



# FOUR STEPS TO PREPAREDNESS



## **ONE: GET INFORMED.**

Community hazards - What specific hazards and risks could you face in your community (e.g. hurricanes, tornados, wildfire, hazardous spills or heavy rain/snow/ice storms, etc.)

Community disaster plans - Learn about community response plans, evacuation plans, and designated emergency shelters.

Community warning systems - Find out how local authorities will warn you of a pending disaster. Learn about the NOAA Weather Radio and its alerting capability. Consider subscribing to alert systems such as those provided by [Code Red](#) or [WRAL.com](#).



## **TWO: MAKE A PLAN**

Meet with your family members to review what you've learned about community hazards plans. Explain the dangers and discuss what preparations you need to make.

Choose an "out of town" contact. Ask an out of town friend or relative to be your contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know the contact's phone number. After a disaster, it's often easier to make a long distance call than a local call from a disaster area.

Decide where to meet. In event of an emergency, you may become separated from family members. Choose two meeting sites - a place right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire and another location outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.

Complete a family disaster plan that includes contact information for family members, work and school. Your plan should also include information for your out-of-town contact, meeting locations, emergency services and the National Poison Control Center (800-222-1222). A sample form for recording this information can be found at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or at the [American Red Cross](#) website.

Escape routes and safe places. In a fire or other emergency, you may need to evacuate on a moment's notice, so be ready to get out fast. Be sure everyone in your family knows the best escape routes out of your home as well as where the safe places are in your home for each type of disaster (i.e., if a tornado approaches, go to the basement or the lowest floor of your home or an interior room or closet with no windows). Draw your plan out on paper and practice emergency evacuation at least two times a year.

Plan for those with disabilities and other special needs. Keep support items in a designated place. For those with home-health caregivers, it is essential to have an alternate plan if the home-health caregiver cannot get to you. Also, develop a contingency plan for alternative powering of power dependent life support equipment.

Plan for your pets. Take your pets with you if you evacuate; however, be aware that pets (other than service animals) usually are not permitted in emergency public shelters. Prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians, and "pet friendly" hotels that could shelter your pets.

Prepare for different hazards. The actions you take to protect yourself from a tornado are different than the actions you would take in response to a fire.



### **THREE: ASSEMBLE A PREPAREDNESS KIT FOR YOUR HOME AND CAR.**

Information on Home Preparedness Kits, Car Preparedness Kits and Grab-and-Go Kits is provided in a in this handout.



**FOUR: MAINTAIN YOUR PLAN.** Review your plan twice a year. Conduct evacuation drills on a regular basis. Don't forget to restock your preparedness kit food and water supplies prior to expiration dates.

This information has been extracted from FEMA Publication 475, dated August 2004.

## FOOD AND WATER IN AN EMERGENCY



### EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES

**Preparing an Emergency Food Supply.** As you stock food, take into account your family's unique needs and tastes. Familiar foods lift morale and give a feeling of security in times of stress. Try to include foods that are high in calories and nutrition. Foods that do not require refrigeration, water, special preparation, or cooking are best. Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils. And, don't forget nonperishable food for your pets.

#### **Storage Tips:**

Keep food in a dry, cool spot - a dark area if possible.

Open food boxes and other re-sealable containers carefully so you can close them tightly after each use.

Wrap perishable foods, such as cookies and crackers, in plastic bags and keep them in sealed containers.

Empty open packages of sugar, dried fruits, and nuts into screw-top jars or air tight canisters for protection from pests.

Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.

Throw out canned goods that become swollen, dented or corroded.

#### **Shelf Life of Foods - Make sure you rotate your supply.**

**Use within six months:** powdered milk - boxed; dried fruit; dry, crisp crackers; potatoes

**Use within one year,** or before date indicated on label: canned condensed meat and vegetable soups; canned fruits, fruit juices, and vegetables; ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals; peanut butter; jelly; hard candy and canned nuts; vitamins.

**May be stored indefinitely** (in proper containers and conditions): Wheat, vegetable oils, dried corn; baking powder; soybeans; instant coffee, tea, and cocoa; salt, noncarbonated soft drinks; white rice; bouillon products; dry pasta; powdered milk - in nitrogen packed cans.

**If The Electricity Goes Off.** First use perishable food from the refrigerator, pantry, garden, etc. Then, use the foods from the freezer. Limit the number of times you open the refrigerator

and freezer. In a well-fitted, well insulated freezer, foods will usually still have ice crystals in their centers (meaning foods are safe to eat) for at least two days. Finally, begin to use non-perishable foods and staples.

**When Food Supplies Are Low.** If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an extended period and without any food for several days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women. If your water supply is low, don't eat salty foods - they'll make you thirsty. Instead, eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals, and canned foods high in liquid content.

Nutrition Tips. During and after a disaster, it is vital that you maintain your strength; remember to:

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two quarts per day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral, and protein supplements in your stockpile to ensure adequate nutrition.



## **EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLIES**

Having enough clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normal active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. People in hot environments, children, nursing mothers, and people who are ill require even more. You will also need water for food preparation and hygiene. So store at least **one gallon per person, per day**.

If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

**Prepare and Store an Emergency Supply of Water.** To prepare the safest and most reliable emergency supply of water, purchase commercially bottled water. Keep water in its original container, and do not open it until you need it. Store bottled water in the original sealed container and observe the expiration or "use by" date.

**If You Are Preparing Your Own Containers of Water.** Purchase food-grade water storage containers from surplus or camping supply stores for use in storing water. If you decide to re-use storage containers, choose two-liter plastic soft drink bottles - not plastic jugs or

cardboard containers that have had milk or fruit juice in them. The reason is that milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be adequately removed from these containers and provide an environment for bacterial growth when water is stored in them. Cardboard containers leak easily and are not designed for long-term storage of liquids. Also, do not use glass containers, because they are heavy and may break.

