



Preparing for an Emergency

Emergency events can occur quickly and without warning. Planning for any emergency requires considering all likely scenarios. If you are able to stay at home, electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, telephone service and transportation could be disrupted or lost for a considerable amount of time. Most emergency management planners suggest having enough food, water, medications and other essentials on hand to last your family for three to five days for weather-related events, for example. In other types of emergencies, you may have to evacuate your home or community. In any case, it is important to develop a household emergency preparedness plan that includes:

- An emergency preparedness kit.
- An escape plan that includes at least two emergency meeting places. Pick one right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as fire. Pick at least one other place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- An emergency communications plan. Choose an out-of-town person to be your contact point for family members to call if you are separated. Make sure everyone has contact information including phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Information about school and workplace emergency plans.

Your Emergency Preparedness Kit

The basic items that should be stored in your home are water, food, first-aid supplies, an ABC fire extinguisher, clothing and bedding, tools, emergency supplies and specialty items. Keep the items that you would most likely need at home in one easy-to-carry container such as a trash can, plastic storage container, camping backpack or duffel bag. Store it in a convenient place, and put a smaller version in your car. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Remember to change the stored water and rotate the food supplies every six months (place dates on containers). Check the supplies and re-think your needs every year. Consult your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications, and maintain a list of your prescription needs.

Water

Purchase bottled water, or store tap water in clean, airtight plastic containers. Avoid containers that will decompose or break, such as glass bottles. Plan for one gallon of water per person per day. Water should be stored in a cool, dark place with the date labeled on the container. Having some water purification tablets on hand could be useful in the event of an extended water service outage.

Food

Store a three- to five-day supply of nonperishable food per person. Foods should require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking, and little or no water. Examples include: ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables; canned or boxed juices, milk and soup; condiments such as sugar, salt and pepper; high-energy food like peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars and trail mix; vitamins; foods for infants or persons on special diets; cookies; hard candy; instant coffee and sweetened cereals. Bulk food items such as wheat, powdered milk, corn and soybeans can be stored for long periods of time.

First-Aid Kit

Assemble a first-aid kit for your home and each vehicle. Items should include sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, gauze pads, hypoallergenic adhesive tape, triangular bandages, sterile gauze roll bandages, Ace bandages, scissors, tweezers, needle, moistened towelettes, antiseptic, thermometer, tongue depressors, tube of





petroleum jelly or other lubricant, safety pins, cleansing soap, latex gloves and sunscreen. Other items include aspirin or other pain medication, antidiarrhea medication, Syrup of Ipecac, activated charcoal (in case of poisoning), antacids and laxatives.

Tools and Supplies

Keep the following items handy for all-around use: battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries of assorted sizes (check shelf life before purchasing), duct tape, aluminum foil, rope, bow saw, mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, cash (include change) and/or traveler's checks, nonelectric can opener and utility knife, small ABC fire extinguisher, tube tent, pliers, adjustable wrench, compass, waterproof matches, plastic storage containers, signal flares, paper and pencil or pen, needles and thread, medicine dropper, whistle, plastic sheeting and local map. For sanitation, pack toilet paper, soap and liquid detergent, feminine supplies, plastic garbage bags with ties, a plastic bucket and lid, disinfectant and household chlorine bleach.

Clothing and Bedding

Assemble one or two complete changes of clothing per person, sturdy shoes or work boots, rain gear, blankets or sleeping bags, hat and gloves, thermal underwear and sunglasses.

Specialty Items

Babies—formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk and medication.

Adults—medications, prescriptions, denture needs, eyeglasses and/or contact lenses and related supplies, personal hygiene items.

Entertainment—games, books and several quiet toys for children.

Important Family Documents—wills, insurance policies, bank account numbers, contracts, deeds, passports, stocks and bonds, immunization records, important phone numbers, credit card accounts, Social Security cards and other personal family records.

Equipment—NOAA weather radio.

Emergency Planning for Pets

Emergency planning is for all members of the family, including pets. With the exception of service animals, most shelters do not accept pets. Prepare a list of kennels, friends or family members who may be able to care for your pet in an emergency. If you plan to place your pet in a kennel, make sure that the facility meets all requirements for long-term care and has an adequate disaster plan itself. If your family must relocate to a shelter or other site and there is no place for your pet to go, as a last resort, confine your pet to a specific room in the house and provide plenty of food and water to sustain the animal while you are away. Put together a basic disaster kit for your pets to take with you in case you must leave your residence quickly. Recommended items include:

- An airline-approved carrier for each dog, cat or other pets
- ID with photo, vaccination records, registrations, special needs list, sufficient medicines, collar and a muzzle/leash.
- An extra supply of pet food
- Plenty of clean water.
- Bowls (disposable containers if you must leave your residence), manual can opener, kitchen trash bags, bleach (disinfectant and water purification), blankets, towels, paper towels and other waste disposal supplies.



For more information on emergency preparedness for pets, call the Humane Society of the United States at 202-452-1100 or visit their Web site at www.hsus.org.