
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POINTERS

Your Family Disaster Plan

Disasters can strike quickly and often times without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services such as water, gas, electricity or telephones were cut off for an extended period of time? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene immediately after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone who needs assistance right away.

Families can and do cope with disasters by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Follow the steps below to create your family's disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

4 Steps to Safety

1 Learn About the Hazards in Your Area

- Find out what types of disasters are most likely to occur in your area.
- Learn about your community's warning signals. Ada County relies on sirens in the foothills, the media and the Emergency Alert System.
- Ask about how to care for your pets after a disaster by calling the Idaho humane Society. Only certified service animals are allowed in emergency shelters.
- Find out how to help elderly or physically challenged people in your neighborhood.

2 Create a Disaster Plan

Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disasters. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and earthquakes to children.

- Discuss the disasters that are most likely to occur. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two meeting places: One right outside your home in case of sudden emergency, such as a fire, and one outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Ask an out-of-state person to be your 'family contact' so that other family members can call and tell them where they are.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Where will you go and what will you take with you?
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace and your child's school, or daycare.

3 Put Your Plan into Action

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones.
- Teach children how and when to call 911.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off all utilities at the main switches.
- Make sure that you have adequate insurance coverage, i.e. homeowners, renters, and flood.
- Show each family member where the fire extinguisher is kept and how to operate it.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Put together a disaster supplies kit - enough emergency supplies to meet you family's needs for at least 3 days.
- Take a Red Cross First Aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Identify the safer spots in your home for each type of disaster.

4 Practice & Maintain Your Plan

- Quiz your kids every 6 months so that they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water every 3 months and stored food every 6 months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher according to the manufacturers instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.