#### *Best Way Out*

*In an emergency, do you know the best escape routes to get out of your house? Find at least two ways out of each room. Now write them down - you've got the beginning of a plan.*

#### Oh, the places you'll go

Designate two places to meet after an emergency with your family. Identify a location right outside your home, in case of a sudden household emergency such as a fire. The second location should be outside your neighborhood, in the event that it is not safe to stay near or return to your home.

#### *Make a connection*

*Choose an emergency contact who lives outside your area since it may be easier to call long distance after a disaster. Share this number with your family.*

*Also, be sure to have a landline in your home and a phone that works without electricity since cellular phones may not be in service during a disaster.*

#### *Pet project*

*Don't forget your pets in the planning process. Find out in advance which public shelters in your community will take pets in case you have to evacuate. Be sure to include three days worth of food, water, and any medications your animal may need in your emergency supply kit. Also, be sure to have collars, leashes, pictures of you and your pet, and ID tags readily available.*

#### Make it a habit

Make it a point to review your emergency plan, update numbers and check supplies to be sure nothing has expired, spoiled or changed. Do this twice a year when you change your clock and replace the batteries in your smoke detector.

#### What about the kids?

Know your child's school emergency plan. Keep a copy at home and work as part of your home emergency plan.

Also, include your children in the planning process by having them participate in assembling your supply kit, so they, too, will know how to utilize these resources.

#### Get emergency help

*Teach your children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency medical services number for help. Post these and other emergency numbers by your telephones.*

#### Work together

A community working together during an emergency makes sense.

* Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together during an emergency.
* Find out if anyone has specialized equipment such as a power generator or has expertise, such as medical knowledge, that might help in a crisis situation.
* Decide who will check on your older neighbors, as well as neighbors with disabilities and other special needs.
* Develop back-up plans for children in case you can't get home during an emergency.

#### What's the plan, boss?

Do you know the emergency preparedness plan for your workplace? If you don't, make a point to ask.

Know multiple ways to exit your office building, participate in workplace evacuation drills and consider keeping some emergency supplies at the office.

#### *Be ready to go!*

*Make sure you have a to-go bag on hand in case you have to evacuate. Your portable kit should include: water, food, battery-powered radio and flashlight with extra batteries, first-aid supplies, change of clothing, blanket or sleeping bag, wrench or pliers, whistle, dust mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape, trash bags, local map, a manual can opener for canned food and special items including medication for infants, older individuals, or individuals with disabilities and other special needs. Keep these items in an easy to carry container such as a covered trash container, a large backpack or a duffle bag.*

#### Food for thought

Preparing for emergencies can be inexpensive if you think ahead and buy small quantities at a time. Supplies should sustain each member of your family for at least three days following an emergency.

Make a list of foods that:

* Have a long shelf-life and will not spoil (non-perishable)
* You and your family enjoy
* Do not require cooking
* Can be easily stored
* Have low-salt content as salty foods can make you thirstier

#### First Aid

Make sure you have a first-aid kit for your family. Be sure to check it regularly and also ensure it is well stocked.

#### Water is essential

Store a minimum of one gallon of water per person for at least three days, to be used for drinking, food preparation, and sanitation. Store your water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held toxic substances. Plastic containers such as soft drink bottles, are best. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums.

Seal water containers tightly, label them and store in a cool, dark place. Rotate water every six months.

#### What's in YOUR kit?

One of the easiest ways you can prepare for emergencies is to keep some supplies readily available. Every kit is unique and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of your family, but below is a general list of supplies you may want to consider:

* Water, one gallon per person, per day for three days
* Food for at least three days
* Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
* Flashlight and extra batteries
* Cash or traveler's checks, change
* First-Aid kit
* Whistle
* Dust mask
* Moist towlettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
* Shut-off wrench or pliers, to turn off household gas and water
* Map of the area (for locating shelters and evacuation routes)

#### What's in YOUR kit? Part two

Consider the following additional items for your emergency preparedness kit:

* Prescription medications and glasses
* Infant formula and diapers
* Pet food and extra water for your pet
* Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof portable container
* Emergency reference material such as a First-Aid book or information from www.ready.gov
* Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate
* Complete change of clothing including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate
* Fire extinguisher
* Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
* Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
* Paper and pencil
* Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

#### Car kit?

You should also keep a smaller version of your emergency supply kit in your vehicle, in case you are en route when disaster strikes.

The emergency kit for your vehicle should include:

* Bottled water and non-perishable high-energy foods, such as granola bars, raisins and peanut butter
* Flashlight and extra batteries
* Blanket
* Booster cables
* Fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type)
* First-aid kit and manual
* Local maps
* Shovel
* Tire repair kit and pump
* Flares or other emergency marking devices

#### Office kit?

You should also keep an emergency supply kit in your office, in case you need to shelter-in-place there. Think about your individual needs when planning. Some suggestions for a workplace kit include:

* Bottled water
* High-energy food bars
* 12-hour light sticks
* Blanket
* First-aid kit
* Change of clothes
* Personal hygiene items
* Medications and medical information
* AM/FM portable radio
* Whistle

#### Surf the 'net

Print emergency preparedness information and be sure to keep a copy with your disaster supplies kit. It can provide telephone numbers, addresses and other local information you need when electronic connections are not available options for obtaining the information.

#### Know how to treat contaminated water

Always use bottled water for drinking and cooking if it is available. Unsanitary water can be very dangerous to your health. If you don't know the level of purity of the water, it should always be treated.

Use one or a combination of these treatments:

* Boil
  + Boiling is the safest method of treating water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking.
* Chlorinate
  + You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular household liquid bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented bleaches, color-safe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners. Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.

Flood water can also be contaminated by toxic chemicals. Do NOT try to treat flood water.