

# Your Family Disaster Plan



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**EMERGENCY**  
**MEDICAL SERVICES**

# Welcome to Your Family Disaster Plan

Emergencies can occur at any time, often without warning. In order to be prepared, you and your family should have a disaster plan. You should have talked about and practiced the plan.

In this course you will learn what should be included in your family disaster plan. You will be given tools to help you develop the plan if you do not already have one or to evaluate the plan you do have. You will also have a chance to see how your plan might work in several emergency situations.



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# Learning Objectives

**After completing this module, you will be able to describe:**

- The importance of a Family Disaster Plan
- The elements of a Family Disaster Plan
- How this plan might function in different emergency situations

You can download the Family Disaster Plan Workbook to help you with your planning.



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# Lesson Topics

1. **Assessing Your Risk**
2. **Creating Your Family Disaster Plan**
3. **Community Emergency Plans**
4. **Evacuation**
5. **Disaster Supplies**
6. **Special Needs**
7. **Practice the Plan**
8. **Testing Your Preparedness Plans**

# Types of Emergencies

You may need to be prepared for a number of different types of emergencies including:

- Natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, winter storms, etc.)
- Large-scale accidents (transportation or aviation incidents, hazardous materials incidents, explosions, etc.)
- Terrorism (biological, chemical, or radiological incidents)
- Communicable disease outbreaks

You may not be at risk for all these types of emergencies. Some emergencies might require that you evacuate your home while in other cases you might have to stay in your home. They may last only a few hours or many days or weeks. These and other issues will affect what parts of your family disaster plan will come into play.



# Why do I need emergency plans?

Disasters can strike anyone, anytime, and anywhere. Precious time may be lost if you have not prepared ahead of time for how you and your family will respond.

You and other family members may also have a responsibility to assist in an emergency because of your work or your volunteer activities. When you respond, your routine—and that of your family and loved ones—will be affected. An important component of emergency preparedness is the development of a family disaster plan to protect your children, elderly relatives, other family members or dependents, and/or pets if your usual household and family routines are disrupted.



# How do I start?

Your family disaster plan should include these four steps:

- Identify likely emergencies in your area
- Create a disaster plan
- Gather emergency supplies
- Practice the plan

Suggestion: Use three-ring binder to keep track of the information you gather as part of your planning process.

# Scenario



The National Weather Service has issued a severe flood warning for several counties in your area. They predict that hundreds of people will have to leave their homes at any moment. Your family may be among those who have to evacuate.

Are you ready? Is your family disaster plan in place?



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# 1. Assessing Your Risk



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# Assessing your risk

The first step is to understand what could happen in your community. Naturally, you cannot predict some events. However, some disasters are more likely to occur where you live.

How can you find out what these are? Consider:

- Natural disasters that have occurred in the past
- Manufacturing facilities located in your community
- Major transportation routes through your community
- Hazardous waste storage nearby



Use the form to indicate the relative likelihood of various emergency events affecting you and your family. (Unless you live close to your workplace, you should consider completing a separate assessment for your personal emergency plan at work.)

**Note:** Your local emergency services agency or the American Red Cross\* may have completed a community hazards assessment that is available to the public. Such assessments may be available online.

\*<https://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter.html>

Hazard	None	Low	Moderate	High
Avalanche				
Chemical spill				
Dam failure				
Dust or sand storm				
Earthquake				
Explosion				
Extreme heat				
Flood				
Hurricane				
Landslide, mudslide				
Nuclear explosion or leak				
Pandemic flu				
Snow, ice, hail				
Tornado				
Tsunami				
Volcano				
Wildfire				

# Assessing your risk

Once you determine the most likely emergencies in your area, focus your planning efforts on those specific situations. (This does not mean you should ignore emergencies that have a low chance of occurring, but plans for those situations can be less detailed or can be developed later.) Be sure to include the possibility of an epidemic involving a communicable disease like influenza which can affect any community.

**Floods:** In most cases historical data is available to show whether or not your home or work location is in danger from floods. Flood maps for your area may be available through FEMA. FEMA's Flood Map Service Center [webpage](#) allows you to enter your address and learn your risk level for floods

Focus on whether or not your home is in a flood-prone area. However, you should also consider whether flooding might affect family members in other areas (e.g., elderly parents who live in another location) or your children's schools. Also consider whether this might affect your ability to get to work.

