

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

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HONORING OUR PAST. SHAPING OUR FUTURE.

GUIDE BOOK

Preparing for an Emergency

Emergency events can occur quickly and without any warning. Planning for any emergency requires considering all likely scenarios. Remember, you may not have time to shop or search for the supplies you need. If you are at home, electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, telephone service, and transportation could be cut off for a considerable amount of time or first responders may not be able to reach you right away. Consequently, you should plan on having food, water, medications, and other essentials to get you through the emergency. Emergency management planners now suggest having enough supplies on hand to last your family at least five to seven days (up to two weeks or more, if possible). In certain 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. Store the kit in a convenient place known to all family members.
- An reunion plan that includes at least two emergency meeting places. Pick one right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire. Pick at least one other place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- 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

An emergency preparedness kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of an emergency. The basic categories of items that should be stored in your kit are water, food, a first-aid kit, tools and emergency supplies, sanitation supplies, clothing and bedding, and special items. For convenience, these items can be put in easy-to-carry containers such as unused covered trash cans, covered storage bins and camping backpacks. You should keep your emergency preparedness kit in a convenient, designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.

You should keep a smaller version of this kit (that includes food, water, first aid supplies, flares or reflective triangles, jumper cables, local road maps, walking shoes, a blanket, a small fire extinguisher, and seasonal supplies) in every vehicle. If you become stranded or are not able to return home, having these items will help you be more comfortable until help arrives.

Additionally, you should have a "mini" one-container version at work. Make sure you have food and water in this kit and remember to include comfortable walking shoes in case an evacuation requires walking long distances.

It may be difficult to obtain prescription medications during a disaster because stores may be closed or supplies may be limited. Maintain a list of your prescription needs and ask your

physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications. Be sure they are stored to meet instructions on the label and be mindful of expiration dates.

All items should be kept in airtight plastic bags. Remember to change the stored water and rotate the food supplies every six months (place dates on containers). Check the items in each kit and re-think your needs every year.

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/liters of water each day. Hot environments can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need even more. You will also need water for food preparation and hygiene.

Plan for at least one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts/liters for drinking and two quarts/liters for food preparation and sanitation). You should store at least a five to seven day supply (ideally, a two week supply) of water for each member of your family.

Purchase bottled water, or store tap water in clean, airtight plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid containers that will decompose or break, like milk cartons or glass bottles. Water should be stored in a cool, dark place with the date labeled on the container. Keep commercially bottled water in its original container and do not open it until you need to use it. Observe the expiration or “use by” date. Tap water generally may be stored up to two weeks without further disinfection or treatment.

Managing Water Supplies for Extended Periods

During extended periods of sheltering, you will need to manage water supplies to ensure you and your family have the required quantities. Guidance on how to accomplish this follows.

Water Treatment

Treat all water of uncertain quality before using it for drinking, food washing or preparation, washing dishes, brushing teeth, or making ice. In addition to having a bad odor and taste, contaminated water can contain microorganisms (germs) that cause diseases such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis.

Boiling is the safest method of treating water. Before treating, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom or strain them through coffee filters or layers of clean cloth. In a large pot or kettle, bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking.

1. Allow people to drink according to their needs. Many people need even more than the average of two quarts/liters per day. The individual amount needed depends on age, physical activity, physical condition, and time of year.

2. Never ration water unless ordered to do so by authorities. Drink the amount you need today and try to find more for tomorrow. Under no circumstances should a person drink less than one quart (four cups) of water each day. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

3. Drink water that you know is not contaminated first. If necessary, suspicious water, such as cloudy water from regular faucets or water from streams or ponds, can be used after it has been treated. If water treatment is not possible, put off drinking suspicious water as long as possible, but do not become dehydrated.

4. Drink water instead of carbonated beverages. Carbonated beverages do not meet drinking water requirements. Caffeinated drinks and alcohol dehydrate the body, which increases the need for drinking water.

5. Turn off the main water valves. Protect the water sources already in your home from contamination if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines, or if local officials advise you of a problem. To close the incoming water source, locate the incoming valve and turn it to the closed position. Be sure you and other family members know how to perform this important procedure.

6. To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your home at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the home.

7. To use the water in a 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 at the tank and turning on the hot water faucet. Refill the tank before turning the gas or electricity back on. If the gas is turned off, a professional will be needed to turn it back on.

