UNITED STEELWORKERS

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UNITED STEELWORKERS DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE *Resource Guide*

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DISASTROUS EVENTS

There are many events that can disrupt our lives. Weather-related events have increased over the past years – and they keep getting worse. This guide gives specific information on the most frequent types of disasters. Because no list can include all disasters, there is also a general section that can be used as an overall guide.

Much of the information in each of the sections is repeated. No matter what caused the disaster, there are often similar issues. This book will give you basic guidance to get you started. For information that is specific to your location or event, please see the referrals list on pages 22-23 for suggestions on organizations that may be helpful.

EARTHQUAKES

Earthquakes happen when the surface of the earth releases and sends out waves of energy. While most cause no obvious damage, when the "big ones" hit, the damage can be devastating.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

After an earthquake, one of the biggest concerns is entering a collapsed or unstable structure. Some other dangers are:

- Water system breaks that may flood basements
- Exposure to bacteria or viruses from sanitary sewer system breaks
- Electrical hazards and energized electrical wiring
- Exposure to airborne smoke and dust (asbestos, silica, etc.)
- Exposure to hazardous materials (ammonia, battery acid, leaking fuel, etc.)
- Natural gas leaks creating flammable and toxic environments
- Possible building collapse from aftershocks
- Confined spaces
- Slip, trip or fall hazards from holes, rebar that is sticking up, etc.
- Getting struck by falling objects
- Fire
- Sharp objects such as glass and debris
- Unfamiliar surroundings

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- Continue to listen to your local radio or television stations for emergency information.
- Only trained personnel should be involved in search and rescue, or demolition and cleanup operations.
- If structural, electrical or gas hazards are identified, report them to the proper local authorities and/or utility. Be particularly cautious around downed overhead lines.
- Wear proper protective clothing when walking on or near debris, including boots and gloves.
- Take steps to prevent cold injuries or heat illnesses and dehydration.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2019 the United States had more than 37,000 earthquakes!
From 1975 to 1995 there were only four states that did not have any earthquakes. These states included Florida, Iowa, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

HURRICANES

Hurricanes are storms that form over the ocean and can move toward landfall with severe affects. The hurricane season lasts from late spring well into fall. When hurricanes hit land, the possible effects include: wind, rainfall, storm surges, flooding, tornadoes and landslides.

Hurricanes in the U.S. are most often in the southern part of the country. There are many oil refineries, chemical plants and other facilities with toxic materials in the path of hurricanes. If those workplaces are not equipped to handle the winds, rain and resulting disruption of electricity and other utilities, they can become a danger to workers and the community.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

- Unstable buildings
- Contact with live electrical equipment and other utilities
- Generator use
- Toxic dusts and other materials as materials are damaged
- Chemical and material storage and use
- Contaminated water and/or floodwater
- Unstable footing
- Exposure to human or animal remains
- Extreme heat
- Fatigue
- Mold (after the water dries)

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- Continue to listen to your local radio or television stations for emergency information.
- Be aware of possible building, electrical or gas-leak hazards. If such hazards are identified, report them to the proper local authorities and/or utility.
- Do not touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed power lines.
- Wear proper clothing when walking on or near debris, including boots and gloves.
- Be careful around sharp objects, including nails and broken glass.
- Take steps to prevent heat illnesses and dehydration.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the southern hemisphere, hurricanes rotate in a clockwise direction, and in the northern hemisphere, they rotate in an anti-clockwise direction. This is due to the earth's rotation.

TORNADOES

A tornado brings destruction to all in its path. Workers and community members are called upon to do tasks that are not part of their routine and that must be done under hazardous conditions. U.S. states most often hit by tornadoes include Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Florida, but every state has experienced tornadoes. While they can occur anytime, tornadoes most often strike between 3 and 9 p.m.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

- After a tornado, one of the biggest concerns is entering a collapsed or unstable building and unstable trees in the area.
- Dangerous driving conditions due to slippery and/or blocked roadways and other utilities
- Slips and falls due to slippery walkways
- Sharp objects including nails and broken glass
- Electrical hazards from downed power lines or downed objects in contact with power lines
- Burns from fires caused by energized line contact or equipment failure
- Exhaustion from working extended shifts
- Heat and dehydration

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- Continue to listen to your local radio or television stations for emergency information.
- Be aware of possible structural, electrical or gas-leak hazards. If these hazards are identified, report them to the proper local authorities and/or utility.
- Do not touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed power lines.
- Wear proper clothing when walking on or near debris, including boots and gloves.
- Be careful around sharp objects, including nails and broken glass.
- Take steps to prevent heat illnesses and dehydration.

