

Emergency Preparedness Information: What You and Your Family Can Do to Prepare for Emergency Situations

General Household/Family Education

Talk with your family about potential disasters and why it is necessary to prepare for them. Involve each member of your family in the planning process. By showing them simple steps that can increase their safety, you can help reduce their anxiety about emergencies.

- Make sure everyone knows where to find your emergency supply kit. (See Emergency Supply Kit section below.)
- Plan where to meet after a disaster if your home becomes unsafe. Choose two places, one just outside your home and one outside your neighborhood. Be sure your gas tank is always at least half full.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home.
- Make sure each member knows who your family's out-of-state contact is and instruct them to call this person and tell him/her where they are.
- Locate the gas main and other utilities and make sure family members know when and how to turn them off (See Utilities section below.)
- Teach each member of your family how to use a fire extinguisher.
- Create emergency response cards for each of your family members.
- Take into account the special needs of children, seniors or people with disabilities, family members that don't speak English and pets.

Preparing Children for Emergencies

- Include your children in family discussions and planning for emergency safety.
- Teach your children their basic personal information so they can identify themselves and get help if they become separated from a parent or guardian.
- Prepare an emergency card with information for each child, including his/her full name, address, phone number, parent's work number and out of state contact.

- Know the policies of the school or daycare center your children attend. Make plans to have someone pick them up if you are unable to get to them.
- Regularly update your child's school with current emergency contact information and persons authorized to pick up your child from school.
- Make sure each child knows the family's alternate meeting sites if you are separated in a disaster and cannot return to your home.
- Make sure each child knows how to reach your family's out-of-state contact person.
- Teach children to dial their home telephone number and 9-1-1.
- Teach children what gas smells like and advise them to tell an adult if they smell gas after an emergency.
- Warn children never to touch wires on poles or lying on the ground.
- Role-play with children to help them remain calm in emergencies
- Role-play with children as to what they should do if a parent is suddenly sick or injured.
- Role-play with children on what to say when calling Emergency 9-1-1.
- Include your child's emergency card and include information on reunification locations and out-of-area contact in the Emergency Supply Kit.
- Provide comfort food and treats for each child in your family disaster supplies kit.
- Keep a recent photo of your children in your Go-bag.

Pets in an Emergency

- Most disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety regulations. Service animals for people with disabilities are an exception.
- Arrange for a neighbor to check on your pets and take care of them if a disaster occurs while you are not at home.
- Plan ahead for a friend or relative outside the affected area to shelter your animals if necessary.
- Keep your pet's ID tags up to date. Consider having your pet micro-chipped.

Pack a kit containing pet care items such as medical records, ample supply of food and water, a carrier or cage, medications, and muzzle and leash

Family First Aid Kit

In any emergency, you or a family member may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. Keep the following basic first aid supplies so you are prepared to help when someone is hurt.

- Two pairs of disposable gloves

- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection
- Burn ointment
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant
- Scissors
- Over-the-counter medicines such as Aspirin or other pain reliever, laxative, anti-diarrhea medication
- Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine, or asthma inhaler
- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose monitoring equipment or blood pressure monitors

Family Emergency Supply Kit

This is a basic list of supplies for emergencies. A more detailed list is available at

<http://redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/supplieshtml>

- Water: at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 days
- Food - at least enough for 3 days (non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices , foods for infants or the elderly, snack foods, non-electric can opener, cooking tools / fuel, paper plates / plastic utensils)
- Bedding and pillows
- Clothing - seasonal / rain gear/ sturdy shoes
- First Aid Kit / Medicines/ Special Items - for babies and the elderly
- Toiletries - hygiene items
- Moisture wipes
- Flashlight / Batteries Radio - Battery operated and NOAA weather radio
- Cash, including coins for public telephone, keys, books, and games
- Important documents – (in a waterproof container) such as insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc. Document all valuables with videotape if possible
- Tools - keep a set with you during the storm
- Vehicle fuel tanks filled
- Child's kit (emergency card with reunification locations and out-of-area contact, a recent photo, toys, books, games)
- Pet care items (medical records, ample supply of food and water , a carrier or cage, medications, muzzle and leash)

Phone Service Disruption

Plan for how you will communicate with loved ones after a disaster.

- Long-distance phone lines often work before local phone lines, so identify an out-of-state contact and provide this person with the contact information of people you want to keep informed of your situation. Share this information with your family and friends locally.
- Avoid making non-urgent phone calls after a disaster – even if phone lines are un-damaged, increased phone traffic can jam phone circuits.
- Don't count on your cell phone - increased traffic on cell phone networks can quickly overload wireless capacity. Record an outgoing message on your voicemail so that callers can be re-assured of your safety status.
- Keep coins in your Emergency Supply Kit. Payphones are more likely to work before other phone lines.
- Cordless phones or phone systems require electricity, so make sure you have a backup phone that requires no electricity.

Power Outages

Power cuts can occur due to rolling blackouts, extreme weather conditions, or can accompany other disasters such as earthquakes. If there is no power in your neighborhood:

- Turn off and unplug appliances and computers. Leave one light on to indicate when power has been restored.
- Avoid using candles, as they are fire hazards.
- Do not use a gas stove for heating or operate generators indoors (including the garage.) Both could cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If a traffic signal is not working, treat it as a stop sign.

