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U.S. General Services Administration

Now is the time to be **Prepared!**

Get Ready Today for
Tomorrow's Emergency



Get a Kit
Make a Plan
Be Informed
Get Involved

Visit www.citizencorps.gov and www.ready.gov



U.S. General Services Administration



September 2008



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sponsored the fifth annual National Preparedness Month (NPM) during September to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses, and communities. This year, the focus of NPM is to encourage citizens to take important preparedness steps:

**Get a Kit
Make a Plan
Be Informed
Get Involved**

The Great Lakes Region of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have teamed up to develop information and materials to remind people of the various disasters that can strike in our Region. From earthquakes, like the one that shook Southern Illinois in April, to the flooding that impacted the Midwest in June, to the annual tornadoes that hit with a fury, emergencies can happen at any time and cause disruptions and inconveniences as well as major devastation and tragedy. Now is the time to be prepared!

We encourage you to participate in National Preparedness Month and take action to prepare your organization, staffs, families, our citizens, and our communities from all types of hazards and potential emergencies. Please join us in spreading the emergency preparedness message this year - and every year!

The DHS Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps Program work closely together to promote activities across the nation that will encourage individual and community preparedness. More information and additional materials can be found at the website www.ready.gov or by calling 1-800-BE-READY. For a listing of National Preparedness Month activities planned by state and local areas, visit www.citizencorps.gov, click on the "News & Events" box and follow the link to the "Calendar of Events."

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for helping to prepare our nation.

Sincerely,

—

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Quick Guide

1 Get an Emergency Supply Kit

- Water and nonperishable food
- First aid kit
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio with extra batteries
- Small hand tools, including a manual can opener, flashlight with extra batteries, screwdriver, pliers, and a knife
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Personal sanitation supplies such as moist towelettes and garbage bags
- Important personal and financial documents such as drivers licenses, passports, bank account records, credit card account numbers, birth certificates, adoption papers, wills, powers of attorney, insurance policies, real estate documents, and vehicle titles
- Prescription medications and glasses
- Cash or traveler's checks

2 Make a Plan

- Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance. How will you get back together? How will you contact one another? What will you do in different situations?
- Make an evacuation plan.
- Designate meeting places, both within and outside your immediate neighborhood.
- Make a family communications plan.
- Have an out-of-town contact to communicate among separated family members.
- Be sure all family members have information in writing, and remember your pets.

3 Be Informed

There are important differences among potential emergencies that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. Learn more about the potential emergencies that could happen where you live and the appropriate way to respond to them. In addition, learn about the emergency plans that have been established in your area by your state and local governments.

4 Get Involved

Citizen Corps brings community and government leaders together to involve community members and organizations in all-hazards emergency preparedness, planning, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Go to www.citizencorps.gov to locate a Citizen Corps Council near you. Ask your Citizen Corps Council point of contact about hazards in your community and ways you can prepare, train, and volunteer. Opportunities may include:

- Preparedness education
- First aid training
- CERT training
- Neighborhood Watch programs
- Volunteering with Fire Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, or Medical Reserve Corps

Helpful Links

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org

Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions
www.cdihp.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Citizen Corps
www.citizencorps.gov

Department of Health and Human Services
www.hhs.gov

Department of Homeland Security
www.dhs.gov

Federal Executive Boards
www.feb.gov

FEMA
www.fema.gov

General Services Administration
www.gsa.gov

Humane Society of the United States
www.hsus.org

Ready.gov
www.ready.gov

USA.gov
www.usa.gov

World Health Organization
www.who.int

Emergency Kits

Portable Emergency Kit

- Take this kit with you when you are ordered to evacuate.
- Place items in a designated area that will be easily accessible in the event of an emergency.
- Make sure every member of your family knows where the kit is.
- If you are required to shelter in place, keep this kit with you.
- Consider adding enough supplies to last two weeks.

Workplace Emergency Kit

- This kit should be in one container to be kept at your work station in case you must evacuate from work.
- Make sure you have comfortable walking shoes at your work place in case you have to walk long distances.
- This kit should include at least food, water, and a first aid kit.
- Make sure you include your family's communications plan.

Vehicle Emergency Kit

- Keep this kit in your vehicle at all times in case you are stranded while driving. At a minimum this kit should contain food, water, a first aid kit, signal flares, jumper cables, and seasonal clothing (coats, rain gear).
- Make sure you include your family's communications plan.

Maintaining Your Kits

- Make sure to constantly evaluate your kit and its relevance to the threats in your area.
- Throw away and replace any expired or damaged medications, food, or water.

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_91_00.html

Department of Homeland Security (Ready.gov)

www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html

www.ready.gov/america/_downloads/checklist.pdf

www.citizencorps.gov

FEMA

www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/supplykit.shtm

www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/kitlocation.shtm

www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/kitmaintain.shtm

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Family

One of the most important tools you and your family can have to protect yourself in possible emergencies is a family preparedness plan. It is important that you plan ahead as a family for all types of emergencies and responses. Everyone in the family should understand what to do, where to go, and what to take in the event of an emergency.

Be Informed

- Find out what disasters are most likely to happen in your area and the history of their occurrence.
- Stay informed of any specific instructions or information you may need to know regarding these specific disasters.

