



Is your family ready for a disaster?

Take the following steps to make sure you and your family are prepared for any emergency:

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones
- Install safety features in your house, such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers
- Inspect your home for potential hazards (such as items that can move, fall, break, or catch fire) and correct them
- Have your family learn basic safety measures, such as CPR and first aid; how to use a fire extinguisher; and how and when to turn off water, gas, and electricity in your home
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number
- 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 case of an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers, such as backpacks or duffle bags.
- Keep important family documents in a waterproof container.
- Keep a smaller disaster supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
- Pick two meeting places:
 - Right outside of your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
 - Outside of your neighborhood in case you can't return home or are asked to leave your neighborhood. Everyone must know the address and phone number of the meeting locations.
- Develop an emergency communication plan for getting back together in case you're separated during a disaster.
- Ask an out-of-town relative or friend to be your "family contact" outside of your area.
- Make arrangements for a place to stay with a friend or relative who lives out of town and/or learn about shelter locations.
- Be familiar with escape routes. Depending on the type of disaster, it may be necessary to evacuate your home. Plan several escape routes in case certain roads are blocked or closed. Remember to follow the advice of local officials during evacuation situations. They will direct you to the safest route; some roads may be blocked or put you in further danger.
- Teach all responsible family members how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches or valves. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves. Turn off utilities only if you suspect a leak or damaged lines, or if you are instructed to do so by authorities. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on. Paint shut-off valves with white or fluorescent paint to increase visibility. Attach a shut-off valve wrench or other special tool in a conspicuous place close to the gas and water shut-off valves.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home in preparation for a fire or other emergency. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe places in your home for each type of disaster. Different disasters often require different types of safe places.
- Make two photocopies of vital documents and keep the originals in a safe deposit box. Keep one copy in a safe place in the house, and give the second copy to an out-of-town friend or relative.
- Make a complete inventory of your home, garage, and surrounding property. The inventory can be either written or videotaped. Include information such as serial numbers,

make and model numbers, physical descriptions, and price of purchases (receipts, if possible).

- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills at least twice a year. Actually drive evacuation routes so each driver will know the way. Select alternate routes in case the main evacuation route is blocked during an actual disaster. Mark your evacuation routes on a map; keep the map in your Disaster Supplies Kit .
- Replace stored food and water every six months. Replacing your food and water supplies will help ensure freshness.
- Test your smoke alarms once a month and replace the batteries twice a year.
- Plan to take care of your pets. If you must evacuate, it is best to take your pets with you. However, pets (other than service animals) are not permitted in public shelters, according to many local health department regulations and because of other considerations.
 - Contact hotels and motels outside of your immediate area to check their policies on accepting pets and restrictions on the number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency.
 - Ask friends, relatives, or others outside of the affected area whether they could shelter your animals.
 - Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
 - Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including their phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies.
 - Carry pets in a sturdy carrier
 - Have identification, collar, leash, and proof of vaccinations for all pets.
 - Assemble a portable pet disaster supplies kit. Keep food, water, and any special pet needs