

## Personal Preparedness Planning

Recent events, both natural and man-made, remind us that at any moment our world can be turned upside-down.

At any time we can lose power or other essential utilities, experience illness or injury, be forced to shelter, or evacuate our home. In larger events it is possible that emergency workers may be overwhelmed and unable to immediately assist everyone who needs them. It is common sense, and our individual responsibility, to be prepared to help ourselves.

In a friendly, fill-in-the-blank and check-box format, this document will guide an individual or family through the key steps necessary to become prepared.

This plan will help you answer questions such as:

- How can I make my home safer?
- How does our family find each other after a disaster?
- What do we do if we lose power?
- What emergency supplies should I keep at home?
- How do we decide whether to stay or evacuate?
- What do we do with our pets?
- Where can I get more information?

# Preparedness Planning

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## **Introduction – Personal Preparedness Planning**

Congratulations! You have already taken the first step toward personal preparedness planning by recognizing its importance and beginning to complete this booklet.

Disasters can strike quickly and without warning. A winter storm could confine you and your family to your home for hours or days. A highway spill of a hazardous material could mean an instant evacuation. An earthquake, flood, tornado or other disaster could cut off basic services such as electricity, gas, water and telephones for days.

While your local police, fire and EMS will respond quickly, they may not be able to assist everyone immediately. Follow the steps in this booklet to create your own personal preparedness plan.

Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

We urge you to read this entire document before you fill in the information.

***Flood ▪ Fire ▪ Tornado ▪ Winter Storm ▪ Lightning ▪ Hurricane ▪ Earthquake ▪ Hazardous Materials Spill ▪ Ice Storm ▪ Aircraft Crashes ▪ Civil Disorder ▪ Pipeline Breaks ▪ Nuclear Incidents***

This personal preparedness plan will help you answer questions such as:

- How does our family find each other after a disaster?
- What do we do if we lose power?
- What emergency supplies should I keep at home?
- How can I make my home safer?
- What do we do with our pets?
- Where can I get more information?

*Information assembled from family emergency planning materials provided by [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) – the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Emergency Contact*

**Emergency Contacts**

**Community Emergency Numbers**

POLICE Dial 9-1-1 or \_\_\_\_\_

FIRE Dial 9-1-1 or \_\_\_\_\_

AMBULANCE Dial 9-1-1 or \_\_\_\_\_

NORTH CAROLINA POISON CONTROL 1-800-222-1222 \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY PHYSICIAN (Name & Phone) \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTH DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

ELECTRIC COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

GAS COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

WATER COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Local Contact**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Day ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Out-Of-Area Contact**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Day ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Emergency Information**

**Family Members**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Medical Information \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Medical Information \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Medical Information \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Medical Information \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Important Medical Information \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Meeting Locations**

NEAR OUR HOME \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

AWAY FROM OUR HOME \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Four Steps to Safety**

### **STEP-1 FIND OUT WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU**

Contact your local authorities or Red Cross chapter and ask them the following questions:

- What types of crises are most likely to happen in our area? Do you have any information on how to better prepare for them?
- Ask about your community's warning signals: what they should sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Find out about the emergency plans at your workplace and your children's schools or daycare center.

### **STEP-2 CREATE A FAMILY CRISIS PLAN**

Discuss why you need to prepare for a crisis. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and other crises to family and include children. Plan to share responsibilities and to work together as a team.

- Discuss what types of crises are most likely to happen, and what to do in each.
- Choose two places to meet:
  1. One outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire.
  2. Another outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know this address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be your "family contact." After a crisis, it's often easier to make a long distance call. All family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know the contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of pets.

### **STEP-3 COMPLETE THIS CHECK LIST**

- Post emergency phone numbers in this plan and near each phone in the house.
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number for help.
- Show each family member where, when and how to turn off the water, gas and electricity.
- Teach each family member how to use a fire extinguisher (ABC type) and where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near the bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt. (page 8 )

- Stock emergency supplies and assemble an Emergency Supply Kit.
- Take a first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of every room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of emergency.

**STEP-4 PRACTICE AND MAINTAIN YOUR PLAN**

- Quiz your family every six months so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills (day and night).
- Check your emergency phone numbers at least annually.
- Replace stored water and food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguishers according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly, change batteries each time we change our clocks.

## Home Hazard Hunt

An important step in preparedness is the identification of hazards in your home. Once hazards are identified, it doesn't take much time or effort to make your home a safer place.

Use the checklist below and involve the whole family to make this a learning exercise as well. Foresight, imagination, and common sense are the only tools you will need. After identifying what needs to be done, devise a plan and do it.