Make an Evacuation Plan

- As a family, discuss where you will go in the event of an emergency.
- Discuss where your children will go if they are in school at the time of the emergency, and make sure they understand where you intend to be.

Make a Family Communications Plan

- Create a comprehensive plan as a family for communicating in the event that you are separated during an emergency.
- Create a sheet or card with all the phone numbers and information every individual in the family may need, and make sure every member of the family has a copy of the communications plan.
- Establish an in-case-of-emergency (ICE) name and number that everyone in your family has a copy of. Save the ICE information in everyone's cell phone.
- Be aware that in the event of an emergency, phone lines and cell phone towers may be out. It may be necessary to have a contingency plan for reaching each other. Consider using text messaging if normal communication options are not available.

Practice Your Plan

- Set up practice evacuations or shelter-in-place drills for your family to ensure everyone knows what to do and where to go in the event of an emergency.
- Keep your emergency supply kit up to date, replacing water and perishables periodically. Make sure everyone knows where it is and the need to take it when sheltering or evacuating.
- Check your smoke alarms regularly.

Emergency Kits

To fully prepare your family for an emergency, create one or more emergency supply kits that include enough supplies for at least three days (although emergencies can vary in length). Keep a kit prepared at home and consider also having kits in your car, at work, and a portable version in your home ready to take with you. These kits will enable you and your family to respond to an emergency more quickly. Your various emergency kits will be useful whether you have to shelter in place or evacuate.

What to Put in Your Basic Home Kit

Necessary

- Water — at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- Food — nonperishable food for at least three days
- Manual can opener
- First aid kit
- Prescription medications
- Dust masks
- Personal sanitation supplies such as moist towelettes and garbage bags
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- All-hazards NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) weather radio
- Extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Small hand tools such as a screwdriver, knife, and a wrench or pliers for turning off utilities
- Local maps and your family emergency plan
- Important personal and financial documents such as drivers licenses, passports, bank account and credit card numbers, insurance policies, and birth records

Additional

- Infant formula
- Diapers
- Food and water for your pet
- Paper plates, paper cups, plastic utensils, paper towels
- Disinfectant
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Sleeping bag or other weather-appropriate bedding for each person
- A weather-appropriate change of clothes for each person
- Coats, jackets, and rain gear
- Fire extinguisher
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles, toys, and other activities for children
- Any items necessary for a specific type of disaster

Winter Storms

What to Do If There Is a Winter Storm

- Stay inside and monitor radio or TV for more information or instructions.
- Eat regularly and drink plenty of fluids.
- Practice fire safety, and make sure there is plenty of ventilation if you are using a heat source that can produce hazardous smoke or fumes.
- Dress in several layers of warm clothing.

If you are outside:

- Do not overexert yourself by shoveling snow or any other physical activity.
- Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from the extremely cold air.
- Keep dry and change any wet clothing as soon as possible.
- Watch for signs of frostbite, which include loss of feeling or pale appearance of extremities.
- Travel only if you must, and do so during the day and on main roads.

If you are trapped inside your car during a blizzard:

- Pull to the side of the road and put the hazard lights on.
- Remain in the vehicle, where rescuers are most likely to find you.
- Run the engine for ten minutes every hour to keep warm.
- Exercise to maintain body heat, but do not overexert yourself.
- Drink fluids to avoid dehydration.
- At night, take turns sleeping and turn the inside light on.
- Be careful not to waste battery power.
- If you are stranded in a remote area, stomp large block letters in an open area that spell “HELP” or “SOS.”
- Leave the car on foot only if absolutely necessary and only after the blizzard has passed.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia: uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, slurred speech, and drowsiness.
- If signs of hypothermia are detected, keep the victim warm by removing all wet clothing and warming the center of their body first. Then seek medical attention immediately.

What to Do After a Winter Storm

- Stay tuned to radio or TV for more information or instructions.
- Be aware of the possibility of flooding after a winter storm.
- Seek medical attention immediately if necessary.
- Use caution while driving as roads may still be wet or frozen.

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont265_lango_127.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/

Department of Homeland Security (Ready.gov)

www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/winter.html

FEMA

www.fema.gov/hazard/winter/index.shtm

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_80_00.html

Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan/index.html

FEMA

www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/index.shtm



Children

As you plan ahead for an emergency, it is important that you discuss potential hazards with your children. Make sure they understand what might happen and what their job is during an emergency. Emergencies are scary situations, but if you talk about them beforehand, your children may stay much more calm.

What Might Happen

- Talk to your children about what types of emergencies might happen in your area.
- Make sure your children know exactly where your family meeting place is.
- Talk about what might happen if they are in school.
- Discuss the differences in what they need to do depending on the different emergencies.

Have a Plan

- Make your evacuation plan as a family so your children understand where you are going and why.
- Make a communications plan as a family by writing down all the phone numbers you and your children would need, as well as how to get in touch with each other if you are separated.
- Let your children be involved in every process of planning.

Make a Kit

- Put your emergency supply kits together as a family.
- Give the children a list so they can help gather supplies for the kit.
- Discuss why it is important to have each item in the kit.

Practice

- Practice what you might do as a family in different emergency situations.
- Let your children ask questions and give their opinions regarding the effectiveness of your plan.
- The more they talk about it, the more likely they will be ready when something happens.

