

family preparedness guide



community preparedness and coordination unit

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additional resources

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
www.ready.gov

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org

National Organization on Disability
www.nod.org

United States Department of Education
www.ed.gov

United States Fire Administration
www.usfa.fema.gov

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov



welcome

As the health authority for suburban Cook County, the Cook County Department of Public Health has created this emergency preparedness guide for families. Unfortunately, in this day and age we have to take seriously the threat of intentional chemical and/or biological terror as well as the likelihood of new and emerging illnesses that threaten the health and safety of our families and communities. Being prepared means that you have created a plan—and by creating a plan it means you are ready to respond to any emergency. Spend some time with your family to review the guidance this book provides. Complete the attached forms and make sure that all family members have this emergency contact information with them at all times.

Of people with disabilities polled in 2003 by the Harris Poll for the National Organizations on Disability:

44%
knew who to contact about emergency plans

39%
had made plans to evacuate quickly and safely from their homes

"With thorough planning, those of us with disabilities will have a good chance of survival, with the interruption of our lives minimized. Without it, we are at particular risk in the chaos."

*Alan A. Reich,
President,
National Organization on Disability*

elderly and special needs individuals

The elderly and other members of your family who have special needs including mobility challenges should be included in your emergency plan. When planning for the care of the elderly and those with special needs, please consider the following recommendations:

establish a close network of relatives and friends who can assist your family in an emergency.

make sure helpers know where to find the disaster-supply kit which includes emergency supplies, medicines, and other essential equipment.

remind family members to always wear a medical alert tag or bracelet if they have threatening health conditions.

compose a list of special items, equipment and supplies family members will need during a disaster and store it with your emergency preparedness supply kit. Provide a copy of this list to another family member, friend, or neighbor designated to help in an emergency.

*Learn more about emergency preparedness and disability concerns from the **National Organization on Disability at www.nod.org**.*



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include usual non-prescription medications that you take, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, etc. If you use prescription medications, keep at least three-day's supply of these medications at your workplace. Consult with your physician or pharmacist how these medications should be stored, and your employer about storage concerns.

include an extra pair of eyeglasses, contact lenses, wetting and cleaning solutions, lens case, glasses case, re-wetting drops, etc.

disasters that may affect your family

natural	human	technological
blizzard	bomb threat	structural failures
tornado	fire	transportation failures
hurricane	hazardous material	utilities failures
earthquake	personal injuries	
cold/heat wave	terrorism	
other severe weather events		

prepare for threats

discuss and create a plan for how your family will respond in an emergency, using these tips.

be familiar with each other's normal routines and schedules.

identify your family's communication devices and record phone numbers so you can contact each other in the event of a disaster. Make sure emergency contact numbers are programmed into telephones and cell phone numbers and posted. Consider using email, cellular communications, and prepaid phone cards.

designate a contact person who lives outside your geographic area and give their name and phone number to each family member. Advise the group to place a long-distance, rather than a local call, as phone lines may be busy. Each family member should call the designated contact person to communicate where they are located and how they are doing.

go to an interior room without windows that is above ground level (not the basement). In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.

bring your pets with you, and be sure to bring additional food and water supplies for them.

call your emergency contact and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone (non-electric) in the room you select. Cellular phone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.

keep listening to the radio or television until you are told it is safe or to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk.

how to *shelter-in-place* in your car

If you are driving a vehicle when you hear advice to "shelter-in-place" on the radio, assess the situation. If you are very close to your home, office, or a public building, go there immediately. Go inside and follow the shelter-in-place recommendations above. If you are unable to get to a home or building quickly and safely, then pull over to the side of the road and follow these guidelines.

stop your vehicle in the safest place possible. If it is sunny outside, it is preferable to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot to avoid being overheated.

practice your response

monthly

- check smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors to assure proper function and be sure you have plenty of fresh batteries.
- talk with family members about current events, potential natural and manmade threats. Discuss how you will respond as a family.
- be aware of the health and medical status for each family member.

every six months

- review response and communications procedures with your family members so they remember what to do.
- review and practice your emergency response.
- practice your communication plans with your family, contact person, and dependable friends and neighbors.
- conduct fire drills.
- replace batteries (flashlights, etc), test and clean smoke detectors (tip: during Daylight Savings Times: spring/fall)
- update your emergency supply kits to assure that all contents are fresh, clean and ready to use. Make sure your family knows where the kits are stored.
- update your contact information.

every year

for pets

medications for heartworm, flea prevention, etc.

medical records: rabies/vaccination certificates, Coggins test for horses

registration records

first-aid kit

sturdy leashes, harnesses

carriers big enough to stand and turn

pet beds, toys

litter and litter pan

current photos of pets

food and drinkable water for three days

bowls, can opener

feeding schedule information

medical conditions, behavior problems

veteranarian's name, address and telephone number

water

keep at least a three-day supply of water per

person: one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation and sanitation).