Safe Water Sources

- Melted ice cubes
- Water drained from an undamaged water heater
- Liquids from canned goods such as fruit or juices
- Water drained from pipes

Unsafe Water Sources

- Radiators and hot water boilers (home heating system)
- Water beds (chemicals added to the water are unsafe)
- Water from the toilet bowl or flush tank
- Swimming pools and spas (chemicals used to kill germs are too concentrated for safe drinking but can be used for personal hygiene and cleaning).

Food

Store at least a five to seven day supply of nonperishable food per person. 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. The foods should require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking, and little or no water.

Examples include: ready-to-eat canned meats; canned fruits and vegetables; high-energy foods like peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars, and trail mix; canned or boxed juices, milk and soup; and comfort foods such as cookies, tea bags, hard candy, and instant coffee. Be sure to include foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets. Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable eating utensils. Remember to rotate your food supplies every six months.

First-Aid Kit

Purchase or assemble a firstaid kit for your home and each vehicle. Whether purchasing or making your firstaid kit, include the following items: adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, anti-bacterial ointment to prevent infection, cleansing agent (such as hydrogen peroxide or soap) and antiseptic wipes to disinfect, sterile dressings to stop bleeding, eye wash solution to flush the eyes, CPR breathing barrier (such as a disposable face shield), waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer, latex gloves, petroleum jelly, small scissors, thermometer, and tweezers.

Consider adding these non-prescription drugs: activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center), aspirin and nonaspirin pain relievers, antacid, anti-diarrhea medication, antihistamine, laxative, and potassium iodide. Remember to check labels for special instructions and expiration dates.

Tools and Emergency Supplies

Battery-operated radio, battery-operated flashlight, extra batteries of assorted sizes (check shelf life before purchasing), cash (include coins) and/or traveler's checks, N95 filter masks, and a whistle (to signal for help and alert others to your whereabouts). Also include, battery-operated travel alarm clock, duct tape, emergency preparedness guide, fire extinguisher (small canister ABC type), local map, manual can opener and utility knife, matches in a waterproof container (or waterproof matches), paper, pencils/pens and markers, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils (or mess kits), paper towels, plastic bags and plastic storage containers, plastic sheeting, scissors, shutoff wrench (to turn off household gas and water) and work gloves.

Sanitation

Pack soap and liquid detergent, feminine supplies, personal hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, deodorant, etc.), washcloths and towels, and toilet paper. Be sure to include heavy-duty plastic garbage bags with ties, 5-gallon plastic bucket with a tight lid, disinfectant, and household chlorine bleach for personal sanitation uses.

In extreme emergencies, sewer lines may not be working. If this occurs, you may have to assemble a makeshift toilet. Use Option A if the toilet is not backed up, contains no waste and the bowl is still useable. Use Option B if the toilet is completely backed up making the bowl unusable.

Option A: Remove all the bowl water and place a heavy-duty plastic garbage bag inside the bowl. After each use, add a small amount of disinfectant, such as chlorine bleach, securely tie the bag and dispose of it in a large trash can or other waterproof container with a tight fitting lid. This large trash can should also be lined with a heavy-duty plastic garbage bag and a small amount of disinfectant should be added each time the lid is opened.

Option B: Line the inside of a five-gallon bucket or other appropriately sized container with a heavy-duty plastic garbage bag. Containers with tight lids are best. After each use, pour or sprinkle a small amount of regular household disinfectant into the container to reduce odors and germs. Cover the bucket tightly when not in use. Waste filled bags should be securely tied and disposed of in a large, lined trash can or other waterproof container with a tight fitting lid. If you live in an apartment, you may not have a large trash can or the room to keep one. In that case, two or more smaller covered buckets will work just as well.

Clothing and Bedding

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

Special Items

Babies: formula, diapers, bottles, wipes, powdered milk, and medications.

Adults: medications, prescriptions, denture needs, eye glasses, contact lenses and related supplies, insect repellent, bladder control pads, hearing aid batteries.

Entertainment: games, deck of cards, books, and several quiet toys for children.

Important Family Documents: Keep these items in a waterproof portable container - wills, insurance policies, bank account numbers, deeds, passports, stocks and bonds, immunization records, birth certificates, pet records, credit card accounts and each issuing company's phone number, social security cards, inventory of household goods, extra set of house and car keys, and other personal family records.

Managing Food Supplies

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 your water supply is limited, try to avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't eat salty foods, since they will make you thirsty. During and right after an emergency, it will be vital that you maintain your strength. So remember to eat at least one well-balanced meal each day, drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly, and take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.

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