

# Disaster Planning



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It can start with a slam like a train hitting your building, or with a whiff of smoke in the air. It can be a big storm. Or, as they've been telling us lately, the problem may be a snuffle and a sneeze. The truth is that, sooner or later, something will happen. Your best bet is to plan for disaster now, no matter how foolish it may make you feel, and then stop worrying.

The most important single item in your disaster kit is free: an emergency plan that everyone in the family can recite. It should actually be three plans: what to do if you must evacuate your home immediately (a fire at night, for example), what to do if there's a disaster while you're away from home (an earthquake at 2 p.m.), and what to do if you're ordered to evacuate in 15 minutes (a flood). Each plan should cover who is doing what, and where they're going to go. If you have children or pets, someone must be responsible for them. Your emergency evacuation plan goes something like "I will get Sophie and go out this way, while you get Sammy and go out that way and

then wake the neighbors and call 911. We'll all meet under the oak tree across the street.”



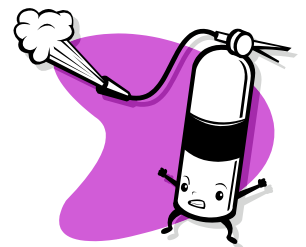
For the disaster outside your home, you need to consider where everyone is going to meet, and determine a secondary meeting place if the first is unsafe. A message center outside your area (your best friend in Ohio, Grandma in Eugene) is handy if the phones are working. If you have kids, you need to find out the school's disaster plan and integrate it into your plan.

Your short-notice evacuation plan should cover where to meet if possible, a message center, and what to take if there's time. If you're given 15 minutes to evacuate, you *may* have 5 of those minutes to grab whatever is important to you – the first draft of your novel, the family pictures or the family jewelry. Don't, under any circumstances, risk your safety for possessions.

Once you have plans, you need to rehearse them. Make everyone recite them periodically. Actually practice the emergency evacuation a couple of times. (Don't, however, pull surprise fire alarms on your household. They won't thank you for it.) People panic in emergencies. Knowing a plan really well helps overcome that panic and gets people moving in the right direction.

The next most important thing on the preparedness list is knowledge. The Red Cross offers first aid courses, and every adult should take one – in a disaster, immediate medical assistance will almost certainly not be available. You should also know basic safety things: where the gas and water shut-offs for your house are; when and how to use a fire extinguisher; hospital, fire and police numbers for your area; and the blood types and medication requirements of the people in your household.

There are a few super-handy items to have in your home during a disaster. Actually, most of them are useful during minor annoyances, too. A camp stove or catering burner is great in an ordinary power outage as well as a disaster. A large flashlight is good for looking for the lost cat as well as directing traffic after an earthquake. A very good First Aid kit is essential. And a fire extinguisher or two will always be useful.



If anyone in your household, including the cat, takes daily medication, keep at least a 14-day supply on hand. The simple method is to always refill your prescription 14 days before it runs out. You can also set aside 14 days worth, in the original container, in your emergency kit.

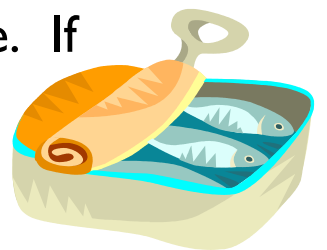
Food and water may be issues, depending on the disaster. While the government recommendations call for 3 days without assistance, the Davis Fire Chief recommends planning for 14 days.



You want one gallon of water per person per day (and don't forget your pets, adjusted by weight.) In many emergency situations, the water will keep coming – Davis has backup generators for the wells, so even an extended power outage won't affect the water. This will be of little consolation to you if the water main to your home has broken in an earthquake, so store water! Purified water has the longest shelf life, but you can also fill containers from the Co-op Water Station.

As for food, how much you need depends on the type of person you are. Even now, two weeks before the 11% sale, I could feed my family for 14 days from freezer and cupboard without breaking a sweat. Less food-obsessed households might be better served by setting aside a box or two of very easy food. Aim for higher fiber (2 grams or more per serving) higher protein (5 grams or more per serving) and lower sodium foods where you can. A list of some products we like for camping is attached.

Please don't buy 14 days worth of food and then forget about it. Most food has “use by” dates on it – if not, write the date you bought it on the package and use within one year. Organized folks will watch for each item to go on sale, replace what's in the emergency box, and eat the older package. Others will take the emergency box on their annual camping trip, and replace it when they get home. If you can afford it, the very simplest way is to donate the contents of the box to the Food Bank once a year and buy all new for your home.



If you travel, a “car kit” is essential. Stock it with food, water, first aid supplies, lighter or matches, flashlight, radio, batteries and blankets.

Emergency planning isn't much fun, but I want you to do it anyway. (So does your Mom.) As investments go, it can't be beat – it's cheap, it's quick, and it could save your life.

## **Good Foods**

Tasty Bite Indian entrees

Aseptic soups

Pacific Stews (contain meat)

Chili, veg or meat

Tuna

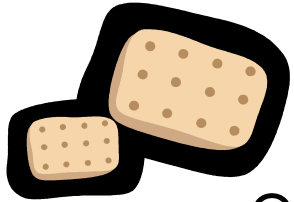
Sardines

Nut butter

Whole wheat couscous

Lundberg Rice Express

Polenta in a tube (does not require refrigeration)



Whole grain crackers

Figgy cookies

Energy-type bars

Oatmeal cups

Dried or aseptic milk

Don't forget pet food!

## **Non-Food Checklist**

Medications for 14 days

Large flashlight, and batteries for it

Radio, and batteries for it

Fire extinguishers, a least 1 for each floor

First aid kit

Extra sterile dressings

Extra instant ice packs

Extra elastic bandages

Camp or catering stove & extra fuel

Matches or lighter

Duct tape

Can opener/Swiss army knife

Feminine supplies

Pet supplies

