

Family Disaster Planning

Where will you and your family be when disaster strikes? What would you do if basic services - water, gas, electricity, and telephones - were cut off for long periods?

Whether faced with a family emergency or a regional disaster, the effort you've put into family preparedness and disaster planning will play a large role in how well you "survive" the event. The following steps can help you enhance your family's preparedness:

1) IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

Visit the library, contact the American Red Cross or your local Emergency Manager, and log on to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) web site at www.fema.gov to learn about the hazards in your area.

- Winter Storm
- Earthquake
- Flood
- Wildfire
- Wind Storm
- Landslide
- Hazardous Material Spill

2) LEARN HOW THE HAZARDS CAN IMPACT YOUR FAMILY

Assess what the consequences might be for your family when disaster strikes. Consider the time of day, the day of the week, and time of year.

- Injury
- Separation
- Isolation
- Power Outage
- Phone Outage
- Water Outage
- Property Damage

3) IDENTIFY STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO MINIMIZE OR PREVENT THE HAZARD IMPACTS

Determine procedures and practices you can develop/implement to enhance your disaster resistance. Consult with the Red Cross, your local Emergency Manager or FEMA for assistance.

- Plans for home escape, neighborhood evacuation, and family communication.
- Procedures for drop, cover, and hold, shelter in-place, and utility shutoff.
- Training in CPR, basic first aid, and use of a fire extinguisher.
- Hazard-resistant construction materials.
- Flood proofing, landscaping, and site drainage practices.
- Nonstructural earthquake hazard mitigation techniques.
- Warning system installation (e.g., smoke detectors.)

- Comprehensive hazard insurance for your home and personal property (e.g., fire, flood, and earthquake).

4) IDENTIFY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES YOU'LL NEED TO HELP SURVIVE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

- Food and Water.
- First Aid Supplies.
- Sanitation Supplies.
- Clothing and Bedding.
- Prescription and Non-prescription Medicines.
- Light Sources (flashlights, candles and/or light sticks).
- Tools, Equipment, Supplies (manual can opener, utensils, fire extinguisher, matches, money, batteries, etc.)
- Special Items (baby supplies, pet food, important family documents, etc.)

5) IDENTIFY THE EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES YOU ALREADY HAVE IN PLACE

- Camping Gear (sleeping bags, cooking equipment, utensils, etc.).
- Fire Escape Plan.
- Extra Food and Water.
- First Aid Kit.

6) IDENTIFY YOUR SHORTFALLS

- What equipment, supplies, procedures, and plans do you need to complete your family preparedness effort?

7) DEVELOP A PLAN TO ELIMINATE THE SHORTFALLS

Identify short and long term objectives. For the short term, focus on items that are low cost or easy to implement and that have high payoff. Some suggestions include:

- Install hazard warning systems such as smoke detectors.
- Develop fire escape and neighborhood evacuation plans.
- Develop a simple family communications plan such as a wallet card with common numbers to call and important policy numbers.
- Develop drop, cover, and hold, utility shutoff, and shelter in-place procedures.
- Attend CPR, basic first aid, and fire extinguisher training.
- Begin or expand your disaster supplies kit. Start with basic necessities such as food, water, light sources, first aid supplies, clothing, and bedding.
- Host a neighborhood meeting to exchange preparedness information and ideas.

For the long term, focus on higher cost items or those that are more difficult to implement. These items might include;

- Special tools and equipment.
- Structural earthquake mitigation.
- Expanded insurance coverage.
- Drainage improvements.

- Building retrofitting.

TRAIN AND MAINTAIN

- Conduct fire evacuation drills.
- Test smoke detectors.
- Test/recharge fire extinguishers.
- Test communications plans.
- Practice utility shutoff, drop, cover, and hold, and shelter in-place procedures.
- Replace stored food, water, and medicines before the expiration date.