Where to Find Additional Information

Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov/children/home.html

FEMA

www.fema.gov/children/

Winter Storms

The extreme cold and heavy snowfalls that accompany winter storms can be debilitating and dangerous. Winter storms can affect everyone, even those who usually experience mild winters. Heavy snowfall can be blinding for drivers and dangerous for those it traps indoors. Winter storms may also include high winds, sleet, freezing rain, frozen roads, power outages, and dangerously cold temperatures.

How to Prepare for a Winter Storm

- Make sure your home is properly insulated.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to keep out cold air.
- Insulate pipes to prevent freezing.
- Consider what to use for emergency heat in case the electricity goes out:
 - Fireplace with ample supply of wood
 - Small, well-vented camp stove with fuel
 - Portable space heater
- Be aware that the most destructive home fires happen during winter weather due to improper use of heating devices.
- Keep your car's gas tank full to prevent the fuel line from freezing and keep the car ready for emergency use.
- Make sure you have an adequate amount of winter clothing and blankets for your family.
- Create an emergency supply kit that includes rock salt, sand, snow shovels and other snow-removal equipment, adequate winter clothing, and batteries for radio and flashlights.
- Be aware of the risk for severe winter weather in your area.
- Stay informed and know winter storm terminology:
 - **Freezing rain** – Rain that freezes when it hits the ground. The resulting ice may coat roads, walkways, trees, and power lines.
 - **Sleet /Hail**– Rain that freezes into ice pellets before it reaches the ground. Sleet and hail can cause slippery roads and frozen walkways.
 - **Frost/freeze warning** – Below-freezing temperatures are expected.
 - **Winter storm watch** – A winter storm is possible. Stay tuned to radio or TV for more information and instructions.
 - **Winter storm warning** – A winter storm is occurring or will occur soon.
 - **Blizzard warning** – Considerable amounts of snow with sustained winds or frequent gusts up to 35 mph are expected to prevail for at least three hours. Visibility is reduced to less than a quarter mile.

Tornadoes

Tornadoes, the most violent natural hazard, are rotating funnel-shaped clouds that form out of thunderstorms. Strong winds are the most destructive aspect, with gusts reaching as high as 300 mph. The damage path can be a mile wide. Tornado season is generally March through August, but tornadoes can occur anytime of the year. Tornadoes most often occur at the tail end of a thunderstorm. Eighty percent of tornadoes occur between noon and midnight. While some areas are more prone to tornadoes than others, they can occur anywhere, so be prepared.

How to Prepare For a Tornado

- Stay informed and know tornado terminology:
 - **Tornado Watch** — A tornado is possible. Stay tuned to radio or TV for more information and further instructions.
 - **Tornado Warning** — A tornado has been spotted. Take shelter immediately.
- Identify a place in your home to take shelter in case of a tornado:
 - A storm shelter or basement provides the best protection.
 - Otherwise, choose an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
 - Create an emergency supply kit.

What to Do If There Is a Tornado

- Take shelter immediately in the designated room.
- If you are outside, find shelter immediately, or if shelter is unavailable, lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.
- If you are in a car, stop immediately and find shelter. Do NOT try to drive through a tornado.
- Stay tuned to radio or TV for information and instructions as they become available.
- Stay sheltered until the tornado has passed.

What to Do After a Tornado

- Stay clear of downed power lines.
- Stay out of damaged areas.
- Stay tuned to radio or TV for further information or instructions.
- Inspect your home for damage, but be careful of unseen damage.

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont244_lango_114.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/tornadoes/

Department of Homeland Security (Ready.gov)

www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/tornadoes.html

FEMA

www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/index.shtm

People with Special Needs

If you or someone close to you has a disability or special needs, you should make special preparations in case of an emergency. Those with physical disabilities may have increased complications during an evacuation. Those with visual, hearing, or mental disabilities may be especially fearful and reluctant to leave familiar surroundings. Others with medical conditions may be dependent on devices or medications that need to travel with them. To adequately prepare for every possible emergency situation, consider making the following arrangements.

Preparing for an Emergency

- Check for hazards in your home and workplace.
- Discuss your needs with family members, neighbors, and co-workers.
- Make sure those around you know how to operate any necessary equipment.
- Have a list with the types and models of any equipment or devices you need.
- Know more than one location of a medical facility that provides the services you need.
- Add any necessary supplies such as wheelchair batteries, catheters, oxygen, medication, food for service animals, or other special aids to your emergency supply kit.
- Do not assume that you or your loved one has been factored into an evacuation plan. Make the necessary preparations, and know what needs to happen during an emergency.
- If you are physically disabled, study the evacuation plan of any building from which you might evacuate. If necessary, know if and where an evacuation chair (EVAC+CHAIR) is located, and make sure someone knows how to operate it.
- Prepare any instructions you need to give rescuers or others who may be around you. Use concise verbal directions, or carry written instructions with you at all times.

During an Emergency

- If told to evacuate, do so with the help of others if possible.
- If you are unable to evacuate, wait where you are for rescuers.
- Take your emergency supply kit, including any special need items, with you.
- Stay as calm as possible to be a help to those around you.

