

TOGETHERWE | **Can Become Safe Families**



The Family Safety Guide

Six Steps of Preparedness to Protect Those You Love



Together, we can save a life



Do you know what to do in an emergency?

Does your family?

What would you do if basic services —

water, electricity, gas, telephone were cut off? If you were separated from family members in an emergency, would you know how to contact them? This booklet is designed to help you and your family become better prepared in case of an emergency. It covers the key steps in disaster preparedness, most importantly, creating a family disaster plan, assembling a disaster supplies kit and taking classes in lifesaving skills, available through your local chapter of the American Red Cross.

Become a Safe Family

Disasters **can** strike anyone at any time. Being prepared can be the key to staying safe — whether in a home fire, earthquake, flood, heat wave, tornado, hurricane, winter storm, blackout or man-made event. To help you and your loved ones prepare before a disaster strikes, follow the Six Steps to Becoming a Safe Family contained in this booklet.

The **Six** Steps include:



Step One: Write a family disaster plan.



Step Two: Write an evacuation plan.



Step Three: Learn safety plans for work and/or school.



Step Four: Prepare for fires.



Step Five: Assemble a disaster supplies kit.



Step Six: Learn lifesaving skills.

The **Six** Steps to Becoming a Safe Family



Step One: Write a family disaster plan.

- ✓ Meet with everyone in your household and discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to occur in your area. Work together to decide what to do in each case. Write your plan down on paper, and keep it in your family files.
- ✓ Since disasters often strike entire communities rather than just a single home, share your plan with neighbors and encourage them to develop their own plan. Share your plan with family members or friends living outside your town.
- ✓ Select two places to meet if an emergency strikes. In case of sudden emergencies, such as a fire, pick a spot in the neighborhood outside your home. In a widespread emergency when you can't get back home, pick a spot outside your neighborhood. Make sure everyone knows the address and phone number.
- ✓ Develop an emergency communication plan. Ask an out-of-town family member or friend to be your "family contact." When family members become separated, they should check in with the contact and say where they are. Everyone must know the contact's name, address, phone numbers (including work, home and cell) and e-mail address.
- ✓ Plan how to take care of your pet. If you are displaced from your home, you may need to stay temporarily with other people in a shelter. Shelters usually do not allow pets.
- ✓ Create a plan that includes how to care for any elderly or disabled persons in your house or neighborhood. To learn more, check out the link below.
- ✓ Post emergency telephone numbers (fire, police, ambulance, etc.) by your phones.
- ✓ Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.
- ✓ Check batteries in smoke alarms, flashlights and radios. Change these batteries at least once a year.
- ✓ Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms. A smoke alarm should also be in your bedroom if you sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- ✓ Have a fire extinguisher in the home and know how to use it. Local fire departments will show you how.
- ✓ Know where the safe places are in your home for each kind of disaster. Plan escape routes out of the house and, if possible, two ways out of each room.
- ✓ Know how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves and teach others as appropriate. Remember: You will need a professional to turn your gas back on, so do not turn it off unless you suspect a leak or have been advised by authorities to do so.
- ✓ Keep your records safe. Make two photocopies of vital documents and put one in a safe deposit box, another in a safe place in the house (such as in your disaster supplies kit), and/or give a copy to an out-of-town friend or relative.

Care for an elderly or disabled person: www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/mobileprogs.html

- ✓ Make a complete inventory list of your home, garage and surrounding property to help you prove the value of your damaged or destroyed possessions. Store a copy outside the home in a safety deposit box or with a family member or friend.
- ✓ Be sure you have adequate insurance coverage.
- ✓ Use a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio with a tone-alert feature or other battery-powered radio to track warnings and updates from the National Weather Service.
- ✓ Test your family's disaster plan every six months and update it as needed.



Step One: Write a family disaster plan.



Step Two: Write an evacuation plan.



Include the following items:



- ✓ Evacuate immediately, if told to do so.



- ✓ Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.



