

Evacuation Pre-Planning

Introduction:

The amount of time you have to evacuate will depend on the disaster. If the event can be monitored, such as a predicted flood event, you may have time to get ready. However, many disasters allow no time for people to gather basic necessities or make plans at that time. It is best to do your evacuation planning now, rather than wait until evacuation is necessary.

Local authorities will not ask people to evacuate unless they truly feel lives may be in danger. **Evacuate immediately if requested or required to do so by local officials.**

This guide will address evacuation on three levels based on the time available to evacuate:

- ◆ Immediate Evacuation necessary
- ◆ Moments to Evacuate
- ◆ Hours to Evacuate

Be sure to involve all family members in the planning, review, and practicing of the evacuation plan. If you live in an apartment building, know the evacuation plan.

Tips:

- ✓ When **P**acking or **P**reparing for Evacuation, keep the letter “**P**” in mind:
 - **P**eople and **P**ets – life safety always comes first!
 - **P**rescriptions – pills and eyeglasses

And if you’ve done the pre-planning or time allows:

 - **P**apers – phone numbers, legal documents, birth certificates, etc
 - **P**ictures of family
 - **P**lastic – credit cards and cash
 - **P**C – personal computer (download vital electronic records)
- ✓ Consider storing copies of important information at another location, such as at the home of a close family member – preferably out of town. Make a visual or written record of your household possessions. Record model and serial numbers.

Immediate Evacuation:

- ☐ If you smell gas or smoke, see fire, or otherwise fear for your safety, evacuate household occupants immediately.
- ☐ From a safe location, call 911 and report the incident.

Plan Your Fire Escape Routes (Immediate Evacuation):

- ☐ Draw the floor plan of your home
- ☐ Identify two escape routes from every room
- ☐ Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas on the second or third floor. Learn how to use them and store them near the window.
- ☐ Identify your meeting location once outside

Escaping Safely from a Fire:

- ☐ Do not waste time gathering valuables or getting dressed. Simply get out!
- ☐ If you see smoke or fire in your first escape route, use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit.
- ☐ Sleep with your bedroom door closed. If the smoke alarm sounds, roll out of bed and crawl to the door. Carefully feel the door with the back of your hand before opening it. If it is hot, use your second way out. Do not use your palm or fingers to test for heat – burning those areas could impair your ability to escape a fire (crawling or use of ladders).
- ☐ If smoke, heat, or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a bright-colored cloth at the window. If there is a phone in the room, call 911 and let them know where you are.
- ☐ Once you're out, stay out! Call 911 from a neighbor's home.

Evacuation – Relocation:

Identify several possible evacuation destinations in different directions.

- ☐ _____, _____
- ☐ _____, _____

When our children evacuate from school, they will relocate to:

- ☐ _____, _____
- ☐ _____, _____

Make arrangements for your pets:

(Although shelters will allow guide dogs, many shelters will not allow pets).

Fire Escape Plan:

Draw a floor plan of your home. On the plan, lay out escape routes for each room of each floor. Identify two escape routes from every room if possible, especially for bedrooms, in case the planned escape route is blocked by smoke or fire.

Moments to Evacuate:

Make a list of critical items to take with you in case you would have a few moments available to evacuate safely.

- ☐ Medical supplies such as prescription medications
- ☐ “Go Bag” - Disaster Supplies Kit & First Aid
- ☐ Clothing, Sleeping Bags and Pillows
- ☐ Car keys and keys to the place you may be going (friend/relative)
- ☐ Wallet or Purse – Cash, Credit Cards
- ☐ Pets and pet evacuation supplies
- ☐ Your Family Disaster Preparedness Plan
- ☐ Important Telephone Numbers
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Also,

- ☐ Lock your home.
- ☐ Continue to listen to local radio or television and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.
- ☐ If specific travel routes are recommended by local officials, use them.
- ☐ Notify family and/or friends where you will be going and when you expect to arrive.
- ☐ Wear or bring appropriate clothing for the season. Consider sturdy shoes, long-sleeve shirts and pants.
- ☐ Stay Away from downed power lines!
- ☐ Don't go around barricades on roads.

Hours to Evacuate:

If local officials haven't advised an immediate evacuation, and you have hours or even days to evacuate:

- ☐ Prepare items and follow procedures above in “Moments to Evacuate” (see above).
- ☐ Keep a full tank of gas in your car or make other arrangements for transportation.
- ☐ Protect Your Home - be sure family members know how to:
 - Turn off Electricity at the main fuse or breaker (*if recommended based on incident specifics*)
 - Turn Off Water at the Main Valve
 - Drain faucets if a hard freeze is expected
 - Turn Off propane gas service (*if recommended based on incident specifics*)
 - Unplug electrical equipment and small appliances.
- ☐ Protect Your Valuables
 - Bring valuables indoors or relocate them
 - Move objects that may be damaged by wind or water to safer areas of the home