



# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

*Bringing the University to You*

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## **FAMILY DISASTER PLANNING From the American Red Cross**

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services--water, gas, electricity or telephones--were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

### **1. Find Out What Could Happen**

- Ask about animal care after a disaster. Animals are not allowed inside emergency shelters because of health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or day care center, and other places where your family spends time

### **2. Create a Disaster Plan**

- Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather, and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.
- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet:
- Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
- Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

### **3. Complete This Checklist**

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the utilities (water, gas, and electricity) at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Get training from the fire department for each family member on how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.

- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.

#### **4. Practice and Maintain Your Plan**

- Quiz your kids every six months or so.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuations.
- Replace stored water and stored food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

#### **NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS**

Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a 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 can't get home.

#### **IF DISASTER STRIKES**

- Remain calm and 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.
- Check for damage in your home:
- Use flashlights. Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches, if you suspect damage.
- 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. (You will need a professional to turn gas back on.)
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids immediately.

#### **REMEMBER TO ...**

- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact--do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

#### **DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT**

##### **WATER**

- Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.
- Store one gallon of water per person per day.

- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).\*

## **FOOD**

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno.
- Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:
  - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
  - Canned juices
  - Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
  - High energy foods
  - Vitamins
  - Food for infants
  - Comfort/stress foods

## **FIRST AID KIT**

- Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Triangular bandages (3)
- Non-prescription drugs
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

## **NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

## **TOOLS & SUPPLIES**

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils\*
- Emergency preparedness manual\*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries\*

- Flashlight and extra batteries\*
- Cash or traveler's checks, change\*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife\*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

### **SANITATION**

- Toilet paper, towelettes\*
- Soap, liquid detergent\*
- Feminine supplies\*
- Personal hygiene items\*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

### **CLOTHING & BEDDING**

- \*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.
- Sturdy shoes or work boots\*
- Rain gear\*
- Blankets or sleeping bags\*
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

### **SPECIAL ITEMS**

Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons

- FOR BABY\*
  - Formula
  - Diapers
  - Bottles
  - Powdered milk
  - Medications

- FOR ADULTS\*
  - Heart and high blood pressure medication
  - Insulin
  - Prescription drugs
  - Denture needs
  - Contact lenses and supplies
  - Extra eye glasses
  
- ENTERTAINMENT
  - Games and books
  
- IMPORTANT FAMILY DOCUMENTS - Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:
  - \* Will, insurance policies, contracts deeds, stocks and bonds
  - \* Passports, social security cards, immunization records
  - \* Bank account numbers
  - \* Credit card account numbers and companies
  - \* Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
  - \* Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)
  - \* Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
  - \* Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
  - \* Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

Contact JoAnne Skelly, Meri McEneny, and Lesley Bensinger at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension at 775-887-2252 or send an email to [waterfallfire@unce.unr.edu](mailto:waterfallfire@unce.unr.edu) if you have any questions or need more information.