

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN GUIDEBOOK

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SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION

FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

GUIDEBOOK

PREPARE

PREPARE to maximize disaster health and well-being for yourself and your family during disasters.

Organize your family disaster plan around the SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION framework.

Individualize your family disaster plan for each family member.

Identify the types of hazards that may affect your family.

KEYS TO DISASTER HEALTH

SAFETY

STRATEGIES

SAFEGUARD

SAFEGUARD and protect yourself, your family, and your home from harm.

SUSTAIN

SUSTAIN yourself and your family with vital supplies and equipment.

TACTICS

Protect, secure, and fortify your home.

Respond to disaster warnings.

Shelter safely at home.

Evacuate safely when necessary.

Stock emergency supplies for your home.

Create emergency GO-KITS for each family member.

Inventory and restock supplies regularly.

Maintain medical records, medications, and First Aid supplies.

FUNCTION

COMFORT

COMFORT, support, manage disaster stress, and diminish distress for yourself and family members.

CONNECT

CONNECT family members to each other and to emergency services during and after a disaster with a family communications plan.

Learn about disaster stress.

Practice stress management techniques.

Identify ways to comfort each family member.

Create a family communications plan for disasters.

Keep your family together and identify ways to reunite if separated.

Generate an emergency services contact list.

ACTION

ADVISE

ADVISE yourself and your family about the disaster and review positive coping strategies.

ACTIVATE

ACTIVATE family members to respond effectively and maintain disaster health during each phase of a disaster.

Identify reliable disaster information sources and receive timely information.

Balance the amount of exposure to disaster information.

Be informed about positive coping strategies.

BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES:

Practice your family disaster plan.

Respond to disaster warnings.

Make decision to shelter-at-home or evacuate.

AFTER DISASTER STRIKES:

Check for post-disaster hazards.

Participate in community disaster response.

Review and revise your family disaster plan.

PREPARE

PREPARE to maximize disaster health and well-being for yourself and your family during disasters.

- **Organize your family disaster plan around the SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION framework.**
- **Individualize your family disaster plan for each family member.**
- **Identify the types of hazards that may affect your family.**

ORGANIZE YOUR FAMILY DISASTER PLAN AROUND THE SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FRAMEWORK

Creating a family disaster plan is the foundation for disaster preparedness. A family disaster plan provides the blueprint for safeguarding and sustaining your family during a disaster, keeping family members connected and informed, handling disaster stress, and taking effective action to respond and recover. The **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN GUIDEBOOK** streamlines the process of designing your family disaster plan. Consider the benefits of creating a family disaster plan:

- Promote “disaster health” and well-being for your family.
- Reduce the impact of a disaster on your family.
- Reduce the risk for death, injury, psychological distress, and property damage during a disaster.
- Increase your family’s self-sufficiency during disaster impact and after disaster strikes.
- Speed the process of recovering from a disaster.

SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION presents a unified, six-strategy framework for training “disaster health” to professionals and volunteers who respond to disasters. The framework used for **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION** training is also ideally suited for organizing your family disaster plan.

In brief, **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION** focuses on achieving and maintaining a high level of “disaster health” and well-being. **Disaster health** is defined as “maximal **SAFETY**, optimal **FUNCTION**, and effective **ACTION** in response to emergencies, disasters, and extreme events.” From this definition, it is clear that the **Three Keys to Disaster Health** are **SAFETY, FUNCTION, and ACTION**. Two strategies are employed to achieve each of the Three Keys, for a total of six strategies:

- To achieve maximal **SAFETY**, the strategies are **SAFEGUARD** and **SUSTAIN**.
- To achieve optimal **FUNCTION**, the strategies are **COMFORT** and **CONNECT**.
- To achieve effective **ACTION**, the strategies are **ADVISE** and **ACTIVATE**.

Your family disaster plan is organized around the six **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION** strategies. In this **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN GUIDEBOOK**, each section presents one of the six strategies and has a corresponding exercise for your family to complete. As you complete each section, you and your family will be taking the essential steps to prepare for a variety of crises, emergencies, and disasters.

INDIVIDUALIZE YOUR FAMILY DISASTER PLAN FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER

A well-developed family disaster plan should be accepted by the whole family and meet everyone’s needs. Be sure to involve the entire family in your planning process and incorporate the particular needs of each household member and pet. Give special attention to each child, older adult, person with a disability, or individual with a temporary health-related condition. Children may require extra care during an emergency. Older adults may be less able to perform daily activities and may have more difficulty preparing for and responding to a disaster. People with disabilities may be less able to respond to warnings and take preventive actions, possibly making them more vulnerable to injury or harm. Individuals who are pregnant, nursing, caring for a newborn, or recovering from an injury or illness may require additional attention while they are experiencing their temporary health situation.

PREPARE

PREPARE to maximize disaster health and well-being for yourself and your family during disasters.

IDENTIFY THE TYPES OF HAZARDS THAT MAY AFFECT YOUR FAMILY

Consider the full spectrum of potential family emergencies and community-wide disasters that could occur. Design a flexible, “all-hazards” family disaster plan that adapts to a range of disaster situations.

PREPARE: SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN EXERCISE.

The exercise in this section is for you to complete the following **HAZARDS REVIEW**. For each type of emergency or disaster listed, consider whether this event is one that could affect your family or impact your community. If so, circle “YES.” Keep these possible disaster events in mind as you complete your family disaster plan.