# 2. Creating Your Family Disaster Plan



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# Creating your family disaster plan

As much as possible you should involve all family members in developing the family disaster plan. This will help them feel more comfortable with the plan, and they will be better able to understand the importance of the parts they play. Also, two—or more—heads are better than one.

Talk with your family about the most likely disasters and emergencies and what each family member should do in each case.\* Before you talk with your children, think about how you can help them understand the seriousness of planning for the possible emergencies without frightening them. Consider these suggestions:

- Use language appropriate to their age or level of understanding.
- Present the information calmly.
- Do not use scare tactics.
- Encourage children to ask questions and provide direct answers.
- Stress that the family needs to work as a team.

\*Detailed information on specific emergencies is available in ["Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness"](#) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This document also includes a number of useful worksheets and checklists.

## Components of a family disaster plan

Your family disaster plan should include the following, particularly for situations where the family is not together when a disaster strikes:

- Meeting places
- Emergency contacts
- Evacuation plans and escape routes



# Meeting Places

You should decide on two places to meet in the event of an emergency.

## **In the neighborhood**

Choose a location near your home for situations such as a fire (for example, in front of a specific neighbor's house or beside the tall tree at the edge of your yard).

## **Outside the neighborhood**

Choose a meeting place outside the neighborhood in case you are unable to return home (for example, a school outside your immediate area or a relative's house in a nearby town).

Keep in mind that normal routes may be cut off during some emergencies so the meeting place outside the neighborhood should be one that can be reached by several routes.

Everyone should know the address and phone number of the meeting place outside the neighborhood.\* Talk about ways to reach that location, especially for those family members who do not have their own transportation.

Everyone should also be aware of evacuation plans for those places each family member spends a lot of time (schools, daycare, workplaces, etc.) including the evacuation locations for each of those sites.

**\*Use the [Family Communications Plan form](#) or something similar to record this information.**



# Family communication plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so you should plan how you will contact each other. During and after a disaster, it is often easier to make a long distance call than a local call. You should choose one out-of-area person (relative, friend) to be your "emergency family contact." All family members should call that person and tell him or her where they are if the family is separated during an emergency. (Of course, you need to be sure the emergency contact person understands what he or she should do if someone calls.)

Use the [Family Communications Plan](#) form to record critical information in one place, including:

- Date of birth, Social Security number, medical information for each family member
- Contact information for the places where your family spends the most time: school, work, other places
- Primary out-of-area contact person
- Information about doctors, veterinarians, insurance, etc.

The form includes cards for each family member where the most important phone numbers can be recorded. These numbers should also be entered into everyone's cell phone.

**Task:** Complete the list of emergency meeting places and the family communication plan.



# Flood Scenario

Let's return to the flood scenario we used to begin this course.

At 8:00 p.m., the National Weather Service issued a flood watch\* for several counties in your area. At that point, it had been raining steadily for more than 24 hours and was expected to continue for at least 6 or 7 more hours.

A **flood watch** means flooding is possible and is expected to occur at least 6 hours after heavy rains have ended. A flood warning means flooding conditions are actually occurring or will occur soon in a designated area.

Would your preparedness plans work well in this situation?

The following questions will test the effectiveness of your plans.

1. Does your family disaster plan cover floods?

- a) Yes
- b) No

2. What is one place your family could meet in case of a flood (or other evacuation emergency)? \_\_\_\_\_

- *Your family meeting place in case of a flood should be in a place that can be reached by all family members even if some roads are closed because of the flooding.*

3. If your family was separated during this flooding emergency, who would each person call? \_\_\_\_\_

- *Your family disaster plan should include an emergency contact person outside the area.*

# 3. Community Emergency Plans



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# Emergency Warning Signals

In addition to assessing what kinds of emergencies you might face, you should find out what kind of warning signals are used in your community (as well as in your workplace or your children's school, if applicable). How will you be notified and how are you supposed to react? Your local emergency services agency\* should be able to tell you.

Some possible warning systems:

- Sirens
- Loudspeakers
- Door-to-door notification
- Local radio or TV stations

\*If you cannot find your local agency in the phone book, your state's [emergency management office](#) can help.



