



## GENERAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Don't know where to start? I offer a whole range of ideas in an article [here](#).

Some of the suggestions below include preparing ahead of time for a specific impending disaster when a warning has been issued, and other suggestions are for general preparedness. For example, having a full tank of gas in your car or filling your bathtub with water is something you may have time to do if a warning is issued, but if disaster strikes without warning you will not have time to do some of these things.

Just because you're a good record-keeper doesn't mean you're a good safe-keeper of records. Can you grab all of your important records in five minutes, if necessary? I didn't think so! Identify a single location to file all crucial papers - preferably a fireproof portable container. In case of disaster that destroys everything, it's also a good idea to have some back-up information stored elsewhere in a safe place.

Put important original documents in plastic covers to protect them and to prevent you from accidentally giving away the original. Notify the appropriate people where important information will be located, in case you're not available when it is needed.

Identify the records that you or your financial institutions keep only on computer. Because they may not be available if electrical power fails, make printouts. Collect important personal papers and information related to financial transactions. For example, keep a paper record of insurance premium payments with the policy. A system error may result in showing you as uninsured.

Create a file of paper-based records of anything you own so you can prove ownership whenever necessary.

### **CONTACT INFO (create a hard copy with this information):**

- Power, light, gas or other utility companies
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Employer
- Insurance agents
- Alarm system
- Doctors
- Minister, Rabbi, or Priest
- Neighbors, friends
- Social Security Office

## **STORE COMPUTER BACKUPS IN A SAFE PLACE**

If you keep much of your information in electronic format on your computer and a flood carries your computer away, you are up a creek without a paddle! Although these suggestions require some effort and time, imagine the effort and time you would have to expend if you *don't* do it and something happens to your computer.

## **HOME:**

Check regularly to see if these items have reliable battery back-up and are in good working condition:

- Fire and security systems
- Programmable thermostats
- Manual can opener
- Answering machines/voice mail systems
- Other electronic equipment that contains battery backups

## **EMERGENCIES:**

- Listen to local radio stations for updates and instructions.
- Be prepared to relocate to a shelter for warmth and protection during a prolonged power outage or if local officials request or require that you leave your home.
- Don't call 911 unless you need emergency assistance.
- Use your time on the phone or on computer modems to a minimum. Leave the lines available for emergency calls.
- Learn how to turn off your household gas and water. Be sure to have the gas company turn the gas back on so pilot lights can be re-lighted at the same time.
- Examine smoke alarms now. If yours is hard-wired, does it have a battery back-up? If so, is the battery fresh?

## **FOOD:**

- Have a five-day supply of food (including some non-perishable food) on hand for each member of your household
- Baby and pet food
- Have one gallon of water per person per day for up to five days. Keep stored in a cool dark place. Stored water should be refreshed every six months.
- A full bathtub or hot tub can provide water for flushing toilets and sponge baths.
- In the event of a power outage, keep refrigerators and freezers shut, and open only when necessary.
- If power goes out, eat perishable foods first, then canned foods.
- Have an ample supply of propane or charcoal and lighter on hand for outdoor cooking in the event of a power outage. Never use open flames or charcoal grills indoors, as this may cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

## **SUPPLIES (for home and car):**

- Cups for drinking, bowls for mixing reconstituted food packets.
- Paper plates, plastic utensils
- Flashlights, batteries
- Matches, lighters
- Batteries
- Blankets or sleeping bags, pillows
- Ear plugs (good for sleeping in shelters or noisy places)
- Toothbrush, floss
- Hand warmers
- Emergency clothing for summer and winter months
- First-aid kit:
  - Gloves
  - Gauze
  - Band-aids

- Tweezers
- Rubbing alcohol
- Antibiotic ointments
- Topical steroid
- NSAIDs: Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Naproxen
- Prescription medications for people and pets
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Car first aid kit, blankets, water
- Portable toilet, toilet paper
- Tissues, paper towels
- Diapers
- Scissors
- Fire extinguisher
- Transistor radio and batteries
- Manual can opener
- Gas in your car
- Have at least a five-day supply of prescription drugs on hand if you need them.
- If you are on kidney dialysis or need regular medical care, have a plan in place for getting your needs fulfilled.