



FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighbourhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services such as water, gas, electricity, or telephones were cut off? In a major crisis, local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away. Every family should have a Family Disaster Plan. Families can, and do, cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Follow the steps listed to create your family's disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

IDENTIFY THE RISKS

- Contact your local Red Cross chapter or emergency management office and ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen in your community. Request information on how to prepare.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Ask about animal care after a disaster.

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 but reassure them that with proper planning they will be much safer. Plan to share responsibilities and work together.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.). Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1.
- Pick two places to meet:
 - Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
 - Outside your neighbourhood in case you are unable to return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room. Practice emergency exits and gathering at the meeting place.
- Ask an out-of-area friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call out of the disaster zone to someone who has not been impacted. If the event that a disaster disrupts your community have a family member call this person and tell them where they are, their status (e.g. safe) and how they can be reached. This person can then share the status and message with other family members. Ensure everyone in the family has this contact's phone number kept with them.
- Discuss with your family what to do in an evacuation.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms. Test your smoke detectors and change the batteries at least twice a year.
- Find the safe places in your home for severe weather events such as tornadoes.

- Keep a fire extinguisher (ABC type) on each level of your home. Get training (free videos on our website) for each family member on how to use the fire extinguisher. Check and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Conduct a home hazard search. During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a home hazard. For example, a hot water heater or a bookshelf can fall. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix / secure potential hazards.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit (see below). Replace stored water and food annually or as per expiry dates.
- Take a first aid and CPR class.
- Plan how to take care of your pets. Animals are often not allowed inside emergency shelters because of health regulations. Ensure you have disaster supplies for your pets as well.
- Check to ensure you have adequate insurance coverage for the types of risks that may affect your home.

NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS

Working with neighbours can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbours to plan how the neighbourhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighbourhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbours' special skills (e.g., medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbours who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

Find out about the disaster plans in your children's school or day care center, how they would protect the children in a crisis and where their designated evacuation site is. Ask about the disaster plans at your workplace and other places where your family spends time.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

After a disaster, local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it may take days. Would your family be prepared to cope with the emergency until help arrives?

Your family will cope best by preparing for disaster before it strikes. One way to prepare is by assembling a Disaster Supplies Kit. Once disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. But if you've gathered supplies in advance, your family can better endure a utility outage, sheltering at home, or an evacuation.

- A fire or spill of hazardous material could require instant evacuation of your home.
- A winter storm could confine your family at home.
- An earthquake, flood, tornado or any other disaster could cut off basic services--gas, water, electricity and telephones--for days.



Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation or if you are confined to your home for a period of time. Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days (72 hours).

There are six basics you should stock in your home: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container(s) such as plastic storage containers, backpack, or duffle bag and keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car. Include:

- A three-day supply of water (12 litres/3 gallons per person) and food that won't spoil (see below).
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person for rapid evacuation.
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications.
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Cash and a debit/credit card. (note: debit/credit card devices may not work in a disaster so having cash available is helpful)
- Sanitation supplies.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- An extra pair of glasses.
- Keep important family documents in a waterproof container.

FOOD

Store at least a three-day (72 hours) supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that do not require refrigeration, preparation, or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food ensure that you have a safe cooking method that does not require electricity. Select food items that are compact and lightweight that you could take with you if you had to evacuate. There are many freeze dried selections at your local camping/outdoors store or available online.

Include a selection of the following supplies in your Disaster Supplies Kit ready for evacuation:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, almond/soy milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water)
- Staples such as salt, pepper, crackers, biscuits
- High energy foods - peanut butter, jelly, honey, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons, or persons on special diets
- Comfort foods - cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags
- Mess kits, or plastic/paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Camp stove and fuel (follow manufacturers instructions)



TOOLS AND SUPPLIES FOR YOUR DISASTER KIT

- Fire extinguisher: ABC type
- Windup or battery powered radio
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Small tool kit or all purpose tool
- Duct tape
- Plastic sheeting
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminium foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Flashlight (windup or keep extra batteries)
- Whistle
- Paper and pencils
- Needles, thread
- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Personal hygiene items and feminine supplies
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant spray or wipes
- Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.
- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Hat and work gloves
- Rain gear
- Shovel
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)
- Entertainment—games (non-battery operated), playing cards and books
- Winter clothing including thermal underwear, parka, hat, gloves
- Tent can be useful if you have to evacuate
- Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.
 - For Baby*
 - Formula / Powdered milk
 - Baby food
 - Diapers
 - Bottles
 - Medications
 - For Adults*
 - Heart and high blood pressure medication
 - Insulin

- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses
- Important Family Documents if you have to evacuate
Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container.
 - Insurance policies
 - Passports, social security cards, immunization records
 - Bank account numbers
 - Credit card account numbers and companies
 - Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
 - Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

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.

IF DISASTER STRIKES

- Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action.
- Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio for news and instructions
- Evacuate, if advised to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

CHECK FOR DAMAGE IN YOUR HOME

- Use flashlights. Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches if you suspect damage.
- Smell for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly. (You will need a professional to turn gas back on.)
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.

REMEMBER TO:

- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact – minimize telephone use unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbours, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.



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 Supply Kit
- Lock your home
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities – do not use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity before leaving if instructed to do so.
- If you are sure you have time, make arrangements for your pets.

SUGGESTIONS AND REMINDERS

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members
- Keep items in air-tight plastic bags
- Rotate your stored food and bottled water supply annually or on expiry dates
- Review your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

IN YOUR VEHICLE

Being prepared includes being prepared while you are traveling, whether it is about town or on vacation. Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle at all times. Suggested items include:

- Fire extinguisher
- First aid kit with seat belt cutter
- Booster cables
- Warning light or road flares (recommend electronic flares)
- Emergency candles, Sterno (for heat, heating food or liquid) and matches
- Extra clothing, boots
- Blankets (emergency blankets)
- Bottled water and food kit
- Flashlight
- Road maps
- Paper towels
- Compass
- For winter weather:
 - Sand, road salt, kitty litter or traction mats
 - Ice scraper and brush
 - Shovel
 - Tow chains

