

# 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!



## 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.



## 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](http://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



## PRACTICE AND MAINTAIN YOUR PLAN



- 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.

- Every Month** -----  
Test your smoke alarms.
- Every 6 Months** -----  
Go over the Family Disaster Plan and do escape drills. Quiz children. Replace stored food and water.
- Every Year** -----  
Replace the batteries in smoke alarms (unless your smoke alarm uses long-life batteries).

## NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS



Meet with neighbors to plan how you can work together during a disaster.

- Talk about who has special skills (medical, technical).
- Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

## UTILITIES

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, EIF.
- 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](http://www.ready.gov)) and the AAP Children, Terrorism and Disasters Web site ([www.aap.org/terrorism](http://www.aap.org/terrorism)), including a Family Readiness Kit ([www.aap.org/family/frk/frkit.htm](http://www.aap.org/family/frk/frkit.htm)), for more information.

