

PREPARE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT - HouseMaster eNewsletter

http://enew sletter.housemaster.com/documents/article1_8_2011.html

September 15, 2011

Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and wildfires are the more recognized natural disasters. Many homeowners thinking that they don't live in an area regularly exposed to these or other natural or man-made disasters can become complacent about protecting their homes and families. But all homeowners need to be prepared for emergency evacuations and life after a catastrophic event as many on the east coast have unfortunately learned as a result of the recent hurricane and tropical storm damage.



According to the Red Cross, there are six basic items you should stock in your home: water, food, first aid and medical supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items. Items that you would most likely need during an evacuation should be kept in a clearly marked, easy-to-carry, water resistant container.

Water

Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Allow one gallon of water per person per day. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount.

Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more. Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).

Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. To heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of canned meats, fruits, vegetables and juices. Include some salt and spices, high energy foods, and special stress/comfort foods. Don't forget food and drinks for babies.

First Aid Supplies

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car that includes items such as bandages and gauze pads of various sizes and types, adhesive tape, scissors, antiseptics, cold packs, and a CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield.

Non-Prescription Drugs and Required Medication

Don't forget to include some vitamins, aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, and anti-acids. Have Syrup of Ipecac (used to induce vomiting) and activated charcoal available but use only if advised by a Poison Center or medical personnel.

Also, maintain a supply of any required heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin, other prescription drugs, denture needs, and extra eyeglasses.

Clothing and Bedding

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person, sturdy shoes, rain gear, blankets or sleeping bags, overcoats, hat and gloves, and sunglasses.

Tools and Emergency Supplies

You'll need supplies such as cooking and eating containers and utensils, battery-operated radio and flashlights (with plenty of extra batteries), cash or traveler's checks, coins, fire extinguishers, basic household tools, tape, rope, matches or lighters, whistle, and plastic sheeting.

A stock of sanitation supplies should also be available, including toilet paper, towelettes, soap, liquid detergent, personal hygiene items, baby diapers, plastic garbage bags and ties, plastic buckets with tight lids, bleach and disinfectants.

Important Family Documents

Finally, important records should be kept in a waterproof, portable container. These include wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds, bank and credit card account information, passports, social security cards, and immunization records. You should also have an inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers, family records (birth, marriage, death certificates).

Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food and medical supplies every six months or as recommended. Replace batteries, clothes, etc. as needed.

For more information on Disaster Preparedness, including items that should be available for emergency evacuations, visit the Red Cross websites: [Canada](#) [United States](#)

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) also has an [online game](#) to help you and your family prepare an emergency supplies kit.

Remember, these tips are only general guidelines. Since each situation is different, contact a professional if you have questions about a specific issue. More home safety and maintenance information is available online at www.housemaster.com.