DID YOU KNOW?

The British were driven out of Washington D.C. on August 25, 1814 due to a tornado.
This was likely what prevented the British from doing any more damage to Washington D.C. The day before the tornado struck the British burned the White House and a large part of the city.

WILDFIRES

Wildfires are sweeping, destructive fires – especially in rural or wilderness areas. Unfortunately, because of the number of locations that have houses and workplaces that are near open areas, the wildfires enter into communities as well.

Wildfires move extremely quickly. Getting out is the most important task. Even if it seems that you are not in the path, a shift in wind can change that very quickly.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

- The biggest risks are getting burnt and breathing in smoke.
- Building instability
- Contact with live electrical equipment and other utilities
- Unsecured hazards
- Generator use
- Toxic dusts and other materials as materials are damaged
- Chemical and material storage and use
- Unstable footing
- Exposure to human or animal remains
- Extreme heat
- Fatigue
- Mold (when water used in firefighting dries)

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- If you know a wildfire is traveling toward your area, the best thing to do is leave, immediately.
- Continue to listen to your local radio or television stations for emergency information.
- Keep brush, weeds and other potential fuels trimmed back on your property, especially around your home.
- Put away grills, propane tanks or other flammable materials that may be in your yard.
- Close all doors and windows and fill sinks, tubs and other containers with water to discourage fire.
- Wetting your roof may help reduce the risk of airborne embers catching.
- If you cannot leave, stay inside. Go to the safest building or room, with the lowest smoke levels. Crouch low for the best air. If you don't have a mask, breathe through a wet cloth.
- If you are caught outside, try to find a body of water to crouch in. If you can't, find a depression with the least vegetation and lie low, covering yourself with wet blankets, clothes or soil if possible.
- Do not return until instructed to do so.
- Listen to authorities before drinking water from the area.
- Avoid items that are hot, smoky or charred.
- Beware of the risk of flooding, since trees and protective vegetation might have been removed, exposing loose soil.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wildfires move faster uphill than downhill! The steeper the slope, the faster the fire travels. If you live on a hill, you might want to leave your house if a wildfire is near.

FLOODS

Floods are the most common natural disasters in the United States; some from hurricanes and others from torrential rain or snow melt.

A flood brings destruction to communities. Workers and community members are called upon to do tasks that are not part of their routine and that must be done under hazardous conditions.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

Driving during flood conditions is the cause of nearly half of flood fatalities. A car can stall in six inches of water and can float in just one foot of water. Once the water has receded and cleanup begins, the following hazards may be present:

- Building instability
- Generator use
- Chemical and material storage and use
- Contaminated water and/or floodwater
- Unstable footing
- Extreme heat
- Fatigue
- Mold (as the water dries)

DID YOU KNOW?

Just six inches of rapidly-moving flood water can make a person fall down.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

If the water level is rising around your vehicle, you should abandon the vehicle. The National Weather Service has a campaign: Don't Drown; Turn Around. This very simple advice will save lives.

- Continue to listen to your local radio or television stations for emergency information.
- Be aware of possible building, electrical or gas-leak hazards. If such hazards are identified, report them to the proper local authorities and/or utility.
- Do not touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed power lines.
- Water may be contaminated with chemicals or bacteria. Take special care not to drink any and shower as soon as possible after exposure.
- Wear proper clothing when walking on or near debris, including boots and gloves.
- Be careful around sharp objects, including nails and broken glass.

OVERVIEW OF HAZARDS FOUND IN MANY DISASTERS

CARBON MONOXIDE During emergencies, generators are often used as a power source. Gasoline and diesel-powered generators, pumps and pressure washers all release carbon monoxide, a deadly, colorless, odorless gas. These devices must be used outdoors and never inside confined spaces.

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS In any disaster, hazardous chemical and biological hazards may be released from their usual storage containers. If at all possible, do not go into an area that has a high likelihood of contamination until it has been checked by authorities. In any event, avoid contact with floodwaters or other sources of contamination. Wash hands and shower as frequently as possible, avoid touching your face or mouth area, and get medical attention for any symptoms.

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS Electricity and water are a bad combination.

Downed power lines are often "live" or energized. Do not come into contact with the downed lines or with any objects that are in contact with the downed lines. Contact can cause burns or electrocution.

INSECTS Precautions against insects are all about covering up. Wear long pants, socks and long-sleeved shirts. To avoid bites use insect repellents containing DEET. If you have a bad reaction to a bite, for example, nausea, sweating, serious swelling and/or loss of breath, seek medical treatment immediately.