### Kitchen

Yes – No

- Wear snug-fitting clothes when cooking
- Do not leave cooking food unattended
- Keep pan handles turned in when cooking
- Keep a pan lid nearby in case of fire
- Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles
- Keep cords from dangling
- Ensure outlets near the kitchen are GFI equipped
- Keep sharp knives out of reach of children
- Keep heated appliances (toaster, coffee maker, etc.) unplugged when not in use

### Bathrooms

Yes – No

- Store poisonous cleaning supplies and medications in "childproof" cabinets
- Replace glass bottles with plastic containers
- Ensure all outlets are GFI equipped

### All Rooms

Yes – No

- Ensure floor coverings are properly secured to prevent tripping hazards
- Separate draw cords on blinds and drapes to reduce strangulation hazards for kids
- Ensure room exits are unobstructed

### Smoking and Matches

Yes – No

- Store matches and lighters out of reach of children
- Use large, deep, no-tip ashtrays
- Never smoke when drowsy or in bed
- Dispose of ashes and cigarette butts in a metal can at least daily
- Check furniture for smoldering cigarettes every night, especially after parties

### Electricity

Yes – No

- Avoid the use of extension cords (if used, ensure the correct wattage rating)
- Plug only one heat producing device into an electrical outlet
- Ensure cords are not placed under rugs
- Verify circuits are not overloaded
- Replace damaged cords, plugs, and sockets
- Use bulbs with correct wattage for lamps and fixtures
- Check fuses/circuit breakers for the correct amperage ratings
- Don't override or bypass fuses or circuit breakers

## **Clothes Washer and Dryer**

Yes – No

- Verify that appliances are properly grounded
- Ensure lint filter is cleaned regularly and serviceable
- Check vent hose and vent line to ensure they are clean and provide unobstructed airflow

## **Heating Equipment**

Yes – No

- Ensure fireplace inserts and gas/wood stoves comply with local codes
- Clean and inspect chimney annually
- Dispose of ashes in metal containers
- Keep clothes, furnishings and electrical cords at least 12” from wall heaters and 36” from portable heaters
- Service furnace annually
- Set water heater thermostat at 120 degrees F
- Elevate new or replacement gas water heaters at least 18” above the floor

## **Smoke Detectors**

Yes – No

- At least one detector is properly installed on each level
- Test each at least once a month
- Battery replaced twice each year when you change your clocks in spring and fall

## **Fire Extinguisher**

Yes – No

- Verify that an all purpose fire extinguisher (Class ABC) is maintained in an accessible location
- Ensure that all occupants know how to use the extinguisher
- Are additional fire extinguishers kept in the kitchen, garbage, basement, and sleeping area?
- Store used oily rags in sealed metal containers
- Never store combustibles such as newspapers

## **Earthquake Hazards (All Rooms)**

Yes – No

- Bolt heavy, tall upright furniture to wall studs
- Lock or remove rollers on beds, furniture and appliances
- Secure hanging plants and light fixtures with one or more guide wires to prevent swinging into walls and windows
- Secure kitchen and bathroom cabinets with “positive” (self-closing) latches
- Secure items on shelves with quake mats, Velcro, low shelf barrier, etc.
- Store heavy and/or breakable items on lower shelves
- Strap water heater to wall studs
- Use flexible connections on gas appliances
- Check chimney for loose bricks and repair as needed
- Check foundation for cracks and repair as needed
- Bolt home to foundation to prevent shifting
- Secure mirrors and pictures to wall or hang them with heavy wire, looped through eye screws or tongue-in-groove hangers

### **Garage/Attic/Shed**

Yes – No

- Use gasoline as motor fuel only and never store it inside the home
- If necessary, keep only a small quantity of gasoline in an approved container
- Keep flammable liquids such as paints and thinners in their original containers and store on or near the ground and away from sources of heat, sparks, or flame.

### **Outside**

Yes – No

- Clear dry vegetation and rubbish from around the house
- Use barbecue grills away from buildings and vegetation
- Dispose of barbecue briquettes in a metal container
- Maintain a “greenbelt” around rural buildings
- Check with the fire department before burning debris or using a burning barrel

### **Family Preparedness**

Yes – No

- Plan two unobstructed exits from every room, including the second floor and make sure everyone knows them
- Designate a meeting place outside
- Have an out-of-state contact for family after a crisis
- Develop an escape plan and practice it regularly
- Store important papers and valuables in a fire proof safe or cabinet
- Maintain proper insurance and coverage for your home and its contents (earthquake, flood, renters, fire)

## **Shelter and Evacuation**

### **DECIDING TO STAY OR GO**

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the crisis, the first important decision is whether you should stay put or get away. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information, including what you are learning here to determine your best course of action.

