News Article

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Are You Prepared for an Emergency?

Whether it is an explosion, flooding, or a tornado, there are three basic things you need to be prepared for any emergency: a plan, supplies, and information.

First, develop an extensive plan so you and your family know what they are going to do in any situation. Second, have a kit that provides basic needs, water, and nonperishable food items for a minimum of 72 hours and includes any items for any family member, like a child or an older adult, who has special needs. Third, constantly monitor what is going on so you stay informed.

Make a plan: A disaster plan tells everyone in the family what they are going to do when an emergency happens. A complete disaster plan will include information about each family member, pets, insurance and finances, medications, vehicles, and the home and its contents.

Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes so it is important to plan: how you will get to a safe place; how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations. Ready.gov (www.ready.gov) has made it simple for you to make a family emergency plan. Download the Family Emergency Plan (FEP) and fill out the sections before printing it or emailing it to your family and friends.

Gather supplies: You and your family should have a disaster kit that includes your disaster plan and emergency supplies. The kit should be easily accessible so you can grab and go when there is an emergency.

Items in a basic disaster kit should include nonperishable food, flashlights, extra batteries, a battery-operated or hand-cranked AM/FM radio, a first-aid kit, and water. Other items might include work gloves, sturdy footwear, toiletries, and tools to turn off utilities.

When putting together your kit, do not forget your pets and family members with special needs.

Your kit also should include cash. In the aftermath of a large-scale event, ATMs may be unavailable and vendors may not be able to process credit card transactions. Visit
and search for the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit. This tool is designed to help you minimize the financial impact of a natural disaster or national emergency.

**Stay informed:** You should constantly be aware of your surroundings, whether at home, at work or out in public. Familiarize yourself with the signs of events that come without warning and know the local advance alerts and warnings and how you will receive them. Learn about local emergency plans for shelter and evacuation and local emergency contacts. This information will help you develop your family plan and will aid you during a crisis.

Learning what to do in different situations and developing and customizing your plans for your local hazards, the locations frequented by members of your household and the specific needs of household members including animals will help you reduce the impact of disasters and may save lives and prevent injuries.

Having emergency preparations in place will help you and your family cope both physically and mentally if disaster strikes.

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