

During an emergency your family may have little or no time to plan what to do next. It is necessary for you to learn about the things you can do to be prepared—before an emergency occurs. Two actions that will help you do this are to develop an emergency plan, and prepare an “Emergency Go Kit.”

Create an Emergency Plan

Part of creating your household emergency plan is to learn about the types of emergencies that may affect your community, how you’ll be notified of an event, and plans that may already be in place to deal with these events. Emergencies may strike when your family members are away from home, so find out about plans at your workplace, school, or anywhere else you and your family spends time. Steps to take in creating a household emergency plan include:

1. Meeting with household members and discuss the dangers of possible emergency events, including fire, severe weather, hazardous spills, and terrorism.
2. Discussing how you and your family will respond to each possible emergency.
3. Discussing what to do in case of power outages or personal injuries.
4. Drawing a floor plan of your home. Mark two escape routes from each room.
5. Teaching adults how to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at main switches. *If for any reason you do turn off natural gas service to your home, call your gas utility company to restore service.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESTORE GAS SERVICE YOURSELF.

6. Posting emergency contact numbers near all telephones, and pre-program emergency numbers into phones with autodial capabilities.
7. Teaching children how and when to dial 911 to get emergency assistance.
8. Teaching children how to make long-distance telephone calls and/or to use a cell phone.
9. Choosing a friend or relative that all family members will call if separated (it is often easier to call out-of-state during an emergency than within the affected areas).
10. Instructing household members to turn on the radio for emergency information.
11. Pick two meeting places:
 - A place near your home
 - A place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home after an emergency.
12. Taking a Basic First Aid and CPR Class. Contact the Carlsbad Fire Dept., the City or the County Emergency Management Office for more info.
13. Keeping family records in a waterproof and fireproof safe. Inexpensive models can be purchased at most hardware stores.

Prepare an Emergency Go Kit

Often during an emergency, electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, or telephone service may not work. Preparing an Emergency Go Kit ahead of time can save precious time in the event you must evacuate or go without electricity, heat, or water for an extended period of time. You should consider including the following items in an Emergency Go Kit:

1. At least a 3-day supply of water (1 gallon per person per day). Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Replace every 6 months.
2. A 3-to 5-day supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a non-electric can opener.
3. A change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes.
4. Blankets, bedding, or sleeping bags.
5. A first aid kit and prescription medications (*be sure to check the expiration dates*).
6. An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and solution (*be sure to check the expiration.*)
7. A list of family physicians, important medical information, and the style and serial number of medical devices such as pacemakers.
8. Special items for infants, the elderly, or family members with disabilities.
9. A battery-powered radio, flashlight, and plenty of extra batteries.
10. Identification, credit cards, cash, and photocopies of important family documents including home insurance information.
11. An extra set of car and house keys.
12. Tools such as screwdrivers, cutters, and scissors, duct tape, waterproof matches, a fire extinguisher, flares, plastic storage containers, needle and thread, pen and paper, a compass, garbage bags, and regular household bleach.

Know the Plans of Your School System

If you have a child who attends school, it is important for you to contact your school system administrators to understand fully what plans are in place to protect your child in the event of an emergency.

Be sure to keep the contact information for your child up to date. Provide your school administrators with a list of family or caregivers who you authorize to pick up your child or children at school.

If a dangerous substance were released in the atmosphere and posed a threat to students during the school day, it is very likely that the schools affected would shelter-in-place and protect children and staff by keeping them inside and moving them to safer areas within the school building.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Working with neighbors in an emergency can save lives and property. Meet with your community members to plan how you could work together until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce emergency preparedness as a new activity.

If You Have Pets

If you evacuate, avoid leaving family pets behind. However, keep in mind that with the exception of service animals, pets are generally not permitted in emergency shelters for health reasons.

For this reason, find out before a disaster occurs which hotels or motels (both within and outside your local area) allow pets. Determine where pet boarding facilities are located.

Create an emergency kit for your pet. This should include:

- Identification tag and rabies tags should be worn on a collar at all times
- Carrier or cage
- Leash each pet during evacuation, if not contained in a carrier
- Any medications (be sure to check expiration date)
- Newspapers and plastic bags for handling waste
- A supply of food, bottled water, and food bowls
- Veterinary records (most animal boarding facilities do not allow pets without proof of vaccination)

Things to think about...

If any members of your household have disabilities or are elderly, find out what services may be available to aid in their care or evacuation in the event of an emergency.

Thunderstorm Preparedness

1. Know the terms used by weather forecasters:
 - a. Severe Thunderstorm **Watch** – Tells you where and when severe thunderstorms are likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to radio or television to know when **warnings** are issued.
 - b. Severe Thunderstorm **Warning** – Issued when severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. Warnings mean imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm.
2. Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage during a severe thunderstorm.
3. When a thunderstorm approaches, secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage. Shutter windows, if possible, and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades or curtains.
4. *Get away from anything metal.*