MOLD Mold grows in wet areas and is often present after a disaster. Even when an item has dried out, mold spores may continue to grow. The best way to prevent mold exposure is to throw out any porous or soft items that have gotten wet and clean any items that have a hard surface.

Mold can cause illnesses including sneezing, eye irritation, cough and congestion, and skin rashes. For people with asthma or with weakened immune systems, the health risks may be more serious. Medical attention is advised.

RODENTS, SNAKES AND INSECTS Disasters may bring a variety of pests into the open. Rodents, snakes, insects and other vermin are often dislodged from their usual homes and food sources.

The first common sense advice is to stay away from wild or stray animals. In addition to the risk of disease, animals are also under stress and may be more likely to bite or scratch. If you are bitten or scratched, get medical attention immediately.

Animals can carry disease whether they are dead or alive. Animal waste can also carry disease. When working in an area that may have animals, wear gloves and wash your hands immediately after leaving the area. Dead animals should be shoveled into bags, double bagged and thrown away as soon as possible.

SNAKES If you are in an area where there are snakes, look at the area or debris pile before proceeding. Try not to put your hands under debris. Wear heavy gloves. If you see a snake, step back and allow it to proceed. Wear boots at least 10 inches high. A snake's striking distance is about one-half the total length of the snake.

If bitten, note the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment. Keep bite victims still and calm to slow the spread of venom in case the snake is poisonous.

Seek medical attention as soon as possible. Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom. Apply first aid: lay the person down so that the bite is below the level of the heart, and cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

TREE AND DEBRIS REMOVAL Downed trees and other large debris are a routine part of post-disaster cleanup. Removing trees can be a dangerous activity.

Make sure that trees or other debris are clear of contact with downed power lines. If they are in contact, do not go near them.

Equipment used to trim trees or tree limbs can cause injury if proper precautions are not taken. Chain saws and chippers require training and proper protective equipment including gloves, chaps, foot protection, eye protection, fall protection, hearing protection and head protection. If tree cuts are not done properly, pieces of the tree can fall back on the worker. If using the equipment in wet conditions, make sure the equipment is designed for that use.

TEMPERATURE EXTREMES: COLD Working in cold, wet conditions can cause the body's temperature to drop. If body temperature goes below 75 degrees Fahrenheit, it can cause uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, stumbling and exhaustion.

Clothing should be used that can keep water away from the skin. Clothing should be layered to adjust to temperature changes. Short breaks in warm dry shelters are important to allow the body to warm up. When possible, work in the warmest part of the day. Work in pairs to watch out for each other. Drink warm, sweet beverages with real sugar. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.

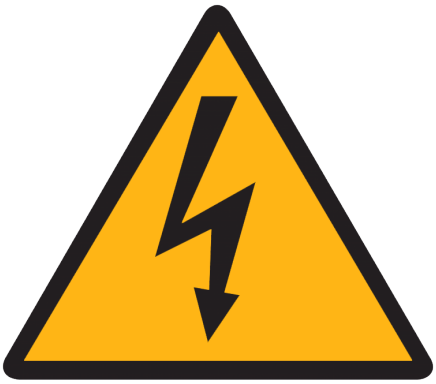
TEMPERATURE EXTREMES: HOT Workers cleaning up after a disaster are at risk of heat-related illness. In addition to working in hot conditions (often after a hurricane or other warm climate disaster), personal protective equipment (PPE) can also raise the body temperature.

Heat is more than just uncomfortable. Excessive heat can kill. When body temperature rises above 104 degrees Fahrenheit, body systems begin to fail. Signs include confusion, loss of consciousness and seizures. The person may stop sweating.

At greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, symptoms may include headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion, thirst and heavy sweating.

Drinking a lot of cool water, taking frequent rest breaks in cooler areas and wearing protective clothing that provides cooling can help prevent heat-related illnesses. Do not drink alcohol or caffeine. Wear light-colored, light-weight clothing.

Those working in warm conditions should always work in pairs so that they can keep an eye on each other.



WORKPLACES+ COMMUNITIES

Workplace disaster planning is different and often more complex than other types of disaster planning. While offices and other lower-risk workplaces can protect people with a basic plan, manufacturing and other workplaces where toxic chemicals and other hazards are in use need much more detailed pre-planning and response. **Can we ever really be ready for a disaster?**

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION RULES

Completely ready? Maybe… or maybe not. But there are steps that can be taken, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires them.

Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) are covered by OSHA regulation **1910.38**. At a minimum, your workplace's plan must be available to employees for review and must include procedures for:

- Reporting a fire or other emergency
- Emergency evacuation, including type of evacuation and exit route assignments
- Procedures to be followed by workers who remain to complete critical operations before they can evacuate
- Procedures to account for all workers after evacuation
- Procedures to be followed by workers performing rescue or medical duties
- The name or job title of everyone who may be contacted by workers who need more information about the plan or their duties

EMPLOYEE ALARM SYSTEM An employer must have and maintain an employee alarm system. The worker alarm system must use a distinctive signal for each purpose and comply with OSHA requirements (**29 CFR 1910.165**).

TRAINING An employer must designate and train workers to assist in a safe and orderly evacuation of other employees.

REVIEW OF EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN An employer must review the EAP with each worker covered by the plan:

- When the plan is developed or the worker is initially assigned to a job
- When the worker's responsibilities under the plan change
- When the plan is changed

To be effective, emergency action plans should:

- Involve workers in the development of the plan
- Anticipate specific problems that are likely or possible to occur at the location
- Be integrated into a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) program

OSHA has an online tool that can help companies create their own EAP. In addition to the EAP regulations, OSHA has regulations that apply in specific circumstances.

HIGH-RISK WORKPLACES

Many United Steelworkers (USW) workplaces are filled with chemicals and other toxic products that can pose a risk during disasters. If chemicals are released, the effects go far beyond the plant gates into the community and environment.

Pre-planning is key. Recognizing the hazards onsite and the possible ways normal protections could be weakened in a storm or other disaster is crucial. Figuring out additional safeguards will protect both workers and the community in the event a storm disrupts operations-as-usual.

Emergency planning often focuses on how to evacuate people in the event of a fire or similar event. Evacuation plans are important, but when dealing with a workplace with toxic chemicals or other hazards on site, a more detailed plan is crucial.

OSHA RULES FOR CERTAIN HIGH-RISK WORKPLACES

For some types of high-risk workplaces, OSHA has special regulations.

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

Attention must be paid to preventing consequences of disasters. As described in the Arkema incident on page 15, loss of power, which can be annoying and somewhat dangerous in any workplace, can be catastrophic in workplaces where power is needed to contain chemicals. Rather than assume nothing bad will ever happen, workplaces must plan multiple back-up systems to contain the effects of situations such as flooding, power loss, temperature extremes and other circumstances that can be a result of disasters.

- In assessing the safety of jobs or tasks, make sure to include worst case scenarios to identify risks and possible solutions.
- Communities and emergency responders should be included, along with workers, in planning activities, training and drills.
- Develop effective communications and information sharing among facilities, responders and the community before, during and after events.
- Make sure that back-up is built into prevention, containment and communications systems.

RESPONSE

There may be some workers who must stay on site to monitor or shut down operations. Those workers must be trained in emergency response. Preparations must be made for:

- Electricity/power needs of production processes
- Procedures for shutting down in the threat of disaster
- Communication with local officials/community

In addition to training workers for their tasks, the workers who remain on the job must be supported. Because workers who take on this role are likely to be at the worksite for days, basic needs must be met:

- Food and drink
- Communication both within the worksite and for the workers to communicate with their families
- Cots/sleeping arrangements
- Sanitation (shower facilities and decontamination facilities)
- Assistance for workers' families, where needed
- Medical care equipment – beyond first aid

Finally, once the emergency has passed it is crucial to assess what worked during the response and what did not. Lessons learned from each event can make future events safer.

PROCESS SAFETY MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS STANDARD

Many worksites such as oil refineries, chemical manufacturers and paper mills must comply with OSHA's Process Safety Management of Highly Hazardous Chemicals standard. Part of the standard requires emergency planning and training to equip workers to respond in an emergency. (**PSM 1910.119**)

HAZARDOUS WASTE OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Anyone responding to an emergency situation in a workplace that are engaged in hazardous waste clean-up, treatment, storage or disposal must comply with the rules under the HAZWOPER OSHA standard. During emergencies, workers at HAZWOPER sites fall into one of five levels of "emergency responders." (**HAZWOPER 1910.120**)

FIRST RESPONDER AWARENESS LEVEL They act defensively from a distance.

FIRST RESPONDER OPERATIONS LEVEL They respond to releases or potential releases as part of the initial response for the purpose of protecting nearby people, environment and property. They respond with defensive actions but do not try to stop the release.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TECHNICIAN (HAZMAT) They take actions to stop the release. They wear specialized PPE and require extensive training.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPECIALIST They are special assistants to the HAZMAT team.

ON-SCENE INCIDENT COMMANDER (IC) They are the one person authorized to make key decisions during emergencies and who control all response activity. Required training is based on both "regular" exposures and on the role people play during an emergency.

WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

HIGH IMPACT/LOW PROBABILITY EVENTS: BEST PRACTICES

Safety planning tends to focus on events that are common or likely to happen. Those events are considered high probability. High probability/low impact (HILP) events are where, even if there is a safety failure, it is unlikely to cause serious harm or injury.

High probability/high impact means that events are likely to happen and that they will cause serious harm or injury. These hazards tend to get more attention in terms of preventive measures.

High impact/low probability events are trickier. There is often reluctance to put resources into events that could, but are unlikely, to happen. Unfortunately, this is often the category that disaster-related hazards fall into. While they are not everyday occurrences, they have devastating impacts.

Planners of all types (workplace, governmental, community, household) must take high impact/low probability hazards seriously – both because of the serious results when they hit and because the "low probability" label is changing as weather patterns change.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RULES

OSHA is not the only federal agency that provides tools for unions and community groups to guide prevention and response activities. Under the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Air Act, many workplaces are required to develop a Risk Management Plan (RMP). Under the RMP, worksites with the greatest likelihood of causing harm both to the workplace and to the community must create a program with the following:

- Hazard assessment including both the actual accident history at the facility and what would happen in a worst case scenario
- Prevention including safety precautions and maintenance, monitoring and worker training
- Emergency response plan with specific programs for emergency health care; employing training and procedures for informing the public and response agencies (like local fire departments and Emergency Medical Services, or EMS) should an accident occur

More information about what facilities are covered and what steps they need to take can be found on the EPA's website at **www.epa.gov**.

UNIONS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Unions have several critical roles in disaster planning and response. Unions help to:

- Ensure the employers where their members work are preparing for disasters
- Assist members in planning
- Help members who have been hurt (physically, psychologically, financially/materially) in a disaster
- Communicate with and help the community at large
- Protect the union's/organization's offices, records and related matters
- Make sure that employers treat workers fairly during and after disasters

When possible, union halls and community offices often become both a clearinghouse of information and a gathering place for members affected by disasters.

Community groups have critical roles in disaster planning and response. They are in a good position to make sure communication plans are responsive to community needs. Some ways they can make sure everyone is kept informed include:

- Use of Facebook and other social media
- Text groups
- Non-cell phone communication in case towers are down
- Ham radio
- Set up meeting sites (like a local Waffle House)
- Make sure communication is in all needed languages
- Hand out refrigerator magnets and other items with helpful contacts

Unions and community groups can work together to make sure local government and local media are responsive to needs. It should include a system for urgent information like which areas are safe or unsafe, whether water is safe to drink and which evacuation routes are available. They can put together local lists of shelters that have services for disabled and seniors, and put together local lists of shelters that take animals.

Assist workers who have lost their jobs due to the disaster. Unemployment benefits generally come from the state where the work is done. If the state unemployment benefits are not available, the federal government Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program may be an option. DUA is a program run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that can give benefits and services to people who lose their jobs as a result of a presidentially-declared disaster.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES

Underused tools that may be worth re-examining are the Local Emergency Planning Committees, or LEPCs. These committees are community-based groups that help communities develop emergency response plans. They also provide information about chemicals in the community to community members. The required LEPC membership must be represent the community. The membership must include:

- Elected state and local officials
- Police, fire, civil defense and public health professionals
- Environmental, transportation and hospital officials
- Facility representatives
- Representatives from community groups and the media

This list is the minimum of who should be included. Unions can also play a vital role since they have firsthand knowledge of what happens inside the facilities.

Community Emergency Response Plans developed by LEPCs must address the following:

- Identification of facilities and transportation routes of extremely hazardous substances
- Description of emergency response procedures, on and off site
- Designation of a community coordinator and facility emergency coordinator(s) to implement the plan
- Outline of emergency notification procedures
- Description of how to determine the probable affected area and population by releases
- Description of local emergency equipment and facilities and the persons responsible for them
- Outline of evacuation plans
- A training program for emergency responders (including schedules)
- Methods and schedules for exercising emergency response plans

CASE STUDY: ARKEMA, INC.

Aug. 29, 2017 – Hurricane Harvey

Hurricane Harvey produced massive flooding in Texas where Arkema is located. The flooding overwhelmed the plant and caused it to lose power. With the loss of power, a critical cooling system was disabled. Without refrigeration, the organic peroxide compounds stored on site began to decompose and combust.

