



**pennsylvania**  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



## Prepare for Emergencies Now: Information to Get Ready

Preparing Makes Sense. The likelihood that you and your family will survive a house fire depends as much on having a working smoke detector and an exit strategy, as on a well-trained fire department. The same is true for surviving a disaster or other emergency. We must have the tools and plans in place to make it on our own, at least for a period of time, no matter where we are when disaster strikes. Just like having a working smoke detector, preparing for the unexpected makes sense. Get ready now.

### 1. Make a Plan

Plan in advance what you will do in an emergency. Use common sense and whatever you have on hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Develop a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. Consider a plan where each family member calls, or e-mails, the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system may be down altogether, but be patient.



Create a Plan to Shelter-in-Place. There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as sheltering-in-place, and sealing the room can be a matter of survival. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to shelter-in-place. Quickly bring your family and pets inside, lock doors, and close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers. Immediately turn off air conditioning, forced air heating systems, exhaust fans and clothes dryers. Take your emergency supplies and go into the room you have designated. Seal all windows, doors and vents. Understand that sealing the room is a temporary measure to create a barrier between you and contaminated air. Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for instructions.

Create a Plan to Get Away. Plan in advance how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency. If you have a car, keep at least a half tank of gas in it at all times and a "go bag" in a convenient location to grab and go. Become familiar with alternate routes as well as other means of transportation out of your area. If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to.

Take your emergency supply kit, unless you have reason to believe it is contaminated and lock the door behind you. Take pets with you if you are told to evacuate; however, if you are going to a public shelter, keep in mind they may not be allowed inside. If you believe the air may be contaminated, drive with your windows and vents closed and keep the air conditioning and heater turned off. Listen to the radio for instructions.

Know Emergency Plans at School and Work. Think about the places where your family spends time: school, work and other places your family frequents. Talk to your children's schools and your employer about emergency plans. Find out how they will communicate with families during an emergency. If you are an employer, be sure you have an emergency preparedness plan. Review and practice it with your employees.



## 2. Get a Kit

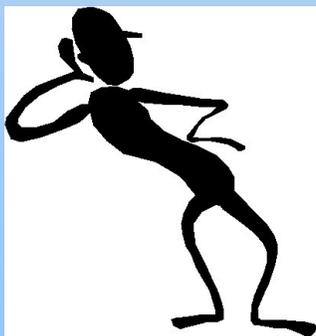
Be prepared to use what you have on hand to make it on your own for at least three days, maybe longer. While there are many things that might make you more comfortable, think first about fresh water, food and clean air. Consider two kits. In one, put everything you will need to stay where you are and make it on your own. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to get away.

### Recommended Supplies to Include in a Basic Kit:

- ✓ Water one gallon per person per day, for drinking and sanitation
- ✓ Food at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- ✓ Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- ✓ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ✓ First Aid kit
- ✓ Whistle to signal for help
- ✓ Filter mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air
- ✓ Moist towelettes for sanitation
- ✓ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- ✓ Manual can opener for food ( if kit contains canned food )
- ✓ Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- ✓ Garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ✓ Unique family needs, such as daily prescription medications, infant formula or diapers, and important family documents



## 3. Be Informed



Learn the types of disasters or emergencies that are likely to occur in your area. These events can range from those affecting only you and your family, like a home fire or medical emergency, to those affecting your entire community, like an earthquake or flood.

Identify how local authorities will notify you during a disaster and how you will get information, whether through local radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio stations or channels.

Know the difference between weather alerts such as watches and warnings and what actions to take in each.

Know what actions to take to protect yourself during disasters that may occur in areas where you travel or have recently moved.

In an emergency, medical help may be delayed, become trained in First Aid, CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED).

## 4. Get Involved

After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies, take the next step and get involved in preparing your community. Join Citizen Corps, which actively involves citizens in making our communities and our nation safer, stronger and better prepared. We all have a role to play for a resilient neighborhood. Citizen Corps works hard to help people prepare, train and volunteer in their communities. Go to [www.ready.pa.org](http://www.ready.pa.org) for more information and to get involved.



### Additional Resources

PEMA: <http://www.pema.pa.gov>

FEMA: <http://www.ready.gov>

ReadyPA: [www.ready.pa.org](http://www.ready.pa.org)