



## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

### Why Prepare for a Disaster?

If a disaster happens in your town, government and disaster-relief groups will try and help you. But you need to be ready as well. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety and losses that happen when a disaster strikes. You need to be ready to evacuate your home. You also need to know how to take care of your medical needs.

Creating your own personal disaster plan is important. Include everyone in the plan. Teach children how to deal with emergencies.

### What Types of Disasters Could Happen?

#### Natural Hazards

- ◆ Floods
- ◆ Thunderstorms
  - ◆ Lightning
  - ◆ Tornadoes
- ◆ Winter Storms and Extreme Cold
- ◆ Extreme Heat (Heat Wave)
  - ◆ Emergency Water Shortages
- ◆ Earthquakes
- ◆ Mudslides
- ◆ Fire
  - ◆ Wildland fires

#### Man-Made Hazards

- ◆ Hazardous Materials
  - ◆ Household chemical emergencies
- ◆ Lengthy Power Outage
- ◆ National Security Emergencies
  - ◆ Terrorism

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING AND DISASTER SUPPLIES**

### Creating a Plan

- Contact your local emergency services or Red Cross office. Ask them which disasters could strike your community.
- Talk with employers and schools about their emergency plans
- Talk with people that you live with about potential emergencies. Talk about how to respond to each type of emergency. Talk about what you would do if you had to leave your home.
- Plan how you would stay in contact if you were separated. Identify two meeting places. The first should be near your home. The second should be away from your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
- Pick a friend or relative who lives out of your neighborhood. Plan on everyone calling this person to say that they are okay.
- Draw a floor plan of your home. Mark two escapes from each room.
- Post emergency phone numbers by the telephone. Teach children how and when to call 911.
- Make sure everyone in your house knows how and when to shut off water, gas, and electricity at the main switches. Ask for help from your local utility companies if you have questions.
- Review property insurance to make sure policies are current.
- Consider starting an “emergency” savings account.
- Consider ways to help neighbors who may need special assistance, such as the elderly or disabled.
- Make arrangements for pets. Pets are not allowed in public shelters.

### Planning for People with Special Needs

If you or a loved one have special needs you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your household in an emergency. If you know of friends or neighbors with special needs, help them with these extra precautions. Examples include:

- People who are hearing impaired may need to make special arrangements to receive a warning
- People who are mobility impaired may need assistance in getting to a shelter
- Single parent households may need assistance from others
- Non-English speaking people may need help from others. Cultural community groups may be able to help with disaster planning. They may also help during a disaster.
- People without vehicles may need to make arrangements for transportation.
- People with special dietary needs should have an adequate emergency food supply.
- People who need special medications should have an adequate supply.
- People who need medical supplies such as oxygen, catheters, and ostomy supplies should have an adequate emergency supply.

Find out about special assistance that may be available in your community. Register with the office of emergency services or fire department for assistance. This is so that needed help can be provided in an emergency. Also, if you have special medical equipment, register with the local Power Company. This will help them know where the power needs to be fixed first.

Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers to aid you in an emergency. Make sure everyone knows what you need help with and how to work necessary equipment. You should also discuss your needs with your employer.

If you or a loved one are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building, have an escape chair. Also make sure you have an evacuation plan from home as well as work. If you live in an apartment building, ask management to clearly mark exits and to make arrangements to help you evacuate the building.

Keep extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for guide or hearing-ear dogs, or other items you might need. Also, keep a list of the type and serial numbers of medical equipment you need. This will help in case you have to evacuate quickly and cannot take all of the equipment with you.

Those who are not disabled should learn whom in our neighborhoods or workplace may need assistance during an emergency. Offer to assist this person and develop a plan with them before disaster strikes.

If you are a caregiver for a person with special needs, make sure you have a communication plan in place. Have necessary phone numbers handy.

### **DISASTER SUPPLY KITS**

You may need to survive on your own for three or more days. You need to have a three-day disaster kit. This means that you should have your own water, food and emergency supplies. Using backpacks or duffel bags to keep the supplies together is a good idea. This way, if you had to evacuate, you could quickly take your kit with you.

