



## Four Steps to Prepare Your Family for Disasters

This guide will help you and your family prepare for a disaster. Keep this sheet in a special place so you will always know where to find it. Get the family together now to start following the 4 steps to safety readiness!

### 1. Find out what the disaster risks are in your area.

Find out from your local emergency management office, health department, or American Red Cross chapter

- What types of disasters are likely to happen and how to prepare for each
- What your community's warning signals sound like and what to do if you hear them
- How to help the elderly and people with special needs

### 2. Create a family disaster plan.

Hold a family meeting; keep it simple and work as a team.

#### Plan

Talk about the dangers of the disaster(s) with your family.

- Have a plan in case you are separated.
  - (A) Choose a place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot go home.
  - (B) Choose someone out of town to be your family contact. Each family member and any babysitter must know the address and phone number for A and B.
- Fill out the local emergency phone numbers and child identification cards. Fill out an Emergency Information Form (EIF) for each child with special health care needs. (See [www.aap.org/advocacy/emergprep.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/emergprep.htm).)
- Become familiar with the specifics of your child's child care or school disaster plans as you could be separated from your child during a disaster.
- Plan what to do if you are asked to evacuate.
- Plan several escape routes.
- Plan how to take care of your pets.

#### What to Tell Children

It is important to educate children about disasters without overly alarming them. Use the following guidelines:

- Tell children that a disaster is something that could hurt people or cause damage. Explain

that nature sometimes provides “too much of a good thing”—fire, rain, and wind.

- Explain how important it is to make a family disaster plan.
- Teach children
  - How to call for help
  - When to call each emergency number
  - To call the family contact if separated
  - To keep personal identification information in their possession at all times

#### Evacuation

If you are told to evacuate, take these steps

- Leave right away if told to do so.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio for instructions from local officials.
- Wear protective clothing and shoes.
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity if told to do so.
- Leave a note telling when you left and where you are going.
- Call your family contact to tell him or her where you are going.
- Take your family emergency supplies (listed on the next 2 pages).
- Lock your home.
- Use routes suggested by officials.

### 3. Complete this checklist.

- Put emergency phone numbers by each phone.
- Show everyone how and when to turn off the utilities.
- Make sure you have enough insurance coverage (for example, flood, fire, earthquake, wind).
- Do a home hazard hunt for items that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire.
- Stock enough emergency supplies to last 3 days
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Plan home escape routes—2 from each room.
- Find safe places in your home for each type of disaster.
- Make 2 copies of important documents and keep the originals in a safe-deposit box. Keep 1 copy on hand and give the second to your out-of-town contact.

