

Disaster Preparation

Failure to prepare is preparing to fail – Benjamin Franklin



Being prepared for emergencies is crucial at home, school, work, and in your community. Various disasters (hurricane, flood, tornado, hazardous materials spill) can strike quickly, without warning. You can better cope with disaster by preparing in advance. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety and losses that accompany disasters.

What would you do if basic services—water, gas, electricity or telephones—were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they can not reach everyone right away. The best way to make you and your family safer is to be prepared **before** disaster strikes.

Your Plan

Start with the basics. For families, pick two meeting places, one right outside your home in case it is not safe to be in your home (ex: house fire) and one outside your neighborhood in case you can not return home.

Ask an out-of-area friend to be your family contact and make sure everyone knows the phone number. Make sure each adult in your house knows how and when to turn off utilities. Keep a fire extinguisher in your home. If you do not know how to use it, ask the fire department for training. Most importantly, practice your plan at least twice a year.

Disaster Supplies Kit

The recommendation: include enough supplies for at least three days. Assemble your Kit with items you may need if advised to evacuate. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or trash containers.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that Disaster Supplies Kits include the following items:

- Food—Due to power outages and closed stores, having a non-perishable food supply will ensure you don't go hungry in the days following a storm.
- Water—Flooding may contaminate the water supply. When considering the amount of water to store for your family, FEMA recommends a 3-day water supply (one gallon per person per day) for drinking, bathing, and hygiene needs.
- First Aid Kit—includes prescription medications your family will need
- Emergency Tools—include a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries to help you stay informed and out of the dark
- Clothing—Per person—one change of clothing and footwear, and one blanket or sleeping bag
- Sanitation supplies
- Special items for any infant, elderly or disabled family members
- An extra pair of eyeglasses
- Tools – wrench, manual can opener, screwdriver, hammer, pliers, knife, duct tape, garbage bags
- Cash and coins
- Pet supplies
- Map—mark evacuation routes on a local area map
- Keep important family documents in a waterproof container; assemble a smaller version of your Kit and keep it in the trunk of your car

Plan Ahead for Evacuation

- Know your evacuation route
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately
- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit
- Lock your home/office
- Tell someone when you left and where you are going

Pets

Although they may be part of the family, pets are not allowed inside public shelters due to public health and safety reasons. Your pet is your responsibility. Advanced planning is essential and could save your pet's life and provide some comfort to you and your family during a disaster.

If you evacuate and take your pet, make sure they are permitted at your planned destination. Some hotels and motels do not accept pets, so check this when making your reservations.

You may choose to board your pet at a kennel or veterinary clinic in a safe area. Be sure your pet's vaccinations are up-to-date, because most boarding kennels will require proof of current rabies and distemper vaccinations before accepting your pet.

After the disaster, be careful in allowing your pet outdoors. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered. Your pet may become confused and lost.

Be Informed

Understand what emergencies or disasters may occur where you live, work and play. Know where to listen for announcements from local authorities on TV, local radio or NOAA weather stations or channels.

Make sure at least one member of your household is trained in first aid, CPR and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED). Your local Red Cross chapter has information about classes in first aid, CPR/AED.

Resources:

FEMA, American Red Cross, www.onestorm.org



For further information, please call your EAP:

1.800.492.4357

Callers with TTY equipment, please call:

1.800.338.2039

Online Services: www.mhnetep.com

