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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **Disaster and Emergency Preparedness**

Disasters can happen anytime and anywhere. They can strike quickly and without warning, leaving you little time to respond. A highway spill or hazardous material incident could mean evacuation; A winter storm could trap your family at home. An earthquake, flood, tornado, or any other disaster could leave you stranded without a phone and without heat, hot and cold water or electricity...for days.

After a disaster, local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. Help may be there for you within hours, or it may take days before assistance can reach you. Is your family prepared to cope with an emergency of catastrophic proportions?

***Cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team!***

Prepare now for a sudden emergency. Learn how to protect yourself and your family. Follow the steps outlined, discuss these ideas with your family members, then prepare your family's disaster plan. Post the plan where everyone will see it--on the refrigerator or bulletin board. Knowing what to do when disaster strikes is your best protection and your responsibility.

### **Four Steps to Safety**

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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **Disaster and Emergency Preparedness - Four Steps to Safety**

#### ***Find Out What Could Happen To You***

- Contact your [Office of Emergency Services](#) (540) 727-7161.
- Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen where you live: fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane or tornado, for example. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Ask about animal care during and after a disaster. Animals are not allowed inside emergency shelters because of health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if necessary.
- Find out about the disaster plans in effect at your place of employment, at your childrens' school or day care center and at any other place where your family spends time.

#### ***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.
- Discuss and explain what to do about power outages and personal injuries.
- See to it that older children and adults in the family take a Basic First Aid and CPR Class.
- Instruct family members in [basic fire safety](#).
- Draw a floor plan of your home. Mark two (2) escape routes from each room.
- Obtain the necessary equipment to effect the escapes (ie. collapsible ladders for escape from a second story room).
- Determine the best escape routes from your home and write an [escape plan](#).

Pick two (2) places to meet:

- Outside your home, in case of sudden emergency, like a fire.
- Outside your neighborhood, in case you can't return home. Be sure everyone knows the address and phone number of this second location.
- Instruct household members to turn on the radio for emergency information.  
Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it is 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. Teach children how to make long distance telephone calls.
- Discuss what to do in the event of an [evacuation](#) and assign tasks to each family member.  
Prepare a [delayed flight plan](#) in the event that there is pre-notification of a disaster.
- Plan how to take care of your pets.
- Meet and work with neighbors to plan how the [neighborhood](#) could work together after a disaster until help arrives.

### ***Complete This Checklist***

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, poison control, etc.)
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off [water, gas, and electricity](#) at the main switches.
- Check and make sure you have adequate insurance coverage.  
Get training from the local fire department for each family member on how to use fire extinguishers (ABC type), and be sure everyone knows where the extinguishers are kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near the bedrooms.
- Conduct a [home hazard hunt](#).
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.  
Find the safe places in your home for each disaster and be sure each family member
- knows where they are.

### ***Practice And Maintain Your Plan***

- Quiz your kids every six (6) months.

- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water and food every six (6) months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change or recharge the batteries at least once a year.
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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **Disaster and Emergency Preparedness - Disaster Supplies Kit**

One way to prepare for disaster is by assembling a Disaster Supplies Kit. Once disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. But...if you've gathered your supplies in advance, your family can endure an evacuation or home confinement.

#### ***Prepare your Kit***

Review the checklist below.

Gather the supplies that are listed. YOU may need them if your family is confined at home. You should have enough supplies on hand to meet your family's needs for at least three (3) days.

Place the supplies you'd most likely need for an evacuation in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container, such as a backpack, duffle bag, or covered trash container.

There are six basics you should stock for your home:

- Water
- Food
- First aid supplies
- Clothing and bedding
- Tools and emergency supplies
- Special items

#### ***Disaster Kit Checklist***

- Water: A supply of water (one gallon per person, per day)
- Food: A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food
- Clothing: A change of clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes
- Bedding: Blankets or sleeping bags
- [First Aid Kit](#): Assemble for your home and for your car. Include supplies of both prescription *and* non-prescription medications.
- Specialty Items: Be sure to remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

- Money: Credit cards, cash, and/or travelers checks
- Important family documents: Store in a portable, waterproof container. Keep copies in a safe place other than your home. (i.e. Safety deposit box)
- Sanitation and hygiene: Items for personal hygiene

***First Aid Kit***

*Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. The kit should include:*

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Safety pins in assorted sizes
- Cleansing agent/soap
- 2 Prs of Latex gloves
- Sun screen
- 2" sterile guaze pads (4-6)
- 4" sterile guaze pads (4-6)
- Triangular badages (3)
- [Non-prescription drugs](#)
- 2" sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3" sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Pre-moistened towlettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue depressors (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly (or other lubricant)
- 