Where to Find Additional Information

FEMA

www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/specialplans.shtml
www.fema.gov/pdf/library/pfd_all.pdf

Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions (CDIHP)

www.cdihp.org/evacuation/emergency_evacuation.pdf

Pets

When preparing for an emergency, be sure to include arrangements for your pets. Your emergency supply kit should contain provisions for your pets. Know in advance how you will handle your pets if you need to evacuate. If you must leave them behind, make sure they have access to food, water, and shelter.

Preparing to Take Your Pets

- Add pet supplies to your emergency supply kit, including, but not limited to, food, a strong leash, a carrier, and veterinary records.
- Make sure your pet's identification tags are up to date and secured on its collar.

What to Do with Your Pet During an Emergency

- Bring pets inside immediately. Many times pets run away when they sense danger. Never leave them tied up outside.

If you are told to evacuate and you can bring your pets:

- Take enough supplies and food.
- Make sure the carrier is secure.
- Be responsible for your pets by cleaning up after them and making sure they are not causing problems.
- Understand that many shelters do not allow pets. You may have to board your pet or place it in a shelter prepared for evacuated pets.

If you are told to evacuate and are ordered not to bring your pets:

- Bring your pet inside. Never leave your pet outside during an emergency.
- Leave plenty of food and water.
- Take the toilet seat off and brace the bathroom door so they can drink.
- Place a notice on your door that your pet is inside. Include your name, phone number, and the name and phone number of your veterinarian.

What to Do with Your Pet After an Emergency

- Keep close contact with your pet to make it feel safer.
- Keep your pet on a leash when possible so it stays with you.
- Understand that your pet may have some behavioral changes because of trauma.
- Be responsible for your pet at all times by cleaning up after it and keeping it away from others.

Thunderstorms

Approaching thunderstorms may be noted by a sudden reverse in wind direction, a noticeable rise in windspeed, and a sharp drop in temperature. Rain, hail, and lightning occur only in the mature stage of a thunderstorm. Observe the 30/30 rule: a) If you see lightning and hear thunderclaps within 30 seconds, take storm counter-measures identified below; b) Do not resume work in exposed areas until 30 minutes after storm activity has passed.

- If possible, take shelter in a vehicle or building.
- If outdoors, find a low spot away from tall trees, wire fences, utility lines, and other elevated conductive objects. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.
- If in a wooded area, move to an opening with shorter trees.
- If only isolated trees are nearby, keep your distance from them equal to twice the tree height.
- If in open country, crouch low, minimizing contact with the ground. You can use a pack to sit on, but never lay on the ground.
- If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, immediately crouch low to the ground. Make yourself the smallest possible target and minimize your contact with the ground.
- Don't group together.
- Don't stay on ridgetops, in wide open areas, near edges, or on rock outcroppings.
- Don't operate land line telephones, machinery, or electric motors.
- Don't handle flammable materials in open containers or metal handtools.

Power Outages

What to Do If There Is a Power Outage (continued)

- Try not to open the freezer or refrigerator too often.
- A full freezer should keep food unspoiled for 48 hours.
- Pack dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, and other items that can quickly spoil in a cooler surrounded by ice to extend their usability.

If the power goes out in extreme heat:

- Stay hydrated, drinking a glass of water every 15–20 minutes.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Keep the air circulating by opening doors and windows.
- Be aware of the possibility for a heat stroke.

If the power goes out in extreme cold:

- Wear several layers of warm clothing.
- Keep moving to stay warm.
- Be aware of the possibility for hypothermia, which happens when one's body temperature falls below 95°F.

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont1359_lango_609.pdf
www.redcross.org/static/file_cont3461_lango_1352.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.bt.cdc.gov/poweroutage/pdf/poweroutage.pdf
www.bt.cdc.gov/poweroutage/pdf/blackout.pdf

Be prepared, stay informed, develop disaster plans with your family, and have ready an emergency supply kit.

Where to Find Additional Information

FEMA

www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/animals.shtm

The Humane Society of the United States

www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center/resources/
www.hsus.org/web-files/PDF/DIST_DisasterPetBrochure.pdf

Financial and Insurance Records

To ensure that you are protected after an emergency, it is necessary to preserve your family's valuable financial and insurance records. During the excitement of an emergency situation, it is easy to forget about protecting important records. Instead, prepare for such an event by making sure these records are already part of your emergency supply kit.

Important Records

Personal

- Birth certificate
- Marriage licenses and divorce records
- Social Security cards
- Passports
- Citizenship papers
- Medical records
- Wills
- Vehicle registration/ownership records
- Power(s) of attorney (personal/property)

Financial

- Tax returns and property tax statement
- Bank/credit union statements
- Credit/debit card statements
- Retirement accounts
- Investment accounts
- All income records (including government benefits, child support, and alimony)
- Mortgage statements or leases
- Bills (electricity, gas, water)

Insurance

- Health insurance card
- Insurance policies (property, rental, auto, and life)

Preparing Your Records for an Emergency

- Make sure you have dated copies of all important personal, financial, and insurance records.
- If possible, make electronic copies and store them on a disk to be placed in your emergency supply kit.
- Place important records in a waterproof/fireproof container to be taken with you in case of an emergency.

Power Outages

Electrical power can go out for any number of reasons. An unexpected outage can have unforeseen consequences. Without electricity you may experience a shortage of food and clean water, as well as extreme temperatures. You should be prepared to manage without power for an extended period of time.