The Emergency Alert System (EAS) can reach the entire nation on very short notice in the event of a national emergency. All AM, FM, and TV stations and most cable systems use the EAS. The EAS can also be used for local emergencies.

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations. These stations broadcast continuous weather information as well as other emergency information directly from nearby National Weather Service offices to special NOAA weather radio receivers. Consider buying a NOAA weather radio receiver.\*

\* The [National Weather Service](#) website provides information about these receivers including manufacturers and key features.

**Floods:** Except in flash floods, people usually have several hours warning about potential flooding. If you live in an area that is prone to flooding, pay careful attention to local warning systems. A **flood watch** means flooding is possible and is expected to occur at least 6 hours after heavy rains have ended. A flood warning means flooding conditions are actually occurring or will soon occur in a designated area.

# Community Emergency Plans

Find out what response plans exist in your community for various emergency events. Most cities or counties have emergency management agencies that are responsible for developing community emergency plans. Contact your local or state emergency management agency to learn more about these plans. (These may have been published in a document that includes the community hazard assessment.

You can access the San Mateo County Emergency Preparedness site here: <https://www.smchealth.org/emergency-preparedness>

## **School emergency plans**

If you have children, find out about their school or daycare emergency plans. Ask school officials how they will notify you about what is happening to your children in the event of an emergency. How will you know whether or not they are safe, where they have been taken if they cannot stay at the school, etc.?

If your children are older and have their own transportation, ask them to follow the instructions issued by authorities.

# 4. Evacuation



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# Evacuation

Evacuations are more common than many people realize. Hundreds of times each year people are evacuated because of emergencies such as:

- Transportation or industrial accidents involving hazardous substance spills
- Wild fires
- Floods
- Hurricanes

Find out how local officials will notify you if you must evacuate. Again, your local emergency services agency can give you this information. If time allows, local officials may use local radio or TV. In other cases, they may use warning signals or telephone calls. Keep in mind that there may also be situations where you decide to leave your home, school or workplace because you do not feel safe even though there hasn't been an official evacuation order.

Your evacuation plan should address:

- Escape routes (including alternatives)
- Family communication
- Utility shut-off and safety
- Insurance and vital records
- Emergency supplies
- Special needs
- Caring for animals

# Evacuation

FEMA has provided these evacuation guidelines:

Always	If time permits:
Keep a full tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.	Gather your disaster supplies kit.
Make transportation arrangements with friends or your local government if you do not own a car.	Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides some protection such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a cap.
Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions.	Secure your home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Close and lock doors and windows</li><li>•Unplug electrical equipment such as radios and televisions, and small appliances, such as toasters and microwaves. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.</li></ul>
Gather your family and go if you are instructed to evacuate immediately.	Let others know where you are going.
Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.	
Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.	
Be alert for washed out roads and bridges. Do not drive into flooded areas.	
Stay away from downed power lines.	

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# Escape routes

## **Escape routes**

Using a detailed local map, mark several possible evacuation routes. If your community has designated evacuation routes, you should use those. (Your local emergency services agency is the source of this information.) Remember that different emergencies may require different evacuation routes.

Your family communication plan and emergency meeting places should be considered as you think about evacuation.

As part of this planning, you should also map out escape routes in case of fire or other emergencies within your own home. On a floor plan of each floor mark at least two escape routes and post a copy where everyone can see it. Be sure children understand where they should go, including your neighborhood meeting place. This escape plan should be practiced regularly.

# Flood scenario

It is now 1:00 p.m. the next day, and the National Weather Service has issued a flood warning, meaning flooding is occurring. Forecasters are now estimating that rivers and streams in your area will crest at 5 feet above flood level at approximately 9:00 p.m. Officials have issued a mandatory evacuation order for all residents in the flood area, which includes your home.

You have been at work all morning and have now been notified that your help is required to deal with flood-related issues at your workplace. You probably will not have a chance to go home for many hours.

Answer the following questions.

