Family Disaster Plan

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Disaster, of any type, can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate or stay in your home. Consider what you would do if your utilities and communications systems were cut off. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but will be unable to reach everyone right away. In the case of a terrorism event, your best option may be to stay in and close up your home or building.

Families do and will cope with disaster by advance preparation and by working together as a team. Follow the steps outlined to create your personal family disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and YOUR responsibility. In the event of an act of terrorism, civil defense, which includes you, is the best immediate defense.

**Emergency Supplies**

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your family’s needs for at least three days. Assemble a disaster kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these items in sturdy, easy to care containers that you can “pick up and go” with.

Include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per day per family member) and food that will not spoil
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- A first aid kit that includes your family’s prescription medications
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash or traveler’s checks
- Sanitation supplies
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- An extra pair of glasses

*Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car.*

**Utilities**

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main, and natural gas main. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.

Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to.

**Neighbors Helping Neighbors**

If there are is a Neighborhood Watch or another community group in your neighborhood, you could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you are a member of a neighborhood organization, such as home association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity.
Know your neighbors’ special skills (e.g., medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for child care in case parents cannot get home.

**Home Hazard Hunt**

During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a home hazard. For example, a hot water heater or bookshelf can fall. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards. Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire hazards.

**Evacuation**

Evacuate immediately if told to do so:
- Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials
- Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes
- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit
- Lock your home
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities—do not use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous

If you are sure you have time:
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity before leaving, if instructed to do so
- Post a note telling others when you left and where you are going
- Make arrangements for your pets

**If Disaster Strikes**

If disaster strikes: remain calm and be patient. Put your plan into action. Check for injuries: Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people. Listen to your battery-powered radio for news and instructions: Evacuate, if advised to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

**Check for damages in your home:**
- Use flashlights – do not light matches or turn on electrical switches, if you suspect damage
- Check for fires, fire hazards, and other household hazards
- Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly
- Shut off any other damaged utilities
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids immediately

**Remember to:**
- Confine or secure your pets. If you evacuate and plan to take your pet, remember to include food and water for each
- Consider closing up your home and leaving food and water if is safe for your animals. Your Health Department can advise you through public media
Post Disaster Needs Assessment

☐ Family safe and secure

☐ Check utilities:
  1. Gas (Don’t turn off unless leaking.)
  2. Electricity (Don’t turn on a light switch, check electric clock, etc.)
  3. Water

☐ Assess safety of structure and secure your property

☐ Family Disposition
  1. If at home:
     a. Provide safe shelter (at home, other agreed-upon location, Red Cross shelter)
     b. Verbalize an agreed-upon contact person (out of area)
     c. Develop plan for future communication with one another
  2. If at work:
     a. Identify a meeting place for your family if your home is unsafe to enter after the disaster.
     b. If your phone is working, resist the temptation to call home, school, or other family and/or friends. Non-essential calls may make an emergency call impossible. Phone systems can handle only a specified number of calls

☐ Reassure your family that you will contact them when able. Inform them of your initial reporting site (Check with your local Health Department)

☐ Check and secure your personal car emergency kit in the trunk of your car

☐ Report to the site directed by your Facility or Public Health Department OR your supervisor during work hours. If communications are not functioning, report to closest public health site or, if unable to reach, report to the nearest fire department or Red Cross