HAZARDS REVIEW

TYPE OF EMERGENCY / DISASTER	LIKELY IN YOUR COMMUNITY?		TYPE OF EMERGENCY / DISASTER	LIKELY IN YOUR COMMUNITY?	
	Circle Yes or No			Circle Yes or No	
Family Emergencies			Natural Disasters		
Automobile crash	YES	NO	Drought	YES	NO
House fire	YES	NO	Earthquake	YES	NO
Power outage	YES	NO	Epidemic of new disease	YES	NO
Other _____	YES	NO	Extreme cold	YES	NO
			Extreme heat	YES	NO
Job-related Emergency Events			Flood	YES	NO
Severe injury	YES	NO	Hurricane	YES	NO
Severe illness	YES	NO	Landslide	YES	NO
Line of duty death	YES	NO	Mudslide	YES	NO
Exposure to traumatic scenes	YES	NO	Pandemic influenza	YES	NO
Other _____	YES	NO	Thunderstorm	YES	NO
Other _____	YES	NO	Tornado	YES	NO
Technological Disasters			Tsunami	YES	NO
Transportation emergency	YES	NO	Wildfire	YES	NO
Hazardous materials release	YES	NO	Winter storm	YES	NO
Nuclear power plant accident	YES	NO	Volcano	YES	NO
Other _____	YES	NO	Other _____	YES	NO
			Other _____	YES	NO
Act of Terrorism					
Explosion/fire	YES	NO			
Biological attack	YES	NO			
Chemical/gas attack	YES	NO			
Radiation/nuclear event	YES	NO			
Warfare/terrorist assault	YES	NO			
Other _____	YES	NO			

SAFEGUARD

SAFEGUARD and protect yourself, your family, and your home from harm.

- **Protect, secure, and fortify your home.**
- **Respond to disaster warnings.**
- **Shelter safely at home.**
- **Evacuate safely when necessary.**

INTRODUCTION

When preparing for a disaster, safety is the primary concern. One of the first steps in creating your family disaster plan is determining how to protect your home and your family. Through this process you can increase your ability to remain safe and decrease stress and uncertainty surrounding the disaster. The **SAFEGUARD** strategy focuses on fortifying your home, responding to disaster warnings, sheltering safely at home, and evacuating safely to alternative shelter sites when necessary.

PROTECT, SECURE, AND FORTIFY YOUR HOME

Preparing your home for potential disasters is important to minimize damage and to increase your family's safety when your home is used as a shelter. Prepare your home to mitigate damage to personal property and protect your family when sheltering within. Start by reviewing the following list of **HOME PROTECTION MEASURES**.

HOME PROTECTION MEASURES

Building Fortification

Secure fixtures and tall furniture inside the home.

Place heavy objects on/near the floor.

Protect windows/doors with shutters/barriers.

Ensure your home meets current building codes.

Inspect/repair your home's structure, including the roof.

Trim trees and shrubs around your home.

Clear the yard, patio, or balcony of loose objects that may become projectiles.

Protection Systems and Equipment

Install and maintain smoke detectors.

Maintain home alarm and disaster warning systems.

Locate safety shut-offs for gas and power.

Make sure family members know how to turn off utilities.

Distribute and maintain fire extinguishers throughout the home.

Stock water protection supplies (tarps, coverings).

RESPOND TO DISASTER WARNINGS

Warning systems exist for many types of disasters to alert citizens and communities of impending danger. By identifying warning systems for the major hazards or disaster events that may affect your family, you will be better equipped to react quickly and safeguard your family effectively.

Warning systems for disasters that may affect your family:

- Consider the major disasters that may occur in your community (consult your **HAZARDS REVIEW**).
- Identify peak seasons and climate conditions when these disasters are most likely to occur.
- Know your community, regional, or national warning systems for these disasters.
- Learn what each warning means and how to respond to that warning.
- Plan to follow the emergency alert system instructions when warnings are issued.

SHELTER SAFELY AT HOME

Plan to use your home as the primary sheltering location for a range of disasters. For disasters with little or no warning period, family members who are at home will need to remain there for shelter. Depending on the type of impending disaster, you will need to select specific sheltering locations within your home. By identifying safe spaces prior to a disaster, you can decrease the amount of time your family needs to move to safety within the home when a disaster threatens.

SAFEGUARD

SAFEGUARD and protect yourself, your family, and your home from harm.

EVACUATE SAFELY WHEN NECESSARY

The decision to evacuate requires prior planning. This includes determining when to evacuate and the specifics of evacuation (when to leave, how to leave, and where to go). Your family needs to identify one or more alternative sheltering locations and plan transportation routes to these sites.

Evacuation is advised in these situations:

- There is sufficient time to evacuate safely.
- You live in an evacuation zone and have been asked or ordered to evacuate.
- The disaster threat is severe.
- You believe that the structure of your home may be unable to withstand the disaster and therefore would not be able to protect you and your family.
- You do not have appropriate protection for your home for the anticipated disaster.
- You live in a high-rise building and your building's systems will not be operating.

Secure your home and personal property prior to evacuation:

- Shut off gas and power.
- Clear your yard and the exterior of your home of loose objects that may become projectiles.
- Install window protection.
- Protect windows, doors, and other openings from water.
- Secure furniture and fixtures.
- Move fragile articles to enclosed spaces.
- Secure personal property that cannot be easily transported.
- Update photographs of your home prior to disaster impact.

SAFEGUARD: SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN EXERCISE.

The exercise in this section is for you to complete the following table, **RESPOND TO WARNINGS, SHELTER, EVACUATE**. In the first column, list up to five emergency or disaster events that may affect your family (refer back to your **HAZARDS REVIEW**). In the second column, list the types of disaster warnings that may alert you to each type of disaster. In the third column, for disasters where you will be sheltering at home, identify your selected home sheltering location. In the fourth column, for disasters where you will evacuate, identify how your family knows it is time to go. In the fifth column, identify your family's evacuation destination for each type of disaster.

