West Virginia Office of Emergency Services

Getting Ready:
A Family Emergency Guide

West Virginia Citizen Corps Council

This publication was printed for you by the West Virginia Citizen Corps Council to help you and your family be safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any kind of disaster.

The West Virginia Citizen Corps Council is an organization network dedicated to making a safer West Virginia by developing new volunteer resources and public education programs while managing existing volunteer assets and supporting development of local Citizen Corps Councils.

Local Citizen Corps Councils work to promote and strengthen programs at the community level as well as to provide opportunities for special skills and interests.

While encouraging cooperation among community leaders, the councils provide residents with training opportunities in first aid and emergency preparedness. This helps residents become educated about what to do in emergency situations when first responders are not immediately available.

The councils also develop outreach programs for communities and organize special projects or community events such as disaster preparedness fairs and safety fairs.

Citizen Corps programs:

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP)
- Fire Corps

If you want more information about Citizen Corps, contact your county emergency services director or the state Citizen Corps/CERT coordinator.

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Introduction

This booklet provides families, neighborhoods and local communities in West Virginia with basic information and suggestions on how to prepare for emergencies.

It is important for everyone to be prepared for natural disasters such as ice storms, tornadoes, forest fires and floods, and man-made disasters such as train accidents or chemical spills, as well as for possible terrorist attacks.

Many preparations that you and your families can take are similar for any type of disaster and are covered in this booklet.

The West Virginia Office of Emergency Services offers a special thanks to Curt Bury from the Jefferson County Red Cross for his work on this booklet and his dedication to protecting lives and property by informing the public on safety issues.

The Basics

Storms or other emergencies may happen at any time and the immediate effects may last for a while. It's best to be prepared with supplies for 7 to 14 days.

Water: You can live for a while without food, but not without water. Store 7–14 gallons of water for each person in your family. Keep in a cool, dark place and replace with fresh water every 6 months.

Food: Stock up on the food you normally use and enjoy. Foods that don't need refrigeration or cooking are best. Remember babies, older people and those with special diets as you prepare. If the electricity goes off, use foods that might spoil first. Then use foods from the freezer. Finally, use others that don't need refrigeration.

Medicines: If you use prescription medicines, keep an extra supply on hand. If anyone in the family uses special medical devices, talk to your doctor about what to do if there's a problem with them. Buy or put together a first aid kit. Take it with you if you're asked to leave your home.

Bank records: Keep paper copies of your bank, credit card and other financial records. Keep a little extra cash on hand in small bills and change.

If the power goes off: Have several flashlights, extra batteries and bulbs ready to use. Be careful using open candles. They may cause a fire. Have a battery-powered portable radio. Listen to radio or local TV stations selected to broadcast emergency information.

If you don't have heat: Bundle up with extra warm clothes and blankets. Use a hat. Be very careful if you use a fireplace or wood stove. They might cause a fire. You may need to go to a relative or friend's house, hotel or motel or to a Red Cross shelter. Listen to the emergency radio or TV stations to find out where the shelters are.

What to prepare for

Natural events and other incidents can disrupt services and create emergency conditions, but family preparedness can reduce any impact. Listen to your local news and weather reports daily. If severe weather is predicted, stay home, if possible, until roads are clear and services are restored. Be particularly alert for fallen electrical wires and report them to the power company. West Virginia emergencies can include:

Floods: In mountainous West Virginia, floods can result from heavy rain or sudden snow melt. Floods can be very destructive in narrow valleys and river lowlands. If they happen suddenly, escape routes may be limited. In these areas, be alert and be ready to evacuate quickly, if necessary. If a flood puts you in danger, move to higher ground. Don't drive through high water. Keep children away from creeks, streams and storm drains.

Hurricanes or tornadoes: West Virginia is not on a typical hurricane or tornado path. However, very high winds, sometimes with heavy rain, can create emergency conditions. If possible, stay at home until roads are clear of debris, such as fallen trees and branches, and services are restored. In case of a tornado warning, take shelter in a basement corner or in a small interior room. Don't attempt to outrun a tornado in a car. Get out and take shelter in a ditch or on low ground – not under a tree.

