



Four Steps to Safety Readiness

This guide will help you and your family prepare for a disaster. Keep this sheet in a special place so you will always know where to find it. Get the family together now to start following the 4 steps to safety readiness!

1. Find out what the risks are in your area.

Find out from your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter

- What types of disasters are likely to happen and how to prepare for each
- What your community's warning signals sound like and what to do if you hear them
- How to help the elderly and people with special needs

2. Create a family disaster plan.

Hold a family meeting: keep it simple and work as a team.

Plan

Talk about the dangers of the disaster(s) with your family.

- Have a plan in case you are separated.
 - Choose a place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot go home (A).
 - Choose someone out of town to be your family contact (B). Everyone must know the address and phone number for A and B.
- Fill out the local emergency phone numbers and child identification cards.
- Discuss what to do if you are asked to evacuate.
- Plan several escape routes.
- Plan how to take care of your pets.

What to Tell Children

It is important to warn children, without overly alarming them, about disasters. Use the following guidelines:

- Tell children that a disaster is something that could hurt people or cause damage. Explain that nature sometimes provides "too much of a good thing" — fire, rain, and wind.
- Explain how important it is to make a family disaster plan.

- Tell children there are many people who can help them during a disaster.
- Teach children
 - How to call for help
 - When to call each emergency number
 - To call the family contact if separated

Evacuation

If you are told to evacuate, take these steps

- Leave right away if told to do so.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio for instructions from local officials.
- Wear protective clothing and shoes.
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity if told to do so.
- Leave a note telling when you left and where you are going.
- Call your family contact to tell him or her where you are going.
- Take your family emergency supplies (listed on back page).
- Lock your home.
- Use routes suggested by officials.

3. Complete this checklist.

- Put emergency phone numbers by each phone.
- Show everyone how and when to turn off the utilities.
- Make sure you have enough insurance coverage.
- Do a home hazard hunt for items that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire.
- Stock enough emergency supplies to last 3 days.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Plan home escape routes — 2 from each room.
- Find safe places in your home for each type of disaster.
- Make 2 copies of important documents and keep the originals in a safe-deposit box. Keep 1 copy on hand and give the second to your out-of-town contact.

4. Practice and maintain your plan.

Every month...

Test your smoke alarms.

Every 6 months...

Go over the family disaster plan and do escape drills.

Quiz children. Replace stored food and water.

Every year...

Replace the batteries in smoke alarms.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Meet with neighbors to plan how you can work together during a disaster.

- Talk about who has special skills (eg, medical, technical).
- Make plans for child care in case parents cannot get home.

Utilities

Do the following so you will be ready if told to turn off your utilities:

- Find the main electric fuse box, water service main, and natural gas main.
- Learn how and when to turn these off, and teach family members.
- Keep a wrench near gas and water shut-off valves.
- If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.

Important Documents

Make 2 copies and keep the originals of the following in a safe-deposit box or waterproof container:

- Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, investments
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers/credit card account numbers
- Inventory of valuable household goods
- Family records (eg, birth and marriage certificates)

Emergency Supplies List

Put the following supplies in an easy-to-carry waterproof container:

- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual and prescription medications
- A credit card and cash
- Personal identification
- An extra set of car keys
- An extra pair of eyeglasses
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Signal flare
- Map of the area and important phone numbers
- Special items for infants and the elderly
- Three gallons of water per person
- Three-day supply of ready-to-eat canned or packaged food
- Manual can opener
- Paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Toiletries
- A change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes for each family member

From Your Doctor

The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.

American Academy of Pediatrics

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