

# Family Disaster Planning

Disaster can strike quickly and **without warning**. It can force you to **evacuate** your neighborhood or **confine you to your home**. What would you do if basic services, such as water, gas, electricity or telephones, were cut off?

Families cope with disaster by **preparing in advance** and **working together as a team**. Follow these steps to create your family's disaster plan.

## Emergency Supplies

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for **at least three 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.
- **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 do so. ***If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.***

## Create a Disaster Plan

Meet with your family and **discuss** why you need to prepare for disaster. **Explain** the dangers of fire and severe weather to children.

Pick **two places** to meet:

- Right outside your **home** in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
- Outside your **neighborhood** in case you can't return home.

Complete This Checklist:

- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your family **contact**.
- Post **emergency telephone numbers** by phone (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Teach children how and [when to call 911](#) or your local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) 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 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 months** so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation **drills**.
- **Replace stored water** every three months and stored food every six months.
- Test and **recharge your fire extinguisher(s)** according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your **smoke detectors** monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.