Blizzards, ice and heavy snow: Pay attention to weather forecasts in your area and stay at home if possible until roads are clear, downed electric wires are cleared and services restored. Be careful shoveling heavy snow.

Forest or brush fires: These can be started by lightning, human carelessness or arson, and can spread very rapidly. Call 9-1-1 and get ready to evacuate before routes are cut off. If your house catches fire, leave the house immediately and then call 9-1-1. Do NOT try to put it out yourself. Lives are more important than possessions.

Naturally occurring disease epidemics: These are now rare. Should any threaten, your local health officials will publicize necessary information. Flu shots every fall are suggested for people most vulnerable to this common ailment.

Terrorism: Terrorist attacks have left many concerned about the possibility of future incidents in the United States and their potential impact. Terrorist goals are to destabilize government and panic citizens. They try to keep us guessing about what might happen next, increasing our worries.

However, there are things you and your family can do to prepare for the unexpected. This can reduce the stress that you may feel now and later should another emergency arise. Being prepared can reassure you and your children that you can have a measure of control even in the face of such events.

Possible terrorist acts could include bombs or explosives. One example is a car bomb like those used in the Middle East and against U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania or against the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen. Airliners full of fuel caused the bomb-like destruction at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Bombs can even be sent by mail.

Find out what could happen to your family and neighborhood. Reading this booklet is a good start. Once you have determined the events possible and their potential in your community, it is important that you discuss them with your family or household. Develop an emergency plan together.

Homeland Security Advisory System: The Homeland Security Advisory System is shown here. Please refer to this color-coded chart when officials issue a security alert. Appropriate safety instructions will accompany an alert.

Red: A Severe Condition reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks.

Orange: A High Condition is declared when there is a high risk of terrorist attacks.

Yellow: An Elevated Condition is declared when there is a significant risk of terrorist attacks.

Blue: This condition is declared when there is a general risk of terrorist attacks.

Green: This condition is declared when there is a low risk of terrorist attacks.

With help from the American Red Cross, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security developed guidelines to help citizens understand what they can do to be safe and prepared at each Homeland Security Advisory level. Visit www.dhs.gov to learn more about the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the advisory system.

Green Level Recommendations

•Develop a family emergency plan. Share it with family and friends, and practice the plan.
•Visit www.Ready.gov for help creating a plan.
•Create an "Emergency Supply Kit" for your household.
•Be informed. Visit www.Ready.gov or obtain a copy of "Preparing Makes Sense, Get Ready Now" by calling 1-800-BE-READY.
•Know how to shelter-in-place and how to turn off utilities (power, gas, and water) to your home.
•Examine volunteer opportunities in your community, such as Citizen Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch or others, and donate your time. Consider completing an American Red Cross first aid or CPR course, or Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) course.

Blue Level Recommendations

•Complete recommended steps at level green.
•Review stored disaster supplies and replace items that are outdated.
•Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities.

Yellow Level Recommendations

•Complete recommended steps at levels green and blue.
•Ensure disaster supply kit is stocked and ready.
•Check telephone numbers in family emergency plan and update as necessary.
•Develop alternate routes to/from work or school and practice them.
•Continue to be alert for suspicious activity and report it to authorities.

Orange Level Recommendations

•Complete recommended steps at lower levels.
•Exercise caution when traveling, pay attention to travel advisories.
•Review your family emergency plan and make sure all family members know what to do.
•Be patient. Expect some delays, baggage searches and restrictions at public buildings.
•Check on neighbors or others that might need assistance in an emergency.

Red Level Recommendations

•Complete all recommended actions at lower levels.
•Listen to local emergency management officials.
•Stay tuned to TV or radio for current information/instructions.
•Be prepared to shelter-in-place or evacuate, as instructed.
•Expect traffic delays and restrictions. Provide volunteer services only as requested.
•Contact your school/business to determine status of workday.

Build your emergency plan

How to make a family emergency plan

Meet with your family to discuss why you need to prepare for an emergency. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and floods to children. Be sure to cover the suggestions on how to prepare for possible terrorist attacks. Talk together about how to prepare and respond. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team. Talk to a Citizen Corps representative or take a Citizen Corps class to learn more about making a family emergency plan.

