

In Case of a Disaster

Create a Family Disaster Plan

The first step in coping with a disaster is knowing what the disaster risks are in your area and creating a plan should one occur. Information is available from your local emergency management office, health department or American Red Cross chapter.

- Know 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.
- Talk about potential dangers with your children.
 - ✓ Without causing alarm or fear, tell children that a disaster is something that could cause damage or hurt people, that sometimes nature provides too much of a good thing – rain, fire, wind.
 - ✓ Explain why it is important to have an emergency 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 with them at all times
- Have a plan in case you are separated, preferably a place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot get home (A). Choose someone outside of your town as a family contact (B), and be sure each family member and any babysitters know the address and phone number for A and B. Have this information written down.
 - ✓ Plan what to do if you are asked to evacuate.
 - Leave right away if you are told to do so.
 - Listen to a 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, where you are going, who is with you.
 - Call your family contact to give him or her that information.
 - Take your family emergency supplies (see below)
 - Lock your home.
 - Use routes suggested by officials.
 - ✓ Plan several escape routes.
 - ✓ Plan how to take care of your pets.
- Complete child identification cards for each child and an emergency information card for children with special health care needs. Emergency Information Forms are available from the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org).
- Know the specifics of your child's child care or school disaster plan in case you are separated during a disaster.
- It is important that babysitters and child care providers have these numbers and know the following:
 - ✓ How to dial 911
 - ✓ Whether 911 can be reached from a cell phone in your area
 - ✓ Your home address (directions to your home) and phone number
 - ✓ Location of a spare car safety seat
 - ✓ Location of the child's emergency information and medications
 - ✓ Phone number and address where parents can be reached
 - ✓ A neighbor who could respond to an emergency
- 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)
 - Do a home hazard hunt for items that can move, fall, break or cause a fire.
 - Stock enough emergency supplies to last 3 days.
 - Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.

- Plan home escape routes – 2 from each room.
- Find safe places in your house for each type of disaster.
- Make 2 copies of important documents and keep the originals in a safe-deposit box. Keep one copy on hand and give one to your out-of-town contact.

Practice and maintain your plan:

- Test smoke alarms every month
- Review the family disaster plan every 6 months; quiz children; replace stored water and food
- Replace smoke alarm batteries every year
- Meet with neighbors to plan how you can work together during a disaster

Be Prepared:

- Utilities
 - ✓ Find the main electric fuse or circuit box, water service main and gas main
 - ✓ Learn how and when to turn these off, and teach family members
 - ✓ Keep a wrench and flashlight near gas and water shutoff valves
 - ✓ If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on
- Important Documents
 - ✓ Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, investments
 - ✓ Passports, social security cards, immunization records, emergency information forms
 - ✓ 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
 - ✓ 3-day supply of ready-to-eat canned or packaged food
 - ✓ Manual can opener
 - ✓ Paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
 - ✓ Blankets or sleeping bags
 - ✓ Toiletries, hand sanitizer
 - ✓ 10-day supply of prescription medications
 - ✓ Cell phone batteries; phone charger
 - ✓ A change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes for each family member
 - ✓ Pack the following in a separate, easy-to-carry waterproof container:
 - ❖ Battery-powered radio, flashlight and batteries
 - ❖ First aid kit and manual and prescription medication
 - ❖ A credit card and cash
 - ❖ Personal identification
 - ❖ An extra set of car keys
 - ❖ An extra pair of eyeglasses
 - ❖ Matches in a waterproof container

For more information, visit the US Department of Homeland Security Web site (www.ready.gov) and AAP Children, Terrorism & Disasters Web site (www.aap.org/terrorism).