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IS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD READY?

Emergency preparedness information created for
the City of Houston, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Harris,
Galveston and Montgomery Counties.

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Are You and Your Neighborhood Ready?

In an actual emergency, we are often forced to rely on our own resourcefulness. It's simply a matter of knowing how to react when disaster strikes.

Consider that in 95 percent of all emergencies, bystanders or the victims themselves are the first to provide emergency help or to perform a rescue. Couple that with how often emergency personnel are overwhelmed during severe disasters like hurricanes and floods, and may face delays while trying to reach local neighborhoods.

That's why residents should plan and prepare before a disaster strikes; stay informed before, during and after a disaster; and get to know neighbors, particularly those too elderly or too ill to independently plan and prepare themselves for a disaster.

Communication and planning are key to keeping our families, homes and neighborhoods safer from the threats of crime, terrorism, public health issues and disasters of all kinds.

When individuals and their neighborhoods are prepared to mutually assist each other in the event of disaster, lives can be saved, property can be spared and emergency services can focus on reaching the most devastated areas first.

That's why Houston area residents should:

MAKE A PLAN, BUILD A KIT, STAY INFORMED AND KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

DISCUSSION

Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Stay Informed

DISASTERS THAT COULD AFFECT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Simply knowing what to anticipate once a disaster hits your area or your home is the foundation for disaster planning. Let's identify some situations that could affect our area.

NATURAL OR WEATHER-RELATED

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

INDUSTRIAL/TECHNOLOGICAL

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

OTHER

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Recall an experience with one of these disasters and share how your family and community responded.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Think about storms or emergencies that you have experienced. Name one precaution that you took before the storm/emergency, which you are glad to have done.

EXAMPLE...



I'M GLAD THAT I TRIMMED THE RUBBER TREE PLANT OUTSIDE MY BEDROOM WINDOW BEFORE HURRICANE IKE. THE WIND WOULD HAVE CAUSED THOSE BRANCHES TO WHIP AROUND AND LIKELY BREAK MY SECOND FLOOR WINDOW.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Think about one thing that you wish that you would have done, but didn't.

EXAMPLE...



DURING A HEAVY THUNDERSTORM LAST SPRING, I WISH THAT I HAD TURNED THE CAR AROUND RATHER THAN DRIVING INTO THE WATER THAT WAS ACTUALLY MUCH DEEPER THAN I THOUGHT. MY CAR WAS FLOODED AND I SPENT A LOT OF MONEY TO GET IT RUNNING AGAIN.

Make a Plan

Make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. Before an emergency happens, sit down together and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go and what you will do in an emergency. Keep a copy of this plan in your emergency supply kit or another safe place where you can access it in the event of a disaster.

Advance planning can prevent or at least reduce the confusion in the midst of an emergency. Use the proverbial “calm before the storm” to sit down and decide what works best for you and your loved ones.



If you have children, they will already know how to follow a safety plan. It’s like doing fire drills at school – children know the plan and are safe in case of an actual emergency. Talking about your plans will help your children feel comfortable that they will be safe.

HOW WILL WE STAY IN TOUCH?

- Keep a list of contacts by the phone and in your emergency kit.
- Make sure you have a phone in your home that has a cord and does not require electricity.
- If you have a cell phone, program your emergency contact(s) as “ICE” (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Make sure to tell your family and friends that you’ve listed them as emergency contacts.
- Teach family members how to use text messaging (also known as SMS or Short Message Service). Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.

WHERE WILL WE MEET?

- Decide on a meeting place outside of your home.

WHAT ABOUT FAMILY PETS?

- Make a plan about what you will do if you need to evacuate and cannot bring your pets with you.

My Family Emergency Plan

Family Health and Contact Information

MAKE A PLAN

1.

Family Member's Whole Name

Relationship (Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, etc.)