1. Create an emergency communications plan.

•Choose an out-of-town contact your family or household will telephone or e-mail to check on each other if a disaster occurs. Your selected contact should live far enough away that they would be unlikely to be directly affected by the same event, and they should know they are the chosen contact.

•Make sure every household member has telephone numbers (home, work, pager and cell phone) for that contact, and for each other's e-mail addresses.

•Leave these contact numbers at your children's schools and at your workplace.

•Your family should know that if regular or cell telephones are not working, they need to be patient and try again later or try e-mail. Many people flood the telephone systems when emergencies happen but e-mail can sometimes get through when calls don't.

Keep up on the news and any recommendations from your county and state emergency planning teams. Learn about your community's warning signals, what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them. Find out what local radio stations provide such warnings. Know how to find the emergency broadcasting station on your portable or car radio. Make sure your radio is strong enough to work inside your shelter location. Listen to weather reports.

2. Pick two places to meet:

•Choose a specific outside location on or very near your property in case of a sudden emergency, like a house fire.

•Pick a place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone should know the address and phone number and how to get there.

•Having a set meeting place away from your home will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected or the area evacuated. You may even want to make arrangements to stay with a family member or friend in case of an emergency. Be sure to include any pets in these plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters and some hotels will not accept them. See page 30 for suggestions about pets.

3. Check on the school emergency plan of any school-age children.

You need to know if children at school will be kept until a parent or designated adult can pick them up or if they will be sent home on their own. Be sure that the school has updated information about how to reach parents and responsible caregivers to arrange for pickup. Ask what type of authorization the school may require to release a child to someone you designate if you are not able to pick up your child. During times of emergency, the school telephones may be overwhelmed with calls. If you use a day-care center, find out its emergency plan.

4. Find out about the emergency plans at your workplace, your church and other places where your family spends time, such as sports facilities, scout troop centers, etc.

Develop communications and pickup plans for these locations, too, in case an emergency occurs when one or more members of your family are there.

5. Work with your neighbors.

Neighbors helping neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how you can work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce emergency preparedness as a new activity.

You also can help your family and neighbors by participating in Citizen Corps programs such as Community Emergency Response Team, Volunteers in Police Service, Medical Reserve Corps or Neighborhood Watch Program.

Discuss how you can work together to handle natural disasters or terrorist problems. Talk about how you can share resources. Know your neighbors' special skills (medical, technical and others). Consider how you can help neighbors with special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Develop a way to stay in touch with them as well.

Make plans for childcare, in case parents can't get home, and exchange contact information.

6. Complete your emergency plan and share it with your family by following these suggestions.

- Teach all family members how to call 9-1-1.

- Post emergency contact information by phones. Stress can confuse memory.

- Make sure each responsible family member knows how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main

switches. Keep necessary tools by the switches.

•Check if you have sufficient insurance coverage. Note that if you are a renter, your landlord's insurance does not protect your personal property. Renters' insurance and renters' flood insurance are available from most insurance representatives. Homeowner's insurance does not cover flood damage. Ask your agent about the National Flood Insurance Program. Remember to keep your insurance coverage up to date.

•Teach each family member how to use a fire extinguisher (ABC type) and show them where they are kept.

•If they are not already there, install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.

•Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire preparedness and hazards. 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.

•Take a Citizen Corps preparedness class or Red Cross first aid and CPR class. Include older children in these courses. These are critical skills and learning can be a fun activity.

•Tell children that in a disaster there are many people who can help the family. Talk about ways that people can help: neighbors, volunteers, police officers, firefighters, teachers, doctors, or utility workers.

•Have adequate home emergency supplies stored together in a convenient place.

•Have evacuation supplies stored separately and easily accessible.

7. Practice and maintain your plan and supplies.

- Recharge your fire extinguisher(s) as needed. Follow the manufacturer's maintenance instructions on the cylinder.
- Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors monthly. Change the batteries at least once a year.
- Periodically check the condition of escape equipment from upper stories.
- When you change your clocks in the spring and fall, check your emergency supplies and practice your fire and evacuation drills.
- Quiz your kids so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water and food to keep them fresh.

