Steps To Prepare Your Family for Disasters

This guide will help you and your family prepare for a disaster. Keep this sheet in a special place so you will always know where to find it. Get the family together now to start following the 4 steps to safety readiness!

1. FIND OUT WHAT THE DISASTER RISKS ARE IN YOUR AREA

Find Out From Your Local Emergency Management Office, Health Department, Or American Red Cross Chapter:

- What types of disasters are likely to happen and how to prepare for each.
- What your community’s warning signals sound like and what to do if you hear them.
- How to help the elderly and people with special needs.

2. CREATE A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

Hold A Family Meeting: Keep It Simple And Work As A Team.

What To Tell Children

It is important to educate children about disasters, without overly alarming them. Use the following guidelines:

Tell children that a disaster is something that could hurt people or cause damage. Explain that nature sometimes provides “too much of a good thing” – fire, rain, and wind.

Explain how important it is to make a Family Disaster Plan.

Teach children:
- How to call for help.
- When to call each emergency number.
- To call the family contact if separated.
- To keep personal identification information in their possession at all times.

Plan

- Talk about the dangers of the disaster(s) with your family.
- Have a plan in case you are separated. (A) Choose a place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot go home. (B) Choose someone out of town to be your family contact.
- Each family member and any babysitter must know the address and phone for A and B.
- Fill out the local emergency phone numbers and child identification cards. Fill out an Emergency Information Form (EIF) for each child with special health care needs (see www.aap.org/advocacy/emergprep.htm).
- Become familiar with the specifics of your child’s child care or school disaster plans as you could be separated from your child during a disaster.
- Plan what to do if you are asked to evacuate.
- Plan several escape routes.
- Plan how to take care of your pets.

Evacuation

If you are told to evacuate, take these steps:
- Leave right away if told to do so.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio for instructions from local officials.
- Wear protective clothing and shoes.
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity if told to do so.
- Leave a note telling when you left and where you are going.
- Call your family contact to tell him or her where you are going.
- Take your Family Emergency Supplies (listed on next page).
- Lock your home.
- Use routes suggested by officials.
COMPLETE THIS CHECKLIST

☐ Put emergency phone numbers by each phone.
☐ Show everyone how and when to turn off the utilities.
☐ Make sure you have enough insurance coverage (for example: flood, fire, earthquake, wind).
☐ Do a home hazard hunt for items that can move, fall, break or cause a fire.
☐ Stock enough emergency supplies to last 7 days (see list at bottom right).
☐ Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
☐ Plan home escape routes—2 from each room.
☐ Find safe places in your home for each type of disaster.
☐ Make 2 copies of important documents and keep the originals in a safe deposit box. Keep 1 copy on hand and give the second to your out-of-town contact.

UTILITYs
Do the following so you will be ready if told to turn off your utilities:
• Find the main electric fuse box, water service main, and natural gas main.
• Learn how and when to turn these off and teach family members.
• Keep a wrench and flashlight near gas and water shut-off valves.
• If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
Make two copies and keep the originals of the following in a safe deposit box or waterproof container:
• Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, investments.
• Passports, social security cards, immunization records, E-I-F.
• Bank account numbers/credit card account numbers.
• Inventory of valuable household goods.
• Family records and photos (eg, birth and marriage certificates).
• Documentation to assist in identifying children who may be separated from their parents (eg, photos, adoption records, birth certificates).

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES LIST
• Signal flare
• Map of the area and important phone numbers
• Special items for infants and the elderly (diapers, formula, medication)
• Three gallons of water per person
• Seven-day supply of ready-to-eat canned or packaged food
• Manual can opener
• Paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
• Blankets or sleeping bags
• Toiletries (10-day supply of prescription medications, hand sanitizer)
• Cell phone batteries and/or phone charger
• A change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes for each family member

Put the following supplies in an easy-to-carry waterproof container:
• Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
• First aid kit and manual and prescription medications
• Credit card and cash
• Personal identification
• An extra set of car keys
• An extra pair of eyeglasses
• Matches in a waterproof container

Visit the US Department of Homeland Security Web site (www.ready.gov) and the AAP Children, Terrorism and Disasters Web site (www.aap.org/terrorism), including a Family Readiness Kit (www.aap.org/family/frk/frkit.htm), for more information.