How will your family be notified when and where they have to evacuate?\*

How will your family notify you where they have been evacuated?\*\*

- a) Call you at work
- b) Call you on your cell phone
- c) Call the out-of-town contact

*\*Your local emergency response system may include notification about evacuation. There may also be information from the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on local radio or TV stations or from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio (NWR).*

*\*\*The best choice is to have them call the out-of-town contact. When you have a chance, you can call that person and get the relevant information.*

# Insurance and Vital Records

Be sure you understand the provisions for your property, health and life insurance policies.\* Make copies of all important papers and store them in a safe place away from your home (for instance, in your office, in a safe deposit box, or with your out-of-town emergency contact). These might include:

- Insurance policies
- Deeds
- Property records
- Personal property inventory\*\*
- Will
- Advance directives (living will, medical power of attorney or health care proxy)

\* FEMA [guidance on safeguarding your valuables](#), and [personal property worksheet](#)

\*\*Download a free [Household and Personal Property Inventory Book](#) from the University of Illinois.

## **Personal medical information**

In an emergency you may not be able to access your medical records. The CDC has developed a ["Keep It With You"](#) Personal Medical Information Form where you can keep track of relevant medical information. This can be used by healthcare workers until your medical records can be accessed.



# Utility Shut-off and Safety

You may be told to shut off utilities in the event of certain disasters.\* Below are some general guidelines which should be modified based on directions from your local utility company. All responsible family members should know how to shut off the following utilities.

**Natural gas** - Natural gas leaks and explosions cause a number of fires after disasters. The procedure for shutting off natural gas service will vary depending on the equipment in your home. Do not shut off the valve when you are practicing. **If you shut off the gas for any reason, you must have a qualified professional turn it back on.**

**Water** – Locate the main shut-off valve for the water line that enters your house and label it so it is easy to find. Be sure the valve can be completely shut off. (It may be rusted open or may only partially close. Replace if necessary.)

**Electricity** – Locate the electrical circuit box and determine how to shut off the electricity to the entire house. (Always shut off all the individual breakers before shutting off the main circuit breaker.)



# 5. Disaster Supplies



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# Disaster supply kit

When a disaster strikes you may not have time to buy essential supplies. Also, you don't know where you will be when an emergency occurs. Therefore, you should gather in advance a set of emergency supplies for home, work, and vehicles. Also, consider getting each family member a whistle and small flashlight for their key chains. These can provide very inexpensive but effective communication methods.

## Home

- There should be enough supplies on hand to last three days for each household member. These supplies should include:
- Three gallons of water per person\*
- Foods (including pet foods) that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, such as canned goods\*
- Manual can opener
- Emergency tools such as a battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit that includes a list of any family members' allergies
- Contact lenses or an extra pair of glasses
- A week's supply of prescription medications
- Sanitation and hygiene items (toilet paper, soap, moist towelettes, plastic garbage bags, personal hygiene supplies, etc.)
- A change of clothing, sturdy footwear
- Clothing for cold or bad weather
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Extra set of car keys
- Cash in small bills or traveler's checks; ATM card
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled members of the household
  - The kinds of items you might need for an infant or toddler include diapers, supplies for breastfeeding, baby food, favorite toys or stuffed animals, etc.



You may want to download an [emergency supply checklist](#) from Ready.gov.

\*[FEMA guidance on managing food and water supplies](#)

# Disaster supply kit

Your emergency supplies should be stored in a place that is easy to access, preferably in a place in your home or garage. They should be in suitcases, boxes, or large plastic bins that would be convenient to take with you if you have to evacuate.

In addition you might want to include items to keep you and your children occupied. Remember, if you are confined to your home, you may be without electricity. Computers, video games, TV, etc. may not be available. Access to electricity may be limited. If you take electronic items, be sure you have extra batteries. Also consider books, puzzles, and other small items they can use anywhere. If you have to evacuate, your children may need to spend a long time away from their toys and other familiar things.

The next slide contain a Disaster Supply calendar to help you gather your emergency kit over a number of weeks.