Emergency supplies

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for about 7 to 14 days, more if possible. Assemble a family emergency supplies kit with items you may need both for your home and in an evacuation (see page 19 for a suggested list). Store separate supplies for the evacuation kit in sturdy easy-to-carry containers like backpacks, duffel bags or covered trash containers. Replace these supplies periodically.

Keep important family documents in a waterproof and fireproof container or bank safe deposit box.

Getting your home ready

Water

Having a supply of clean water is very important. A normally active person needs to drink at least 8 glasses of water each day. During hot weather, you will need to increase that amount. Children, nursing mothers and sick people will need more. You will also need water to fix meals and to wash. Keep at least one gallon per person, per day. You should keep at least a 7 to 14 day supply of water for each member of your family. Don't forget water for pets.

If supplies run low, drink what you need today and try to find more for tomorrow. You can use less by doing less and staying cool.

Keep your water in very clean plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held poison. Plastic soft drink bottles work well for water storage. You can also buy food-grade plastic buckets or drums. Close water containers tightly, date them and keep in a cool, dark place. Change this water with fresh water every six months.

Food

You don't need to go out and buy special foods to prepare an emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods and other staples on your cupboard shelves. In fact, familiar foods are important. They can lift spirits and give a feeling of security in times of stress. Also, many canned foods don't need cooking, water or special preparation. Just be sure to have an adequate supply.

Special considerations

People with special diets and allergies will need more attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people. Nursing mothers may need to give their baby liquid formula in case they can't nurse. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people. Make sure you have a hand-operated (not electric) can opener and disposable utensils. And don't forget foods for your pets.

Heat and light

Have lots of flashlights and extra batteries and bulbs on hand. Keep a flashlight next to your bed. Check batteries often. Be careful using open flame candles or lanterns for emergency lighting.

Examine your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms now. If you have alarms that are hard-wired into your home's electrical system (most newer ones are), check to see if they have battery back-ups. If not, buy battery-operated smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. If you already have detectors, clean and test them. A working smoke detector can double your chances of survival. Replace all batteries in all alarms each year as a general safety precaution. If you rent your home, ask your landlord about doing this.

If you plan to use alternate equipment for heat, cooking and light during a power failure, be sure to check your equipment periodically. Have an adequate supply of fuel stored (not in the house). Have fireplace chimneys and stove flues cleaned regularly.

Fire Safety

Practice home fire drills. Make sure all family members know of the outside meeting place and how to get out quickly.

Store any gas cans or other flammable liquids away from the house. Always keep an ABC fire extinguisher close at hand.

Possible home hazards

During an emergency, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, or break can cause an accident or fire. For example, an unsteady bookshelf is a home hazard. People can trip over loose electric cords or toys on stairways. Make sure that freestanding heaters or lamps cannot be knocked over by active children or pets. Enlist all family members to keep your home always hazard free.

Utilities

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service meter or main intake pipe, and natural gas meter. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members.

Keep necessary tools handy in case you need them to shut off gas and water.

Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.

If you have your own septic system for sewage, make sure your treatment schedule is up to date.

Preventing flood damage

What is flood mitigation? Flood mitigation is the correct action taken on your property to prevent future flood losses. Flood mitigation saves lives and money. Some mitigation options are:

- Elevate your property above the base flood height
- Relocate your property out of the floodway, or

•Allow your county or city government to purchase your property,

Contact your city council, county emergency services director or county commission to express interest in flood mitigation programs. The city or county then applies for grant money on your behalf to fund mitigation projects.

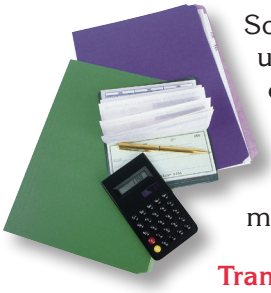
Pharmacies, medication and general health

Your drugstore keeps its records on computers and they may be subject to power or even computer problems. If you take medication regularly, ask your doctor to write an additional prescription so you have an extra supply on hand.