don't forget water for your pets.

never ration water if supplies run low. Drink the amount you need today and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

treat all water of uncertain purity before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene. Treating water kills most microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals. Before treating, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom or strain through layers of paper towels or cloth.

boiling: This is the safest method of treating water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let cool before drinking. It will taste better if you add oxygen to it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This will also improve the taste of stored water.

disinfecting: Use only regular household liquid bleach that contains 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented, color-safe or bleaches with added cleaners. Do not use any other chemical to treat water. Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water. Stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.

for car

road flares + reflective markers	essential tools
battery-powered radio + batteries	booster cables
fire extinguisher (5 lb. A-B-C-type)	flashlight with backup batteries
cell phone with car charger and backup battery	list of service stations with locations + phone numbers along commute
towels	changes of clothing
maps	shovel
overshoes	tire repair kit + pump
rain gear / foul-weather gear	blanket (i.e. aluminum reflective)
umbrella	this family preparedness guide
food + water for 24-hour period: non-perishable, high-energy foods, such as granola bars, raisins and peanut butter	first-aid kit (including medicines, and personal hygiene supplies: toilet tissue, soap, etc.) + manual

family documents

will(s)
insurance policies
contracts and deeds
stocks and bonds records
social security cards
passports
immunization records
bank account numbers
credit card numbers
inventory of valuables
family records
pictures of family members (for identification)

tools + supplies

family preparedness guide	infant supplies
radio	signal flare
batteries (all sizes)	dust mask + work gloves
candles	whistle
cash and travelers' checks	utility knife
waterproof matches in containers	emergency shelter (tent, tarp)
map of area with shelters marked	tape
sewing materials (needle, thread)	plastic sheeting
flashlights	plastic storage containers with lids
toiletries (soap, towels, toothbrush)	emergency <i>space</i> blanket (Mylar)
portable ABC fire extinguisher	paper plates, cups, plastic utensils
disinfectant	manual (non-electric) can opener
personal hygiene items, including toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush soap, contact lens supplies and feminine supplies	plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation use)
one complete change of clothing and footwear, including long-sleeved shirt and long pants, closed-toe shoes or boots	

first aid

prescription medications
over-the-counter medications
assorted sterile pads and roller-gauze (for bandaging)
safety pins and other fasteners
antiseptic solution (rubbing alcohol, peroxide, iodine)
latex gloves
tweezers, scissors
adhesive bandages (Band-Aid®), triangular bandages
thermometer (battery back up if electronic)
tongue depressors (for finger splint)
sunscreen + mosquito repellent
cleansing agent/soap/hand sanitizer
wet wipes/moistened towelettes
tube of petroleum jelly or lubricant
any special needs specific to you and your family

food

minimum of one gallon of water per person per day

ready-to-eat foods NOT requiring cooking

condiments

powdered milk/canned juices

high energy snacks: trail mix, nuts, energy bars

comfort foods: cookies, candies

age-specific foods: baby formula, pediatric electrolyte replacement products

disposable paper/plastic utensils

non-electric can opener

utility knife

for elderly + special needs individuals

back-up plan for electricity-dependent air concentrators, respirators, etc.

two-week supply of disposable dressings, airway adjuncts, suction equipment

two-week supply of prescription and over-the-counter medications

multiple copies of drug prescriptions and all needed equipment in case ambulance is called or information needs to be transferred another caretaker

contact lenses, supplies, and extra eyeglasses

extra batteries for hearing aids and other equipment that requires batteries

extra foam mattress cover, special clothing, etc.

complete a Durable Power of Attorney document for each family member

and

make sure everyone knows where the document is kept



supply kit

Store your supply kit in a safe place with your emergency plan.

gather supplies and equipment ahead of time so the kit is ready and accessible if you must evacuate, or go without electricity, heat, water and/or food for an extended period of time.

gather kits in easy-to-carry containers such as a cooler on wheels, or duffel bags. Place kit near door or exit that you most frequently use. Clearly label your kit. Keep loose items in airtight plastic bags.

have familiar foods on-hand. Familiar foods are important in times of stress. It is not necessary to buy special foods to prepare an emergency food supply. The canned foods, dry mixes and other staples in your cupboard will provide comfort to your family.

do not include candles, weapons, toxic chemicals, or controlled drugs unless prescribed by a physician.

include items for your children:

a few favorite books

crayons and paper

two favorite small toys, such as a doll or action figure, board game, cards & puzzles

favorite blanket or pillow

picture of family and pets

other special items that will comfort children

list of contact phone numbers

occasionally check and update your family kit.



shelter

Local officials are the best source of information.