Address

Daytime Phone

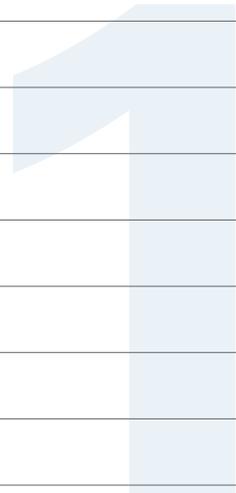
Cell Phone

E-mail

Date of Birth

Medications

Allergies/Important Health Information



2.

Family Member's Whole Name

Relationship (Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, etc.)

Address

Daytime Phone

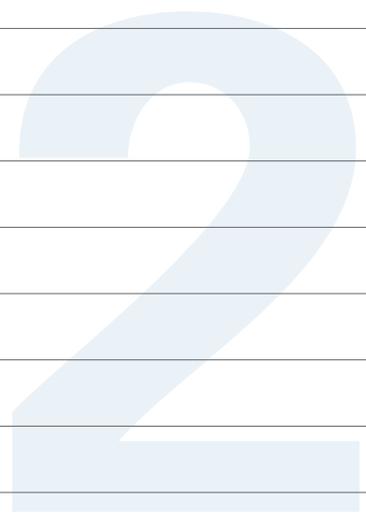
Cell Phone

E-mail

Date of Birth

Medications

Allergies/Important Health Information



MAKE A PLAN

My Family Emergency Plan

Family Health and Contact Information

3.

Family Member's Whole Name

Relationship (Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, etc.)

Address

Daytime Phone

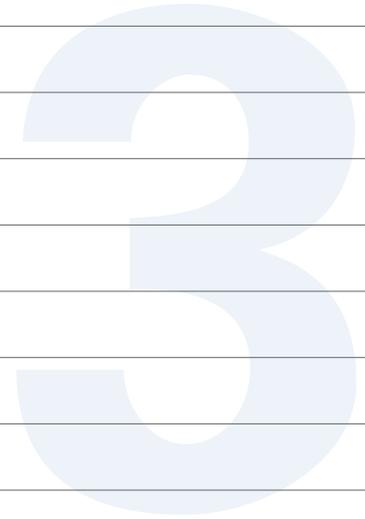
Cell Phone

E-mail

Date of Birth

Medications

Allergies/Important Health Information



4.

Family Member's Whole Name

Relationship (Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, etc.)

Address

Daytime Phone

Cell Phone

E-mail

Date of Birth

Medications

Allergies/Important Health Information



6

Out-of-Town Emergency Contact

Name

Address

E-mail

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Work Phone

Local Emergency Contact

Name

Address

E-mail

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Work Phone

Trusted Adult

Whole Name

Relationship to Child (Aunt, Friend, Neighbor, etc.)

Address

E-mail

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Work Phone

Doctor/Insurance Information

Primary Care Physician

Primary Care Physician's Phone Number

Family Health Insurance Provider

Health Insurance Provider's Phone Number

Policy Number

MAKE A PLAN

My Family Emergency Plan

School and Workplace Information

SCHOOLS

(IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, THE CHILD WILL GO HERE WITH THE TEACHER/CHILD-CARE PROVIDER WHILE WAITING FOR A PARENT/GUARDIAN TO ARRIVE.)

Child's Whole Name

School/Child-Care Program

School/Child-Care Program Address

Teacher's/Child-Care Provider's Whole Name

Phone

Evacuation Location

Child's Whole Name

School/Child-Care Program

School/Child-Care Program Address

Teacher's/Child-Care Provider's Whole Name

Phone

Evacuation Location

Child's Whole Name

School/Child-Care Program

School/Child-Care Program Address

Teacher's/Child-Care Provider's Whole Name

Phone

Evacuation Location

WORKPLACES

USE THE SPACE BELOW TO DOCUMENT THE WORKPLACE INFORMATION FOR EACH MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY THAT WORKS OUTSIDE OF THE HOME.