Keep a family medical inventory. List all medications that all family members use, and supplies used with them, such as needles, alcohol swabs, etc. List all medical conditions, allergies and medical devices for all family members. List last dates of all immunizations such as tetanus.

Discuss these lists with your doctor to be sure they are complete. Ask how to handle chronic medical conditions in an emergency and what you can do if needed mechanical or electric equipment fails. Keep medical and dental checkups up to date. Maintaining good health is the first line of defense against any unexpected emergencies.

Banks and financial records



Keep hard copies of all bank statements, Social Security earnings profiles, mortgage, car, utility and rent payments, IRA's, etc. in a safety deposit box or at a family member's house. Keep canceled checks or carbons, income statements and tax records. Computer disruptions in banks or businesses could make these hard copies an important backup.

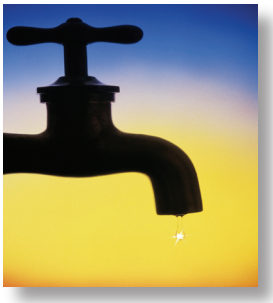
Transportation

Keep your automobile gas tank more than half full and oil at the proper level. Gas stations could experience a variety of electrical problems or delays in fuel delivery. Storing gasoline at home can be extremely expensive and hazardous and is not recommended.

Prepare an emergency kit

If you need to evacuate your home, having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable. Once a disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. Discuss what to do and what to take with you if you have to leave your home. Practice what you have discussed.

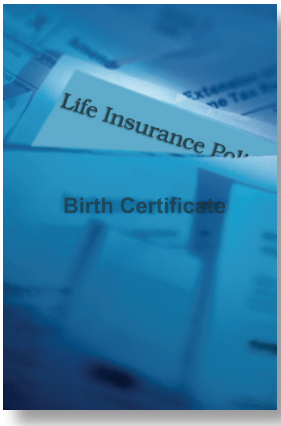
Assemble an emergency supplies kit that can go with you. Use the family emergency supplies kit check list provided on pages 19-21. The items checked off in the "Take" column on the Check List are those recommended for a kit that you would take to a shelter. Store your evacuation kit with, but separate from the supplies that you may need if your family is confined at home (checked in the "Home" column). Place the supplies you chose for the evacuation kit in an easy-to-carry container, such as a large, covered trash container, knapsacks or a duffel bag. Don't forget your keys for your house, cars and safe deposit box.



You may need several days supply of water, since you can't be sure when it will be available in your temporary new location.

Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of Sterno fuel. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

Put together a first aid kit for your home and one for your evacuation kit, with one for each car in case you use a car to evacuate. Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person. Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons. You will need to plan ahead for any pets you have, because they cannot be



taken to community shelters. See page 30 for suggestions on pets.

Keep important family documents in your safe deposit box at the bank or copies at the house of a friend or relative. It is a good idea to keep copies of documents you might need in an emergency, if you can't get to the bank. Keep these in a locked waterproof, fireproof, portable container that you can take with you if you have to evacuate. Remember to take the key to this container with you with your other keys.

These documents may include:

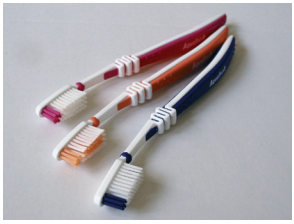
- Important phone numbers;
- Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds;
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records;
- Bank account numbers, credit card account numbers and companies;
- Inventory of valuable household goods; and
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates) as well as legal papers such as divorce, immigration or citizenship records.