#### Water is Essential

It is recommended that you have at least one gallon of water per person per day. For example if you have four household members you need at least 4 gallons of water per day. It is not safe to ration water so it is essential that you have this much water on hand. You may purchase bottled water or store water in thoroughly washed plastic, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Don't use glass. Never use a container that has held toxic substances. Soft drink bottles are best.

- ◆ Containers should be rinsed with a diluted bleach solution. One part bleach to ten parts water before use.
- ◆ If your water is from a city or town utility system and is already treated, you do not need to treat water before storing.
- ◆ If you have a well or public water that has not been treated, follow the treatment instructions provided by your public health service or water provider.
- ◆ Seal the water containers tightly, label them and store in a dark cool place.
- ◆ It is important to change stored water every six months.

#### Food Supplies

Unlike water, food can be rationed safely. It is not recommended though to ration food to children or pregnant women. Keep food supplies limited to those that do not require refrigeration or cooking. Remember, in a disaster, the power may be out.

- ◆ Ready-to-eat meats, fruits, and vegetables; canned or boxed juices, milk and soup; peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, and trail mix are all good choices. Don't forget the manual can opener.
- ◆ Baby formulas, food and formulas should also be kept on hand for infants.
- ◆ People on special diets need to plan more carefully.
- ◆ Replace items in your food supply every 6 months.
- ◆ Store canned foods in a cool dry place.

### First Aid Kit

A basic first aid kit is also essential. You can purchase a ready-made kit, or make one your self. Make sure to include sunscreen and over-the-counter medications in your kit.

If you take prescription medications you should take the following precautions. It may be difficult to obtain medications during a disaster. Make sure that you fill your prescription 7 days before you run out. If you do this routinely, you will always have a week's supply of medication on hand.

### Tools and Emergency Supplies

A basic tool kit should include the following items. This is per the recommendation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

#### Tool Kit

- ◆ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ◆ A portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries
- ◆ Signal flare
- ◆ Matches in a waterproof container
- ◆ Shut-off wrench, pliers, shovel
- ◆ Duct tape and scissors
- ◆ Plastic Sheeting
- ◆ Whistle
- ◆ Small canister, A-B-C type fire extinguisher
- ◆ Tube tent
- ◆ Compass
- ◆ Work gloves
- ◆ Paper, pens and pencils
- ◆ Needles and thread
- ◆ Battery-operated travel alarm clock

### Kitchen Items

- ◆ Manual can opener
- ◆ Mess kits or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- ◆ All-purpose knife
- ◆ Household liquid bleach in case you need to treat drinking water
- ◆ Sugar, salt, pepper
- ◆ Aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and resealing plastic bags
- ◆ If food must be cooked, small cooking stove and a can of cooking fuel

### Sanitation and Hygiene Items

- ◆ Washcloth, towel, soap, towelettes, hand sanitizer, liquid detergent
- ◆ Toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorants, comb and brush, razor, shaving cream, lip balm, sunscreen, insect repellent, contact lens solutions, mirror, feminine supplies, toilet paper
- ◆ Plastic trash bags and ties
- ◆ Medium-sized plastic bucket with tight lid

### Household Documents and Contact Numbers

- ◆ Personal identification, cash, credit card
- ◆ Copies of important documents such as birth certificates, marriage certificate, driver's license, social security cards, passport, wills, deeds, inventory of household goods, insurance papers, immunization records, bank and credit card account numbers, stocks and bonds. Be sure to store a watertight container.
- ◆ Emergency contact list and phone numbers
- ◆ Maps
- ◆ Extra sets of car and house keys

### Clothes and Bedding

- ◆ One complete change of clothing and footwear for each household member. Coats, gloves, scarves, and boots should be taken in the wintertime.
- ◆ Blankets or sleeping bags and pillows for each household member.

### Specialty Items

- ◆ Child's favorite toy and book
- ◆ Comfort item for elderly

It is important for you to be ready, wherever you may be when disaster strikes. With the checklists above you can now put together a disaster kit at home. But what happens if you are away from home? Have a small disaster kit in the trunk of your car. Water and extra clothing for cold weather are a good start. Keep extra water and snacks at your desk at work. Water fountains won't work if the power is off.

If you would like more information about disaster planning please contact Salud customer service at (505) 342-4681 or (800) 580-2811. Or you may log on to the <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/> web site.