Follow their instructions during and after emergencies regarding sheltering, food, water, and clean-up.

what *shelter-in-place* means

During an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the air, it is possible that you will be required to "shelter-in-place," or stay inside to protect you and your family from harmful toxins outside. Shelter-in-place refers to choosing a small room, with few or no windows, and seeking protection until the situation outside has calmed down. It is not necessary to seal off your home, office, and/or windows.

reasons why you would *shelter-in-place*

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be emitted accidentally or deliberately into the environment. If this situation occurs, information will be released by local authorities via television and radio stations on how to safeguard your family. Because television and radio are the primary sources of information delivery, it is vital to keep a TV or battery powered radio on, even during the work day. It is imperative that you follow the instructions of local authorities and be prepared to shelter-in-place if advised.

how to *shelter-in-place* at home

prepare your home. Close and lock all windows and exterior doors. Close the window shades, blinds, or curtains if you are told there is danger of explosion. Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Get your family preparedness kit and make sure the radio is working.

write contact information on the family communication cards provided, and give a copy to each family member and ask to always carry and update it.

make supply kits for each family member.

inquire about community, school and work place warnings signals and their meanings. Know what alerts sound like and what actions to take.

investigate support services for special needs or elderly family members. Record procedures and prepare a kit with prescription medications and medical equipment.

decide under what circumstances you will implement your emergency preparedness plan. Seek guidance from local police and fire professionals for their ideas on when to act.

create escape routes from home or office and select at least two meeting places (rally points). The first rally point should be outside your home in the event of a sudden emergency such as a fire. The second rally point should be located outside your neighborhood in case evacuation from the area is necessary.

know when not to evacuate—shelter in place. Please refer to the information contained in this guide. Create and practice shelter plans.

check and update insurance coverage. Routinely review property, medical, and life insurance policies to make sure your family's changing needs are always met. Make sure documents are safe and can be easily located.

turn off engine. Close windows and vents. If possible, seal the heating/air conditioning vents with duct tape. Listen to the radio for updated advice and instructions.

stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road. Be aware that some roads may be closed or traffic detoured. Follow law-enforcement officials' directions.

how to *shelter-in-place* at work

have a flashlight with extra batteries to find your way if the power is out. Do not use candles or any other open flame for emergency lighting.

have a battery-powered radio. News about the emergency may change rapidly as events unfold. You also will be concerned about family and friends in the area. Radio reports will give information about the areas most affected.

have enough non-perishable food to sustain you for at least one day (three meals). Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water.

- ready-to-eat/canned meals, fruits, vegetables
- canned juices.
- high-energy foods

keep at least one gallon of water available, or more if you are on medications that require water or that increase thirst. Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles.



emergency plan

According to the American Red Cross, the majority of Americans have not put together

an emergency preparedness kit
58%

or family emergency plan
59%

Store your emergency plan in a safe place with your supply kit.

Using the guidance in this document and the attached forms, you will be able to prepare a personal and family emergency preparedness plan. A good plan is the key to protecting yourself and your family, and to participating in an effective community response to an emergency.

The first step in creating an emergency preparedness plan is to identify the types of emergencies that are likely to occur and to evaluate how such an emergency could affect your family, community and workplace. In response to your observations, you will be able to create a family emergency preparedness plan. Included in your plan will be documents with personalized emergency information to help you communicate with your family. Using your plan and communication forms, you will be ready to practice what you've planned!

evaluate threats

Identify potential threats to your well-being which are present in your community. Power plants, manufacturing structures, factories, areas prone to flooding and hazardous chemical stockpiles could be targets for terrorism and/or sites where natural disasters could occur. Other potential threats are a storm surge, flooding, fire, tornados, hazardous spills, transportation-related accidents, and personal injuries. Don't hesitate to ask for advice in identifying these threats from your local police and fire department officials—they serve to protect!



special considerations

children at school

A key component to your family preparedness plan is the well-being of your child or children. Maintaining contact with your child's school or daycare facility may help reduce anxiety during an emergency.

During an emergency, school phones will be overwhelmed with parents trying to gather information, so it's important to plan ahead to be able to communicate with your children.

familiarize yourself with the emergency response plan of schools and/or daycare you children attend.

find out if the school/daycare will keep kids

or send them home in an emergency. If their plan is to send children home, will officials notify the parents or pre-identified caregiver first? If the school is keeping children, does the school have food, water and other essential supplies stored within the facility?

can your child get into your home if you are not there?

can your children take care of themselves until you, a family member or caregiver arrives home?

can a neighbor take care of your children until you, a family member or caregiver arrives home?

pets

prepare in advance a list of facilities or animal shelters and a 24-hour telephone number. Find out if the facility provides emergency sheltering or foster care for pets in the event of an emergency. Animal shelters may be overburdened, so this should be your last resort.

give your house key to a friend or relative to provide care for your pets if you cannot get home.

ask a friend or relative to provide shelter for your pet, in case of an emergency. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately if necessary.

include in your plan construction of a cage/pen that includes a three-day supply of dry food and a large container of fresh water. Use of this pen should be limited to a situation requiring you to leave your pets alone for an extended period of time.