Family Emergency Supplies Checklist

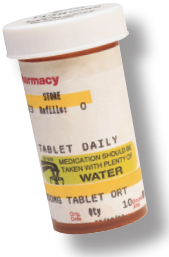
"Home" – keep in kit at home; "Take" – keep in evacuation kit

Home	Take	Supplies
		Water
√	√	One gallon a day for each person
√	√	Household liquid bleach to purify drinking water
		Food
√	√	Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables
√	√	Canned juices, milk, soup
√	√	Sugar, salt, pepper
√	√	High energy foods – peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
√	√	Multi-vitamins (as needed)
√	√	Comfort foods – cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereal
		Clothing & Bedding
√	√	Sturdy shoes or work boots
√	√	Rain gear, boots, warm socks
√	√	Blankets or sleeping bags
√	√	Hats and gloves
√	√	Extra warm clothing
√	√	Thermal underwear
√	√	Sunglasses, sunscreen

Home	Take	Other supplies
√	√	Mess kits, paper cups, plastic utensils
√	√	Batteries
√	√	Battery operated radio
√	√	Flashlight, extra bulbs
√		Duct tape
√		Wooden matches in water-proof container
√		Aluminum foil
√		Plastic storage containers
√	√	Signal flare
√	√	Paper, pencil
√	√	Needles, thread
√		Shovel & other useful tools
√		Plastic sheeting
√	√	Maps (state, county, city)
√		Fire extinguisher
√	√	Money
√	√	Can opener (hand-operated)
√	√	Utility knife
√	√	Paper towels
√	√	Personal hygiene items
√	√	Plastic garbage bags and tie
√		Plastic bucket with tight lid
√	√	Spray disinfectant
√	√	Towelettes or diaper wipes
√	√	Toilet paper
√	√	Formula, bottles



Home	Take	Supplies
✓	✓	Canned baby food, juice
✓	✓	Medications, vitamins
		General needs
✓	✓	Prescription medications
✓	✓	Insulin and kit
✓	✓	Dentures
✓	✓	Eye glasses, contact lenses
✓	✓	Cell phone
		Important Family Documents
✓	✓	See list on page 18



Find more information about emergency preparedness at these excellent Web sites:

- www.fema.gov
- www.citizencorps.gov
- www.redcross.org
- www.dhs.gov
- www.Ready.gov

When an emergency happens

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a method to notify the public. Selected radio and television stations throughout your county or area serve as EAS stations. Emergency officials can activate the system to relay warnings and vital information to the public about what emergency actions to take.

Emergency information will be repeated over these stations until the "all clear" message has been given. The EAS will explain the emergency response level and will tell you what you should do (shelter-in-place or evacuate).

How to shelter in place:

If you are advised by local officials to "shelter in place," what they mean is for you to remain inside your home, workplace or school and protect yourself there. This would most likely happen in case of a tornado, flood conditions, chemical or radiation accident or attack. Depending on the reason for sheltering:

- Go inside your home or the nearest building.
- Close all windows and doors, and turn off all ventilation systems.
- Get your Emergency Supplies Kit, and make sure your radio works.
- In case of a tornado, take refuge below ground, if possible.
- In the case of a chemical or radiation threat, if possible, take shelter in an interior room without windows that is above ground level. An above ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed. Using duct tape, plastic sheeting or damp towels, seal all cracks around the door, any windows and any vents into the room.

- Don't use the phone, except for emergency messages.

•Turn on your radio or television to an EAS station. Keep listening until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas that are at greatest risk in your community.

Staying at home during an emergency

During an emergency, you might be cut off from food, water and electricity for several days or more. If power is out, food stores may be closed and your water supply may not work. Here are some suggestions to follow:

Water: If a disaster catches you without a supply of clean water, you can use ice cubes and the water in your hot-water tank or pipes. You can also use clean water from the reservoir (back) tank of your toilet (not the bowl). If it is safe to go outside, you can also purify water from streams or rivers, rainwater, ponds and lakes, natural springs and snow by boiling (for 5 minutes), distilling or disinfection. To purify water with bleach, use 10 drops of bleach per gallon of water. Use only regular household liquid bleach that contains only 5.25% sodium hypochlorite.

Food: During and right after an emergency, it will be important to keep up your strength by eating at least one well-balanced meal each day. Take vitamin, mineral and/or protein supplements. Food may be rationed safely, except for children, pregnant women and the frail or ill.

If the electricity goes off: First, check to see if your neighbors have power. The problem may be in your home. If they also have lost power, check with the power company to see when power might come back on. Turn off or unplug all major appliances. When appliances, such as refrigerators are left on, they could overload electric lines when power is turned back on, causing a second outage. Use the phone only when absolutely necessary. If the only problem is downed lines, your cell phone or car phone will work.