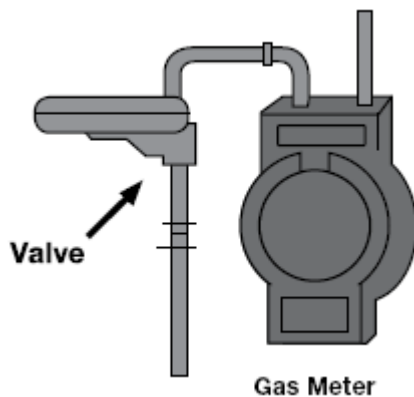
Learn about food safety when your refrigerator's power is off.

Utilities (Natural Gas | Electricity | Water)

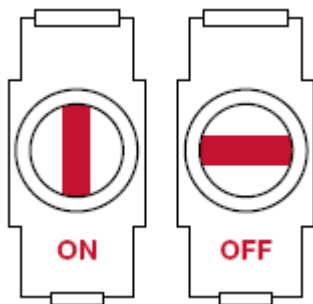
Natural gas leaks can cause an explosive and flammable atmosphere inside a building.

Natural Gas

- If you smell gas, hear gas escaping, see a broken gas line, or if you suspect a leak, shut off the main valve and open all windows and doors.
- Never use candles or matches if you suspect a leak. Do not turn on electrical switches or appliances.
- Identify the main shutoff valve, which is located on the gas line coming into the main gas meter. This is usually on the exterior of your home or building, or in an external closet. Your main valve may look like this:



- To turn gas off, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction. When the lever crosses the direction of the pipe (see below) the gas is off.



- Keep a crescent wrench or gas shut-off tool nearby to turn the lever.
- Once you turn off the gas, never attempt to turn it back on yourself. wait for your utility company to do it, but be aware that it may take several days for it to be turned back on.

Electricity

- Electrocutation can result from direct contact with live wires or anything that has been energized by these wires.
- Locate your home's main electric switch, which is normally in the garage or outdoors, where the power lines enter the home. The panel box may have a flip switch or pull handle on a large circuit breaker.

Shut off electricity when:

- Arcing or burning occurs in electrical devices.
- There is a fire or significant water leak.
- you smell burning insulation.
- The area around switches or plugs is blackened and/or hot to the touch.
- A complete power loss is accompanied by the smell of burning material.

Shutting Off Water

Water leaks can cause property damage and create an electrocution hazard.

- Shut off the water when there is a leak inside the building.
- The water shutoff is usually located in the basement, garage, or where the water line enters the home. The water shutoff is located on a riser pipe and is usually a red or yellow wheel. Turn wheel clockwise to shut off.

Food and Supplies

When a disaster occurs, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. Store enough emergency food to provide for your family for at least 3 days.

- Store food items that are familiar, rather than buying special emergency food. Consider any dietary restrictions and preferences you may have.
- Ideal foods are: Shelf-stable (no refrigeration required), low in salt, and do not require cooking (e.g. canned fruit, vegetables, peanut butter, jam, low-salt crackers, cookies, cereals, nuts, dried fruit, canned soup or meats, juices and non-fat dry milk).
- Mark a rotation date on any food container that does not already have an expiration date on the package.
- Include baby food and formula or other diet items for infants or seniors.
- Store the food in airtight, pest-resistant containers in a cool, dark place.
- Most canned foods can safely be stored for at least 18 months. Low acid foods like meat products, fruits or vegetables will normally last at least 2 years. Use dry products, like boxed cereal, crackers, cookies, dried milk or dried fruit within six months.
- After a power outage, refrigerated food will stay cold longer if you keep the door closed. Food should generally be consumed within 4 hours. Food in the freezer will normally remain safe for 2 days.

For a pandemic, store a two-week supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.

Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.

Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response.

Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic

Sample Supply List for Emergencies

Food and Non-Perishables	Medical, Health, Emergency
Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups	Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment
Protein or fruit bars	Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash
Dry cereal or granola	Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
Peanut butter or nuts	Thermometers
Dried fruit	Anti-diarrheal medication
Crackers	Vitamins
Canned juices	Fluids with electrolytes
Bottled water	Medical records and ID
Canned or jarred baby food and formula	Flashlight
Pet food	Batteries
Portable radio	Prescription medications
Manual can opener	First Aid Kit
Garbage bags/paper towels	
Tissues, toilet paper, diapers	

Water (Storing and Treating)

In a disaster, water supplies may be cut off or contaminated. Store enough water for everyone in your family to last for **at least 3 days**.

- Store one gallon of water, per person, per day. This amount will be adequate for general drinking purposes. Three gallons per person per day will give you enough to cook and for limited personal hygiene. Do not forget to plan for your pets.

If you store tap water:

- Store water in food grade plastic containers, such as clean 2-liter soft drink bottles. Heavy duty, reusable plastic water containers are also available at sporting goods stores.
- Replace water at least once every six months.

If you buy commercially bottled “spring” or “drinking” water:

- Keep water in its original container, and don't re-store a bottle once it's been opened.
- Label bottles with their replacement date, and store in a cool, dark place.
- Replace water at least once each year.

Treating water after a disaster:

If you run out of stored drinking water, strain and treat water from your water heater or the toilet reservoir tank (except if you use toilet tank cleaners.) You cannot drink swimming pool or spa water, but you can use it for flushing toilets.

Treatment process:

Begin by straining any large particles of dirt by pouring the water through a couple of layers of paper towels or clean cloth.

Next, purify the water one of two ways:

Boil – bring to a rolling boil and maintain for 3-5 minutes. To improve the taste, pour it back and forth between two clean containers to add oxygen back.

Disinfect – If the water is clear, add 8 drops of bleach per gallon. If it is cloudy, add 16. Shake or stir, then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal.

Family Medical Fact Sheet

Family Member	Blood Type	Allergies	Past/Current Medical Conditions	Current Medications/ Dosages