<p><b>WEEK 1—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 gallon water*</li> <li>___ 1 jar peanut butter</li> <li>___ 1 large can juice*</li> <li>___ 1 can meat*</li> <li>___ Hand-operated can opener</li> <li>___ Permanent marking pen</li> <li>___ Pet food, diapers, and baby food</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Find out what kinds of disasters can happen in your area.</li> <li>___ Date each perishable food item using marking pen.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disaster Supplies Calendar</b> <i>Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities</i></p> <p>This Disaster Supplies Calendar is intended to help prepare for disasters before they happen. Using the calendar, you can assemble a disaster supplies kit in small steps over a five-month period. Check off items you gather each week. Remember to change and replace perishable supplies (such as food and water) every six months.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Source: American Red Cross</i> <a href="http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/appendixb.html">http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/appendixb.html</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;">*Purchase one for each member of household.</p>		<p><b>Disaster Supplies Calendar</b> <i>Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities</i></p> <p>This Disaster Supplies Calendar is intended to help prepare for disasters before they happen. Using the calendar, you can assemble a disaster supplies kit in small steps over a five-month period. Check off items you gather each week. Remember to change and replace perishable supplies (such as food and water) every six months.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Source: American Red Cross</i> <a href="http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/appendixb.html">http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/appendixb.html</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;">*Purchase one for each member of household.</p>			
<p><b>WEEK 2—HARDWARE STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Heavy cotton or hemp rope</li> <li>___ duct tape</li> <li>___ 2 flashlights with batteries</li> <li>___ Matches in waterproof container</li> <li>___ Leash or carrier for your pet</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Complete a personal assessment of your needs and your resources for meeting your needs in a changed disaster environment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 3—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 gallon water*</li> <li>___ 1 can meat*</li> <li>___ 1 can fruit*</li> <li>___ Feminine hygiene supplies</li> <li>___ Paper and pencil</li> <li>___ Map of the area</li> <li>___ Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever</li> <li>___ Laxative</li> <li>___ 1 gallon of water for each pet</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Create a personal support network who can help you identify and obtain the resources you will need to cope effectively with disaster.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 4—HARDWARE STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Patch kit and can of seal-in-air product for the tires of mobility aids</li> <li>___ Signal flare</li> <li>___ Compass</li> <li>___ Extra medications or prescriptions marked "emergency use"</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Develop a personal disaster plan.</li> <li>___ Give copies of the following lists to your network: emergency information list, medical information list, disability-related supplies and special equipment list, and personal disaster plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 11—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 large can juice*</li> <li>___ Large plastic food bags</li> <li>___ 1 box quick energy snacks</li> <li>___ 3 rolls paper towels</li> <li>___ Medicine dropper</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Store a roll of quarters for emergency phone calls.</li> <li>___ Go on a hunt with your family to find a pay phone that is close to your home.</li> <li>___ Test your smoke detector(s). Replace the battery in each detector that does not work.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 12—ANIMAL CARE STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Extra harness, leash, ID tags, and food for your service animal and/or pets</li> <li>___ Litter/pan</li> <li>___ Extra water</li> </ul> <p><b>VETERINARIAN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Obtain current vaccinations and medical records of your animal(s)</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Develop a pet care plan in case of disaster.</li> <li>___ Make photocopies of all vaccination records and put them in your disaster supplies kit.</li> <li>___ Put extra animal harness, leash, and identification tag(s) in your kit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 13—HARDWARE STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Whistle</li> <li>___ Pliers</li> <li>___ Screwdriver</li> <li>___ Hammer</li> <li>___ Perforated metal tape (sometimes called plumber's tape or strap iron)</li> <li>___ Crow bar</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Take a first aid/CPR class from your local Red Cross.</li> <li>___ Arrange to have your water heater strapped to wall studs using perforated metal tape.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 14—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 can fruit*</li> <li>___ 1 can meat*</li> <li>___ 1 can vegetables*</li> <li>___ 1 package eating utensils</li> <li>___ 1 package paper</li> <li>___ Cups</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Make sure your network and neighbors know what help you may need in an emergency and how best to assist.</li> <li>___ Practice using alternate methods of evacuation with your network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WEEK 5—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 gallon water*</li> <li>___ 1 can meat*</li> <li>___ 1 can juice*</li> <li>___ 1 can vegetables*</li> <li>___ 2 rolls toilet paper</li> <li>___ Extra toothbrush/toothpaste</li> <li>___ Special food for special diets</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Make a floor plan of your home including primary escape routes.</li> <li>___ Identify safe places to go in case of fire or earthquake.</li> <li>___ Practice a fire drill and earthquake drill with your network.