

What You Can Do In The Threat Of An Emergency

Whether it's a wildfire, flood, an earthquake, or a power outage, when an emergency threatens, we don't always have a lot of time to act. Your personal safety is paramount. Listed below are some important tips to follow, in the event of an emergency, in addition to staying tuned to news media for additional information.

Create an Emergency Plan

- Meet with household members. Discuss with children the dangers of fire, severe weather, earthquakes, and other emergencies.
- Discuss how to respond to each disaster.
- Discuss what to do about power outages and personal injuries.
- Draw a floor plan of your home. Mark two escape routes from each room.
- Learn how to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at main switches.
- Post emergency telephone numbers near telephones.
- Teach children how and when to call 911, police, and fire.
- Instruct household members to turn on the radio for emergency information.
- Pick one out-of-state and one local friend or relative for family members to call if separated by disaster (it is often easier to call out-of-state than within the affected area).
- Teach children how to make long distance telephone calls.
- Pick two meeting places. 1. A place near your home in case of a fire. 2. A place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home after a disaster.

Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit

Assemble supplies you might need in an evacuation. Store them in an easy-to-carry container, such as a backpack or duffle bag. Include:

- A supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Identify the storage date and replace every six months.

- A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a non-electric can opener.
- A change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes.
- Blankets or sleeping bags.
- A first aid kit and prescription medications.
- An extra pair of glasses.
- A battery-powered radio, flashlight, and plenty of extra batteries.
- Credit cards and cash.
- An extra set of car keys.
- A list of family physicians.
- A list of important family information; the style and serial number of medical devices, such as pacemakers.
- Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members.

Escape Plan

In a fire or other emergency, you may need to evacuate your house, apartment, or mobile home on a moment's notice. You should be ready to get out fast.

Develop an escape route by drawing a floor plan of your residence. Using a black or blue pen, show the location of doors, windows, stairways, and large furniture. Indicate the location of emergency supplies (Disaster Supplies Kit), fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, collapsible ladders, first aid kits, and utility shut off points. Next, use a colored pen to draw a broken line charting at least two escape routes from each room. Finally, mark a place outside of the home where household members should meet in case of fire.

Be sure to include important points outside, such as garages, patios, stairways, elevators, driveways, and porches. If your home has more than two floors, use an additional sheet of paper to map out other floors. Practice emergency evacuation drills with all household members at least two times each year.

If You Need to Evacuate

- Listen to a battery-powered radio for the location of emergency shelters.
- Follow instructions of local officials.
- Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local officials.
- If you are sure you have time ...
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity, if instructed to do so.
- Let others know when you left and where you are going.
- Make arrangements for pets. Animals are not allowed in public shelters.

Prepare an Emergency Car Kit

- Battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Blanket
- Booster cables
- Fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type)
- First aid kit and manual
- Bottled water and non-perishable high-energy foods, such as granola bars, raisins and peanut butter.
- Maps
- Shovel
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Flares

Make Plans for Your Pets

- Contact your veterinarian and find out if they will accept your pet in an emergency.
- Decide on safe locations in your house where you could leave your pet in an emergency.
- Consider easy to clean areas such as utility areas or bathrooms and rooms with access to a supply of fresh water.
- Avoid choosing rooms with hazards such as windows, hanging plants or pictures in large frames.
- In case of flooding, the location should have access to high counters that pets can escape to.
- Set up two separate locations if you have dogs and cats.
- Buy a pet carrier that allows your pet to stand up and turn around inside. Train your pet to become comfortable with the carrier. Use a variety of training methods such as feeding it in the carrier or placing a favorite toy or blanket inside.
- If your pet is on medication or a special diet, find out from your veterinarian what you should do in case you have to leave it alone for several days. Try and get an extra supply of medications.
- Make sure your pet has a properly fitted collar that includes current owner identification tag, rabies tag, or license tag (if applicable). A microchip implant is also a great way to provide permanent identification for your pet.
- Current Owner Identification tag should include your name, address, and phone number.
- If your dog normally wears a chain link "choker" collar, have a leather or nylon collar available if you have to leave him alone for several days.
- Keep your pet's shots current and know where the records are.
- Most kennels require proof of current rabies and distemper vaccinations before accepting a pet.
- Contact motels and hotels in communities outside of your area and find out if they will accept pets in an emergency.

- When assembling emergency supplies for the household, include the following items for pets:
- Extra food (The food should be dry and relatively unappealing to prevent overeating. Store the food in sturdy containers.)
- Kitty litter
- Large capacity self-feeder and water dispenser
- Extra medications
- In most states, trained guide dogs for the blind, hearing impaired or handicapped will be allowed to stay in emergency shelters with their owners.