

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

CONTACT

*In an emergency situation,
please call 911.*

Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for at least three days, maybe longer. While there are many things that might make you more comfortable, think first about fresh water, food and clean air.

1. Get a kit of emergency supplies.

Recommended supplies to include in a basic kit:

- Water one gallon per person per day, for drinking and sanitation
- Non-perishable Food at least a three-day supply
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA
- Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First Aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Filter mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener if kit contains canned food
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Important family documents
- Items for unique family needs, such as daily prescription medications, infant formula or diapers

Consider two kits. In one, put everything you will need to stay where you are and make it on your own. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to get away.

2. Make a plan for what you'll do in an emergency.

Plan in advance what you will do in an emergency, be prepared to assess the situation. Use common sense and whatever you have on-hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Develop a Family Emergency Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. Consider a plan where each family member calls, or e-mails, the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.

Be sure each person knows the phone number and has coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system may be down altogether, but be patient. Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the attack, the first important decision is whether you stay put or get away. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and the information you are learning here to determine if there is immediate danger. Watch television and listen to the radio for official instructions as they become available.

Create a Plan to Shelter-in-Place. There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as sheltering-in-place and sealing the room can be a matter of survival. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to shelter-in-place and seal the room. Consider precutting plastic sheeting to seal windows, doors and air vents. Each piece should be several inches larger than the space you want to cover so that you can duct tape it flat against the wall. Label each piece with the location of where it fits. Use all available information to assess the situation. Quickly bring your family and pets inside, lock doors, and close windows, air vents and replace dampers. Immediately turn off air conditioning, forced air heating systems, exhaust fans and clothes dryers. Take your emergency supplies and go into the room you have designated. Seal all windows, doors and vents. Understand that sealing the room is a temporary measure to create a barrier between you and contaminated air. Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for instructions from local emergency management officials.

Create a Plan to Get Away. Plan in advance how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency. If you have a car, keep at least a half tank of gas in it at all times. Become familiar with alternate routes as well as other means of transportation out of your area. If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to. Take your emergency supply kit, unless you have reason to believe it is contaminated and lock the door behind you. Take pets with you if you are told to evacuate, however, if you are going to a public shelter, keep in mind they may not be allowed inside. If you believe the air may be contaminated, drive with your windows and vents closed and keep the air conditioning and heater turned off. Listen to the radio for instructions. Know Emergency Plans at school and work. Talk to your children's schools and your employer about emergency plans. Find out how they will communicate with families during an emergency. If you are an employer, be sure you have an emergency preparedness plan. Review and practice it with your employees. A community working together during an emergency also makes sense. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together.

3. Be informed about what might happen.

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family emergency plan, are the same for both a natural or manmade emergency. However there are significant differences among potential terrorist threats, such as biological, chemical, explosive, nuclear and radiological, which will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. By beginning a process of learning about these specific threats, you are preparing yourself to react in an emergency. Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities on the scene. Also learn about your community's local emergency plan. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

4. Get Involved in preparing your community.

After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies, take the next step and get involved in preparing your community. Learn more about Citizen Corps, which actively involves citizens in making our communities and our nation safer, stronger and better prepared. We all have a role to play in keeping our hometowns secure from emergencies of all kinds.

Citizen Corps works hard to help people prepare, train and volunteer in their communities. Go to www.citizencorps.gov for more information and to get involved.

For more information, visit ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY



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