RESPOND TO WARNINGS, SHELTER, EVACUATE

PLAN FOR HAZARDS	KNOW THE WARNINGS	FAMILY DECISION: SHELTER-AT-HOME OR EVACUATE		
TYPE OF EMERGENCY/DISASTER	WARNING SYSTEM	SHELTER AT HOME LOCATION	EVACUATE: DECISION RULE	EVACUATE: DESTINATION

SUSTAIN

SUSTAIN yourself and your family with vital supplies and equipment.

- **Stock emergency supplies for your home.**
- **Create emergency GO-KITS for each family member.**
- **Inventory and restock supplies regularly.**
- **Maintain medical records, medications, and First Aid supplies.**

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining a stockpile of supplies to meet basic needs is an essential ingredient for disaster preparedness. The **SUSTAIN** strategy focuses on stocking basic emergency and medical supplies for your home and creating GO-KITS of essential supplies for each family member.

Prepare to sustain your family with vital supplies for a period of five days (120 hours). The expression to keep in mind is **“YO-YO-120”** (You’re On Your Own for 120 hours). Maintaining five days of supplies is the minimum recommendation, but some disasters, such as pandemic influenza, will require sheltering for weeks at a time. Without a stockpile of basic supplies, you may find it difficult to remain in the safety of your shelter location. Keep this in mind and continuously update and expand your stockpile of supplies.

STOCK EMERGENCY SUPPLIES FOR YOUR HOME

In order to safely shelter-at-home, your family needs to be fully equipped with basic supplies. Begin to prepare a stockpile of goods to sustain your family’s needs for five or more days during a disaster. Many families create their initial stockpile over a period of several months to minimize demands placed on the family budget. Adapt your specific list of home disaster supplies to meet the special needs of your family members. Consider the special needs of each child, older adult, or individual with medical or mobility challenges living in your household. It is also good practice to stock an extra month’s supply of baby food, baby hygiene goods, elderly supplies, and medications.

CREATE EMERGENCY GO-KITS FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER

GO-KITS consist of easily transportable containers (backpack, suitcase, 5-gallon covered pail) packed and ready with emergency supplies for use in the in-home shelter location or for evacuation at a moment’s notice. Ideally, GO-KITS should be assembled and personalized for each family member (including pets). Store your GO-KITS in an easily-accessible location, ready for immediate use during in-home sheltering or rapid evacuation.

INVENTORY AND RESTOCK SUPPLIES REGULARLY

At regular intervals, inventory and restock your shelter-at-home and emergency evacuation supplies. Check expiration dates and replace items as necessary. Pay special attention to updating and replacing children’s in-home supplies and GO-KIT items as children literally outgrow their goods and gear.

SUSTAIN: SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN EXERCISE.

The exercise for this section consists of several steps: create a list of essential in-home and evacuation disaster supplies, acquire disaster supplies, stockpile supplies at home, pack GO-KITS for family members, and monitor and restock supplies on an ongoing basis. To assist in this process, begin with the lists that are provided.

On the following two pages you will find lists of **SHELTER-AT-HOME EMERGENCY SUPPLIES CHECKLIST** and **EVACUATION EMERGENCY SUPPLIES**. Review the lists and place a checkmark in the box labeled **“NEED IT”** for items you need to acquire. Place a checkmark in the box labeled **“HAVE IT”** when you have successfully acquired and stocked each needed item. Leave items you do not need unchecked. Use the same process for the final table in this section, **MEDICAL INFORMATION AND FIRST AID SUPPLIES**.

SHELTER-AT-HOME EMERGENCY SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

GENERAL DISASTER SUPPLIES			Need It	Have It	WATER AND FOOD ITEMS			Need It	Have It
Emergency cash (bills and coins)					Water (1 gallon per person per day)				
Fuel for vehicles					Cereal/granola				
Propane for gas grills/stoves					Trail mix, nuts, dried fruits, protein or fruit bars				
Generator (with fuel for 5 days)					Peanut butter and jelly				
Battery-powered flashlight for each person					Crackers and cookies				
Battery-powered portable TV or radio					Powdered drinks/canned juices				
Batteries					Canned/jarred vegetables				
Basic landline telephone					Canned/jarred fruits				
Weather/All-hazards alert radio					Canned meats/fish				
Garbage bags (several sizes)					Beans, pasta, soups				
Blue tarp/heavy plastic					Baby formula and extra bottles/liners				
Utility knife or Swiss Army knife					Dietary supplements				
Tools (hammer, screwdriver, pliers)					Oral hydration fluids				
First Aid kit (see page 9)					Other:				
PERSONAL & HYGIENE ITEMS					KITCHEN/FOOD PREPARATION				
Soap and hand sanitizer					Disposable kitchen utensils				
Toothbrush, toothpaste, denture supplies					Napkins/paper towels				
Toilet paper supply					Paper plates				
Feminine hygiene products					Plastic wrap and aluminum foil				
Diapers and diaper wipes					Portable gas grill/stove				
Eyeglasses, contact lenses, solution					Manual can opener				
Hearing aids and batteries					Cleaning supplies (bleach, laundry detergent)				
Sunscreen, insect repellent					Cooler				
BEDDING/CLOTHING					INDIVIDUAL COMFORT ITEMS				
Cots, bedding, blankets, pillows, sleeping bags					Baby toys, infant pacifier				
Changes of clothing for five days					Children's games and toys				
Protective clothing (rain gear, boots, gloves, masks, goggles, warm clothing)					Books, card, past times for adults and elderly				
Other:					Other (see COMFORT):				
IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS					PET SUPPLIES				
Photo identification					Pet food, water, and supplies				
Proof of home occupancy					Kennel, muzzle				
Insurance policy documents					Leash, collar with identification tags				
Photo inventory of personal belongings					Sanitary supplies (cat litter, waste bags)				
Banking information									
Medical records					SPECIAL NEEDS ITEMS				
Proof of pet vaccination					Specify:				
Emergency contact numbers					Specify:				
Personal/family contact numbers					Specify:				