Rolling Blackouts

- Rolling blackouts or temporary power shortages may happen from time to time when power companies turn the power off in certain areas to curb usage.
- Rolling blackouts occur during peak seasons and hours of energy consumption, usually in the summer, 4-7 p.m.
- Power companies try to warn affected areas of planned rolling blackouts, but they cannot always do so.
- The power is usually out for only about an hour.

Summer Blackouts

- Extreme heat is usually the cause of summer blackouts.
- Summer blackouts are dangerous because they eliminate the most effective ways to beat the heat: fans and air conditioning.
- In the absence of these means of keeping cool, make sure you stay hydrated.
- Take cold showers or baths to cool down.

How to Prepare for a Power Outage

- Make sure you have flashlights and batteries.
- Make sure you have a battery-operated radio.
- Stockpile plenty of nonperishable foods and bottles of water.
- Back up computer files regularly
- Create a family emergency supply plan.
- Create an emergency supply kit.

What to Do If There Is a Power Outage

- Use flashlights rather than candles for light.
- Turn off the electrical equipment you were using when the power went out.
- Water purification systems may not be functioning when the power goes out, so water may be unsafe to use
- Drink and use only bottled, boiled, or treated water.

Pandemic Flu

Vaccine and Treatment

- Currently, there is no vaccine commercially available for the H5N1 avian flu virus; however, several are in the testing phase.
- Vaccines can be produced only after the pandemic strain appears.
- Antiviral medicines can treat some cases of avian flu.

Preparation

- Contact local officials to stay informed, and plan as you would for any emergency.
- Have a family emergency plan.
- Plan alternative transportation routes to school and work.
- Stock a supply of water and food (10 days is recommended).
- Be aware of emergency, containment, or evacuation plans and distribution sites.

Emergency Response

- Be calm — stay informed and follow emergency plans.
- Practice infection control:
 - Good hygiene (especially washing hands)
 - Social distancing
 - Limit direct contact by not shaking hands.
 - Telecommute or hold telephone or video conferences.
 - Maintain personal space of three feet or more.
- Limit exposure with sick people, and stay home if you are sick.
- Quarantine measures may be used to limit movement and isolate people who may have been exposed to the disease.

Where to Find Additional Information

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.pandemicflu.gov

World Health Organization (WHO)
www.who.int/topics/avian_influenza/en/

Financial and Insurance Records

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/FinRecovery/FinPlan/records.html#supplykit
www.redcross.org/services/prepare/o,1082,o_188_oo.html

FEMA (with Operation Hope)

www.operationhope.org/fileupload/File/effak_english.pdf
www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/recordsplan.shtm

Property Protection

It is important to take precautions to protect your property before an emergency situation arises. There are a few things you may want to consider to ensure that your property survives an emergency in the best condition possible.

Preparing Your Home for an Emergency

- Do a home hazard hunt with your family to spot any potential hazards or dangers around the house before an emergency situation.
- Repair any defective electrical wiring or leaky gas connections.
- Make sure shelves, pictures, and mirrors are securely on the wall and away from beds.
- Place large, heavy objects on the bottom shelf.
- Secure the water heater by strapping it to wall studs.
- Repair any cracks in the ceiling or home foundation.
- Store any flammable liquids (pesticides, oil, oily rags, etc.) away from heat sources and possibly in metal cans to prevent fires.
- Make sure your chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors, and gas vents are clean.
- Create an emergency plan as a family.
- Make a family emergency supply kit.

Preparations for Specific Emergencies

Earthquakes

- Make sure all tall, heavy pieces of furniture (e.g., bookcases, dressers, etc.) are bolted to wall studs.
- Install strong latches on your cabinets.

Fires

- Check smoke alarms monthly and change batteries annually.

Floods

- Make sure that your fuse box/electric panel is located above average flood level for your area.
- Try to elevate appliances (e.g., furnace, water heater, washer and dryer) above average flood level for your area.

Hurricanes

- Install hurricane shutters.
- If you do not have hurricane shutters, have enough precut plywood and tape to cover your windows and doors.

Wildfires

- Create a 30-foot safety zone around your home by removing or limiting vegetation.
- Remove all debris in and around your property.
- Use fire-resistant siding on your home.
- Use safety glass for windows and doors if possible.

Pandemic Flu

Pandemic Flu

- Pandemic flu is a global outbreak caused by a new strain of flu virus.
- Experts predict a flu pandemic will occur, but it is difficult to forecast when it will occur.
- A pandemic may affect daily life for a period of time and could include:
 - School and business closings
 - Society-wide disruptions in the economy and everyday functions

Avian Flu

- Avian flu is a disease caused by bird flu viruses that primarily infect birds but may also infect other animals, including humans.
- Flu viruses mutate frequently and can infect other animals and humans.
- Currently, H5N1, a specific type of avian flu virus, has not mutated to permit easy human-to-human transmission despite the fact that more than 200 humans have been infected and more than 100 have died.

