



Emergency Preparedness: A Step-by-Step Guide for Families

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Introduction

If you think about it, you take precautions every day, not just when an emergency occurs. For instance, you wear a seat belt in the car just to protect yourself in case of an accident. You make your children wear helmets when they ride their bicycles. You double-check your iron to make sure it is unplugged.

Preparing for emergencies is not new. Your grandparents probably have extra supplies, such as soap and shampoo in the bathroom closets, onions and potatoes stored in the basement, and canned goods on pantry shelves in their home. They understood the value of having a little extra on hand in case of emergencies.

All states and counties have experienced disasters. Virginians have experienced ice storms, thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and power outages. It is wise to be prepared for the unexpected.

What is in the Fact Sheet?

This fact sheet describes how to cope with an emergency and protect your family. It will help you to:

- Assemble an emergency kit.
- Develop a family communication plan.
- Develop a family evacuation plan.
- Develop an in-home care plan for family members with special needs.

Step 1: Assemble Your Emergency Kit

Making a kit is easier than you think. In fact, you can start with the basics and add to them over time. The checklist below gives ideas on what might go into an emergency kit. Select items to place in the grab bag that best meet your own needs. Items for the grab bag may include the following:

- One day's clothing and shoes for each family member.
- Personal care products (for example, toothbrush, feminine hygiene products, diapers).
- Towel and washcloth for family members.
- Blanket(s) or sleeping bag(s).
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Granola bars/trail mix.
- An extra set of car keys.
- Copies of important documents: medical, prescriptions, passport, birth certificate, driver's license, insurance, and bank information.
- Cash.
- Portable phone charger or power bank.
- Face masks and hand sanitizer.



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If you have to leave your home quickly, do not forget your prescription medications, eyeglasses and/or hearing aids.

Your Car

If you have a car, keep its gas tank at least half-full because in an emergency, you may not be able to get fuel. Other items to have in your car include:

- Bottled water.
- Food (granola/energy bars).
- First aid kit.
- White distress flag.
- Flares/light sticks.
- Blanket or sleeping bag.
- Emergency reflective blanket.
- Jumper cables.
- Tire jack and spare tire.
- Fix-a-flat.
- Shovel.
- Maps.

Consider keeping your grab bag in your car trunk. This will allow you to leave the disaster area quickly with the things you need.

Your Home

In an emergency, having the following items in your home is highly recommended to keep your family safe.

- Water: at least one gallon/person/day.
- Can opener, non-electric.
- Battery-powered radio.
- ABC-type fire extinguisher.
- Smoke detectors and carbon-monoxide detectors.
- Prescription medications.
- First Aid Kit.
- Flashlight and battery-powered lantern.
- Extra batteries.
- 5–7-day supply of canned or dried food.
- 5–7-day supply of baby food and formula as needed.

If there is a power outage, eat the food in your refrigerator first. Without power, food in a refrigerator will only be good for about four hours. If the power is out longer than that, use your emergency food supply.

Your In-Home Kit

To be MORE prepared, add supplies to last 7-10 days. How can you build your 7-10 day supply? Buy a few extra supplies each month until you have enough to last for at least 7 extra days. Buy foods that need no refrigeration and little or no cooking.

TRY:

- Water: at least one gallon/person/day.
- Canned or dried fruits, vegetables, and soups.
- Canned or dried meat, seafood, or alternative proteins.
- Beverages: instant coffee, canned juice.
- Rice, pasta, cereal, crackers.
- Powdered or canned milk.
- Baby food and formula, if needed.
- Comfort foods, snacks, and sweets.
- Other foods such as peanut butter, cooking oil, salt, and nuts.

Other Items Needed

- Personal care products (for example, feminine hygiene products, diapers).

Pet Needs

- Food, water, leashes, kitty litter, litter box, food/water bowls, and medications, etc.
- Store supplies in a dry, cool place. Use supplies before they expire and replace what you use.

Extra Supplies to Have at Home

To be MOST prepared, keep these things at home.

- Outdoor grill and fuel.
- Fire escape ladder.
- Rope and duct tape.
- Extra batteries.

Never use items such as grills, camp stoves, or generators indoors. They produce carbon monoxide, which is deadly and undetectable.

Step 2: Develop a Family Communications Plan

If you are separated and unable to contact other members of your family, each member should have the same contact out-of-state. Fill out the card provided in this factsheet and give copies to all family members.

Identify:

- An emergency contact in your local area.
- A contact out-of-state if the entire local area is under emergency.
- A neighborhood meeting place.

Step 3: Develop a Family Evacuation Plan

In an emergency, you may have to leave your home quickly. If evacuation is necessary, listen to the radio for more information. Also, make sure that everyone is familiar with:

- Best exit(s) out of your home.
- Neighborhood meeting place.
- Local radio station.
- Location of grab bag, fire extinguisher, and first-aid kits.
- Plan for taking care of pets and livestock.

Step 4: Develop a Plan for In-Home Care for Members with Special Needs.

Here are some helpful hints for family members with special needs:

- Inform the local fire department about the person's special needs.
- Identify a neighbor or a family member who can help if a care provider is not available.
- Familiarize the care provider with the steps he/she must take in case of an emergency.
- Consider helping neighbors who may have special needs.

Twice Each Year

When you change your clocks, you should:

- Change the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Check the pressure gauge on your fire extinguisher.
- Tip the fire extinguisher over and ensure the powder has not become compacted.
- Practice getting out of your home quickly with your family.
- Update your grab bag.
- Use and replace any food in your kit that will soon expire.

Family Communications Plan
Family Emergency Contact: _____
Phone: _____
Out-of-State Contact: _____
Phone: _____
Neighborhood Mtg Place: _____
Phone: _____
Alternate Mtg Place: _____
Phone: _____
Dial 911 in Emergency

<i>Fold Here</i>
Other Important Information
Allergies: _____
Blood Type: _____
Medical Conditions: _____
Current Medications: _____
Health Care Provider: _____
Phone: _____
Other: _____

To Help Prevent the Spread of Disease and Illness

- Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wash hands often, especially when handling food, and after coughing, sneezing, or using the bathroom.

Safe Drinking Water

If your water source is from a city or town system, follow orders from municipal officials strictly. Heat water to a rolling boil for 2 minutes. Do not use water from a well that has been submerged in floodwater. Check with officials about testing for well water contamination. Never use floodwater for any purpose because it could be contaminated.

Disaster Declarations

Local government has direct responsibility for the safety of its residents. State government has additional legal responsibilities for emergency response and recovery, and serves as a point of contact between local and federal governments. The day-to-day activities of the emergency preparedness program have been delegated to the County/City Administrator and Emergency Services Coordinator. They will direct and control emergency operations in times of emergency and issue directives to other services and organizations concerning disaster preparedness.

Acknowledgments

This brochure was designed and produced by the Brunswick County Local Emergency Planning Committee. For additional information on Emergency Preparedness, visit the following websites:

www.ready.gov

www.fema.gov

www.cdc.gov

www.redcross.org

www.eden.lsu.edu

www.ext.vt.edu

www.vaemergency.gov

www.brunswickco.com/government/departments/emergency_services

www.brunswickso.org

Special Thanks to:

Brunswick County Local Emergency Planning Committee Brochure Team.

New Hampshire Department of Safety, Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

Greensville County, *A Citizen's Guide to Disasters*.

Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

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