***Non-Prescription Drugs to include:***

- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication

- Antacid (for upset stomach)
- Syrup of Ipecac (to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (to use if directed by the Poison Control Center)
- 

***Tools and 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 ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper and 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)
- Extra set of car keys



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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **Disaster and Emergency Preparedness - Disaster Supplies Kit (Page 2)**

#### ***Sanitation***

- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags w/ties (for personal sanitation use)
- 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
- Hats and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

#### ***Specialty 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 disease or high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Other Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra pair of eyeglasses

Entertainment

- Games and books, comics, coloring books

***Important Family Documents***

Keep these documents in a waterproof, portable container:

- Will
- Insurance policies
- Contracts and deeds
- Stocks and bonds
- Passports
- Social security cards
- Immunization records
- Bank account numbers and companies
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Household inventory of valuable goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)
- List of family physicians and their phone numbers
- List of important family information: style and serial number of medical devices (i.e. pacemakers)

***Disaster Kit Maintenance***



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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **Food and Water in an Emergency**

#### **Introduction:**

If an earthquake, hurricane, winter storm or other disaster strikes your community, you might not have access to food, water or electricity for days, even weeks. By taking some time now to store emergency food and water supplies, you can provide for your entire family.

#### ***Water:***

Having an ample supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency.

- A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. *Hot environments can double that amount.*
- Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need even more.
- Water is also needed for food preparation and hygiene.
- Store a total of one gallon per person , per day, as a minimum.
- Store at least a two-week supply of water for each member of your family.
- If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount needed today, and try to find more for tomorrow.
- The amount of water the body needs may be minimized by reducing activity and staying cool.

#### ***How to Store Water:***

- Store your water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. ***Never use a container that has held toxic substances.*** Plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles, are best. Food

grade plastic buckets or drums can also be purchased.

- Seal water containers tightly, label and store them in a cool, dark place. Rotate water every six months.

***Emergency Outdoor Water Sources:***

If you need to find water outside your home, you can use these sources:

*( Be sure to purify the water according to the instructions listed below before drinking it. )*

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

***Avoid water that is dark in color, has an odor or contains floating material .***

***Use saltwater only if a distillation method is available.***

***NEVER drink flood water.***

***Three Ways to Purify Water:***

In addition to having a bad odor and taste, contaminated water contain microorganisms that cause diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. All water of uncertain origin should be purified before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene.

There are many ways to purify water. None are perfect. Often, the best solution is a combination of methods. Two easy purification methods are outlined below. These measures will kill most microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals.

Before purifying, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towel or a clean cloth.

**1. Boiling**

Boiling is the safest method of purifying water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking.

Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This will also improve the taste of stored water.

## 2. Disinfection

You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular household liquid bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. *Do not use scented bleaches, color-safe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners.*

Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.

The **only** agent used to purify water should be household liquid bleach. Other

products sold in camping or surplus stores that do not contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient, are not recommended and should not be used.

While the two methods described above will kill most microbes in water, distillation will remove microbes that resist these methods, as well as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals.

## 3. Distillation

Distillation involves boiling water and then collecting the vapor that condenses above it and returning it to the water. The condensed vapor will be devoid of salt and other impurities.

To distill:

- Fill a pot halfway with water.
- Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side-up when the lid is upside-down (make sure the cup is not dangling into the water).
- Boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.

### ***Hidden Water Sources in Your Home:***

If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use the residual water in your hot-water tank, pipes and in ice cubes. As a last resort, you can use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl).

Know the location of your incoming water valve. It must be shut off to stop contaminated water from

entering your home if there are reports of broken water or sewage lines.

1. To use the water in your pipes

Let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet located at the highest level in your house. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the house.

2. To use the water in your hot-water tank

Be sure the electricity or gas is off, and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve and turning on a hot-water faucet.

***Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty.***



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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **Food**

#### ***Short-term Supplies***

Even though it is unlikely that an emergency would cut off your food supply for two weeks, you should prepare a supply that will last that long.

The easiest way to develop a two-week stockpile is to increase the amount of basic foods you normally keep on your shelves.

#### ***Storage Tips***

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot--a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans carefully so that you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker.
- Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

#### ***Nutrition Tips***

During and right after a disaster, it is vital that your strength be maintained.

