

TIPS IN PERSONALIZING YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. You may have trouble getting through, or the telephone system may be down altogether, but be patient.

Emergency Information

Find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and how you will be notified. Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via emergency radio and TV broadcasts. You might hear a special siren, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door. Call the closest chapter of the American Red Cross for emergency information that applies to your community.

Emergency Plans

You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together in the event of an emergency. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance.

Important things to consider in an emergency family plan:

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance: how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations.

Contacts:

It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Ask an out-of-state friend to be your family out of town contact. After a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance. Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. You may have trouble getting through, or the telephone system may be down altogether, but be patient.

Other Plans in Place:

Find out what disaster plans are in place at your work, your children's school and other places your family spends time. Discuss preparedness with your family. Make sure you all understand what types of disasters can occur and what you will do in each case.

Escape routes:

Determine two escape routes from each room in your home

Meeting Places:

Pick three places to meet: in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire. Decide a location in your neighborhood and lastly, a regional meeting place in case you can't return home.

Children:

Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 and other emergency numbers including fire, police, ambulance, etc. Post these numbers near phones in your home.

Fire Safety:

Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms and make sure everyone knows where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it.

First Aid:

Learn basic first aid skills, including CPR.

Insurance:

Make sure your family has adequate insurance.

EVACUATION TIPS WHEN PERSONALIZING YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

Family Evacuation Considerations

- Have a written plan: Who does what; priorities; locations; who has last word
- Each person has a pre-loaded 72-hour (minimum) evacuation kit in place
- Family vehicle(s) always have fuel tank at least half full
- Each vehicle has its own emergency kit, geared to the season
- Maintain a 12-volt charger for cell phone in vehicle
- Based on the plan, divide evacuation tasks by person & by checklist
- Plan to share with someone in need
- If possible, have shoulder pack for each of following "evacuation packages"

Document Package

- Will/Estate plans
- Deeds– Title Certificates
- Mortgages and Contracts
- Insurance policies
- Veterans' papers
- Passports
- Zip drive records

Medical Package

- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription, but needed meds
- Testing equipment
- Antibacterial liquid or 'wipes'
- Basic first aid kit
- Cooler w/"blue ice" for insulin
- Extra eyeglasses (prescriptions)

Family/Personal Package

- Family History & Genealogy records
- (Associated albums & CD-Roms)
- Diplomas, awards & certificates
- Birth certificates & personal data
- Cash package (handy denominations)
- List of key phone numbers
- Credit cards & checkbooks
- Laptop computer

72-hour Kit & Essentials

- Portable radio w/extra batteries
- Flashlights w/extra batteries
- Lightweight high-energy food items
- Personal hygiene supplies
- Comfort items
- Emergency water supply (or purifier)
- Sleeping bag/blanket
- 3-day medication supply
- Change of clothing
- Small first aid kit (some hidden cash)
- Sterno or mini-stove

Time Permitting

- Extra clothing
- Extra ready-to-eat food items
- More water (handy gallons)
- Camera gear
- Collections of value
- Protective all-weather gear
- Foam sleeping pad
- Portable 'potty' (luggable loo)
- Reading/writing material
- Personal fire arms