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 6—FIRST AID SUPPLIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes</li> <li>___ Safety pins</li> <li>___ Adhesive Tape</li> <li>___ Latex gloves</li> <li>___ Sunscreen</li> <li>___ Gauze Pads</li> <li>___ Sterile roller bandages</li> <li>___ Extra hearing aid batteries</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Check with your child's day care center or school to find out about their disaster plans.</li> <li>___ Ask your local emergency management office if emergency transportation services are available in case of evacuation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 7—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 gallon water*</li> <li>___ 1 can ready-to-eat soup (not concentrated)*</li> <li>___ 1 can fruit*</li> <li>___ 1 can vegetables*</li> <li>___ Sewing kit</li> <li>___ Disinfectant</li> <li>___ Extra plastic baby bottles, formula, diapers</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Establish an out-of-town contact to call in case of emergency.</li> <li>___ Share this information with your network so they know whom to call.</li> <li>___ Make arrangements for your network to check on you immediately after an evacuation order or a disaster.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 15—HARDWARE STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Extra flashlight batteries</li> <li>___ Extra battery for portable radio</li> <li>___ Assorted nails</li> <li>___ Wood screws</li> <li>___ Labels for your equipment and supplies</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Make arrangements to bolt bookcases and cabinets to wall studs.</li> <li>___ Label equipment and attach instruction cards.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 16—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 can meat*</li> <li>___ 1 can vegetables*</li> <li>___ 1 box facial tissue</li> <li>___ 1 box quick energy snacks</li> <li>___ Dried fruit/nuts</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Find out if you have a neighborhood safety organization and join it.</li> <li>___ Develop a disaster supplies kit for your car or van.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 17—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 box graham crackers</li> <li>___ Assorted plastic containers with lids</li> <li>___ Dry cereal</li> </ul> <p><b>FIRST AID SUPPLIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Antidiarrheal medication</li> <li>___ Rubbing alcohol</li> <li>___ Antiseptic</li> <li>___ Syrup of ipecac and activated charcoal</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Arrange for a friend or neighbor to help your children if you are not able to respond or are at work.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>WEEK 8—FIRST AID SUPPLIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Scissors</li> <li>___ Tweezers</li> <li>___ Thermometer</li> <li>___ Liquid antibacterial hand soap</li> <li>___ Disposable hand wipes</li> <li>___ Needles</li> <li>___ Petroleum jelly or other lubricant</li> <li>___ 2 tongue blades</li> <li>___ Extra eyeglasses (put in first aid kit)</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Place a pair of sturdy shoes and a flashlight by your bed so they are handy in an emergency.</li> <li>___ If blind, store a talking clock and extra white canes.</li> <li>___ If blind, mark your disaster supplies in Braille or with fluorescent tape.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 9—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 can ready-to-eat soup*</li> <li>___ Liquid dish soap</li> <li>___ Household chlorine bleach</li> <li>___ 1 box heavy-duty garbage bags</li> <li>___ Antacid (for stomach upset)</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Familiarize your network with any areas on your body where you have reduced sensation.</li> <li>___ Choose a signal with your network that indicates you are okay and have left the disaster site.</li> <li>___ If you have a communication disability, store a word or letter board in your disaster supplies kit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 10—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Waterproof portable plastic container (with lid) for important papers</li> <li>___ Battery-powered radio</li> <li>___ Wrench(es) needed to turn off utilities</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Take your network on a field trip to the gas meter and water meter shutoffs. Discuss when it is appropriate to turn off utilities.</li> <li>___ Attach a wrench next to the cutoff valve of each utility meter so it will be there when needed.</li> <li>___ Make photocopies of important papers and store safely.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 18—HARDWARE STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ "Child proof" latches or other fasteners for your cupboards</li> <li>___ Double-sided tape or hook-and-loop fasteners (such as Velcro) to secure moveable objects</li> <li>___ Plastic bucket with tight lid</li> <li>___ Plastic sheeting</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Arrange for someone to install latches on cupboards and secure moveable objects.</li> <li>___ Put away a blanket or sleeping bag for each household member.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 19—GROCERY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ 1 box quick-energy snacks</li> <li>___ Comfort foods (cookies, candy bars)</li> <li>___ Plastic wrap</li> <li>___ Aluminum foil</li> <li>___ Denture care items</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Review your insurance coverage with your agent to be sure you are covered for the disasters that may occur in your area. Obtain additional coverage, as needed.</li> <li>___ Purchase and have installed an emergency escape ladder for upper story windows, if needed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEEK 20—HARDWARE STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Camping or utility knife</li> <li>___ Work gloves</li> <li>___ Safety goggles</li> <li>___ Disposable dust masks</li> <li>___ 2 blank videocassettes</li> </ul> <p><b>SPECIALTY STORE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Get an extra battery for motorized mobility aids</li> </ul> <p><b>TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Use a video camera to tape the contents of your home for insurance purposes.</li> <li>___ Make a copy of the videotape and send to an out-of-town friend or family member.</li> <li>___ Find out about your workplace disaster plan.</li> </ul>	