Working Family Member Name

Workplace Name

Workplace Address

Supervisor Name

Phone

Evacuation Location (if applicable)

Working Family Member Name

Workplace Name

Workplace Address

Supervisor Name

Phone

Evacuation Location (if applicable)

Working Family Member Name

Workplace Name

Workplace Address

Supervisor Name

Phone

Evacuation Location (if applicable)

My Family Emergency Plan

A Go Bag and a Stay-at-Home Kit

BUILD A KIT

Build a Kit

Building a family emergency kit is crucial. During emergencies, you will need to be self-reliant for a period of time. You may want to consider two types of kits: a Go Bag and a Stay-at-Home Kit. A Go Bag is one that you would take with you in case of evacuation. A Stay-at-Home Kit would come into play if you were to shelter-in-place. Allow your family to be a part of this experience as they help you put together your kits.

In case you need to evacuate, a Go Bag keeps your supplies together and ready to go. Go Bags should be easily portable like a backpack or a suitcase on wheels. Store it somewhere easily accessible.

GO BAG CHECKLIST:

- Copies of your important papers in a waterproof bag
- Extra set of car and house keys
- Extra mobile phone charger
- Copies of credit and ATM cards and cash
- Bottled water and snacks such as energy or granola bars
- First-aid kit, flashlight, and whistle
- Radio with batteries (don't forget to pack extra batteries)
- A list of the medications each member of your family needs and at least 24-hour supply of such medication
- Toothpaste, toothbrushes, wet cleansing wipes, and so on
- Contact and meeting place information for your family and a small map of your local area
- A special cuddly stuffed animal for your child and something to help occupy their time, like books or coloring books. If this includes a hand-held video game, make sure you have extra batteries.
- Rain ponchos

STAY-AT-HOME KIT:

Use a Stay-at-Home Kit when you need to shelter-in-place. Recommended supplies to include in a basic kit:

- Water (one gallon per person per day, for drinking and sanitation)
- Non-perishable food (recommend a 5–7 day supply)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio
- Weather radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First Aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Filter mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener if kit contains canned food
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Items for unique family needs, such as daily prescription medications, infant formula or diapers
- Rain gear
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Paper towels
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Disinfectant
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.
- A special cuddly stuffed animal for your child and something to help occupy their time, like books or coloring books. If this includes a hand-held video game, make sure you have extra batteries.

BUILD A KIT

My Family Emergency Plan

A Go Bag and a Stay-at-Home Kit

DISCUSSION QUESTION

If my home was without power for one week, list the five things you/your family absolutely must have to survive. Discuss your choices with the group.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Each one of us is a unique person. Name something specific to your personal health or well-being that you need daily that others may not need.

Item

Reason

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The expense of building an emergency supply kit all at once can be too much for many of us. But, working year-round to stock and maintain your emergency kit can be easy. Most of us go to the grocery store at least twice each month. Start with this month and list the items that you can buy to build your emergency kit over time.

MONTH:

Trip A

Trip B

Item 1: _____

Item 1: _____

Item 2: _____

Item 2: _____

Item 3: _____

Item 3: _____

(This would repeat for 12 months)

EXAMPLE:

MONTH: JUNE

Trip A

5 one-gallon bottles of drinking water

Trip B

Non-perishable food

MONTH: JULY

Trip A

Flashlight and batteries

Trip B

Disposable plates, cups and utensils



DON'T FORGET THE PETS

Overlooking pets during a disaster can result in them being lost, injured or worse. If a family is going to evacuate, the family's pets should probably be evacuated, too. Consider boarding facilities or veterinarians who shelter pets during emergencies. Also, designate a pet buddy, a friend or neighbor that can take care of your pet if you are unable to get to your house. It's also smart to have a pet disaster supply kit, which could include:

- Pet medications
- First aid kit
- Strong leashes and collar/harness
- Carriers to transport pets safely
- Current photos of pets (in case pets get lost)
- Pet food
- Potable water
- Bowls
- Litter/pan
- Muzzle
- Can opener
- Toys



Practice, Maintain and Update

Disaster plans and kits can become dated if you're fortunate enough to go for long periods of time without experiencing any disasters. Unfortunately, outdated plans and kits may prove inadequate when a disaster actually does hit.

