

# Home and Individual Disaster Preparedness

## Create a Disaster Plan

Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet.
  1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
  2. Outside your neighborhood if you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact". After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

## Complete this Checklist

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type) and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two (2) ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

## Practice and Maintain Your Plan

- Quiz your kids every six (6) months so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water every three (3) months and stored food every six (6) months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.

## **Emergency Supplies**

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three (3) days. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or covered trash containers.

### **Include:**

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't 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.

## **Evacuation**

### **Evacuate immediately if told to do so.**

- Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.
- Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities – don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.

### **If you're sure you have time:**

- Shut off water, gas, and electricity before leaving, if instructed to do so.
- Post a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Make arrangements for your pets.

## **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 do so. *If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.*