- ✓ Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- ✓ Take your disaster supplies kit and first aid kit.
- ✓ Make arrangements for your pets.
- ✓ Lock your home.
- ✓ Use travel routes specified by local authorities. Do not use shortcuts, as certain areas may be impassable and dangerous.
- ✓ Know where each family member would go in the event of an evacuation.

Preparing Your Pets

Pets are an important part of the family. Be sure to plan for their safety as well.

1. Have a safe place to take your pets

Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets due to health regulations, other than service animals that assist people with disabilities. It may be difficult to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead.

2. Assemble a portable pet disaster supply kit

Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy carriers that are easy to handle. Your pet disaster supply kit should include:

- Medications and medical records and a first aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers to transport pets safely.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food, portable water, bowls, cat litter/pan and can opener.
- Information on feeding, medical or behavior issues and the name and number of your veterinarian.

3. Know what to do as a disaster approaches

- Always plan to take pets with you and provide shelter for them — do not leave pets behind to fend for themselves.
- Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars with up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area.

For a complete listing of the steps to prepare your pets for disaster, visit the link below.

Prepare your pets for disaster: <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/animalsafety.html>



Step One: Write a family disaster plan.



Step Two: Write an evacuation plan.



Step Three: Learn safety plans for work and/or school.



Although disaster planning for your work or school may be beyond your control, you can influence them by taking these steps that advocate safety:

- ✓ Make sure your work and/or school has written emergency plans. Get copies of each plan.
- ✓ Be sure your work or school conducts practice safety drills regularly. Talk to your kids about their school's emergency plan.
- ✓ Work with your school to make sure it has a first aid and disaster supply kit in each classroom. Suggestions for these kits can be found on pages 6-7 of this guide. For more details on disaster supplies for schools, go to <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters/supply>.
- ✓ Work with the Board of Education, the appropriate school officer or local emergency management if you have concerns about the safety of a school.
- ✓ Know where first aid and disaster supplies kits are kept at work.
- ✓ Work with senior management at your place of employment to prepare a written emergency plan if one does not exist.
- ✓ Contact your local American Red Cross to find out about training courses or programs that can help your work or school prepare for emergencies.



Do it Together

Go on 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.

- Hire a professional to repair defective electrical wiring.
- Fasten shelves securely.
- Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Secure water heater. Strap to wall studs.
- Repair cracks in ceilings or foundations.
- Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products away from heat sources and places where children can get to them.
- Place oily polishing rags or waste in covered metal cans.
- Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors and gas vents.



Step One: Write a family disaster plan.



Step Two: Write an evacuation plan.



Step Three: Learn safety plans.



Step Four: Prepare for fires.



Each year, the American Red Cross responds to more fire-related emergencies than any other type of disaster. Unlike some types of disaster that tend to affect specific regions of the country, such as hurricanes and winter storms, fires can occur anywhere. Fire prevention is key to becoming a safe family.



Make your home safe from fires

- ✓ Install smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home. A smoke alarm should also be in your bedroom if you sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- ✓ Test smoke alarms once a month. Replace dead batteries immediately. Replace all batteries at least once a year.
- ✓ Vacuum away cobwebs and dust from your smoke alarms monthly.
- ✓ Replace smoke alarms every ten years, as they become less sensitive over time.
- ✓ Have a fire extinguisher in the home and know how to use it. Local fire departments will show you how.
- ✓ Recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.

Plan your escape routes

- ✓ Find at least two ways to escape from every room of your home, if possible, and diagram these on paper for future reference and practice sessions.

- ✓ Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas above the first floor. Learn how to use them and store them near windows.
- ✓ Select a location outside your home where everyone can meet after escaping.
- ✓ Practice your escape plan at least twice a year.

Escape safely

- ✓ Once you are out, stay out!
- ✓ Call the fire department from a neighbor's phone, or ask someone to call for you.
- ✓ If smoke or fire blocks your first escape route, use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to get out.
- ✓ If you escape through a closed door, feel the door before opening it. If it is warm, do not open the door. Go immediately to your second escape route.
- ✓ If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a bright-colored cloth or item of clothing at the windows. If there is a telephone in the room, call the fire department and tell them where you are.