Frozen plumbing: Plumbing can freeze when power is lost during cold weather periods. You can turn off the water supply at the main intake pipe, drain your system and leave a faucet open to avoid air lock. Be ready to go to a shelter if warmth and protection are needed during a long power outage.

Medical: If you or anyone comes in contact with a biological or chemical agent, a special cleansing procedure and medical attention may be needed. Listen to the advice broadcast on EAS stations. As emergency services may be overwhelmed, only call 9-1-1 about life-threatening emergencies.

If you have to go to a shelter:

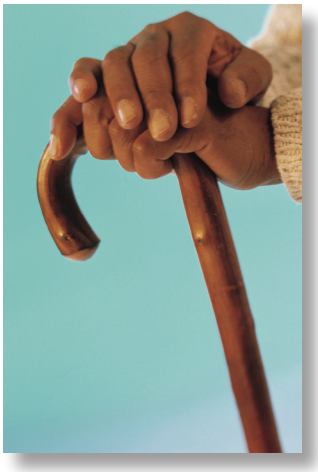
If local authorities ask you to leave your home, they have a good reason to make this request, and you should follow their instructions. Your life and those of your family are more important than property. Keep these simple tips in mind:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sturdy shoes so you can be protected as much as possible. Dress warmly in winter.
- Lock your home. Take your Family Emergency Supplies Kit.
- Use travel routes local authorities tell you to use. Don't take shortcuts, because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- Continue to listen to the Emergency Alert System radio station.

If you're sure you have time: Shut off water and electricity before leaving, if instructed to do so. Leave natural gas service ON unless local officials advise you otherwise. You may need gas for heating and cooking later, and only a professional can restore gas service

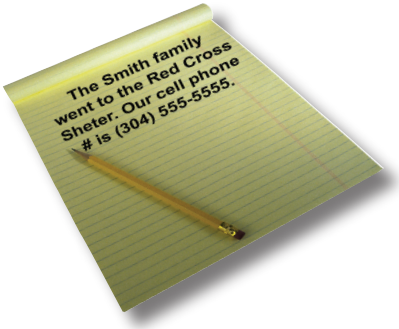
in your home once it's been turned off. In an emergency situation it could take weeks for a professional to respond.

Post a note telling others when you left, who is with you and where you are going. Call your family contact to tell them where you are going, when you expect to arrive and who is with you. Do not use the phone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.



Remember to evacuate your pets too. See page 30 for more about what to do for pets. Check on your neighbors according to prearranged plans, especially those living alone, the elderly or disabled persons.

When you return home, check for damage. Use a flashlight. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches if you suspect damage. Check for fires, fire hazards and other household dangers. Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows and get everyone outside quickly. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately.



Basic first aid

It is important in preparing for any emergency to know how to give first aid. If medical help is not immediately available, use the first aid booklet in your first aid kit (available from the Red Cross or at stores). If you do not have a first aid booklet, the information below may be helpful.

If you encounter someone who is injured, apply these emergency **Check-Call-Care action steps**:

- Check the scene to make sure it is safe for you to approach. Be alert for fallen power lines. Then check the victim for unconsciousness and life-threatening conditions. Someone who has a life-threatening condition, such as not breathing or severe bleeding, requires immediate care by trained responders and may require treatment by medical professionals.

- Call out for help.

- Care for someone who is hurt.

Control bleeding

Cover the wound with a dressing, and press firmly against the wound (direct pressure). Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart if you do not suspect that the victim has a broken bone. Cover the dressing with a roller bandage. If the bleeding does not stop, apply additional dressings and bandages, and use a pressure point to squeeze the artery against the bone. Provide care for shock.

Care for shock

Keep the victim from getting chilled or overheated. Elevate the legs about 12 inches (if broken bones are not suspected). Do not give food or drink to the victim.

Burns

Reduce pain by gently cooling the burn with large amounts of water. Cover the burn with dry, clean dressings or cloth.

