



Emergency Medical Info Kits™ and more...

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Be Prepared: Steps to Preparedness

What would you do if basic services - water, gas, electricity or telephones - were cut off? You can cope with disaster by preparing in advance and by working with your family as a team. The following steps will help you.

1. Get informed
2. Make a plan
3. Assemble a kit
4. Maintain your plan and kit

Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

Step 1: GET INFORMED

Gather the information needed to create a plan. Learn about community response plans, evacuation plans, and designated emergency shelters. Ask about the emergency plans and procedures in places such as places of employment, schools, etc.. If you do not drive, find out how those without transportation are evacuated, in advance. Find out how local authorities warn you of a disaster and how they will provide information to you during and after. Learn about NOAA Weather Radio (noaa.gov).

Step 2: MAKE A PLAN

Meet with Your Family Members. Review the gathered information. Include caregivers in your meeting and planning efforts.

Choose an "Out-of-Town" Contact. Family members call this person to tell them where they are.

Decide Where to Meet. If separated, choose a place near your home for a sudden emergency, like a fire. Choose a location outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.

Complete a Family Communication Plan. Your plan should include contact information for family members, work and school. Also include information for your out-of-town contact, meeting locations, emergency services and the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222).

Escape Routes and Safe Places. You may need to evacuate immediately. Be ready to get out fast. Know the best escape routes as well as where the safe places are in your home for each type of disaster (if a tornado approaches, go to the basement, an interior room/closet with no windows or the lowest floor).

Plan for those with disabilities and special needs. Keep support items in a designated place, it is essential to have an alternate plan in case the caregiver cannot get there. In advance, provide the power company with a list of all power-dependent life support equipment required. Develop a contingency plan that includes an alternate power source or relocating the person.

Plan for your pets. Take your pets with you when you evacuate. Sometimes, pets (other than service animals) are not permitted in emergency public shelters for health reasons. Have a back shelter arranged.

Prepare for different hazards. In your plan, include how to prepare for different hazards, such as the actions you would take to protect yourself from a tornado are different from those you would for a fire.

Action Checklist - To Do Before a Disaster

Utilities Know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves. Keep the needed tools near gas and water shut off valves. Turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if instructed to. (Note: Gas shut-off procedure - When learning process, do NOT actually turn off the gas. Only a qualified professional can turn it back on.

Fire Extinguisher Everyone needs to know locations of and how to use the fire extinguishers (ABC type).

Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors Smoke alarms on each floor and a carbon monoxide alarm should be installed. Test regularly and change batteries with the time changes.

Insurance Coverage Check if you have adequate insurance coverage. Homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage and may not provide full coverage for other hazards.

First Aid/CPR and AED (Automated External Defibrillation) Take American Red Cross first aid and CPR/AED classes.

Vital Records and Documents Vital family records and other important documents ie. birth and marriage certificates, social security cards, passports, wills, deeds, and financial, insurance, and immunizations records should be kept in a safe location.

Inventory Home Possessions Store records of your home (interior and exterior), cars, and other possessions offsite in a safe deposit box or other secure (flood/fire safe) location. Use photos, video or electronic files to record the make and model numbers for each item. Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles and other hard to evaluate items. Make copies of receipts and canceled checks showing the cost for valuable items.

Reduce Home Hazards

- ♦ Professionally repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. Have the chimneys, flue pipes, connectors, and gas vents cleaned/repaired.
- ♦ Repair cracks in ceilings and foundations.
- ♦ Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves. Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
- ♦ Secure tall cabinets, bookshelves, large appliances with straps and light fixtures to wall studs.
- ♦ Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products away from heat sources.

If Disaster Strikes

If instructed to take shelter immediately, **DO SO!**

If you are instructed to evacuate - **DO SO!**

Listen to the radio or TV for the location of emergency shelters and for other instructions. **Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes. Take your disaster supplies kit. Use travel routes specified by authorities.** Don't use shortcuts as they may be impassable or dangerous.

After a disaster

Administer first aid and get help for the seriously injured. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches use a flashlight to check for damage. Check for fires, electrical, gas leaks, and other hazards.

Shut off any damaged utilities. Call your out-of-town contact. Check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled.

Information compiled from FEMA 475 and Red Cross 6558615: Preparing for Disaster. *Disclaimer:* HD Merrimack makes no warranties or representations. User assumes all responsibility for use of this product.