
Family Disaster Plan

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Disaster, of any type, can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate or stay in your home. Consider what you would do if your utilities and communications systems were cut off. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but will be unable to reach everyone right away. In the case of a terrorism event, your best option may be to stay in and close up your home or building.

Families do and will cope with disaster by advance preparation and by working together as a team. Follow the steps outlined to create your personal family disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and YOUR responsibility. In the event of an act of terrorism, civil defense, which includes you, is the best immediate defense.

Emergency Supplies

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your family's needs for a least three days. Assemble a disaster kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these items in sturdy, easy to care containers that you can "pick up and go" with.

Include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per day per family member) and food that will not spoil
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash or traveler's checks
- Sanitation supplies
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- An extra pair of glasses

Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car.

Utilities

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main, and natural gas main. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.

Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

If there are is a Neighborhood Watch or another community group in your neighborhood, you could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you are a member of a neighborhood organization, such as home association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity.