

Preparing for a Disaster – Have a Family Plan

Disasters, by their very nature are unexpected. The more we prepare, the greater control we have over the consequences and the better we can manage some of the stress that comes with such events.

We are familiar with the following **natural disasters**:

Fire, Flood, Earthquake, Wind

However, we should also include the following as disasters, even though we don't usually think of them that way:

Unemployment, serious health challenge, death of a family member, pandemic, civil chaos, etc.

Consider possible disasters that you feel could happen to you because of where you live or other circumstances.

Consider what your family plan would be for each possibility.

Use your 'Our Emergency Plan' form as a Guide in Creating your own Family Plan

Consider any special needs that you or a family member may have that might present a problem during a disaster.

Medical condition, medications, transportation-mobility, etc.

Age – advanced or infant

Etc.

Financial Preparedness:

Set aside cash in small denominations. Have a fireproof and waterproof container for cash, important documents and pictures set aside for a quick exit.

Physical Preparedness

Responding to a disaster not only causes emotional stress it can also cause physical stress. We may have to lift more and walk further than we normally would because of a disaster. Unprepared for stressful exertion often leads to injury.

Emotional Preparedness

Developing good coping skills in advance can help during emergencies.

Benefits of Preparedness

Preparation provides for more choices. Storing essential supplies in advance that may otherwise be unavailable or in limited supply can provide a greater sense of security during emergencies. Planning and preparing in advance will help us be better equipped to help ourselves, our family, and our community.

Sheltering in Place

Have a plan for sheltering at: (if these apply to your family)

Home, Office, School

Communications During a Disaster:

Make plans for ways to communicate with separated family members.

Home Storage:

Accumulate a 3-6-month supply of food that is part of your normal diet - long-term and pantry type.

Store a minimum of 2 gallons of water per person per day – enough for 2 weeks.

Consider growing a vegetable garden.

Evacuations

Identify three meeting places for you and your family to gather

One very near your house

This is where everyone can quickly assemble in the event of a **house fire** to determine if there is anyone still in the house.

One in the immediate area

This location is close enough that travel is not a concern. It is within walking distance, yet still far enough away that whatever made your house uninhabitable, would hopefully, not affect this location.

One out-of-the area

If the damaged area is widespread, this location is, hopefully, far enough away to be out of that area. This location could require travel by motorized vehicle.

Assemble a 96-hour Comfort Kit

Tent, sleeping bag for each person, etc.

Clothing for the weather

Food and water

Medications

Comfort items: Pillow, blanket, toy for children, or a book.

Flashlight for each adult and teen plus extra batteries, and a phone charger.

An often-overlooked item is a foldup chair

Know the evacuation plan the school has for your children.

Practice your Family Plan - Evacuations are usually rushed affairs

Practicing will help pinpoint problem areas

Practice with your children. No matter the age, they need to be involved in the planning and practicing of the family plan.