

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN AN HOUR A MONTH

PREPARE IN A YEAR

Being prepared for a disaster or emergency can be daunting. No one really wants to think about an emergency or disaster happening and there is so much to do! The US Department of Homeland Security has created “*Prepare in a Year*,” an easy and comprehensive guide to prepare for emergencies or disasters in just one hour a month for a year. A little bit of preparation goes a long way toward reducing stress and anxiety. Here is the best way to prepare for an emergency or disaster—one small task at a time.

JANUARY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

If you are separated from your loved ones when a disaster happens, the first thoughts may be about your family, their location and condition. Every household member should have an out-of-area contact card in a wallet, purse, or backpack at all times. Facebook has a “safety check” that can be implemented after a disaster.



FEBRUARY ACTION PLAN

Get familiar with the types of disasters this area is prone to. Information is available online or by attending a preparedness fair to learn about local hazards. Gather your family and create a family/household communication and reunification plan. Discuss the types of disasters that are likely to happen and write down a plan for each type. The response to an earthquake may be different than the response to a flood or the response to a fire. Practice your plan, discuss what each plan looks like, and discuss when to call 9-1-1. Post emergency numbers in a visible location that is easy for everyone to access.



MARCH WATER

Keep as much safely treated drinking water in the household plumbing system as possible. Be sure everyone in the household knows where the main water valve to the house is located and practices turning the water off and back on. The standard amount to have on hand is one gallon per person per day.



LEARN MORE:

DisasterReadyWashington.com
and Ready.gov

APRIL GRAB AND GO KIT

A Grab and Go kit should have enough supplies to last 2-3 days and should be lightweight and easy to carry such as a backpack, tub, or suitcase. Place items in plastic bags to protect against water, depending on the circumstances, these can later be repurposed for waste disposal. Keep the Grab and Go kit as close to the most used entrance/exit as possible, such as the garage, mud room or front door. Everyone – including pets – should have their own kit, although some supplies will be for the whole group.



MAY IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Gather and make copies of (or print out) the following documents:

- Property insurance (home, auto, renters, boat, etc.)
- Health insurance (medical, dental, vision, pet, life, disability, long-term care, etc.)
- Financial (bank, investment, retirement, etc.)
- Estate papers (wills, powers of attorney, medical proxy, minor guardianship, etc.)

Take photographs or videos of all valuables as documentation for insurance claims. Keep physical copies of these documents, photographs, or videos in a safe deposit box, or fireproof box.



JUNE**GET TWO WEEKS READY**

When a disaster happens, it may take up to two weeks for resources to arrive. Plan for alternative ways to do the following to care for you and your family's needs:

- Cooking
- Lighting
- Shelter
- Protecting food during power outage
- Sanitation

**JULY****FIRE SAFETY**

Home fires can occur anytime and are most often caused by cooking accidents, smoking indoors, fireworks or unsafe use of woodstoves or space heaters. Practice what to do in case of a home fire with your family. Test your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

**AUGUST****UTILITY SAFETY****NATURAL GAS**

- Natural gas leaks and explosions are responsible for a significant number of fires following any major earthquake.
- Know the signs of a gas leak
- Don't shut off the gas if there isn't a leak
- Attach a wrench to the meter or to the wall directly behind the meter.
- Make sure all responsible household members know when and how to shut off gas at the meter

ELECTRICITY

- Check the cords, plugs, and connectors
- Locate your electricity circuit box
- Teach all responsible household members how to shut off the electricity to the entire house

PROPANE

- Have your home's propane tank properly installed by a qualified professional and serviced on a regular basis.
- Propane tanks are extremely flammable.
- Never use or store a propane tank indoors
- Do not use portable propane heaters, stoves, or lanterns in tents, campers, truck caps, RVs, or other unventilated enclosures, especially while sleeping.

**SEPTEMBER****UNDER THE BED**

One way to be sure you are ready to respond is to keep important items under your bed.

Knowing where to go to get the essentials will make your response more effective and efficient. Keep these emergency supplies under the bed: sturdy shoes, work gloves, flashlight and/or light sticks.

**OCTOBER****DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON**

Practice "Drop - Cover - Hold On" with your family. Safety comes from stopping quickly or moving to a place of safety. Drop, Cover and Hold On is the national standard for earthquake safety.

- Drop - Where you are, onto your hands and knees. This prevents you from being knocked over or thrown to the ground.
- Cover - Your head and neck with one arm and hand. If a sturdy table or desk is nearby crawl underneath.
- Hold On - Until shaking stops. If under a table or desk hold on with one hand and be ready to move with your shelter. If not under a table or desk hold onto your head and neck with both arms and hands.

**NOVEMBER****SHELTER IN PLACE**

Practice sheltering in place as a family - this is different from "staying inside". In the event of a Shelter in Place Order:

- Go inside immediately
- Tightly close and lock all doors and windows
- Shut off fans and devices that circulate air
- Get into your pre-selected room and seal it tightly
- Listen to the news for instruction
- Thoroughly air out the home once the emergency is over

**DECEMBER****HOME HAZARD HUNT**

Take the time to identify and fix potential household hazards. Take 30 minutes to walk through your home. Imagine the ground movement of a significant earthquake. Identify potential hazards, make a list and then a plan to start fixing them.

