

If a Disaster Strikes

Stay and survive

If you are advised by local officials to "shelter-in-place", you must remain inside your home or office and protect yourself there. Take the following steps to maximize your protection:

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air-conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room that is above ground level (if possible, one without windows). In the case of a chemical threat, an above ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- Seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Continue to monitor the radio or television coverage until you are told all is safe or advised to evacuate. Local officials may call for the evacuation of specific areas in your community that are at greatest risk.

If a disaster strikes, remember to:

- Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action.
- Check for injuries.
- Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio or television for news and instructions from local authorities.
- Evacuate, if advised to do so.
- Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Check for damage in your home.
- Use flashlights. Do not use matches, lighters or turn on electrical switches.
- Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly. You will need a professional to turn gas back on.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately.
- Call your family contact - do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Confine or secure your pet.

Seniors in emergency situations

- Keep a one-week supply of medicine and a spare pair of eye glasses in your emergency kit.
- Individuals with hearing disabilities may want to consider installing a smoke alarm that has a flashing strobe light.

- If a can, crutches, walker or other device is needed, keep it nearby whenever possible.
- Set up a buddy system to check on one another after an emergency.

Keep a one-week supply of medicine and a spare pair of eye glasses in your emergency kit.

Pets & disasters

Prepare a grab and go kit for each pet:

- Food
- Water
- Certificates
- Bowls
- Plastic bags
- Newspaper
- Animal carrier
- Toys
- Medications
- Leash vaccination