#### ***Remember:***

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two quarts a day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral and protein supplements in your stockpile to assure adequate nutrition.

#### ***Food Supplies***

When Food Supplies Are Low:

- If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an

extended period and without any food for many days.

- Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women.
- If the water supply is limited, avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods, these foods tend to increase thirst. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content.
- Don't go out and buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply.
- Use the canned foods, dry mixes and other staples on your cupboard shelves.
- Familiar foods are important. They can lift morale and give a feeling of security in time of stress.
- Canned foods won't require cooking, water or special preparation.
- Following are recommended short-term food storage plans.

### ***Special Considerations:***

- As you stock food, take into account your family's unique needs and tastes.
- Try to include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition.
- Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking are best.
- Individuals with special diets and allergies will need particular attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people.
- Nursing mothers may need liquid formula, in case they are unable to nurse.
- Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people.
- Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils.
- Don't forget non-perishable foods for your pets.

### ***Shelf-life of Foods for Storage:***

Here are some general guidelines for rotating common emergency foods.

Use within six months:

- Powdered milk (boxed)
- Dried fruit (in metal container)
- Dry, crisp crackers (in metal container)
- Potatoes

Use within one year:

- Canned condensed meat and vegetable soups
- Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
- Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (in metal containers)
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Hard candy and canned nuts
- Vitamin C

May be stored indefinitely (in proper containers and conditions):

- Wheat
- Vegetable oils
- Dried corn
- Baking powder
- Soybeans
- Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
- Salt
- Non-carbonated soft drinks
- White rice
- Bouillon products
- Dry pasta
- Powdered milk (in nitrogen-packed cans)

***If the Electricity Goes Off:***

**FIRST**, use perishable food and foods from the refrigerator.

**THEN**, use the foods from the freezer. Post a list of freezer contents on the door to minimize the number of times you open the freezer. In a well-filled, well-insulated freezer, foods will usually still have ice crystals in their centers, rendering foods safe to eat for at least three days.

**FINALLY**, begin to use the stored non-perishable foods and staples.

***How to Cook If the Power Goes Out:***

For emergency cooking you can use a fireplace, or a charcoal grill or camp stove can be used outdoors. You can also heat food with candle warmers, chafing dishes and fondue pots. Canned food can be eaten right out of the can. If you heat it in the can, be sure to open the can and remove the label first.



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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **Financial Disaster Preparedness**

Natural or other disasters can strike suddenly, at any time, and anywhere. ***Your first priority, of course, would be to protect your family and your property.*** It is also important to protect against the financial consequences of a disaster. A disaster can damage or destroy your property, force you to live somewhere else temporarily, cut the flow of wages and other income, or ruin valuable financial records.

Listed here are some simple, common-sense steps you can take now, to make sure you are financially prepared to deal with a natural disaster. Before you take any actions, however, be sure to involve your family and/or friends, whenever possible, in the decision making and planning process. You may also want the assistance of an advisor, such as a Certified Financial Planner® licensee, insurance agent, or similar financial professional.

***The important thing is to begin planning now, before the unexpected becomes a harsh reality.***

#### **Protect your property**

The following steps can help you avoid or substantially reduce the potential physical destruction to your property if you were to be hit with a disaster.

These steps can reduce your insurance costs, too:

- Install smoke detectors to warn of an apartment or home fire.
- Elevate utilities to upper floor or attic.
- Clear surrounding brush to protect your home against fires.
- Secure objects that could fall and cause damage in an earthquake, such as a bookcase or hot water heater.
- Install hurricane shutters on windows, and prepare plywood covers for glass doors.
- Cover windows, turn off utilities, or move possessions to a safer location if you have adequate warning of something like a hurricane or flood.
- If your home is in a high risk flood area, on a fault line, or threatened by coastal erosion, consider relocating.
- Have your house inspected by a building inspector or architect to find out what structural improvements could prevent or reduce major damage from disasters.
- If you haven't yet bought a house, you might take construction type into account. Frame houses tend to withstand some disasters, while brick homes hold up better in others.

#### ***Conduct a household inventory***

Inventory your household possessions by making a list of everything you own. If disaster strikes, this list could:

- Help you prove the value of what you owned if those possessions are damaged or destroyed.
- Make it more likely you'll receive a fast, fair payment from your insurance company for your losses.
- Provide documentation for tax deductions you claim for your losses.