The consequences of this reaction included the following:

- **Arkema employees had to evacuate the site**
- **Residents within a 1.5 mile radius of the plant were evacuated**
- **Twenty-one (21) people sought medical attention from exposure to fumes**
- **Shutdown of the highway was delayed due to lack of training by officers**
- **The plant suffered a massive amount of damage**

Source: U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB)

DURING A DISASTER

Shelter-in-place or evacuate? When disaster strikes, the main concern is making sure everyone is safe. This means finding the right shelter from the storm for everyone in the community. In general, local officials will give direction to the community using one of two options: shelter-in-place or evacuate the area. Keep in mind that the same event may include both responses. Weather patterns can shift, threats can increase or decrease, and different areas in the same community may be at different levels of risk.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE

Shelter-in-place is recommended when staying where you are is safer than leaving. When sheltering in place, some of the conveniences of home that are normally available may not be there: electricity, running water, gas lines, reliable telephone service. Preparing to shelter-in-place requires much of the same planning as evacuating would.

On pages 20-21 you will find suggestions for a "go-bag" in the event you need to leave. That bag can be the bulk of what you need for your "stay-in-kit." You should plan for a minimum of 72 hours, and a maximum of 14 days. That means you must make sure you have enough food, water, medication, first aid supplies, and where appropriate, a generator and fuel for the generator. The "stay-in-kit" is also useful in situations where an illness requires someone to stay at home during an illness.

If air contamination is a concern, seal windows, doors and vents with two to four millimeter plastic sheeting. Having sheeting cut ahead of time can be helpful.

Shelter-in-place can also happen at work. Employers must be prepared to feed, house and protect workers that are ordered to remain in place. Pre-planning is key to ensuring that all necessary supplies are available and accessible.

EVACUATE

Evacuating your home can be unsettling and scary. In 2017, more than eight million people in the U.S. were ordered to evacuate due to hurricanes, flooding and wildfires. Issuing evacuation orders is not something that officials take lightly.

Evacuation orders should be issued early enough to get everyone away before disaster strikes. In pretty much every storm, we see television interviews with people who are looking at the clear sky and decide they do not need to leave. Situations can and do change quickly. When an evacuation order is issued, it is time to leave.

There are a number of different considerations during an evacuation. All people evacuating should prepare their homes by unplugging electrical equipment like televisions and small appliances. Leave refrigerators and freezers plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding. Move all valuables that you are not taking with you off the floor and to higher shelves in case of flooding. Refer to pages 20-21 for information on what should be in your "go bag."

1 **Self-evacuating or leaving the area in private transportation.** Packing up the car with people, pets and personal items is one way to get away from the danger. Traveling this way requires all of the usual planning. Additionally, it requires patience (roads will be packed). It also requires planning for fuel to make sure you can actually get to your destination.

If you have pets, try to identify ahead of time where you can bring them if you end up having to stay in a hotel or motel. Choose destinations in different directions in case your options change.

Local planners should consider fuel needs in designating primary and secondary roads out of town. Additional facilities like restrooms and access to water must be part of the route. They will also need to make sure road access is available to first responders.

2 **Evacuation Assembly Point.** If evacuations are being coordinated using shared transportation (often buses or vans) someone must arrange for and publicize the pick-up location and times for those needing the ride.

3 **Regional Hub Reception Centers.** These centers are usually state-run and staffed. They are an information center to help evacuees figure out the best shelter based on their needs.

4 **Shelters (mass care).** Shelters are facilities that have large numbers of beds, food, water and restrooms available, and often have basic disaster services (counseling, medical care or first aid, financial assistance and other referrals). Many provide areas for pet and service animal sheltering.

EVACUATE OR SHELTER-IN-PLACE

Local governments should involve the entire community in shelter-in-place and evacuation planning. Organizations that represent underserved or special populations are particularly important to include. Examples of underserved or special populations are people with disabilities, limited English proficiency, limited access to financial resources, limited access to transportation and animals that they will not/do not want to leave.

REASONS WHY PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO EVACUATE

- They do not want to leave their homes
- They think that they can take care of themselves
- They have disabilities that make it difficult
- They have pets or other animals that they do not want to leave
- They are afriad of looting

REASONS WHY PEOPLE SHOULD EVACUATE WHEN AN ORDER IS ISSUED AND WAYS TO MAKE IT EASIER

- Prepare by packaging everything of importance and keeping it handy. Arrange to keep important possessions high off the floor in case of flooding.
- Situations can change and worsen. If emergency response is needed, responders may not be able to get through during the storm.
- Pre-planning is key to having a safe place to go. Staying at home is not safe.
- Many shelters take pets. There may also be local organizations that can arrange for temporary pet care.
- While looting is feared, data shows that it doesn't happen that much. Crime goes down during crises.

