

Terrorism – Preparing for the Unexpected

Devastating acts, such as the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, have left many concerned about the possibility of future incidents in the U.S. and their potential impact. They have raised uncertainty about what might happen next, increasing stress levels. Nevertheless, there are things that you can do to prepare for the unexpected and reduce the stress that you may feel now and later should another emergency arise. Taking preparatory actions can reassure you and your children that you can exert a measure of control even in the face of such events. 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 Basic Preparedness Steps

1. Create a Disaster Plan

Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disasters. Discuss the hazards and how your family should respond to each.

- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Formulate a family communication plan. Ask an out-of-state friend to be your 'family contact'. After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members can call this person 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 children's school or daycare.

2. 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
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Take a Red Cross First Aid and CPR class.
- ❑ Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- ❑ Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

3. Create a Disaster Supplies Kit

If you need to evacuate your home or are asked to "shelter in place", having some essentials on hand will make you and your family more comfortable and will help you all cope until emergency crews can respond. Plan for at least 72 hrs (3 days). Store your supplies in an easy to carry container such as a duffle bag or small plastic trash can. Be sure it's in an easily accessible location.

- ❑ Non-perishable high-energy foods that require little or no preparation
- ❑ Water – stored in plastic containers (1 gallon per person per day is suggested)
- ❑ First Aid Supplies
- ❑ Tools and Supplies – flashlights, extra batteries, gloves, matches, battery operated radio, wrench to shut off utilities, wide duct tape, plastic bags
- ❑ Extra Clothing and Bedding
- ❑ Special Items – medications, baby supplies, etc.
- ❑ Cash (small bills)-banks and ATMs may be closed and out of service in time of disaster

4. Practice and Maintain Your Plan

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