***To conduct a thorough home inventory:***

- *Record the location* of the originals of all important financial and family documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, wills, deeds, tax returns, insurance policies, and stock and bond certificates.
- *Keep the originals* in a safe place and store copies elsewhere. You'll need accessible records for tax and insurance purposes.
- *Make a visual or written record of your possessions.* If you don't own a camera or videotaping equipment (and can't borrow or rent it), buy an inventory booklet and fill it out, or make a simple list on notebook paper. Ask your insurance agent if he or she can provide one.
- *Go from room to room.* Describe each item, when you bought it, and how much it cost. If you're photographing or videotaping, have someone open closet doors and hold up items. Include less expensive items, such as bath towels and clothes. Their costs add up if you have to replace them.
- *Record model and serial numbers.* Make copies of receipts and canceled checks for more valuable items.
- Be sure you *include items in your attic, basement, and garage.* Note the quality of building materials, particularly for such furnishings as oak doors or expensive plumbing fixtures.
- *Photograph the exterior of your home.* Include the landscaping--that big tree in the front yard may not be insurable, but it does increase the value of your property for tax purposes. Make special note of any improvements, such as a patio, fencing, or outbuildings.
- *Photograph cars, boats, and recreational vehicles.*
- *Get professional appraisals* of jewelry, collectibles, artwork, or other items that are difficult to value. Update the appraisals every two to three years.
- *Update* your inventory list annually.

Sound like too much work? Computer software programs designed for such purposes can make the task much easier. These programs are readily available in local computer stores.

***Once you have completed your inventory, leave a copy with relatives or friends, or in a safe deposit***

***box. Don't leave your only copy at home, where it might be destroyed.***

### ***Buy insurance***

Even with adequate time to prepare for a disaster, you still may suffer significant, unavoidable damage to your property. That is when insurance for renters or homeowners can be a big help. The sad truth is that many people affected by recent disasters have been under insured-or worse-not insured at all.

#### ***If you own a home:***

- Buy, at a minimum, full replacement or replacement cost coverage. This means the structure can be replaced up to the limits specified in the policy.
- Investigate buying a guaranteed replacement cost policy. If available, these policies can pay to rebuild your house, including improvements, at today's prices, regardless of the limits of the policy.
- Have your home periodically reappraised to be sure the policy reflects the real replacement cost.
- Update the policy to include any home improvements, such as basement refinishing and waterproofing. Annual automatic increases may not be enough to cover these.
- Buy a policy that covers the replacement cost of your possessions. Standard coverage only pays for the actual cash value (replacement cost discounted for age or use).
- Be very clear about what the policy will and will not cover, and how the deductibles work (the part you pay before the policy pays).
- Check state-operated or federally operated insurance pools if you find it difficult to obtain private coverage because of a recent disaster. Premiums often run higher than market rates, but this is better than no coverage.
- Use your home inventory list to check that your policy's coverage matches the value of your possessions.

#### ***If you rent:***

- If you are renting, consider locating outside a high risk flood area or away from a fault line.
- Buy renter's insurance, which pays for damaged, destroyed, or stolen personal property. Your landlord's insurance won't cover damage to or loss of your possessions. Consider special coverage, like flood insurance, for your belongings.
- Be clear about what a policy will cover. Some policies cover more than others. For example, will the policy pay for living expenses, if you have to live somewhere else temporarily, or for damage from sewer backup?
- Comparison shop for the best coverage at the best price. Other than government flood insurance policies vary from company to company. Policies, in most areas are very affordable. Start with the company that insures your car. Discounts are often available if you carry more than one policy with a company.

#### ***If you are moving:***

- Select a home in an area not on a fault line, in a flood area, or at risk from costal erosion.
- Consider special coverage .
- Insurance for renters and homeowners won't cover certain types of losses.
- Ask your insurance agent or financial planner about special or additional coverage.
  - Floods. Homeowner policies don't cover damage from flooding. Call your current insurance company or agent first about getting coverage. If your company doesn't provide flood insurance, call the National Flood Insurance Program at (800) 427-4661, which can provide you with the name of an agent in your area who writes flood insurance. As of 1997, the average premium is \$300 a year for \$98,000 of coverage.
  - Earthquakes. Premiums typically are high (\$5,000 annually for a \$200,000 home), and deductibles may range from 5% to 20% of the policy's coverage. Still, such coverage may be better than no coverage. (Earthquake coverage for the contents of a home usually is separate. You also may need separate coverage for masonry and plate glass.)
  - Home offices. Some policies automatically extend coverage to computer equipment and a few other items of business property. Talk to your agent to determine what items would or would not be covered. If necessary, you could buy additional business coverage at a modest cost. Or it may be better to buy a separate small business policy, which would also provide more coverage.
  - Building codes. Ask your agent about additional insurance to cover the costs of meeting new, stricter building codes. Frequently, after a disaster, people get socked with rebuilding costs that are much higher because building codes have changed. All current codes must be met when rebuilding. Consider additional structural improvements that provide more protection.
  - Other potential problems. This would include problems such as underground mines (located beneath your property) sewer backup, or mudslide.
  - Big-ticket items. Purchase additional coverage for specific jewelry, collectibles, artwork, furs, or other big-ticket items.