RETURNING HOME

- Once officials have announced it is safe to return home, you can begin the trip back.
- Before you start your trip, it is important get supplies ready.
- Let friends or family know when you are leaving and when you expect to arrive home.
- Charge your phone and check batteries in case there are still power outages.
- Fill your gas tank and listen to news reports of any fuel shortages along your route.
- Bring similar supplies to your trip away: food, water, medications and other necessary items.
- The storm may have downed power lines. Stay away from power lines or anything that is in contact with power lines!

FINALLY HOME

This can be a particularly trying and emotional time. It will be necessary to assess the damage and contact your insurance companies and/or FEMA to see what assistance is available for repairing and rebuilding.

It is also a time when shady and opportunistic people may try to pass themselves off as contractors ready to help you. The resource list on pages 22-23 has referrals to the Better Business Bureau where you can get information on how to assess whether a contractor is legitimate.

Additionally, many good people want to help after a disaster. The resource list on pages 22-23 includes a list of community, faith-based, non-profit and union organizations that can help with everything from offering guidance, to cleaning up the mess, to rebuilding.

While surviving a storm is potentially one of the most challenging experiences someone can go through, there are also many ways in which neighbor helping neighbor brings out the best in people.

12 WAYS TO PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

1. Sign up for alerts and warnings
2. Make a plan
3. Save for a rainy day
4. Practice emergency drills
5. Test your family communication plan
6. Safeguard documents
7. Plan with your neighbors
8. Make your home safer
9. Know your evacuation routes
10. Assemble or update supplies
11. Get involved in your community
12. Document and insurance your property

Source: ready.gov

GO-BAG

The bag you choose should be small and portable. A backpack is best but a lightweight suitcase with wheels will also work.

PAPERWORK

It should be easy to grab and stored in a waterproof bag or container.

_____ Government identification (birth certificate, green card, license, social security card)

_____ Emergency contact information

_____ Passport

_____ Medical information (include doctors' contact, medications list, allergies)

_____ Insurance policies including health insurance card

_____ Legal documents (power of attorney, will, health care proxy)

_____ Information about your credit and debit cards

_____ Telephone list for utilities, landlord

_____ Mortgage information

_____ Photos of family members/pets (for identification purposes)

FOOD AND DRINK

_____ Water

_____ Water filtration kit

_____ Snacks (something portable and high energy like protein bars or jerky)

_____ Canned goods (and a manual can opener)

BASIC ELECTRONICS

_____ Phone chargers

_____ Portable battery pack

_____ Long-lasting LED flashlight

_____ Small hand-cranked or solar radio (with extra batteries)

PERSONAL NEEDS

_____ Medications: prescription and basic over-the-counter

_____ Insect repellant

_____ Sun block

_____ Extra prescription glasses

_____ Hearing aids

_____ Portable oxygen machine, if needed

_____ Toiletries you typically use (travel size)

_____ Baby or cleaning wipes

_____ Toothbrush and toothpaste

_____ Toilet paper

_____ Soap/hand sanitizer

_____ Feminine hygiene products

CLOTHING

_____ Layers you can add or remove

_____ Lightweight rain gear

_____ Waterproof boots

_____ Sturdy shoes

_____ Warm hat

CASH

_____ Bring enough money for a few days, including small bills and a roll of quarters.

MISCELLANEOUS/TOOLS

_____ Flashlight

_____ Whistle

_____ Dust masks/Personal protective equipment

_____ Ear plugs

_____ Light mask

_____ Pocketknife

_____ Multi-tool

_____ Lighter and matches

_____ Permanent marker, paper and tape

_____ Extra house and car keys

_____ Mylar blanket

_____ Cooler (space permitting)

_____ Pet supplies

_____ Sturdy leashes and pet carriers

_____ Food, water and any medications

_____ Non-spill bowls

_____ Plastic bags, litter box and litter

_____ Vaccination and medical history

_____ Veterinary information

_____ If you are sheltering in place, you should still have the items listed here. Additionally, where appropriate, try to get a generator and gasoline to ensure uninterrupted power.

_____ If you are traveling by car consider bringing an air mattress and cooler.

REFERRALS

Referrals include who or where you can go to in order to obtain assistance.

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20472
Phone: 202-642-2500
www.fema.gov
www.ready.gov/cert

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills.

AFL-CIO
815 16th Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-637-5000
www.afl-cio.org

The AFL-CIO is an umbrella organization representing labor unions in the U.S. They can assist you in finding out what special programs your union has to offer in the aftermath of a disaster.