# 6. Special Needs



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# Special Needs

If you or others in your household have special needs, there may be extra steps you should take in case of emergency\*.

Some things to consider:

- Medications (Is there at least a week's supply of all critical medications?)
- Special equipment and/or supplies (Are these ready to take on short notice?)
- Transportation (Is special transportation needed?)
- Power source for special equipment (If the electricity goes out, is there a back-up power source?)
- Food (Is a special diet needed?)
- Other groups with special needs are non-English speaking people and people without vehicles.

\*The American Red Cross has [preparedness information](#) for seniors and people with disabilities.

# Pets

Don't forget to take your pets into consideration.\*

Plans for them should include:

- Making arrangements for boarding
- Gathering pet supplies (food, water, blankets)
- Making sure your pet has proper ID and up-to-date veterinarian records (including current shots)
- Providing a pet carrier and leash

If you have to go to a shelter, you will not usually be able to take your pets (other than service animals). However, in 2006 Congress passed legislation requiring that state and local emergency plans take into account the needs of individuals with pets. Find out how your local emergency plans deal with the rescue, care, and shelter of pets.

If you have large animals (horses, cattle, sheep, etc.) on your property, be sure to plan for their care and safety.\*\*



\*See the [ASPCA](#) for more details.

\*\* [FEMA information](#) for livestock owners

# Other preparedness issues

Your personal emergency plan will be based on the plan you have developed with your family. Since you may not be at home when disaster strikes, you should have information in other places (in your wallet or purse, at work, in your car).

You may not be able get home, or you may have to stay at work indefinitely. You should feel confident that you have arranged care for others for whom you are responsible. This should include an understanding about who will do the tasks you normally do for your household such as:

- Preparing meals
- Caring for children (e.g., taking them to school, being there when they get home)
- Caring for any people with special needs (e.g., giving medicine or other medical care)
- Caring for pets
- Doing household chores (e.g., laundry, cleaning, dishes, putting out garbage)
- Paying bills
- Buying groceries
- Driving family members to activities, appointments, etc.

You may want to determine ahead of time which of these tasks must be done and which can wait until you are able to get home.

# 7. Practice the Plan



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# Practice the plan

Once you have developed your family disaster plan, you should practice and maintain it. This can take several forms:

- Ask questions about how family members would react in various emergencies (where they would meet, what they would take with them, whom they would call, etc.)
- Perform an actual evacuation drill
- Test fire alarms or smoke detectors
- Replace and update supplies

Since loss of electricity is a common outcome of several emergency situations, you might consider having your family spend a weekend without electricity.

You should keep a written version of the plan where every family member can find it. You should review it at least once a year and update as needed.

# Summary

Your family disaster plan will help you feel reassured that you and your family will be safe in any emergency. The family disaster plan should include these four steps:

1. Find out what emergencies could affect you and your family
2. Create a disaster plan
3. Gather emergency supplies
4. Practice the plan

The next section will look at how your family disaster plan might function in several emergencies. If you have not completed your family disaster plan, you might want to do that before you do the next section. You may want to download the Family Disaster Plan Workbook to help in your planning.

# 8. Testing Your Preparedness Plans



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**Please proceed to the quiz to  
complete your training.**



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# Summary

You should have completed the following tasks in Your Family Disaster Plan:

- a) Determine the emergencies that are likely in my area
- b) Establish emergency meeting place
- c) Develop a family communication plan
- d) Develop an evacuation plan
- e) Develop plans for any special needs (e.g., disabilities, pets)
- f) Begin gathering emergency supplies
- g) Practice the plan

# References

All content in this training was adopted from the “Your Family Disaster Plan” Course  
from the  
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University at Albany School of Public Health



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