

Prepare Your Household for Emergencies

After a disaster, you and your family should be prepared to be on your own for at least two weeks. In some emergencies, such as an influenza pandemic, you may need to prepare for even longer. Emergency response teams will be very busy and may not be able to provide immediate care to all who need it.

Before disaster strikes

- Choose a place for your family to meet after a disaster.
- Choose a person outside the immediate area for family members to contact in case you get separated. This person should live far enough away so he or she won't be involved in the same emergency.
- Know how to contact your children at their school or daycare, and how to pick them up after a disaster. Let the school know if someone else is authorized to pick them up. Keep your child's emergency release card up to date.
- Put together an emergency supply kit for your home and workplace. If your child's school or daycare stores personal emergency kits, make one for your child to keep there.
- Know where the nearest fire and police stations are located.
- Learn your community's warning signals, what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Learn first aid and CPR. Have a first aid kit, a first aid manual and extra medicine for family members.
- Learn how to shut off your water, gas and electricity. Know where to find shut-off valves and switches.
- Keep a small amount of cash available. If the power is out, ATM machines won't work.

- If you have family members who don't speak English, prepare emergency cards in English with their names, addresses and information about medications or allergies. Make sure they can find their cards at all times.
- Conduct earthquake and fire drills every six months.
- Make copies of your vital records and store them in a safe deposit box in another city or state. Store the originals safely. Keep photos and videotapes of your home and valuables in your safe deposit box.
- Make sure family members know all the possible ways to get out of your home. Keep all exits clear.
- Make sure all family members agree on an emergency plan. Give emergency information to babysitters or other caregivers.

During an emergency or disaster

- Keep calm and take time to think. Give assistance where needed.
- Listen to your radio or television for official information and instructions.
- Use the telephone for emergency calls only.
- If you are ordered to evacuate, take your emergency kit and follow official directions to a safe place or temporary shelter.

After the emergency or disaster is over

- Use caution in entering damaged buildings and homes.
- Stay away from damaged electrical wires and wet appliances.
- Check food and water supplies for contamination.
- Notify your relatives that you are safe. But don't tie up phone lines, they may be needed for emergency calls.

- If government disaster assistance is available, the news media will announce where to go to apply.



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