FastFacts

If the power goes out, use flashlights. Don't use candles. Candles can start fires, causing more damage than the disaster itself. Battery-operated flashlights pose no fire risk.



Step One: Write a family disaster plan.



Step Two: Write an evacuation plan.



Step Three: Learn safety plans.



Step Four: Prepare for fires.



Step Five: Assemble a disaster supplies kit.



You should plan to have enough supplies to sustain you for at least three days. Store them in a sturdy, easy-to-carry bag, backpack or container that is clearly marked as your family's "Disaster Supplies Kit."

Your kit should include the following:

- ✓ A flashlight and extra batteries.
- ✓ A portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries.
- ✓ Cash in a waterproof container.
- ✓ Photocopies of personal identification and other family documents in a waterproof container.
- ✓ A supply of prescription medications in a waterproof container.
- ✓ Store glasses or contact lenses with solution in a waterproof container.
- ✓ An extra set of keys for both your home and car.
- ✓ One change of clothing and footwear per person and one blanket per person.
- ✓ Sanitation supplies, such as toilet paper, soap, feminine supplies, diapers, garbage bags and other materials as appropriate.
- ✓ A three-day supply of water, stored in plastic containers. Each person needs one gallon of water per day.
- ✓ A non-electric can opener.

Do it Together

Practice!

- Once you have a disaster plan, a disaster supplies kit, and training in American Red Cross lifesaving skills, your family should practice and update your plan, skills, evacuation routes and kit supplies regularly.
- Involve the whole family and practice together.
- Keep it fun for kids by including small prizes or treats for accomplishments.
- Help everyone feel they play an important part in making yours a safe family.

- ✓ A three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water.
- ✓ A first aid kit and first aid manual. First aid kits should be in every home and car.



Do it *Together*

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car to include:

- Waterproof case
- Antimicrobial hand wipes or hand cleaner
- Antiseptic towelettes
- Antibacterial ointment
- Disposable gloves
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Sterile gauze pads in assorted sizes
- Sterile roller bandages in assorted sizes
- Adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages
- Cold pack
- Plastic bags
- Emergency (mylar/plastic) blanket
- First aid instructions/booklet
- Breathing barrier (such as face shield or resuscitation mask)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Small flashlight and batteries
- Activated charcoal (use only if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Local emergency numbers including the Poison Control Center's number





Step One: Write a family disaster plan.



Step Two: Write an evacuation plan.



Step Three: Learn safety plans.



Step Four: Prepare for fires.



Step Five: Assemble a disaster supplies kit.



Step Six: Learn lifesaving skills.

In addition to creating a disaster plan and kit, you and other family members should get certified in American Red Cross lifesaving courses. In the event of a disaster, emergency medical response may be slowed by adverse conditions, such as blocked roads or a high number of people in need of help. If someone is injured in a disaster, the timely use of lifesaving skills can be critical.

Last year, nearly 12 million people enrolled in American Red Cross health and safety courses. Your local Red Cross chapter offers training programs in first aid, CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) and other lifesaving skills that are designed for any age group and can be tailored to the needs of specific groups and individuals. Find out more by calling your local Red Cross chapter.

Fast Facts

Batteries are important to being prepared as a safe family. Keep a supply of reliable batteries in key locations so you can be sure flashlights, radios, smoke alarms and other battery-operated emergency items work when you need them most.



TOGETHERWE Can Become Safe Families**Information Resources**

Your American Red Cross chapter is dedicated to helping your family become prepared. To learn more about the programs in your community or for more information, the Red Cross encourages you to use the following resources:

- ✓ www.redcross.org
- ✓ Your local American Red Cross chapter (to find your nearest American Red Cross chapter check in your local phone book, or log onto www.redcross.org and place your zip code in the “Find Your Local Red Cross” section).
- ✓ Call 1-866-GET-INFO (438-4636)
- ✓ Your local emergency management office.



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