



Developing a Family Disaster Plan

A family disaster plan is your personal plan for how you and your family will deal with an emergency situation if one arises. It's important that every member of your family understands your family disaster plan and is ready to implement it, perhaps at a moment's notice.

Suggestions for your family disaster plan include:

- Understand the types of natural disasters that are most likely to strike the area where you live (hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, flooding). Agree on what each family member will do in the event of one of those disasters.
- If you have to remain in your home, identify the safest places to stay.
- If you're advised to evacuate, plan your escape route in advance. Be prepared to listen to local radio for shelter locations.
- What if family members are separated? Agree on two alternative meeting places, one near your home and the second outside your immediate area.
- Make sure your children know how and under what circumstances to call 9-1-1.
- Have a plan to protect your property in the event of a disaster. For example, know where your utilities are and how to turn them off. Depending on the threat, remove small outdoor items, close window shutters, etc.
- Request information on your employer's disaster plans, as well as those for your children's school and/or childcare center. Be sure they have your emergency contact information and you theirs.
- Identify a family member or friend living in another area...someone your children can call if the need arises.
- Ensure that your home is safe: periodically test smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers to make sure they are working, identify any potential hazards and remove them, be certain that all family members know how to evacuate your home in the event of fire.

Additional advice on your family disaster plan and preparing a disaster supply kit is available from:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): 1-800-480-2520 or <http://www.fema.gov>
- Department of Homeland Security: 1-800-237-3239 or <http://www.ready.gov>
- American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org>

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