**To prepare containers:** Thoroughly clean the bottles with dishwashing soap and water and rinse completely so there is no residual soap. Additionally, for plastic soft drink bottles, sanitize bottles by adding a solution of one teaspoon of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water. Swish the sanitizing solution in the bottle so that it touches all surfaces. After sanitizing the bottle, thoroughly rinse out the sanitizing solution with clean water.

**To fill water containers:** Fill the bottle to the top with regular tap water. If the water you are using comes from a well or water source that is not treated with chlorine, add two drops of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to each gallon of water. Tightly close the container using the original cap. Be careful not to contaminate the cap by touching the inside of it with your fingers. Write the date on the outside of the container so you know when you filled it and store it in a cool, dark place. Replace the water every six months if not using commercially bottled water.

### **Hidden Water Sources in Your Home**

Safe water sources in your home include the water in your hot water tank, pipes and ice cubes. You should not use water from toilet flush tanks or bowls, radiators, waterbeds, or swimming pools/spas.

You will need to protect the water sources already in your house from contamination if you hear of broken water or sewage lines, or if local officials advise you of a problem. To shut off incoming water, locate the main valve and turn it to the closed position. Be sure you and other family members know beforehand how to perform this important procedure.

To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your home located at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the home.

To use the water in your hot-water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is shut off and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve at the tank and turning on a hot-water faucet. Refill the tank before turning the electricity or gas back on. If gas is turned off, a professional will be needed to turn it back on.

(This information has been extracted from FEMA Publication 477.)



## **YOUR HOME PREPAREDNESS KIT**

The supplies in your house should keep your family safe and healthy for at least three days - and be useful during the cleanup phase after a disaster. Following are items you should consider for inclusion in your home preparedness kit, in addition to the items in your "Grab and Go Kit".

- Water - one gallon per person per day, for drinking and sanitation
- Food - at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food for family and pets
- NOAA weather radio - battery or hand-cranked
- First Aid Kit - pain relievers, antidiarrheal medication, bandages, scissors, tweezers, insect repellent, splint, medical tape, iodine, needle and thread
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt - to help filter the air
- Hand tools - wrench, pliers, multi-tool, plastic sheeting, duct tape, and an assortment of nails, screws, and bolts to shelter in place
- Manual Can opener
- Garbage bags and plastic ties - for personal sanitation
- Vital documents (see Evacuation Document Checklist for ideas)
- Prescription medications
- Cash
- Fire extinguisher
- Heavy gloves - for removing debris
- Toilet paper & bucket; moist towelettes for sanitation
- Flashlight with extra batteries, lanterns or candles and matches
- Window sealing materials - plastic, duct tape
- Change of clothing - long pants, long-sleeved shirts, rain jackets, sturdy boots or shoes



## YOUR CAR PREPAREDNESS KIT

You never know where you will be-when a crisis occurs, so keep a box or bag of supplies in the trunk of your car to sustain your family if stranded on the road. Consider:

- Local maps
- Writing supplies - pens, pencils, notebook
- Food - dried fruit, snacks, cookies
- 2 gallons of bottled water
- Mess kit - paper plates, cups, utensils
- Compact sleeping bag or blankets
- Sanitation supplies - toilet paper, moist towelettes, garbage bags, plastic ties
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand tools, multi-tool knife, duct tape, jumper cables
- Cell phone charger
- Clothes - sweater, waterproof jacket, hat, shoes
- First Aid kit - bandages, antibiotic ointment, antiseptic, aspirin, anti-diarrheal medicine, medical tape
- Fire extinguisher
- Light sticks or roadside flares
- Tow line for hauling or towing



## YOUR "GRAB-AND-GO" KIT

In an emergency evacuation, there's not always enough time to find what you need, so your Grab-and-Go kit should be preloaded with all your essentials.

- Important documents - copy of insurance documents, identification, bank records, medical records, deeds, etc.
- Prescriptions - medications (remember to rotate your stock)
- Extra pair of eye glasses
- Mini first aid kit - bandages, antibiotic ointment, aspirin
- Cash - \$300.00 in small denominations
- Prepaid phone card
- Matches in waterproof container
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Portable NOAA weather radio - battery or hand crank powered
- Food - e.g., granola, nuts and bottled water
- Extra set of keys for your home and car
- Infant/child/pet necessities



## EVACUATION DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

When it comes to evacuating, there are many decisions to make. One of those decisions regards what documents you should take with you. The Carolina Trace CERT recommends you consider copies of the following documents to be kept in a waterproof bag, or an encrypted flash drive with electronic documents, ready to go in case you ever need to evacuate.

- Driver's license or ID card
- Important phone numbers and emergency contacts
- Bank and credit card numbers and list of creditors
- List of savings and investments, including CDs, stock, bonds, and mutual funds
- Lists of advisors, such as accountant, attorney or religious leader
- Titles for your house, car and other property
- List of insurance policies with name of company, type of policy and policy number
- Birth, marriage, divorce, death and adoption certificates, and passports
- DD Form 214 (Record of Military Service) and educational records
- Social Security Cards
- Copy of wills, trust documents and living wills
- Inventory of household goods: paper copy, photos, video or computer disk/flash drive
- Immunization records
- Prescription information (list of medications, dosage, prescription numbers, etc.)
- Doctors contact information
- Veterinarian contact information and pet records
- Map of area and phone numbers of places you could go
- Other special papers that could be difficult or impossible to replace