EVACUATION EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

PERSONAL GO-KIT SUPPLIES

GENERAL SUPPLIES

	Need It	Have It
Keys (house, office, car, storage/shed)		
Emergency cash (bills and coins)		
Battery-powered flashlight for each person		
Batteries		
Weather/All-hazards alert radio		
Utility knife or Swiss Army knife		
Whistle		
Tools (hammer, screwdriver, pliers)		
First Aid kit (see page 9)		

PERSONAL & HYGIENE ITEMS

Soap and hand sanitizer		
Toothbrush, toothpaste, denture supplies		
Toilet paper supply		
Feminine hygiene products		
Diapers and diaper wipes		
Eyeglasses, contact lenses, solution		
Hearing aids and batteries		
Sunscreen, insect repellent		
Other:		

BEDDING/CLOTHING

Blanket, pillow, sleeping bag		
Towel, wash cloth		
Change of clothing for five days		
Protective clothing (rain gear, boots, gloves, masks, goggles, warm clothing)		

WATER AND FOOD

	Need It	Have It
Water (1 gallon per person per day)		
Cereal/granola		
Trail mix, nuts, dried fruits, protein or fruit bars		
Peanut butter and jelly		
Crackers and cookies		
Baby formula and extra bottles/liners		
Dietary supplements		
Oral hydration fluids		
Other:		

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Photo identification		
Proof of home occupancy		
Insurance policy documents		
Photo inventory of personal belongings		
Banking information		
Medical records		
Proof of pet vaccination		
Emergency contact numbers		
Personal/family contact numbers		

INDIVIDUAL COMFORT ITEMS

Baby toys, infant pacifier		
Children's games and toys		
Books, card, past times for adults and elderly		
Other (see COMFORT):		

CAR GO-KIT SUPPLIES

GENERAL SUPPLIES

Waterproof disposable camera		
Battery-powered flashlight and batteries		
Tools (hammer, screwdrivers, pliers)		
First Aid kit (see page 9)		
Roadmap		
Other:		

CAR REPAIR SUPPLIES

Jumper cables		
Tire repair kit/spare tire (and tools)		
Flares/white distress flag		
Utility knife		
Duct tape/masking tape		
Bungee cords		

PET GO-KIT SUPPLIES

Pet food and water		
Pet medications		
Leash, muzzle, collar with identification tags		

Portable kennel		
Community kennel or other safe facility contact info		
Sanitary supplies (cat litter, waste bags)		

SUSTAIN

SUSTAIN yourself and your family with vital supplies and equipment.

MAINTAIN MEDICAL RECORDS, MEDICATIONS, AND FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Medical records are among the most important documents to have available during a disaster. Maintain these records in both paper and electronic format. Make sure that critical medical information is available in a watertight packet of important documents that you keep in your personal possession at home and when evacuating during a disaster. This medical information should include contact information for your physicians, care providers, clinics, and your local pharmacy. Maintain a list of all prescription medications for each family member. Maintain an extra one-month supply of these prescription medications in your home. Take these medications with you if you evacuate.

Maintaining an updated and fully-stocked First Aid kit is important for your family's safety during unexpected emergencies and disasters. You should have a comprehensive First Aid kit in your home and be sure to update it regularly. Verify that sterile packaging is intact and that medications are properly stored and sealed. Carry First Aid kits in every vehicle at all times. A First Aid kit is also a high-priority item for your evacuation GO-KIT. Since disasters and emergencies frequently result in injury and/or disease, maintaining and updating First Aid skills is advised for all family members, ages 10 and older. Review the First Aid manual or pamphlets inside your First Aid kit as a just-in-time refresher.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND FIRST AID SUPPLIES

MEDICAL RECORDS & CONTACT INFO

Need It Have It

Hardcopy of personal medical records		
Electronic version of medical history		
Vaccination history		
Physician contact information		
Hospital and clinic contact information		
Other care provider contact information		
Pharmacy contact information		
Care instructions for current medical conditions		

MEDICATIONS/MEDICAL DEVICES

Need It Have It

List of medications for each family member		
1-month supply of each prescription medication		
Medical device information		
Medical device supplies		
Medical device professional support contacts		
Special needs medical supplies		
Other:		
Other:		

FIRST AID KIT SUPPLIES

Latex or rubber gloves (2 pairs)			Cortisone cream		
Rubbing alcohol			Aspirin and non-aspirin pain relievers		
Sterile adhesive bandages			Anti-diarrheal medication		
Sterile bandages (assorted sizes)			Antacids		
Adhesive tape			Antihistamines		
Safety pins (assorted sizes)			Hydration packets for children and adults		
Scissors			Laxative medication for children and adults		
Tweezers			Special needs medical supplies		
Needles			Other:		

COMFORT

COMFORT, support, manage disaster stress, and diminish distress for yourself and family members.

- Learn about disaster stress.
- Practice stress management techniques.
- Identify ways to comfort each family member.