Muscles, bones and joint injuries

Rest the injured part. Apply ice or a cold pack to control swelling and reduce pain. Avoid any movement or activity that causes pain. If you must move the victim because the scene is becoming unsafe, try to immobilize the injured part to keep it from shifting.

Poisoning

Call Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) with a list of substances that were swallowed and the quantity. Follow their directions exactly.

Be aware of possible biological, radiological or chemical attacks

Listen to local radio and television reports for the most accurate information from responsible governmental and medical authorities on what's happening and what actions you will need to take.

Reduce any care risks

The risk of getting a disease while giving first aid is extremely rare. However, to reduce the risk even further:

- Avoid direct contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Use protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and breathing barriers like cloth handkerchiefs.
- Whenever possible, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately after giving care.

What to say to children

Traumatic events can have a powerful impact on children. Graphic images of natural disasters and terrorist activities can result in children feeling that their safety is threatened. When there is an interruption in the natural flow of life, a child can experience anxiety and fear. These are normal reactions.

Be calm and reassure children that they are safe. Children take their emotional cues from the significant adults in their lives. Explain that other important adults in their lives are safe and that these are only temporary events that can be overcome. Explain that the firefighters, police, doctors, and the military are helping people who are hurt and are working to ensure that no further tragedies occur.

Let children know it's all right to feel upset. Listen to what children tell you about their thoughts and feelings and don't dismiss their fears. Encourage the children to talk about these feelings and help put them into perspective. Encourage your child's physical, creative and artistic avenues of expression at this time.

Observe a child's emotional state. Depending on their age, children may not express their concerns verbally. Children who at first hold back fear or grief may experience delayed stress symptoms later, such as reverting to outgrown childish behavior, sleeplessness, anxiety, nightmares, or even depression. These behaviors are only signs of the child's anxiety, and your acceptance will reassure the child and shorten the duration of such behaviors. Children respond to praise, and parents should make a deliberate effort not to focus on the child's immature behavior. Have them do "normal" activities like school, and play as much as possible.

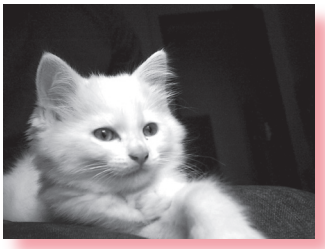
Tell children the truth. Don't try to pretend the event has not occurred or that it is not serious. Children are smart and pick up on adults' fears and anxieties without anyone saying a word. Their misconceptions often leave them very confused and they will be more worried if they think you are too afraid to tell them what is happening. Fantasized danger can be as real and threatening as actual danger to them. Be patient and do not belittle their fears, but listen with understanding, love and factual explanations.

Keep explanations appropriate for the child's age. Elementary school-age children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that the daily structures of their lives will not change. Upper middle school and high school-age students will have more questions, and may have strong and various opinions about the causes of violence or inadequate preparation in schools and society. They will be more committed to doing something to help the victims and the affected community. Encourage all children to speak about their thoughts and feelings. Be a good listener!

Have the family spend more time together. Your physical presence will be reassuring and provide the opportunity to look for any reactions. Explain that when people know what to do and practice in advance, everyone can handle emergencies better. That's why you created a family emergency plan together.

It is very important that you make a deliberate effort to get back to a routine. Engaging in "normal" activities of life, i.e., eating, sleeping, chores, school and work, provides stability at a time when events make life seem very confusing. If the family is evacuated, there will be a delay in a return to normal. Planned activities in such centers will increase the morale of all. Try to treat shelter-at-home or evacuation as a positive thing or even a temporary adventure!

What to do about pets



Have a pet emergency plan. Emergency planning should include all members of the family, including pets. Be aware that Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. If your family must go to a shelter or other site away from home, do not leave your pets at home.

You may not be home when an evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be and have a key to your home.

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number and size. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Or, ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. However, animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other emergency information and supplies.

Keep a pet emergency supplies kit with your emergency evacuation kit. Include a carrier box, immunization record, muzzles or leashes, pet food and supplies. Have an ID photo available in case they stray. Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative.

Where to find help

Write emergency phone numbers here.

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety
West Virginia Office of Emergency Services