

General Preparedness Information

Emergency Planning

Essential services may be interrupted following an emergency and local disaster relief and emergency responders may not be able to reach you immediately. Equipping yourself with the knowledge and tools to prepare and protect yourself and your family is essential.

Step One: Create a Disaster Plan

The first step to take to prepare for emergencies is to develop a household disaster plan.

- † Know and understand the impact of natural disasters that could occur in your community. Know whether hazardous materials are produced, stored or transported near you. Prepare for each potential emergency and how you would respond.
- † Talk with employers and school officials about their emergency response plans and understand how those plans impact your family plan.
- † Discuss potential emergencies with all members of your household, and determine how to respond to each. Make sure you agree on what you would need to do in an evacuation scenario.
- † Listen to your **LOCAL** media for alerts. (see “Emergency Contacts” section)
- † Make a plan to stay in contact with family members in the event you are separated. Identify and agree on two meeting places:
 - the first should be near your home—in case of fire, perhaps a tree or a telephone pole
 - the second should be away from your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
- † Choose a friend or relative who lives out of the area for household members to call to say they are okay and make sure they know your plan.
- † Draw a floor plan of your home, identifying two escape routes from each room. (Use the “Home Evaluation Plan Diagram”)
- † Keep emergency telephone numbers by all telephones and teach children how and when to call 9-1-1.
- † Ensure that everyone in your household knows how and when to shut off water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- † Ensure that at least one member of your family has taken a CPR/first aid class. Local American Red Cross chapters can train you in these lifesaving skills. Official certification by the American Red Cross provides “Good Samaritan” law protection for those giving first aid.
- † Reduce the economic impact of disaster on your property and your household’s health and financial well-being:
 - Review property insurance to be sure policies are current and meet your needs (type of coverage-including Renter’s Insurance, amount of coverage, and hazard covered—flood, fire and theft)
 - Review life insurance policies and consider saving money in an “emergency” savings account that could be used in any crisis. Keep a small amount of cash or traveler’s checks at home in a safe place where you can quickly gain access in case of an evacuation.
 - Ensure that health insurance policies are current and meet the needs of your household.
- † Consider ways to help neighbors who may need special assistance, such as the elderly or disabled.
- † Make sure your disaster plan includes arrangements for your pets, since they are not allowed in emergency shelters. Service animals are allowed.

Step Two: Assemble Disaster Supply Kits

You may need to survive on your own for three days or more and use your own water, food and emergency supplies.

Assembling the supplies you might need following a disaster is an important part of your disaster plan. You should prepare emergency supplies for the following situations:

- † A disaster supply kit with essential food, water, and supplies—this kit should be kept in a designated place and be ready to “grab and go” in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all household members know where the kit is kept.
- † Have a disaster supply kit at work. This should be in one container, ready to “grab and go” in case you have to evacuate the building.
- † Keep a car kit of emergency supplies, including food and water, stored in your car at all times. This kit would also include flares, jumper cables and seasonal supplies.

See the “Emergency Supply Kits” section for details on assembling your kits.