INTRODUCTION

Disasters cause stress and distress, impacting your ability to function. You can design your family disaster plan to decrease the amount of stress your family experiences when a disaster threatens or strikes. The **COMFORT** strategy focuses specifically on supporting family members to manage disaster stress and diminish the distress experienced during emergencies and extreme events.

LEARN ABOUT DISASTER STRESS

Disasters can be stressful. Powerful stress reactions are common and expected throughout the disaster experience. Persons who are impacted by disasters may experience a range of responses during and immediately following the disaster. Stress reactions may appear as changes in body function and sensation, emotions, thinking patterns, behaviors, and ways of relating to others (review the table of **COMMON STRESS REACTIONS**). The nature and types of these reactions may also change over time. By learning about the stress responses that you and your family members may exhibit during a disaster, such reactions become more understandable and manageable.

COMMON STRESS REACTIONS

Physiological Stress Signs (changes in body function and sensation)

“Fight or flight” reaction

Headache

Nausea or diarrhea

Muscle tension or soreness

Increased startle response, sweating or chills

Shortness of breath or heart palpitations

Behavioral Stress Signs (changes in actions and behaviors)

Change in eating habits (increased or decreased appetite)

Change in sleep patterns

Increased alcohol or medication use

Inappropriate humor

Social Stress Signs (changes in interpersonal relationships)

Irritability, hostility

Social withdrawal

Greater need for support from others

Emotional Stress Signs (changes in emotions and feelings)

Fear, terror, or intense anxiety

Irritability and anger

Sadness and tearfulness

Feeling overwhelmed

Hopelessness and helplessness

Cognitive Stress Signs (changes in ability to think and problem-solve)

Difficulty thinking clearly

Memory problems

Difficulty making decisions

Confusion or disorientation

Decreased attention span

Preoccupation with the source of stress

PRACTICE STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Disaster stress is expected, but can be managed. There are many techniques available for reducing and managing stress. Most likely, you have already learned to use some combination of stress management strategies effectively to handle the stressors of daily life. Review the table of **STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES** to identify a range of options available to manage disaster stress.

COMFORT

COMFORT, support, manage disaster stress, and diminish distress for yourself and family members.

STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Engage in physical exercise and/or sports	Use healthy humor
Practice relaxation breathing	Relax by playing with children and/or pets
Practice yoga or stretching exercises	Maintain daily routines
Pray or meditate	Take personal time
Practice personal faith or seek spiritual support	Take brief naps
Spend time with others	Engage in light reading
Seek support from others	Listen to relaxing music
Maintain a healthy diet	Keep a journal
Drink plenty of water	Engage in favorite hobbies

A useful approach to prepare for and manage disaster stress is to practice a variety of stress management techniques regularly during periods of lower stress. Familiarizing yourself with personally effective techniques will enable you to lower your level of stress more quickly during periods of high stress and uncertainty. In addition to practicing stress management techniques, you should not forget the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle entails getting restful sleep, maintaining a healthy diet, and exercising regularly. By taking care of yourself and prioritizing your health, you are diminishing the effects that stressful situations may have on you, including the impact of disasters.

IDENTIFY WAYS TO COMFORT EACH FAMILY MEMBER

Each family member will experience disaster stress in a unique and individual manner. These differences in stress reactions need to be considered so you can best support each family member when a disaster occurs. For each family member, identify preferred methods of comfort and support during disasters. One helpful approach to comforting family members during a disaster is having favorite comfort items available when sheltering at home or evacuating. The following table lists examples of **COMFORT ITEMS**.

COMFORT ITEMS

Books, magazines	Family photos, camera
Board games, toys	Grooming supplies, hygiene supplies
Soft items (for example- blanket, stuffed animal)	Comfort foods (for example- favorite snacks or treats)
Favorite pet	Journal, paper, and pens
DVD player, music player (remember DVDs and batteries)	Coloring books, crayons, and markers

COMFORT: SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN EXERCISE.

The exercise in this section is to review the three key points and the corresponding tables. First, review the table of **COMMON STRESS REACTIONS**. Identify one or two stress reactions that each family member may exhibit during a disaster. Identifying your family's stress signs will enable your family members to apply stress management techniques in both day-to-day situations and during a disaster. Second, review the table of **STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES**. Have each family member select and practice one NEW technique that is unfamiliar to them. Third, have each family member identify one preferred way to receive comfort during a disaster and, after reviewing the **COMFORT ITEMS** table, select one favorite comfort item to pack in each family member's GO-KIT.

CONNECT

Connect family members to each other and to emergency services during and after a disaster with a family communications plan.

- **Create a family communications plan for disasters.**
- **Keep your family together and identify ways to reunite if separated.**
- **Generate an emergency services contact list.**

INTRODUCTION

When a disaster occurs it is important for family members to remain together if possible. It is equally important for family members to know how to reconnect if they are separated. The **CONNECT** strategy focuses on the creation of a family communications plan with the goal of keeping the family unit together during an emergency and quickly reuniting family members who become separated. Maintaining connection with family members and support networks lowers stress levels, provides protection, and facilitates a healthier recovery after a disaster. In addition to connecting family members when disaster strikes, knowing how to connect to emergency services is important.

CREATE A FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR DISASTERS

A **FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN** is the blueprint for keeping your family in contact during a disaster. Here is an eight-step approach to creating your communications plan:

- 1 List the family members covered by your communications plan.** Start by creating a list of names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses for all family members included in your plan. All family members should be informed about the plan and ideally, participate actively in creating the plan. All family members should agree to a shared action plan.
- 2 List local contact persons.** Continue by creating a list of names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses for local contact persons you rely upon for support. These are the persons you are most likely to contact for personal emergencies when your family is affected, but your local contacts are unaffected and available to help.
- 3 Identify a primary out-of-area contact person.** It is important to identify an out-of-area contact person so that all family members in your plan have a single out-of-area point-of-contact in a distant location that is unlikely to be affected by a disaster occurring in your community. There are two reasons for selecting an out-of-area contact person. First, this person is likely to be available to provide support to your family since the disaster has not affected their home area. Second, this person is likely to have working phone lines and other communications at a time when services in your area may be disrupted by the disaster.
- 4 Identify a secondary out-of-area contact person.** It is recommended that a secondary contact be identified as a backup point of contact in the event that your primary contact is unreachable in a time of need.

Primary and secondary emergency contacts should be informed of their role in your family disaster planning. Your identified contact persons should be aware of one another so they may directly communicate during times of disaster. Identify the two best methods for making contact with each of your family emergency contacts (for example, a phone number and email address). When disaster threatens, or strikes without warning, get in touch with your family emergency contact(s) and inform them about:

- a What you know regarding the disaster.
- b The effects of the disaster on your family and home.
- c Your arrangements for evacuation and/or sheltering.

As part of the shared action plan, have family members notify the family emergency contact person(s) if:

- a A family member becomes lost or separated from loved ones.
- b A family member changes emergency plans or locations.
- c A family member experiences something unexpected or urgent.

CONNECT

Connect family members to each other and to emergency services during and after a disaster with a family communications plan.

- 5 Determine in-town and out-of-town family meeting places.** Determine locations where you and your family members can meet, in your home town and out-of-town, if you leave your home and one or more family members become separated during the disaster.
- 6 Generate an emergency services contact list.**
- 7 Create multiple options for communication.** Usual modes of communication, such as land-line telephones and cellular communications, may become unavailable during a disaster. Plan to use additional means of communication such as email messaging, text-messaging, or digital two-way radio services to reach your family and contact persons.
- 8 Distribute copies of the plan to all family members.** Once your family communications plan has been created, each family member should carry a copy of the plan at all times. Pack a copy in each family member's GO-KIT. The most vital information of the communications plan can be reduced to a wallet-sized card for portability. Your family communications plan should also be posted in a readily available location, such as near your home telephone and/or on your home refrigerator.

KEEP YOUR FAMILY TOGETHER AND IDENTIFY WAYS TO REUNITE IF SEPARATED

Separation from family members during a disaster is a major source of stress and distress even when their whereabouts and safety are known; being separated without information regarding your family members' safety and welfare is significantly more stressful. Identifying strategies to keep your family together and to reconnect if separated will help you reconnect in a more timely manner and greatly decrease stress during a disaster.

Strategies to keep family members together.

For disasters with a sufficient warning period, there is typically adequate time to gather family members and maintain an intact family unit while sheltering or evacuating. Parents/guardians should know the schedules and locations of their children and plan to retrieve young children from child care, school, camp, or similar settings if disaster threatens. Take a moment to review each family member's weekly schedule. Identify one responsible adult to locate and retrieve each dependent member of the family in the event of an emergency. By coordinating who will be responsible for each dependent family member you are maximizing the likelihood of keeping your family unit together during a disaster.

Strategies to reunite family members when separated.

For disasters that occur without warning, family separation can occur in an instant. To avoid long-term separation when the unexpected occurs, your family can strategize to reconnect quickly post-disaster. One strategy is to predetermine a neighborhood or regional meeting place and an out-of-town meeting place to reconnect after a disaster has passed. Another strategy to reconnect separated family members is to coordinate communications through a single point-of-contact, your family emergency contact person.

GENERATE AN EMERGENCY SERVICES CONTACT LIST

A list of emergency service numbers specific to your community is an important resource to have at all times. Record key emergency services contacts in your family communications plan. Update this list annually as school, medical, and insurance information may change. Customize your list with contacts for additional services available in your area.

CONNECT: SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN EXERCISE.

The exercise in this section is to complete your **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**. The family communications plan incorporates the eight-step process outlined above. A template for your plan appears on the following two pages of this **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN GUIDEBOOK**.

CONNECT

Connect family members to each other and to emergency services during and after a disaster with a family communications plan.

SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

FAMILY NAME:

Home Address:

Home Telephone:

Step 1: Family Members Covered by the Family Communications Plan

Name	Telephone/Cell	Email	Address (if not home address)

Step 2: Local Contact Persons

Name	Telephone/Cell	Email	Address

Step 3: Primary Out-of-Area Contact Person

Name	Telephone/Cell	Email	Address

Step 4: Secondary Out-of-Area Contact Person

Name	Telephone/Cell	Email	Address

CONNECT

Connect family members to each other and to emergency services during and after a disaster with a family communications plan.

SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Step 5: Family Emergency Meeting Places

In Home Town

Out-of-Town

Location Name:

Location Name:

Contact Name:

Contact Name:

Address:

Address:

Telephone:

Telephone:

Step 6: Emergency Services Contact List

Local Emergency Contacts

Medical/Health Contacts

Police (Emergency): **911**

Physician:

Police (Non-Emergency):

Physician:

Fire Department:

Clinic:

Ambulance/EMS:

Hospital:

Office of Emergency Mgmt:

Dentist:

Local Red Cross:

Pharmacy:

Local Disaster Shelter:

Veterinarian:

Children's Information

Other Information

School/Child Care:

Insurance Agent:

Teacher:

Plumber:

School/Child Care:

Electrician:

Teacher:

Contractor:

School/Child Care:

Landlord:

Teacher:

Bldg. Maintenance:

Step 7: Communications Options

Step 8: Distribute Family Communications Plan

Land line telephones

Copy for every family member

Cellular telephones

Copy for every GO-KIT

Local contact persons

Copy for each automobile

Out-of-area primary/secondary contact persons

Copy near in-home telephones

Email messaging

Copy in in-home sheltering location

Text messaging

Copy for each worksite

Digital two-way radio

ADVISE

ADVISE yourself and your family about the disaster and review positive coping strategies.

- **Identify reliable disaster information sources and receive timely information.**
- **Balance the amount of exposure to disaster information.**
- **Be informed about positive coping strategies.**

INTRODUCTION

Your family needs information about the disaster event and about coping with the challenges and stresses of the disaster. This information guides you and your family toward actions you can take to protect yourselves before and during impact. Inaccurate information that does not match the reality of the situation may cause you to become unnecessarily stressed about imagined threats or exaggerate the severity of the situation. Conversely, in the absence of accurate information, you may fail to take preventive and protective actions to deal with authentic threats. Staying well-informed throughout each phase of a disaster will help clarify true threats, limit unnecessary stress, and permit educated decision-making. The **ADVISE** strategy focuses on providing your family with timely and accurate information regarding the disaster, as well as providing information on coping strategies for dealing with disaster stress.

IDENTIFY RELIABLE INFORMATION SOURCES AND RECEIVE TIMELY INFORMATION

Sources of timely and accurate disaster information vary based on the type of event. With natural disasters, for example, your local office of emergency management is likely to be the ultimate source for accurate, up-to-date information. Readily-accessible information is also delivered by local news sources (media, print, radio, and Internet). Whatever your preferred source for disaster information, be sure the source is reliable and credible. Review the following table, **COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS FOR TIMELY DISASTER INFORMATION**, to select your best options for receiving timely disaster information.

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS FOR TIMELY DISASTER INFORMATION

AM/FM portable radio	Disaster management websites
Weather/All-hazards alert radio	Red Cross and disaster response websites
Battery-powered television	Hazard/disaster-specific websites
Phone tree set up at work or within the community	Public health websites (epidemic diseases)
Email/text messaging alerts	Social networking websites

When gathering disaster information there are four general questions to address:

- 1 What has happened?** Your family needs to know the details of the disaster event and what is being done. This information provides perspective, allowing your family to get a handle on the event that has impacted your community. Accurate information dissolves the major stressor of uncertainty.
- 2 What will happen?** Clarifying what to expect provides your family with information to guide them. This information orients your family, decreases the stress of uncertainty, and warns about upcoming risks and threats.
- 3 What to do?** Those impacted by disaster often benefit from directive information that focuses on what to do. This is information for action. In the early aftermath of a disaster there is often great damage and confusion. You and your family may benefit from knowing exactly what you should do following a disaster.
- 4 What resources are available?** Now that you know what to do, this information identifies the available resources to support your actions. In a disaster, some usual resources will be unavailable. However, simultaneously, new resources will arrive on scene as part of the disaster response.

ADVISE

ADVISE yourself and your family about the disaster and review positive coping strategies.

BALANCE THE AMOUNT OF EXPOSURE TO DISASTER INFORMATION

Although it is important to stay well-informed, be mindful to limit your family's exposure to local and national media. Watching ongoing and repetitive news coverage of the disaster can shift from useful to harmful when viewed too often or for prolonged periods. Exposure to a constant barrage of negative disaster experiences can cause undue stress. The key is to balance the amount of exposure to disaster news. Get brief updates once or twice a day rather than a continuous stream of news coverage.

BE INFORMED ABOUT POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Physiological, psychological, and emotional reactions to disasters are understandably powerful and often troublesome. You may find that some of your family members will have a difficult time coping with the effects of a disaster. This is completely understandable and expected. In fact, it is important to monitor each family member's stress level, emotions, and behaviors.

People use many strategies to attempt to adapt to stressful situations. Positive coping strategies decrease stress in a manner that is healthy. Positive coping strategies effectively act to resolve the underlying causes of stress. The use of positive coping strategies is strongly advocated. In contrast, the use of negative coping strategies should be avoided as they may actually prolong stress, cause negative long-term consequences, or may harm you or others. The contrast between positive and negative coping strategies is highlighted in the following table **COMPARING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES**.

COMPARING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Allow time to mourn losses.	Build relationships by accepting and offering support.
Seek support from loved ones.	Engage in healthy lifestyle behaviors.
Focus on situations that can be changed & try to accept things that cannot.	View tough situations in broader context & with a long-term perspective.
Increase focus on positive aspects of life.	Reduce focus on fears and worries.
Take time for enjoyable activities and hobbies.	Recognize personal needs and prioritize self-care.
Reestablish routines (regular meal times/bed times, family traditions).	Develop realistic goals and take small steps to attain these goals.
Limit caffeine and sugar intake.	Avoid overuse of alcohol or medications.

NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Excessive smoking.	Withdrawal from social settings/interactions/support.
Overuse of alcohol and/or medications.	Directing anger or negative emotions onto others.
Increase in caffeine intake.	Verbal and/or physical violence.
Binge eating.	Intentional avoidance of stressors and/or responsibilities.
Increase in risk taking behaviors.	

ADVISE: SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN EXERCISE.

The exercise for this section has two parts. First, review the table of **COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS FOR TIMELY DISASTER INFORMATION**. Verify that you have the communications devices and media channels necessary to receive up-to-date disaster information for the major emergency and disaster events that may affect your family.

Second, review the table **COMPARING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES**. From this table, select several positive coping strategies that your family can use effectively in times of family emergency or community disaster. Also, consider the list of negative coping strategies and consider whether any family member is at risk of using these strategies in high-stress situations, such as a disaster. Use times of lower stress to have your family practice positive coping strategies.

ACTIVATE

ACTIVATE family members to respond effectively and maintain disaster health during each phase of a disaster.

BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES:

- Practice your family disaster plan.
- Respond to disaster warnings.
- Make decision to shelter-at-home or evacuate.

AFTER DISASTER STRIKES:

- Check for post-disaster hazards.
- Participate in community disaster response.
- Review and revise your family disaster plan.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to and following a disaster you and your family will need to take action. Completing your **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN GUIDEBOOK** and the exercises within are actions you have already taken prior to a disaster. The **ACTIVATE** strategy puts the family disaster plan into motion when disaster threatens or strikes, and in the aftermath during response and recovery. These actions serve to protect you and your family and help you recover following a disaster.

BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES: PRACTICE YOUR FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

The ideal time to develop and practice your family disaster plan is now. Disaster can strike at any time. Your area or region may have identified seasons for local natural disasters; in which case, the best time to plan and practice is during off-season or between disaster seasons. Completing your family's plan during a period of lower risk allows you to take the time to engage all family members in the planning process. Once your family disaster plan is complete, it is important to update supplies and practice your plan between disaster seasons. It may also be helpful to review "what-if" scenarios with your family to keep their skills up-to-date and work out potential foreseeable problems before they can occur during an emergency. When disaster strikes, your family can activate and put well-practiced skills to good use.

BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES: RESPOND TO DISASTER WARNINGS

When disaster threatens and warnings are issued, it is time to put planning and practice into action. The **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN GUIDEBOOK** becomes the guide for your actions. Review the [General Protective Measures](#) and the [Secure Home and Possessions](#) guidance in the following table, **RESPOND TO DISASTER WARNINGS**.

RESPOND TO DISASTER WARNINGS

General Protective Measures

Review your **SAFETY FUNCTION ACTION FAMILY DISASTER PLAN GUIDEBOOK** with family members.

Get cash.

Fill vehicles with gasoline.

Verify that home supplies are fully stocked.

Verify that every personal GO-KIT is fully stocked.

Follow disaster updates from a reliable news source.

Inform designated contact person(s) of the family's action plan.

Secure Home and Possessions

Clear your yard and the exterior of your home of loose objects that may become projectiles.

Install window protection.

Protect windows, doors, and other openings from water.

Secure furniture and fixtures.

Move fragile articles to enclosed spaces.

Secure personal property that cannot be easily transported.

Shut off gas and power.

BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES: MAKE DECISION TO SHELTER-AT-HOME OR EVACUATE

When a disaster is threatening or about to occur, it is time to make the critical decision to shelter-at-home or evacuate. As you react to the impending disaster, consult the following **SHELTER-AT-HOME/ EVACUATION CHECKLIST** for a quick review of steps you can take to shelter or evacuate safely.

ACTIVATE

ACTIVATE family members to respond effectively and maintain disaster health during each phase of a disaster.

SHELTER-AT-HOME/EVACUATION CHECKLIST

Decision: Shelter-at-Home	OR	Decision: Evacuate
Review emergency sheltering procedures with family members.		Review emergency evacuation plan with family members.
Monitor the disaster situation using reliable information sources.		Retrieve supplies and GO-KITS for all family members.
Stay indoors and away from windows.		Retrieve important documents and cash.
Close all interior doors. Brace and secure exterior doors.		Call family emergency contacts prior to departure.
Gather supplies and GO-KITS for all family members and place them in home safe space.		Make final vehicle or transportation preparations.
Verify that essential supplies are in the home safe space.		Turn off utilities and unplug electronics.
Secure a supply of water for sanitary purposes.		Follow local evacuation instructions.
Freeze water for extra ice.		Evacuate to the identified evacuation location.
Call family emergency contacts to inform them of your plans.		Inform family emergency contacts when you arrive.
Turn off utilities if instructed to do so by local officials.		
Take refuge in your safe space when instructed to do so by local officials.		
Stay indoors until instructed by local officials that it is safe to come outside.		

AFTER DISASTER STRIKES: CHECK FOR POST-DISASTER HAZARDS

There may be hazards in the post-disaster environment that pose risks to you and your family. If you are sheltering within the area directly impacted by the disaster, the first hazard to watch for is the possibility that your shelter may no longer be safe. Review the following table, **POST-DISASTER HAZARDS**, to increase your awareness of possible post-disaster hazards you may encounter.

POST-DISASTER HAZARDS

Type of Hazard	Examples
Home hazards	Structural damage, carbon monoxide danger from portable generators, heat/cold risks when power is out
Environmental hazards	Lack of utilities, lack of transportation services and communications, downed power lines, fallen trees, debris, flooding
Roadway hazards	Non-working traffic signals, non-working street lights, accident scenes, road debris
Health hazards	Lack of medical care access, lack of public health services, physical injury, fatigue, exposure to the elements, infectious diseases, food-borne illness, insect-borne diseases, water contamination, animal bites, psychological stress and distress

AFTER DISASTER STRIKES: PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY DISASTER RESPONSE

You and your family members can take an active role in disaster recovery for your community. The many opportunities to help yourself, your family, and your community provide avenues for building community resilience in the aftermath of a disaster.

Ways to participate in community disaster response:

- Join a local community disaster response team.
- Participate in distribution of vital supplies to meet basic needs.
- Participate in repair and reconstruction efforts.
- Volunteer with local disaster response organizations.
- Visit places of worship nearby to offer support services.
- Contact disaster-affected neighbors, family, and friends to offer support and help.



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