Transmission (Spread of Disease) and Symptoms

	SEASONAL FLU	AVIAN FLU
Transmission	Spread through droplets expelled during coughing and sneezing.	Spread through contact with infected birds, their droppings or blood, or surfaces exposed to them. However, due to the changing nature of flu viruses, it is possible that avian flu may mutate to spread from person-to-person.
Symptoms	High fever, headache, fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches, nausea (which may lead to vomiting and diarrhea).	Similar to those of seasonal flu but may include eye infections and severe respiratory diseases.
Who Is at Risk	Those 65 years or older, those who live in long-term care facilities or need regular medical attention, those prone to asthma or other respiratory conditions, and young children (6-23 months).	People of all ages are at risk. Past pandemic influenza outbreaks suggest that healthy young adults may be most at risk of exposure.

Prevention

Flu viruses can be prevented by vaccines, antiviral medicines, and good hygiene.

- Update flu shots and other vaccinations to boost immunity.
- Get vaccinated every year because the vaccine is changed along with the mutating flu virus to help fight the most threatening strain.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Properly cook poultry to destroy all germs, including the avian flu virus.

Nuclear Power Plant Emergencies

If you have been exposed to radiation:

- Remove clothes and seal in a plastic bag.
- Place the sealed clothing in a separate room.
- Take a very thorough shower.

What to Do After a Nuclear Power Plant Emergency

- Do not return until you are told to do so.
- Water can be contaminated, so listen for reports about its safety.

Where to Find Additional Information

FEMA

www.fema.gov/hazard/nuclear/index.shtm

Property Protection

During an Emergency

- Turn off gas and electricity before you evacuate.
- If a hurricane, flood, thunderstorm, or tornado warning has been issued, bring any outdoor furniture inside to prevent it from being moved by wind or flood waters.

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_71_00.html

Be prepared, stay informed, develop disaster plans with your family, and have ready an emergency supply kit.

Chemical Emergencies

Chemicals affect our lives daily. They are in and around our homes to provide a better life for us all. However, exposure to certain harmful chemicals can be extremely dangerous. You can be exposed through accidents involving home chemicals as well as through large-scale chemical emergencies in your area.

Home Chemical Emergencies

- Do not mix any household chemicals together. Some combinations, like ammonia and bleach, can produce a toxic gas.
- Carefully read and follow directions.
- Store household chemicals in clearly marked, tightly closed containers.
- Make sure the chemicals are stored out of the reach of children and away from any food.
- Never work with chemicals near lit cigarettes or open flames (candle, pilot light, fireplace, wood-burning stove, etc.).
- If you spill a chemical, clean it up immediately with rags. Place the rags outside to allow the chemical to evaporate. Dispose of the rags after wrapping them in newspaper.

Major Chemical Emergencies

- A major chemical emergency is an accident in which large amounts of hazardous chemicals are released into the surrounding environment.
- Accidents may happen anywhere, including chemical and manufacturing plants, highways, railroad tracks, and underground.
- In addition, chemical emergencies may result from deliberate attacks targeting such facilities.
- Chemical emergencies may include fires or explosions.
- You may not smell or see any evidence of a chemical emergency, but this does not diminish the high level of danger.

What to Do If There Is a Chemical Emergency

- You will be notified if there is a chemical emergency.
- Listen for instructions and follow them carefully.
- Do not use your telephone unless absolutely necessary.
- Do not go outside.

If you are told to evacuate:

- Take only essential items, including your emergency supply kit.
- If you have time, shut vents, turn off appliances and lights, and close and lock all doors and windows.
- Follow the evacuation plan.
- Once inside your car, close windows and air vents, and turn off the heat or air conditioner.

Nuclear Power Plant Emergencies

Nuclear power plants are designed to rigorous standards, have many redundant safety features, and are carefully regulated and monitored; however, problems and accidents can happen. If a nuclear power plant emergency does occur, it may result in dangerously high levels of radiation in your area, especially if within 10 miles of the plant. Exposure to high levels of radiation is extremely dangerous to you and your family. Radiation can also contaminate the water and soil within a 50-mile radius.

How to Prepare

- Be aware of local emergency plans should an emergency occur, especially if you live within 10 miles of a plant.
- Know nuclear emergency terms:
 - **Notification of Unusual Event** – There is a small problem at the plant which did not result in the escape of any radiation. There is no immediate danger, and you are not required to do anything in response.
 - **Alert** – There is a minor problem at the plant where a small amount of radiation could have leaked inside the plant. There is no immediate danger, and you are not required to do anything in response.
 - **Site Area Emergency** – Listen for possible area sirens. Stay tuned to the radio or TV for safety information.
 - **General Emergency** – There has been an emergency at the plant in which radiation could leak outside the plant. Listen for sirens. Stay tuned to radio and TV for instruction and information reports. Promptly follow any instructions given.
- Create a family evacuation plan.
- Make an emergency supply kit.

What to Do If There is a Nuclear Power Plant Emergency

- Stay tuned to the radio or TV and listen for instructions.
- Keep as much distance or shielding between you and the source of radiation as possible.

If you are told to evacuate:

- Bring your emergency kit.
- Follow the designated evacuation path.
- Keep windows and vents closed to minimize exposure to radiation.

If you are told NOT to evacuate:

- Turn off air conditioners, ventilators, furnaces, and any other air intakes.
- Do not go outside.
- Try not to use the telephone unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Stay in a basement or underground room if at all possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Uncovered food should be washed and covered or discarded.