That's why it is wise to periodically review your plans and update your kits. Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills at least once a year. Remember to replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months. Make time to test and re-charge your fire extinguisher(s) according to the manufacturer's instructions. It's also a good idea to test your smoke detector once a month and replace the batteries twice a year — once in the fall and once in the spring.



PRACTICE, MAINTAIN AND UPDATE

Make a Plan

Just as you did with your family emergency plan, it is equally important to have a neighborhood plan as well. Consider the following questions:

HOW WILL WE STAY IN TOUCH?

KEEP A LIST OF NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACTS BY THE PHONE AND IN YOUR EMERGENCY KIT. ESTABLISH A PHONE TREE TO RELAY INFORMATION MORE QUICKLY.

WHERE WILL WE MEET?

DECIDE ON A GROUP MEETING PLACE IF ACCESS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS BLOCKED.

WHAT ABOUT FAMILY PETS?

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH NEIGHBORS TO CARE FOR YOUR PETS IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO MAKE IT HOME.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Work in small groups to create a neighborhood emergency plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE

Meet here if you can't get home. Young children should not go to this place alone; they should stay with a caregiver and wait for their parent/guardian to arrive.

Name of Location

Type of Establishment (Grocery Store, Bookstore, etc.)

Address

Phone Number

Work Phone

SECONDARY MEETING PLACE

Meet here if access to your neighborhood is blocked.

Name of Location

Type of Establishment (Grocery Store, Bookstore, etc.)

Address

Phone Number

Work Phone



Know Your Neighbors

Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Start by meeting your neighbors. In the event of a disaster, your neighborhood will be more comfortable working together until help arrives.

Learn your neighbors' special skills (e.g., medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have functional and access needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Find out if anyone has specialized equipment like a power generator, or expertise such as emergency training, that might help in a crisis. Make back-up plans for children in case you can't get home in an emergency.

If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a homeowners association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Sharing plans and communicating in advance is a good strategy.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- Create a Neighborhood Disaster Committee and participate in local community and police events
- Organize block parties
- Observe National Night Out
- Create maps and directories of the neighborhood
- Develop a phone tree/contact list
- Establish teams and responsibilities

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Whom in your neighborhood do you know who might have functional and access needs requiring transportation assistance in an emergency? Can you ask them to register with 2-1-1?

If you hear a "shelter-in-place" order, identify specific locations where you would feel safe:

Within your own home

Within your neighborhood

Within the Houston area



What is a Phone Tree and Why Is It Useful?

A phone tree, or call-down, is a series of telephone calls from one person to the next used to relay specific information. An established and exercised phone tree protocol can be used during emergency situations to deliver urgent information to and for communication among your neighbors. Using the phone tree system can spread a message quickly and efficiently to a large number of people. This sample phone tree procedure is intended to be adapted to fit your specific neighborhood.

When Calling:

- The person at the top will start the tree and it may be helpful to have a brief script complete with the specific action.
- Ask the person to get paper and pencil to write specifics.
- Give facts about the event.
- Please be sure that you have alternative phone numbers, so you can reach each person.
- If nobody is answering, leave a message and call the next person. This should ensure that everyone gets the information in a timely fashion.
- Confirm they will be making the next call on the list.
- Prearrange with neighbors at the end of the list to contact the person at the top once they receive the message. The LAST person on the phone tree should CALL THE FIRST person to ensure that the tree is completed and that the message was accurate.



My Neighborhood Emergency Plan

Sample Phone Tree

KNOW NEIGHBORS



A community working together during an emergency makes sense.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Talk to your neighbors and fill-in the chart to keep with your supply kit. Please list address, family members, phone numbers, e-mail, and any special skills, equipment or needs.

