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# FACT SHEET

L-724

## FAMILY EMERGENCY PLANS

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How well are you prepared to meet an emergency? Through the years, families purchase protection and security, such as fire insurance on their homes, auto insurance and health insurance. These protective steps fit into the plan for living. Families also need a protective plan for survival — another kind of insurance in case of natural or man-made disaster.

### WHY PLAN

Family emergency planning entails a calm, steady approach to condition yourself and your family against emergency hazards. Planning is as important in everyday living as in times of unexpected emergency. Emergencies could subject you and your family to stresses so extreme devising a rational plan to counteract the effects of the emergency would be difficult. Therefore, prepare an action plan well in advance of an emergency and review, exercise and up-date that plan. Suggestions follow which may help you plan ahead to meet possible emergencies.

### FIRE

*Design a fire drill plan for your home and out-buildings. Make sure all members of the family know these plans.*

*Hold regular practice drills. Pre-arrange a signal for announcing a drill or a real fire.*

*Select a spot outside for the family to gather to make sure all are safe. Every person must be accounted for before commencing to fight the fire.*

*Have available basic fire fighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers and water hoses. Know where the equipment is and how to use it for maximum results.*

*Know how to contact the nearest fire department as quickly as possible.*

### TORNADOES

*Assign duties to each family member to be executed in a tornado. Practice these duties during regular family tornado drills.*

*The only sure protection against tornadoes is underground. Take a battery-operated radio along for instructions. If no below-ground protection is available in your home, lie flat on the floor near*

*an inside wall or center hallway. Keep away from windows, keep calm, and do not run outside.*

*If in open country, escape by moving at right angles to the tornado's path. If there is not time to escape, lie flat in the nearest depression, such as a ditch or ravine. If the ditch is along a road, be sure there are no electrical lines overhead.*

*Seek indoor protection in a designated shelter area, reinforced building or in the basement of frame structures when in a city or town. Keep away from windows.*

*If in a school, factory or plant, stay inside away from windows. Remain near an inside wall or in a center hallway. Avoid auditoriums, gymnasiums or other areas with long room spans and few supporting posts. Students and personnel in rural schools or small factories which are not strongly reinforced should move to a ravine or ditch, following school or company policy and established emergency procedure.*

### HURRICANES

*Keep your radio or television on for latest Weather Bureau alerts, warnings and advisories. If power fails, use your car radio or battery operated radio.*

*Have gasoline in your car. If electric power is off, service stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.*

*Move inland from low-lying beaches or other locations which may be swept by high tides or storm waves.*

*Check on anything that might blow away or be torn loose. Garbage cans, garden tools, signs, porch furniture, awnings and other objects become weapons of destruction in hurricane winds. Store inside if possible.*

*Board up windows, using good lumber, or put storm shutters in place.*

### FLOODS

*Make your preparedness plan with family members sitting in and helping, so that each person will know what to do and quickly.*

*Move important things, as time allows, to*

higher ground. These items might include food, furniture, appliances, rugs and clothing.

If time allows, *turn off all electrical service* at the main utility pole and at each building. Turn off all gas appliances and close the valve at the tank or meter. Turn off water at the meter.

*Collect valuables, legal papers, etc., and take them with you.* These should be kept in a handy spot in case of any kind of disaster.

*Remember, evacuate as soon as possible.* Although water may not have reached the house, the avenue of escape may be cut off. Don't forget "couldn't-do-without" items — medications, spectacles, diet foods, equipment and proper clothing. Make a list ahead of time and have it handy.

### NUCLEAR DISASTER

Although no one likes to think about nuclear disaster, in this nuclear age, it is possible. Your family needs shelter to protect them from nuclear radiation.

*Determine shelter available.*

*Know how to improve this available shelter.*

*Stock your shelter* with a 2-week supply of emergency food, water, medical supplies, sanitation supplies, clothing and equipment.

*Inform each family member of his responsibility* in the event of a nuclear disaster.

*Have regular family shelter drills, and practice shelter living* to test family readiness. Revise, improve and test again until you know your family is well prepared.

### DROWNINGS AND ELECTROCUTIONS

*Know how to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.*

*Know the phone number and location* of the nearest rescue squad, state police, fire department, local hospital, civil defense unit, etc.

### ACCIDENTAL POISONING

1. Have available first aid antidotes for all poisons and pesticides in the home. These are generally listed on the labels of the poisons and pesticides. (See L-696, *Poisoning First Aid Guide*, available at your county Extension office, or from the Department of Agricultural Information, Texas A&M University.)

2. Take the container with the poison or pesticide along with the victim to the doctor. The doctor can often determine the proper treatment by knowing the ingredients of the poison or pesticide.

3. Know the address and telephone number of

the doctor and the poison control center nearest you.

### SUMMONING HELP

The telephone is often your family's fastest and most reliable method for calling help in an emergency. But the speed and long reach of a telephone are wasted if the caller first fumbles with a phone book, panics when his party answers and forgets to tell from where he is calling or what is wrong. Precious minutes can be wasted while those at the other end of the line try to re-establish contact or calm down an incoherent caller.

#### Emergency Telephone Use

*Know where to find the number you want.* Post emergency phone numbers in an obvious place near the phone.

*Know how to dial zero in the dark.* Smoke may blind you or power may be off at night. Feel for the opening just beneath the finger-stop and dial clockwise. Operators are trained to help you quickly.

*Tell the type help needed.* Explain the type of equipment you think needed.

*Tell your location.* Give street number and name. Repeat it. If the emergency isn't obvious (a fire would be easy to spot), a brief description of the house is helpful — two-story frame, brick, etc. This is especially important at night.

*Tell who you are.* This is important, particularly if a multi-family dwelling is involved. A neighbor asked for directions is more likely to recognize your name than your house number.

*Post a reminder.* Include all emergency phone numbers needed. Also list the four points to remember in case you momentarily "black out" during a call: Who are you? Where are you? What happened? What is needed?

#### What Your Children Should Know

*What to say.* Tell the child to "dial zero and tell the operator what's wrong."

*What to memorize.* Help your child memorize his name, his father's name and his address.

*How to operate a pay phone.* Keep a dime taped in a known place. Teach youngsters how to reach a pay telephone, how to insert a dime and reach the operator.

### PLAN AHEAD

Sit down with your family *now* in the relaxation and quiet of normalcy to determine in advance what you would do in an emergency. It will take only a few minutes, but *your* family's safety is at stake.