When to stay put (shelter):

- When officials say so
- When the air outside is full of debris or badly contaminated
- When there is other danger outside and the physical building provides protection

When to get away (evacuate):

- When officials say so
- When the building itself is unsafe to occupy

### **SHELTERING**

Sheltering is the process of using the structure of your home or another building to protect you from a threat from outside.

From a tornado or severe storm:

- Seek an internal space, ideally below ground level, away from exterior walls, and glass
- Monitor changing conditions by radio or television
- Remain in safety until official “All Clear”

From air unsafe to breathe:

- Get everyone (including pets) inside
- Lock doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers
- Turn off fans, forced air heating and air conditioning systems
- Monitor changing conditions by radio and television news
- If instructed, seal all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape.  
Seal gaps

### **EVACUATION**

There may be times when it is dangerous to remain in your home, or you are simply ordered to leave. Make sure you have at least one near, and one alternative emergency meeting location in case your family is separated for any reason.

From a fire:

- Exit immediately by the most direct, safe route
- Close doors behind you (do NOT lock)

For other reasons:

- If you have a car, keep a half tank of gas in it at all times
- Become familiar with alternative routes and other means of transportation in your area
- Take your emergency supply kit
- Lock the door behind you (unless evacuating because of a fire)

If time allows:

- Turn off the utilities to your home if you believe they have been damaged, or you are told to do so by authorities, AND you feel it is safe to take the time
- Call the out-of-area contact in your family communications plan and tell them what you're doing
- Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going
- Check with elderly or disabled neighbors to see if they need assistance

**If you have children ...**

**Check with authorities from your day-care provider, pre-school and school about their plans for your children in an emergency.**

**You need to know if they send children home, or keep them until a parent or designated adult can pick them up. Be sure they have updated information about how to reach you. Ask what type of authorization they require to release your child.**

**If you don't find their plans satisfactory, get involved now to assist so you will be comfortable when something happens.**

## Special Needs Individuals

Remember the special needs of your family members. Infants, the elderly and persons with disabilities may require special planning.

### For the Baby

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Moist towelettes
- Diaper rash ointment
- Medications

### For Seniors and People with Disabilities

- Plan how they can signal for help
- Plan any special needs to accomplish evacuation
- Consider special equipment like wheelchairs, canes and walkers
- Written medical history including allergies
- List of prescription medications with dosages
- Copies of medical insurance and cards
- List of physicians and phone numbers
- Eyeglasses and hearing aids
- Extra batteries for special equipment
- If they are dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility
- Know the size and weight of wheelchairs and other special equipment, and if and how it can fit into your auto

## Taking Care of Pets

If you have pets, you should create a survival kit for them as well. This kit should include:

- Identification collar and vaccination tags that are up-to-date
- Carrier or cage
- Leash
- Medications (be sure to check expiration dates)
- At least a 2-week food supply, water and food bowls
- Veterinary records (most shelters do not allow pets without proof of vaccination)

Unless no other alternative exists, pets should never be left behind. Research your options now regarding animal care after a crisis. Animals may be allowed in designated public shelters. One shelter will be available to accept animals in the county. *If you have no other choice but to leave your pet at home, place your pet in a safe area inside your home with plenty of water and food.* Never leave pets chained outside. Place a note outside your home listing what pets are inside, where they are located, and phone numbers of where you can be reached.

## Homeland Security Guidelines

### Threat Levels and Recommended Actions for the Individual

<p><b><u>SEVERE</u></b> Severe Risk of Terrorist Attack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete recommended actions at lower levels</li> <li>• Listen to radio/TV for current information/instructions</li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities immediately</li> <li>• Contact business to determine status of work day</li> <li>• Adhere to any travel restrictions announced by local governmental authorities</li> <li>• Be prepared to shelter in place or evacuate if instructed to do so by local governmental authorities</li> <li>• Provide volunteer services only as requested</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>HIGH</u></b> High Risk of Terrorist Attack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete recommended actions at lower levels</li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities</li> <li>• Review your personal preparedness plan</li> <li>• Exercise caution when traveling</li> <li>• Have shelter in place, materials on hand and review procedure in Terrorism:</li> <li>• Preparing for the Unexpected brochure</li> <li>• If a need is announced, donate blood at designated blood collection center</li> <li>• Prior to volunteering, contact agency to determine their needs</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>ELEVATED</u></b> Significant Risk of Terrorist Attack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete recommended actions at lower levels</li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities</li> <li>• Ensure emergency supplies kit is stocked and ready</li> <li>• Check telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in your personal communication plan and update as necessary</li> <li>• Develop alternate routes to/from work/school and practice them</li> <li>• Continue to provide volunteer services</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>GUARDED</u></b> General Risk of Terrorist Attack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete recommended actions at lower levels</li> <li>• Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities</li> <li>• Review stored emergency supplies and replace items that are outdated</li> <li>• Develop emergency communication plan with family/neighbors/friends</li> <li>• Provide volunteer services and take advantage of additional volunteer training opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>LOW</u></b> Low Risk of Terrorist Attack</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain copy of Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected brochure from your local Red Cross chapter</li> <li>• Develop a personal preparedness plan and emergency supplies kit using Red Cross brochures Your Family Preparedness Plan and Your Family Emergency Supplies Kit</li> <li>• Examine volunteer opportunities in your community; choose an agency to volunteer with and receive initial training</li> <li>• Take a Red Cross CPR/AED and first aid course</li> </ul>