Heat Waves

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont203_lango_93.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/pdf/heat_guide.pdf

www.bt.cdc.gov/poweroutage/pdf/poweroutage.pdf

FEMA

www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/index.shtm

Chemical Emergencies

If you are NOT told to evacuate:

- Close windows and doors.
- Close fireplace dampers.
- Turn off fans.
- Turn off air conditioning or heat.
- Tape around doors, windows, and vents.
- Use plastic bags to cover windows, outlets, and heat registers.
- Wedge wet towels in door thresholds.
- Take your family to an above-ground room with few windows and doors if possible.
- Do NOT go to the basement.
- Keep your kit and a radio with you to listen for updates.

What to Do If You Are Exposed to Chemicals

If you have a chemical burn:

- Remove any clothing or jewelry that came in contact with the chemical.
- Flush the burn with cold water.
- If your eyes are burned, remove any contact lenses before flushing with water.
- Loosely cover the burn with a clean, dry, sterile cloth or dressing.
- Seek medical attention immediately.

If you or your family have been exposed to any chemicals through household accidents or during a major chemical emergency, look for these symptoms:

- Labored breathing
- Headaches and/or blurred vision
- Irritated eyes, skin, and/or throat
- Changes in skin color
- Dizziness
- Stomach cramps and/or diarrhea
- Strange behavior, including uncoordination or clumsiness

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont157_lango_67.pdf

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Chemical Emergencies Overview

www.bt.cdc.gov/chemical/pdf/chemical-emergencies-overview.pdf

Chemical Agents—Facts About Evacuation

www.bt.cdc.gov/planning/evacuationfacts.pdf

Chemical Agents—Facts About Sheltering in Place

www.bt.cdc.gov/planning/shelteringfacts.pdf

Personal Cleaning and Disposal of Contaminated Clothing

www.bt.cdc.gov/planning/personalcleaningfacts.pdf

Earthquakes

The sudden and violent shaking experienced during an earthquake is caused by the shifting and breaking of subterranean rocks. Earthquakes can happen almost anywhere and any-time without warning, so you and your family should be prepared.

How to Prepare for an Earthquake

- Minimize home hazards by bolting down shelves, bookcases, china cabinets, and other tall furniture and strapping the water heater to studs in the walls.
- Identify a safe place in every room of your home where nothing can fall on you, such as under a table, against a wall, or in a doorway.
- Practice earthquake drills as a family so everyone knows what to do, especially “Drop, Cover, and Hold On.”
- Create an evacuation plan as a family.
- Create an emergency communication plan in case family members are separated during an earthquake.
- Create an emergency supply kit.

What to Do If There Is an Earthquake

If you are indoors:

- Do not run outside. There may be falling debris.
- If possible, DROP to the ground, take COVER under a table or sturdy piece of furniture, and HOLD ON until the shaking stops.
- If you are not near any sturdy furniture, crouch in a corner or a stable doorway where there is less chance of things falling on you.
- Stay away from windows, light fixtures, unstable furniture, or anything that could fall.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and you are absolutely sure it is safe to go outside.
- The electricity may go out, so do not use elevators.

If you are outdoors:

- Move away from buildings, street lights, utility wires, or anything that could fall into an open area. Statistics show that the most injuries during earthquakes are caused by falling debris.
- Once in an open area, drop to the ground.

If you are in a moving vehicle:

- Stop as soon as you can, away from buildings or anything that can fall.
- Stay in the vehicle.
- Proceed very slowly once shaking stops.

Heat Waves

A heat wave is defined as any time temperatures reach 10 or more degrees higher than the average high temperature for a region for several weeks. Extreme heat can be very dangerous. In the United States each year, 400 people die from heat-related complications, more than from any other natural disaster.

How to Prepare for a Heat Wave

- Stay informed and know heat terminology:
 - **Heat Wave** — An extended period of extreme heat, usually combined with excessive humidity.
 - **Heat Index** — A number of degrees in Fahrenheit (F) added to the air temperature that tells how hot it feels with the relative humidity.
- Make sure you have a fan or something to circulate air in extreme heat as many heat-related deaths can be attributed to stagnant atmospheric conditions or poor air quality.

What to Do If There Is a Heat Wave

- Slow down and don't do anything too strenuous.
- Stay inside as much as possible.
- If air conditioning is not available in your home, stay on the lowest level or go to a public building with air conditioning.
- If you stay in your home without air conditioning, make sure there is a way, such as a fan, to circulate the air around you.
- Drink lots of water even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and salt.
- Wear loose, light-colored clothing.
- Be aware that a power outage or drought can result from a heat wave.

Heat Emergencies

- Keep a lookout for possible heat emergencies:
 - **Heat cramps** — Muscle spasms and aches from heavy exertion in extreme heat. They are usually the first sign of heat-related complications.
 - **Heat exhaustion** — A form of mild shock that results from insufficient body fluids due to extreme heat and excessive exercising. The blood flow to the skin increases, decreasing blood flow to vital organs and raising the body temperature, increasing the risk of a heat stroke.
 - **Heat stroke/sun stroke** — The body's temperature control system stops working, causing body temperature to rise so high (103°F or more) that there may be brain damage or death.

If you experience or observe any of the above conditions, seek medical attention immediately.