### ***Where to keep cash***

After a disaster, you may need cash for the first few days, or even several weeks. Income may stop if you can't work.

To help stay solvent, consider the following:

- Keep a small amount of cash or traveler's checks at home in a place where you can get at it quickly in case of a sudden evacuation. A disaster can shut down local ATMs and banks. The money should be in small denominations for easier use.
- Set aside money in an emergency fund. That can be tough to do on a tight budget, but it can be well worth the effort. The fund can be very helpful, not only in a disaster, but in other

financial crises, such as during unemployment or when unexpected expenses like legal fees arise.

- Keep your emergency funds in a safe, easily accessible account, such as a passbook savings account or a money market account.
- Keep some funds outside the local area, since the disaster that affects you could also affect your local financial institutions. A mutual fund money market account in another city or state is one option to consider.

### ***Use an evacuation box***

Buy a durable "evacuation box" to grab in the event of an emergency. Even a cardboard box would do. Put important papers into the box in sealed, waterproof plastic bags. Store the box in your home where you can get to it easily. Keep this box with you at all times, don't leave it in your unattended car.

The box should be large enough to carry:

- A small amount of traveler's checks or cash and a few rolls of quarters.
- Negatives for irreplaceable personal photographs, protected in plastic sleeves.
- A list of emergency contacts that includes doctors, financial advisors, clergy, reputable repair contractors, and family members who live outside your area.
- Copies of important prescriptions for medicines and eyeglasses, and copies of children's immunization records.
- Health, dental, or prescription insurance cards or information.
- Copies of your auto, flood, renter's, or homeowners insurance policies (or at least policy numbers) and a list of insurance company telephone numbers.
- Copies of other important financial and family records (or at least a list of their locations). These would include deeds, titles, wills, a letter of instructions, birth and marriage certificates, passports, relevant employee benefits documents, the first two pages of the previous year's federal and state income tax returns, etc.
- Backups of computerized financial records.
- A list of bank account, loan, credit card, driver's license, investment account (brokerage and mutual funds), and Social Security numbers.
- Originals, other than wills, should be kept in a safe deposit box or at another location. Include the safe deposit box key in your evacuation box.

### ***Rent a safe deposit box***

Safe deposit boxes are invaluable for protecting originals of important papers. If you don't have a safe deposit box, keep copies in your evacuation box or with family or friends.

Original documents to store in a safe deposit box include:

- Deeds, titles, and other ownership records for your home, autos, RVs, boats, etc.
- Birth certificates and naturalization papers.
- Marriage license/divorce papers and child custody papers.
- Passports and military/veteran papers.
- Appraisals of expensive jewelry and heirlooms.
- Certificates for stocks, bonds, and other investments.
- Trust agreements.
- Living wills, powers of attorney, and health care powers of attorney.
- Insurance policies (copies are sufficient).
- Home improvement records.
- Household inventory documentation.

Generally, originals of wills should **not** be kept in a safe deposit box, since the box may be sealed temporarily after death. Keep originals of wills with your local registrar of wills or your attorney.

Deciding on a safe and convenient location is an issue. You may want to consider renting a safe deposit box in a bank far enough away from your home so it is not likely to be affected by the same disaster that strikes your home (for instance, bank vaults have been flooded). Keep the key to the safe deposit box in your evacuation box.

### ***Home safes and fire boxes***

Safes and fire boxes can be convenient places to store important papers. However, some disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes, could destroy your home. Usually, it is better to store original papers in a safe deposit box or at another location well away from your home.



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## ***Family Preparedness Plan***

### **One Last Thing**

#### ***If Disaster Strikes***

- **Remain calm and patient.**
  - Put your plan into action.
  - Mobilize each family member to the tasks assigned them.
- **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.
  - Don't bother to collect replaceable items, such as televisions, furniture, computers and clothing (except the season appropriate items you will need for a few days)
  - Be sure to take your Disaster Supplies Kit and your Evacuation Box.
- **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.



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