## Emergency Supplies

### HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

While local officials will be on the scene after a crisis, they may not be able to reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it may take days. Would your family be prepared to cope with a crisis until help arrives?

Your goal should be to keep enough supplies in your home to meet the needs of your family for at least three days. Once a crisis strikes, you won't have time to shop and gather the needed supplies.

#### Water

Few things are more important to preservation of life than adequate water. Store water in plastic containers such as milk or soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose.

- Store one gallon of water per person per day (2 quarts a day for drinking, two quarts for food preparation and sanitation)

#### Food

Select non-perishable foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, use a can of sterno. Select items that are compact and lightweight.

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples – sugar, salt, pepper
- High energy foods – peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods such as cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereal, coffee and tea

#### First Aid Kit

- First aid manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages (3)
- 2-inch sterile roll bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roll bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue depressors
- Tube of petroleum jelly or lubricant
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (several pair)
- Sunscreen
- Non-prescription drugs
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid
- Syrup of Ipecac (used to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

## Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits or paper cups, plates and utensils
- A battery powered or hand crank radio (and extra batteries)
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Extra pair of glasses
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Non-electric can opener
- Utility knife or tool
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Signal flare
- Paper, pens & pencils
- Needles and thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench (for household gas and water)
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Duct tape
- Map of area (for locating shelters)
- Plastic storage containers

## Sanitation

- Toilet paper or towelettes
- Soap or liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags and ties
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

## Clothing and Bedding

- At least one change of clothing per person
- Sturdy work shoes or boots
- Rain gear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear

## Special Items

- Critical family documents
- Passport, social security cards
- Wills, insurance policies
- Contracts, stocks and bonds
- Bank and credit card account numbers
- Medication lists
- Immunization records
- Family records (birth, death, and marriage certificates)
- Entertainment – games, cards, books
- Glasses and contact supplies
- Sunglasses
- Prescription medications
- Items for infants
- Items for the elderly
- Items for pets

## An Evacuation Kit of Your Home

A fire, flood or other crisis may require the immediate evacuation of your home. A smaller cache of supplies you would most likely need in an evacuation should be kept ready in a sturdy, weather proof and easy-to-carry container such as a backpack, duffle bag or plastic box. These supplies can be part of your larger household emergency supplies cache, but packaged separately for quick action.

- A battery powered or hand crank radio (and extra batteries)
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Extra pair of glasses
- A small amount of cash and change, and a credit card
- An extra set of house and car keys
- Critical family documents
  - Passport, social security cards
  - Wills, insurance policies
  - Contracts, stocks and bonds
  - Bank and credit card account numbers
  - Medication lists
  - Immunization records
  - Family records (birth, death and marriage certificates)

### EMERGENCY KIT FOR YOUR AUTO

Your car should be equipped with emergency supplies too. Never allow the gas tank to drop below half full. If warnings of an impending crises are broadcast, fill up. Gas stations may be affected by the crisis and unable to be used. Keep these items stored in a weather proof and portable container.

- A battery powered or hand crank radio (and extra batteries)
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Cellular phone
- Blanket
- Jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher
- Maps
- Shovel
- Flares
- Bottled water
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Nonperishable, high energy foods (granola bars, canned nuts, hard candy, trail mix, peanut butter & crackers for example)

## More Information

### **LOCALLY**

Feel free to call your local police department, fire department or local emergency manager with your emergency planning questions. The local offices of the American Red Cross or National Safety Council are other good places to start.

### **IF YOU HAVE A COMPUTER**

If you have a computer with an internet connection, there are literally hundreds of sources of information. We have listed a few good ones below.

<http://www.ready.gov>

<http://www.fema.gov>

<http://www.redcross.org>

<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic>

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland>