

# When an emergency strikes: Will you be ready?



**T**here is no time like the present to begin to prepare for an emergency — whether it is a natural or man-made disaster. There are steps people can take to protect themselves and their families in the event of any type of emergency.

The key is to be prepared with emergency supplies, a first aid kit and by remaining alert. The following are suggestions for individuals and families to follow to prepare for an emergency.

## Create an emergency plan

- Meet with household members to discuss the dangers in case of an emergency.
- Discuss how the family will respond to each emergency situation.
- Discuss what to do in power outages or injuries.
- Draw a floor plan of the house and two escape routes from each room.
- Teach young adults how to turn off the water, gas and electricity.
- Place emergency numbers by all telephones.
- Teach children how to dial 9-1-1 and how to make long distance calls.
- Pick someone that all family members should call if separated.
- Turn on a radio or television station for EAS information.
- Pick two meeting places — a place near your home and a place outside the neighborhood — where your family will meet if you are evacuated from your home.
- Learn basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Keep all family records and important information in a watertight and fireproof safe.

## Prepare an emergency go kit

*An emergency go kit can save time in the event that you must evacuate. The following items should be included:*

- ❑ Food and water supplies.
- ❑ Clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes.
- ❑ Blankets, bedding or sleeping bags.
- ❑ First aid kit.
- ❑ An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and solution.
- ❑ A list of family doctors, medical information and serial numbers of medical devices.
- ❑ Items for infants, seniors or members with disabilities.
- ❑ A flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.
- ❑ Identification cards, credit cards and cash.
- ❑ An extra set of house and car keys.
- ❑ Tools, a fire extinguisher, plastic storage containers, pen, paper, garbage bags and household bleach.

### For Your Pets

- ❑ Identification collar and rabies tag.
- ❑ Cage or leash.
- ❑ Any medications.
- ❑ Newspapers or trash bags for waste.
- ❑ Food, water and food bowls.
- ❑ Veterinary records.



Compliments of  
**State Senator**

**VINCENT HUGHES**

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## Food and Water

People should have a **minimum** of three days worth of food and water. Nonperishable foods that do not require refrigeration, cooking or water are the best way to go. The supply should include:

- One gallon of water per person per day.  
*If clean water is needed:*  
Flooding can cause the contamination of water supplies. If your water may be contaminated, you must purify it. The best way to do so is to boil it for about three to five minutes, and then allow the water to cool.
- Three-day supply of food and water for each person.
- Canned meats, vegetables and fruits.
- Canned juices, milk and soup.
- Sugar, salt and pepper.
- High-energy foods, such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers or trail mix.
- Vitamins.
- First aid kit.
- Food for newborns, the elderly or those on special diets.
- Comfort foods – cookies, candy, sweet cereal, lollipops and tea bags.

## First aid kits should include:

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pairs of latex gloves   | <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum jelly or another lubricant |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activated charcoal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety pins                          |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antacid   | <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors                             |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-diarrhea medication  | <input type="checkbox"/> Soap                                 |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antiseptic  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sterile adhesive bandages            |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laxative  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sterile gauze pads                   |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moistened towelettes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen                            |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tongue blades       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needle  | <input type="checkbox"/> Syrup of Ipecac                      |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Triangular bandages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-prescription drugs:<br>Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer                          |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tweezers            |

## In case of fire

- Stay low to the floor and exit immediately.
- Cover nose and mouth with a wet cloth.
- Use the palm of your hand to feel the lower, middle and upper parts of the door. If the door is not hot, go through; if the door is hot, find a different way.
- Stay below the smoke and poisonous gases at all times.

## If you are trapped in debris

- Use a flashlight.
- Stay in one area, and cover your mouth.
- Tap on a wall so rescuers can hear you, or use a whistle if possible. Shouting may cause a person to inhale dangerous fumes and dust.
- Help other victims.
- Inexperienced people should not try to rescue others in a collapsed building.

## Helpful tips

### If the power is out:

- Help family members or neighbors who may be vulnerable if exposed to extreme heat or cold.
- Find a flashlight to use.
- Turn off computers, VCRs and televisions.
- Turn off electric appliances that were on when the power went off.
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- Do not use the stove.
- Be very cautious when driving; treat each traffic signal as a stop sign.
- Listen to the radio for updates, do not call 9-1-1 to ask about outages.

### For businesses

- Prepare backup and store computer records offsite.
- Have an emergency plan for staff and customers.
- Maintain insurance coverage.
- Identify critical functions that must continue, and devise a plan to carry out those functions.

### Technological hazard emergencies

*If you must evacuate the household, you should:*

- Take the Emergency Go kit.
- Lock your home.
- Travel on routes specified by emergency personnel.
- Keep car windows up, air vents, air conditioner and heater turned off.

*If you are instructed to stay home:*

- Close and lock windows and doors.
- Turn off ventilation systems, water and gas.
- Seal gaps under doorways and windows with duct tape.
- If chemical or biological agents have entered the house, move to an upper level room.
- Cover your nose/mouth with a wet cloth.
- Stay inside until told otherwise.

*After an emergency strikes, it is important to stay calm.*

*Follow the advice of professionals on whether it is safe to leave your home or not.*

## How should the public deal with a possible terrorist attack?

*According to Pennsylvania Homeland Security, you should use similar techniques that are used in other emergencies, such as:*

- Be alert of surrounding area.
- Take precautions when traveling. Do not accept packages from strangers, and do not leave luggage unattended.
- Locate all the emergency exits, learn where the staircases are and plan an escape route that is quick.
- Keep an eye on the environment for things like heavy or breakable objects.
- Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) either on television or radio.
- **Being aware of the things going on in the surrounding area is more important than purchasing expensive products.**

## For more information

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency  
[www.pema.state.pa.us](http://www.pema.state.pa.us)

Pennsylvania Homeland Security  
[www.homelandsecurity.state.pa.us](http://www.homelandsecurity.state.pa.us)

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

The American Red Cross  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)