

Family Safety

Does your home have a smoke detector? Does your vehicle have a spare tire? Are there bandages in your medicine cabinet? Undoubtedly you answered yes to these questions. This shows you are aware of preparing for an emergency. While these things may seem common sense and small in nature, but we know emergencies happen.

Bigger events like a house fire, a weather emergency like a tornado or flood or a physical attack upon ourselves and our loved ones. How many children have been killed in a school fire since 1956? Zero! We know this is primarily due to our preparedness and drills. No one wants to be a victim, so we prepare to help protect ourselves. Develop and practice our plan to it becomes second nature when the situation manifests itself. Practice until you can't get it wrong!

Basic items we can assemble in advance include a first aid kit, a weather radio with batter backup (or crank). Remember we are responsible for our personal safety. This is not the government's job – it is ours! We need to create a plan for ourselves, our family and our work place. We also need to prepare a kit for each of these areas: home, vehicle and work.

Begin with creating a plan for your family. Since the likelihood of everyone being in the same place when an emergency happens is slim, a plan is essential. Every family member should know and understand the plan. Develop this plan with everyone's input. Plan for how to reach each other in various situations. Consider all options. The plan for a tornado will differ from a plan for a physical attack. An essential item will be making an out-of-town family member or friend a contact also. A natural disaster can wreak havoc on communications and the local grid. It may be easier for this out-of-town family member to connect separated family members.



Your plan should consider surviving in place as well as retreating to an off-site safe area. You should be prepared to stay at home and prepared to evacuate. Deciding whether it is best to remain at home or go will be dictated by the type of emergency. Officials may command you to leave the area. In some cases, limited communication and information may require you to decide what is best for you and your family.

Before an emergency, decide which room in your house will be your safe room. The room should be in the interior of the house. Select a room with limited access from the interior and exterior. Criteria in selection will include space for all family members. The door should be solid wood or steel, not a hollow-core door. Have a locking deadbolt or crossbar to secure the entry to the room. If a chemical is in the air, you should be able to seal the room from poisonous gasses. This will include the windows and HVAC vents. You will want emergency supplies in this room including water and food, flashlights, glow sticks, battery-powered radio and television.



If you must leave your safe room, plan on where the family will meet. It is important to know not only where to go, but how to get to the offsite location. If you are driving, bring your emergency supply kit in the vehicle. If on foot, have emergency supplies preloaded in a backpack.

What should be included in our kit? Consider that you might have the ability to secure food and water for days or weeks when outfitting your kit. You may have no electricity. Your kit should include several days work of food and water for each person in your plan. Minimum plan on having one gallon of water for each person for each day. Ideally, store two weeks' worth of drinking water for each person. Remember this kit may need to be mobile, so have it packed in a container which can be transported. Backpacks are a good beginning. You may also consider large plastic totes which can be loaded on a two-wheeled dolly. A heavy plastic trash receptacle on wheels is easily mobile. Remember prescription medications if applicable. Also remember you may not be at home when a situation arises. Keep a kit in your vehicle as well. Since this may happen in inclement weather, have blankets and alternate clothing, weather appropriate.

Include children who may be in school when a situation arises. Consider plans to contact them if this is a family emergency. Who will secure the children? Notify the school of your plans in advance so the institution has the emergency contact person on file. Keep current on this information with the school. Include the children in this planning. School plans should also include Scouting activities, sports, camps, neighborhood family friends – anyplace your child frequents.

Documents should be in your kit. Keep photocopies and a jump drive with identification including driver license, passport, military ID, professional credentials, banking information, passwords, medical/doctor information, recent physical, health records, insurance documentation. Remember, you may not be at your home where you regularly access these services. Make this a plan for an unexpected trip → what will you take with you if leaving home and going on a remote excursion to a third world country. Planning should also include rotating these items to reflect product expiration and freshness.



If you are proficient with firearms, include them in your emergency plan. In a natural disaster, dialing 911 will probably get you nowhere. You are responsible for your personal security at all times. In emergency situations, first responders may not be accessible through 911 or may be detailed elsewhere. You must provide for your own personal security. This includes your family. If you are not proficient with a firearm, take a class and learn how to use a firearm safely and proficiently. If there is no one home when you dial 911, how will you prevail?

Protect yourself and your family by signing up for a Personal Safety class from *Advantage*. You'll learn more tips like these, how to protect yourself and essential protection techniques. Learn more about available classes online at www.AdvantageFET.com.