Floods

What to Do After a Flood

- Listen to news reports to make sure water supplies are not contaminated.
- Stay clear of flood waters (standing and moving) as they may be contaminated or deeper than expected.
- Beware of downed power lines.
- Avoid any roads where flood waters have receded as they may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Be extremely cautious when entering buildings and homes as there may be unseen damage.
- Clean and disinfect everything that was touched by flood water as it can contain sewage and other contaminants.

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont180_lango_80.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/

Department of Homeland Security (Ready.gov)

www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/floods.html

FEMA

www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/index.shtm

Be prepared, stay informed, develop disaster plans with your family, and have ready an emergency supply kit.

Earthquakes

What to Do When the Shaking Stops

- Check yourself and others for injuries.
- Turn off the gas line as there may be a leak.
- Stay tuned to the radio for further information and instructions.
- Expect aftershocks, which can come minutes, hours, or days after an earthquake.
- If an aftershock occurs, “Drop, Cover, and Hold On.”
- Be very careful of falling debris, which causes most injuries in homes or outdoors.

If you are trapped beneath debris:

- Do not light a match for light. There may be gas leaks in the area.
- Do not move around or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief, piece of clothing, or dust mask to reduce dust inhalation.
- Tap on a pipe or use a whistle to help rescuers find you. Shout only as a last resort as it will increase dust inhalation.

If you live near the ocean, be aware of possible tsunamis, which are tidal waves caused by earthquakes off the coast.

Where to Find Additional Information

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont164_lango_71.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes/

Department of Homeland Security (Ready.gov)

www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/earthquakes.html

FEMA

www.fema.gov/hazard/earthquake/index.shtm

Evacuations

In the event of an emergency, city emergency management organizations have plans and procedures to direct evacuation or direct movement of citizens to safe havens or shelters.

If advanced warning and other circumstances permit, the preference for nonessential and nonemergency personnel is evacuation, wherein the endangered population is directed to leave the threatened area using specified routes and transportation methods.

Evacuation plans identify the available transportation networks and their capabilities, especially the carrying capacity of proposed evacuation routes and existing or potential bottlenecks caused either by traffic or natural occurrences, such as rising waters. It is important to keep in mind that destructive weather, earthquakes, and other hazards may limit or completely eliminate some transportation routes or methods, especially bridges, ferries, tunnels, and mass transit systems. During certain emergencies — especially those involving flooding, high winds, and multiple aftershocks — emergency public information broadcasts may include prohibitions on using travel trailers, campers, motor homes, buses, motorcycles, bicycles, and boats.

How to Prepare

Safe and effective evacuation requires planning ahead — there may be no advanced warning. You should plan primary and alternative evacuation routes in advance, with appropriate maps to take along in your emergency supply kit. If you don't have access to a vehicle, make other arrangements ahead of time. Plan how you will care for your animals and provide them with extra food, water, and supplies.

Actions to Take During an Evacuation

- Plan to take one car to reduce congestion and delay.
- Keep a full tank of gas; power outages or congestion could make refueling challenging.
- Gather your emergency supply kit, adequate for at least three days.
- Wear sturdy shoes and clothing, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a cap.
- Close and lock all doors and windows.
- Unplug electrical equipment. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.
- Listen to a battery-powered radio to follow local evacuation instructions.
- Leave the hazard area when directed to avoid being trapped or stranded.
- Let others know or post a note as to where you are going.
- Follow the recommended evacuation routes and zones; shortcuts may be blocked.
- Stay alert for damaged or missing roads, bridges, and structures.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

Floods

Flooding is the most common natural disaster and can occur anywhere. Flooding can be localized to a particular neighborhood or widespread, affecting entire cities or large portions of states and territories. Floods can develop over a period of days, giving you adequate time to prepare; however, flash floods can develop in a matter of minutes. Flash flood waters can be caused by heavy rain, levee breaches, or dam failures. **Rushing flood waters can be deeper and stronger than they look.** These waters are also destructive and can carry debris, rocks, and mud.

How to Prepare for a Flood

- Determine whether your home or work place is in a predetermined flood plain.
- Stay informed and know flood terminology:
 - **Flood Watch** — Flooding is possible. Stay tuned to radio or TV for more information.
 - **Flash Flood Watch** — Flash flooding is possible. Stay tuned to radio or TV for more information. Be prepared to move to higher ground.
 - **Flood Warning** — Flooding is currently occurring or will occur soon. Listen for further instructions. If told to evacuate, do so immediately.
 - **Flash Flood Warning** — Flash flooding is currently occurring or will occur soon. Seek higher ground on foot immediately.
- Create an evacuation plan as a family.
- Create an emergency supply kit.
- Identify where you can go if you need to reach higher ground quickly on foot.

What to Do If There Is a Flood

- Stay tuned to the radio or TV for further information and instructions.

If you are ordered to evacuate:

- Take only essential items.
- Turn off gas, electricity, and water.
- Disconnect appliances.
- Make sure your car's gas tank is full.
- Do not walk in moving water.
- Do not drive in flood water. As little as six inches of water can cause loss of control and stalling of a vehicle.
- Follow the designated evacuation plan, and expect a high volume of traffic.

If you are NOT ordered to evacuate:

- Stay tuned to an emergency station on radio or TV.
- Listen for further instructions.
- Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or neighbor's home if your home is damaged.