



Family Plan In Case of Emergency



Making a Family Emergency Plan

The process of completing a written plan will help you identify what you will need during an emergency so that you can have the resources on hand. It also helps you identify key tasks that may need to be assigned in advance. Once it is written, your plan is a resource for you, your family and other household members to review and practice in advance of an emergency situation.

All family members, including children, should be involved in preparing a disaster plan for the home which includes what to do in an emergency, where water and gas shut-off valves are located, where emergency clothing, lights, food and water are stored and how to perform emergency first aid. Checklists are supplied in this book to help you think through your family's specific needs, but be sure to add any elements that are specific to your family's situation.



Family preparedness plans should be posted in a convenient place to be near at hand when the initial threat has ended. Remember that planning is not a one time event, you should update your plan periodically, especially as things change within your family (for example, if you move or if your children change schools).

Adequate planning will not require you to change your current lifestyle, but will mean getting used to the idea that you are taking responsibility for increasing your "survivability quotient." Being concerned about survivability does not imply a morbid concentration on disaster. Rather, a sense of confidence and optimism is your best tool for preparing yourself.

There will be many things to care for after a major disaster. Be sure to include regular baby-sitter or other regular household help in your plans. Think about including friends and neighbors as part of your plan. Assign specific responsibilities to each person, both for preparing for the disaster and also for responding following a disaster. Remember that it may be difficult to get around after a disaster, so each person's tasks should be related to where he or she may be.

Go through the checklist on the back page and write down the information. At the end of the process you will have a written family plan. Additional information to help you think through specific situations is included in the following sections to assist you as well.

Steps to Maintaining Your Plan

A Family Emergency Plan is not a one-time project. Once developed, it needs to be practiced and it needs to grow and develop as your family grows and develops. Changes in your life situation will need to be reflected in your emergency plan. For this reason, it is important to maintain your plan using the following four simple steps:

Step One: Quiz

Review your plan every six months and quiz your family about what to do. Make sure all family members know what they are to do in different scenarios. Review your plan to ensure that it is up-to-date with your family's life situation.



Step Two: Drill

Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis with your family. Make sure they know evacuation routes, meeting locations and next steps from anywhere they might be during an emergency.

Step Three: Restock

Part of making your family emergency plan was stocking up on supplies, but most emergency supplies do have a shelf life and/or may be subject to infestation. It is a good idea to check food supplies for expiration dates and discard or replace stored water and food every six months.



Step Four: Test

Read the indicator on your fire extinguisher(s) and follow the manufacturer's instructions to recharge. Test your smoke alarms and change the batteries at least once a year. Replace alarms every ten years.

For more information about Emergency Preparedness, please visit us at:

www.smcfire.org

SAN MATEO CONSOLIDATED FIRE DEPARTMENT
1040 E. Hillsdale Blvd. • Foster City, CA 94404
650.522.7900 • fire@smcfire.org



Family Plan In Case of Emergency



Family Plan Checklist

Know Your Environment

Suggestion: Draw a floor plan of your house indicating the "safe spots," exit pathways and utility locations on it. Post this portion of the plan in various places in the house where family members and regular household help will see it and be able to access it in an emergency.

- Determine the safest place in each room of your home or workplace as it may be difficult to move from one room to another during an event. Specifically during an earthquake or other event that may shake the structure, stay away from heavy furniture, appliances, large panes of glass, shelves holding heavy objects, and masonry veneer (such as fireplaces) as these tend to fall or break and can injure you. Often a hallway is one of the safest places if it is not crowded with objects. Kitchens and garages tend to be the most dangerous.
- Identify all the possible exits from your home and your workplace and always keep those areas as clear as possible. Conduct evacuation drills with your family every six months.
- Locate the shutoff valves for water, gas and electricity and learn how to shut them off if your structure is damaged in a disaster. If you have any questions, call your utility company. (Remember that once you turn off the gas, you should have the utility company turn the gas back on).

Know Community Resources

- Know your neighbors and their skills. You may be able to help each other after a disaster. Also, know where to go to help your community after a disaster. It may be days before outside emergency assistance arrives. It will be vitally important to help each other.
- Learn the location of the nearest police and fire stations.
- Call your local Red Cross chapter and Office of Emergency Services to find out about their plans for emergency shelters and temporary medical centers in case of a disaster.

Plan To Meet

- Decide where/when to reunite with family if you are apart when a disaster occurs.
- Choose a contact person outside the immediate area as long distance phone service will likely be restored sooner than local service. Do not use the phone except to report life-threatening emergencies immediately following a disaster.
- Know the policies of the school or daycare center your children attend. Make plans to have someone pick your children up if you are unable to do so. Be sure to include these individuals on your child's emergency information card on file with the school.

Make Special Provisions

- Stock up on at least a three-day supply of food, water, clothes, medical supplies and other necessary equipment for everyone in your family.
- The food you store should be low in sodium and high calorie to sustain you during an emergency. Store food that is not outdated or old. Make sure everyone in the family knows where to find your supplies. For suggestions of items to include in your cache, refer to the Emergency Supplies Checklist in the appendix of this guide.
- Make copies of vital records and keep them in a safe place. Make sure your originals are stored safely in a safe deposit box in another city or state. (See the *In Case of Emergency* flyer called Emergency Supply Checklist.)
- Take photos and/or videos of your valuables. Make copies and keep them in a safe location. Consider keeping copies of them in another city or state.
- Remember that elderly persons, disabled persons or persons under medication may have difficulty moving around after a disaster. Plan to have someone help them evacuate if necessary. Also, be sure to store several days' supply of any special foods or medication they may need.

