



# Family Disaster Plan

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Being prepared before a disaster strikes is one of the best ways to make your family and home safer. The 34 cities and towns that make up the Commonwealth's Emergency Preparedness Region 4A want you to be prepared and hope the following information and checklists will be valuable aids to help you accomplish this.

## Be Prepared

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Determine your family emergency contact.
- Designate emergency meeting places for your family.
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a disaster supplies kit.  
*See the American Red Cross Website: <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/supplies.html> or phone their Disaster Information & Resource Center at 1-866-GET-INFO (1-866-438-4636).*
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.  
*In a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a potential hazard. Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. Fasten shelves securely. Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves. Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds. Brace overhead light fixtures. Secure water heater and strap to wall studs. Repair cracks in ceilings or foundations. Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products away from heat sources. Place oily polishing rags or waste in covered metal cans. Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors, and gas vents.*
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms, and check batteries every six months.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the utilities (water, gas, and electricity) at the main switches.
- Have a fire extinguisher (ABC type) handy and make sure each family member knows where it is and how to use it.
- Take a first aid class and a CPR class.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage (property, life, & health).
- Consider ways to help neighbors or family members who may need special assistance (elderly, people with disabilities, etc.).
- Know your city's or town's Emergency Plan.

# Things to remember during a disaster

**Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action.**

## Check for Injuries

Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.

## Listen to Your Battery-Powered Radio for News and Instructions

## Check for Damage in Your Home...

- ◆ Use flashlights. Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches if you suspect damage.
- ◆ Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly. Shut off any other damaged utilities. (You will need a professional to turn gas back on.) *Show each family member how and when to turn off the utilities (water, gas, and electricity) at the main switches.*
- ◆ Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids immediately.

## Remember to...

- ◆ Call your family contact – do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- ◆ Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off. (1 gallon per person/day)
- ◆ Stay away from downed power lines.
- ◆ Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.  
*Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbors' special skills (e.g. medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.*
- ◆ Confine or secure your pets.
  1. *Have a safe place to take your pets. Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals who assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.*
  2. *Assemble a portable pet disaster supplies kit. Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffel bags, covered trash containers, etc.).*
  3. *You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a pet-sitting service, it may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.*

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