

FAMILY PREPAREDNESS: THINKING AHEAD

Unfortunately, disasters can strike at any time, and there is usually little warning and time to prepare. To help in the event of a disaster, create a Family Preparedness Plan. Teaching this plan to all members of the family will help increase family effectiveness and reduce stress in an emergency.

Below are steps to help your family be prepared in the event of a disaster or other emergency. These steps include how to educate yourself and your family, create a family emergency plan, create a family communication plan, make an emergency supply kit, be informed during and after an emergency, and practice. A Family Preparedness Wallet Card (Family Preparedness Card) for parents and caregivers to complete and carry is available on this Website (www.nctsnet.org).

EDUCATE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

- Learn what disasters may strike your area (e.g., earthquake, hurricane, flood, fire)
- Learn what hazards are located in your area (e.g., dams, chemical plants, bridges)
- Learn where your evacuation shelters are located
- Learn your community's evacuation routes
- Learn the disaster plan at your place of work
- Learn the disaster plan at your child's school, including how the school plans to reunite children and families if a disaster strikes during school hours.

CREATE A FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

- Have a family meeting to create an emergency plan
- Make sure everyone knows the plan
- Identify two different routes to get out of the house in case you must leave to be safe
- Identify safe places in your home in case you must stay inside
- Identify places for your family to meet in case all of you are not in your home at the time of disaster
 - Pick one place in your neighborhood
 - Pick one place outside of your neighborhood
- Identify a family contact person (neighbor, friend, or relative) who the members of your family can contact in case of separation
- Identify a contact person outside of your state
- Write these contact names and phone numbers on your Family Preparedness Card.
- Make a plan to keep your pets safe
- Make an emergency supply kit for your home, car, and workplace
- Know how to turn off electricity, gas, and water

HAVE A FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Fill out and carry the Family Preparedness Wallet Card
- Make sure family members know important phone numbers. These can include:

School, Afterschool Care, Child's Cell Phone, Family/Work Cell Phone, Relative/Friend, Out of State Emergency Contact, Doctor, Hospital, Insurance, Fire, Police Information (non-emergency numbers – use 911 only in life-threatening emergencies), Pharmacy, Mental Health Agency, Veterinarian, Local Red Cross, Highway Road Conditions

MAKE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

- **Think Ahead.** Your family needs supplies to last at least three days. Pack them in containers that are easy to carry. You may need more than one kit if you have a large family. Store your supply kits in a secure place.
- **Food and Water.** Have a gallon of water per person for each day. Pack foodstuffs that will not spoil and do not need to be cooked. For canned products, have a hand-operated can opener. Include baby food if needed, and food and water for any pets.
- **Blankets.** Have one warm blanket for each member of the family.
- **Tools.** Include a flashlight and extra batteries in your kit. Have a portable radio, with extra batteries. Include a wrench to turn off gas, water, and a fire extinguisher.
- **First-aid Kit.** Pack a first-aid kit, including any prescription medications that your family needs. Include an extra pair of glasses for family members with prescription lenses.
- **Sanitation supplies.** Have toilet paper or tissues, feminine products, wipes, and anti-bacterial hand gels. Consider plastic trash bags for used food containers and other items such as dirty diapers.
- **Personal items.** Be sure to have an extra set of car and house keys. Have a credit card and cash. Have copies of important family documents (passports, social security cards, insurance information, etc.) in the kit.
- **Extras.** In the event of an emergency, you may be staying in a shelter for several days, so pack a book, playing cards, or a pad with crayons or pencils.

BE INFORMED

During and after an emergency, keep informed about up-to-the-minute risk and safety information (e.g., hazardous conditions, school closings, updated evacuation plans) on radio, television, and hotline telephone numbers.

PRACTICE

Every six months:

- Update and refresh your emergency supply kit
- Review your disaster plan with the whole family

Once a year:

- Practice your family emergency plan
- Update your Family Preparedness Card
- Check your fire extinguisher

For more information about emergency kits as well as disaster preparedness in your area, contact your local American Red Cross Chapter or visit their website at: www.redcross.org.

Other useful sites for emergency information are:

www.ready.gov www.NCTSNet.org www.fema.gov/kids www.mentalhealth.org