

Module 5 - Personal Preparedness

Objectives

- Prepare yourself and your family in the event of an emergency
- Recognize ways to help individuals in your family requiring additional assistance affected by a public health event

Overview

Before an emergency occurs, you will want to make sure that you have prepared a personal plan for your family to ensure that they are prepared for any emergency situation. Knowing that your family is prepared and taken care of may reduce your concerns about leaving them and improve your ability to report to work when needed.

Four Steps to be Prepared

You will be better able to cope with an emergency by preparing in advance and working with your family. Follow the four steps to be prepared:

1. Get informed
2. Create a personal emergency plan
3. Assemble a Emergency Supplies kit
4. Maintain your plan and kit



1. Get Informed

You should understand the risks you may face and what you can do to protect yourself and your family.

- Find out what types of disasters are most likely to occur in your community.
- Learn about your community's response plans, evacuation plans, and locations of emergency shelters.
- Learn about your community's warning signals and what you should do when you hear them.
- Find out about the emergency plans at work, your children's school or daycare, and other places where your family spends time.



2. Create a Personal Emergency Plan

Make sure that you involve all members of your family when you create your personal emergency plan. It should be as simple as possible and include:

- **Where to meet.** Choose two locations -- one should be near your home; the other should be outside of your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- **Who to contact.** Choose an out-of-town contact. Family members should call this person and let them know where they are. Everyone should know the contact's phone number.
- **An escape route.** Everyone in your family should know the best escape routes out of your home as well as where the safe places are in your home for each type of emergency.
- **Plan for the care of others.** Make special arrangements for the care of children, elderly, and disabled family members as well as pets.

See Appendix 3.2 on Page 26 for a list of items to prepare for before an emergency.



3. Assemble an Emergency Supplies Kit

An emergency supply kit is a collection of basic items a family would need to stay safe during and after an emergency.

- Your supply kit should cover the needs for your entire family for *at least three days*.
- Keep your supplies in portable containers such as duffle bags or plastic storage boxes.
- Renew and reorganize the contents of your supply kit every six months.



Contents of an Emergency Supplies Kit

Your supply kit should contain the following items:

- **Water** - 1 gallon per person per day
- **Food** – nonperishable items such as canned goods
- **First Aid and Medical Supplies** –bandages, latex gloves, glasses/contacts and medications
- **Clothing and Bedding** – blankets and clothing for each family member
- **Emergency Tools and Supplies** – such as battery powered radio, money and credit cards
- **Sanitation Supplies** – toilet paper, personal hygiene products, etc.
- **Special Supplies** – items needed by adults, infants, elderly or disabled persons, and pets

See Appendix 3.2 on Page 26 to see a complete list of supplies that you should include in your kit.

4. Practice and Maintain your Plan

Every six months you should:

- Review your plan and quiz your family on what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis.
- Replace stored water every 3 months and food every six months.
- Test your smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms monthly and change batteries at least once a year.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to the manufacturer's directions.



Considerations for Individuals with Access or Functional Needs

Emergency situations such as acts of terrorism and natural disasters pose a real challenge for the millions of Americans who have access issues or functional disabilities. It is important for people who require additional assistance and their families to prepare for an emergency.

If you or someone in your family requires additional assistance, you should:

- Create a support network to help in an emergency.
- Tell the people of their support network where emergency supplies are located.
- Give one member of the support network a key to the individual's house or apartment.
- Contact local city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- Make sure the individual wears medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify their disability.
- Know the location and availability of more than one facility if the individual is dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment.
- Show others how to operate wheelchairs or other personal mobility devices if needed.
- Know the size and weight of wheelchairs or other personal mobility devices and whether they are portable (can be collapsed or taken apart and re-assembled), in case they need to be transported.



References and Resources

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management
Get Prepared
www.mass.gov/dph/getprepared

Disabilities or Access and Functional Needs Online Resources
<https://www.disasterassistance.gov/information/disabilities-access-and-functional-needs>

Tools and Resource Library American Red Cross
<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library>

Get a Family Disaster Kit American Red Cross
<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/be-red-cross-ready/get-a-kit>

Types of Emergencies American Red Cross
<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

People with Disabilities American Red Cross
<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities>

Appendix 3-1

Checklist of Items to Prepare for Before an Emergency

- Post emergency telephone numbers (fire, police, ambulance, etc.) by phones and program them into cell phones.
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the utilities (water, gas, and electricity) at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Get training from the fire department for each family member on how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Take a First aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safest places in your home for each type of emergency.
- Gather vital documents such as birth certificates and passports and put them in a safety deposit box or other safe location.
- Inventory your home possessions and store a record of them in a safe location.

Appendix 3-2

Emergency Supplies Kit

WATER

- Store one gallon of water per person per day.
- Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or could break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles

FOOD

- o Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- o Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water:
 - Ready-to-eat canned meals, meats, fruits, and vegetables.
 - Canned juices.
 - High-energy foods (granola bars, energy bars, etc.).

FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- o (20) Adhesive bandages, various sizes
- o (1) 5" x 9" sterile dressing
- o (1) Conforming roller gauze bandage
- o (2) Triangular bandages
- o (2) 3 x 3 sterile gauze pads
- o (2) 4 x 4 sterile gauze pads
- o (1) Roll 3" cohesive bandage
- o (2) Germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- o (6) Antiseptic wipes
- o (2) Pair large medical grade non-latex gloves
- o Adhesive tape, 2" width
- o Anti-bacterial ointment
- o Cold pack
- o Scissors (small, personal)
- o Tweezers
- o CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield
- o Non-prescription medications (e.g. aspirin)

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- o Sturdy shoes
- o Blankets
- o Hat and gloves
- o Thermal underwear
- o Sunglasses

EMERGENCY TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

SANITATION SUPPLIES

- Toilet paper
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

SPECIAL SUPPLIES

Adults

- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses
- Immunization records

Infants/Children

- Formula
- Diapers/wipes
- Bottles
- Powdered formula, milk, or baby food
- Medications
- Immunization records

Elderly

- List of prescription medications including dosage. Include any allergies
- Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries
- Extra wheelchair batteries or other special equipment
- A list of the style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers
- Copies of medical insurance and Medicare cards
- List of doctors and emergency contacts

Disabled

- Prescription medicines, list of medications including dosage, list of any allergies
- Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries
- Extra wheelchair batteries
- Oxygen, if applicable
- Keep a list of the style and serial number of medical devices
- Medical insurance and Medicare cards
- List of doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified if you are hurt

Pets

- Food
- Extra water
- Leash/harness
- Collar
- Identification tags
- Medications
- Vaccinations and medical records

