

Preparedness Plan

Your family's well-being and security are always important. Whether threatened by fire, severe weather or other disasters, you can devise a crisis protection plan to help safeguard your family. The following guidelines will help you get started:

Be prepared for any emergency

- Basic home security is the first step in an emergency preparedness plan. Make sure there are adequate locks on all doors and windows.
- Contact your local emergency management or American Red Cross chapter for information on what types of disasters are most likely to happen and how to prepare for each.
- Learn your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what to do when you hear them.
- Learn about the disaster plans at your workplace and your children's school or daycare center.
- Determine who will pick up and watch your children if they have to leave school early.

Create an emergency plan for your family

- Meet with your family to discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and household hazards to children.
- Explain the types of disasters that are most likely to happen and what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet: (1) Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire or (2) Outside your neighborhood if you can't return home.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, making local telephone calls may be difficult and it's often easier to call long distance. Give every family member the contact's number.

Complete this checklist

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Teach children when and how to call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number.
- Show each family member how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a "home-hazard hunt," checking for damaged or dangling electrical cords and uncovered or overloaded outlets. Always unplug small appliances and keep them out of kids' reach.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit (see list on reverse).
- Learn CPR and basic First Aid; teach your family members, too.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

Practice and maintain your plan

- Quiz your kids every three to six months so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months or according to noted expiration dates.
- Test and re-charge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

continued on reverse

Emergency Supplies

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks or covered trash containers. Include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil
- One change of clothing per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- A First-Aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash or traveler's checks
- Sanitation supplies
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- An extra pair of eyeglasses

If Disaster Strikes

- Remain calm. Put your plan into action.
- Check for injuries. Give First Aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio for news and instructions.
- Evacuate, if advised to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Check for damage in and around your home.
- Use flashlights; do not light matches or use electrical switches.
- Check for fires and sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly. Shut off all damaged utilities.
- Immediately clean spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids.

Remember to...

- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact; do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

Free family protection publications, including "Are You Ready? Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit," are available by writing to: FEMA, P.O. Box 70274, Washington, DC 20024.