1

Family Members	Phone Number/E-mail
Address	
Special Skills, Equipment or Needs	

2

Family Members	Phone Number/E-mail
Address	
Special Skills, Equipment or Needs	

3

Family Members	Phone Number/E-mail
Address	
Special Skills, Equipment or Needs	

4

Family Members	Phone Number/E-mail
Address	
Special Skills, Equipment or Needs	

5

Family Members	Phone Number/E-mail
Address	
Special Skills, Equipment or Needs	

6

Family Members	Phone Number/E-mail
Address	
Special Skills, Equipment or Needs	

Family Members

Phone Number/E-mail

Address

Special Skills, Equipment or Needs

Family Members

Phone Number/E-mail

Address

Special Skills, Equipment or Needs

Family Members

Phone Number/E-mail

Address

Special Skills, Equipment or Needs

Family Members

Phone Number/E-mail

Address

Special Skills, Equipment or Needs

As a group, identify three things that you can all do to make the neighborhood safer in the event of an emergency.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Stay Informed

Staying informed in an emergency situation may be challenging. How will you get news updates without electricity? Consider a battery-powered radio as part of your emergency kit.

In the Houston area, we often have warning of upcoming weather emergencies. It's important to keep informed about weather emergencies, especially if you live in an area that is evacuated. Visit readyhouston.tx.gov ahead of time for weather resources.



During emergencies, listen to KTRH 740 AM or KUHF 88.7 FM, our region's designated Emergency Alert System, for up-to-the-minute information from local public officials. Follow instructions and recommendations — and be ready to adjust your disaster plans and supply kits accordingly.

WHEN TO CALL 211

- If you don't have access to transportation, then you should pre-register for transportation assistance.
- By registering now, if an evacuation order is issued for your area, emergency management personnel will contact you to schedule your transportation.
- If you wait until disaster strikes, it will likely be too late to get special help.
- Renew or update your information/status each year.

WHEN TO CALL 311

- Call 311 when you have a non-emergency question.
- A city representative will answer your call from 6 am – Midnight.
- During disasters, wait time may be longer to have your call answered.
- Do not call to report an emergency.
- If outside city limits, call 713-837-0311.

WHEN TO CALL 911

- When you are in immediate danger or witness a crime in progress.
- For a serious injury or medical condition.
- Any other situation needing urgent attention.
- Do NOT call 911 for non-emergencies or to report a power outage (power outages may be urgent but phone lines need to be kept open for emergency calls).

WHEN TO CALL



WWW.READYHOUSTONTX.GOV

THE INTERNET OFFERS ACCESS TO NEWS AND WEATHER UPDATES.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE	www.nws.noaa.gov
KPRC CHANNEL 2 (NBC Affiliate)	www.click2houston.com
KHOU CHANNEL 11 (CBS Affiliate)	www.khou.com
KTRK CHANNEL 13 (ABC Affiliate)	abclocal.go.com/ktrk/
KRIV CHANNEL 26 (FOX Affiliate)	www.myfoxhouston.com
THE CW 39	www.39online.com
WEATHER CHANNEL	www.weather.com
KTRH 740 AM EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM	www.ktrh.com
KUHF 88.7 FM	www.kuhf.org
HOUSTON CHRONICLE	www.chron.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, VISIT:

READY AMERICA	www.ready.gov
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY	www.fema.gov
AMERICAN RED CROSS - GREATER HOUSTON	www.houstonredcross.org
CITY OF HOUSTON OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.houstonoem.net
HARRIS COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.hcoem.org
FORT BEND COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.fbcoem.org
GALVESTON COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.gcoem.org
CITY OF GALVESTON OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.cityofgalveston.org
CITY OF PASADENA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.ci.pasadena.tx.us
BRAZORIA COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.brazoria-county.com
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.mctxoem.org
CITY OF LA PORTE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.lpoem.org
TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/

THINGS TO DO

My Notes

Use the spaces below to write reminders or notes on items to be done in order for your family or neighborhood to be ready.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



IS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD READY?

Let's take disasters seriously before we face them. Start today and take an active role to ensure your own safety, your loved ones' safety and that of your community in the event of an emergency. Simply remember: The act of surviving a disaster often begins before the disaster hits.

MAKE A PLAN

BUILD A KIT

STAY INFORMED

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