VOAD: VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTERS
P.O. Box 26125
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: 703-778-5088
www.nvoad.org

The 100 (plus) member organizations of VOAD mitigate and alleviate the impact of disasters, provide a forum promoting cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration, and foster more effective delivery of services to communities affected by disaster.

AMERICAN RED CROSS
Main number: 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767)
Public Inquiry: 202-303-4498 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., EST)
www.redcross.org

AMERICAN RED CROSS (continued)

During disasters the Red Cross provides shelters to those who must leave their homes. After the immediate disaster is over, the Red Cross continues to assist through providing emergency, and in some cases, ongoing financial assistance and providing grants for community-based recovery. After the emergency phase of a response has been completed, they turn to helping people recover and addressing lingering community needs. Working together with community leaders, government and relief agencies, they organize and execute recovery strategies that include:

- Providing emergency financial assistance in the immediate aftermath of a disaster
- Distributing financial assistance for households that need extra help in the long-term
- Providing grants for community-based recovery services

AMERICARES
88 Hamilton Avenue
Stamford, Connecticut 06902
Phone: 1-203-658-9500
www.americares.org

Americare pre-positions emergency medical supplies, helps communities reduce risk and prepare for disaster while training health care providers. They stay in the disaster area rebuilding hospitals and clinics and addressing targeted health needs and restoring health care access.

UNITED WAY
701 North Fairfax Street
Alexndria, Virginia 22314
Phone: 703- 836-7112
www.unitedway.org

Across America, the United Way's 211 is 24 hours a day and seven days a week to connect callers with the help they need. During times of disaster, 211 supports communities before and during disasters. They help people with evacuation and with food, water and emergency supplies.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

Catholic Charities USA is the official domestic relief agency of the U.S. Catholic Church. CCUSA provides housing to responders and survivors of disasters through Airbnb program to provide temporary housing to workers responding to a disaster and to people recovering from one.

SALVATION ARMY
615 Slaters Lane
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
www.salvationarmyusa.org

The Salvation Army gathers resources and volunteers as soon as the federal, state or local government declares the area safe to enter. They provide food, water and shelter to survivors, provide material and financial assistance, and put people in touch with their loved ones.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
National Disaster and Refugee Ministries
700 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
Phone: 216-736-3210
www.ucc.org/disaster

UCC Disaster Ministries is a program of the United Church of Christ that responds to natural and human caused disasters all over world. They serve the most vulnerable populations that require spiritual, physical, financial and psychological support.

WORLD CARES
520 8th Avenue
Suite 201B
New York City, New York 10018
Phone: 212-563-7570

World Cares Center's Disaster Preparation and Trauma Mitigation program was developed to bridge the gap between Spontaneous Unaffiliated Community Volunteers (SUCVs) and official disaster responders. WCC built a model to provide this this link.

CONSUMER ASSISTANCE
During the recovery period, many people hire contractors and others to provide needed services. Assistance in assuring contractors and others are licensed, honest and appropriate to the job can come both from governmental and private agencies.

For local assistance, contact your city or state's Office of Consumer Affairs or the State Attorney General's office.

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU
www.bbb.org

BBB addresses two primary aspects: integrity and performance. Integrity includes respect, ethics and intent. Performance includes a business's track record of delivering results. Information on local businesses can be found by searching on the BBB web site.

Local TV stations consumer reporters can also be helpful in both identifying and pursuing remedies with local businesses.

MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL ASSISTANCE
Surviving a disaster can leave survivors traumatized. FEMA has an office that can help both as a hotline and as a gateway to ongoing care.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
www.samhsa.gov

The National Helpline provides 24-hour free and confidential referrals and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, treatment and recovery in English and Spanish.

SAMHSA'S NATIONAL HELPLINE
800-662-HELP (4357)
TTY: 800-487-4889

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONTACT AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

EMERGENCY CONTACT #1
NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

EMERGENCY CONTACT #2
NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

EMERGENCY CONTACT #3
NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

PHYSICIAN #1
NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

PHYSICIAN #1
NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

ALLERGIES:

MEDICAL CONDITION(S):

In addition to carrying this information, program this information into your cell phone. Many law enforcement, medical personnel and first responders are all trained to check your cell for information.

APPENDIX B: CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS TO KEEP IN A SECURE LOCATION

If these documents are kept at home, make sure to store them off the floor and to take them during an evacuation.

_____ **Financial account information**

- _____ Checking account
- _____ Savings account
- _____ Loan documents
- _____ Credit card accounts
- _____ Mortgage and/or lease
- _____ Mutual fund accounts
- _____ Brokerage accounts
- _____ List of stocks held outside of brokerages
- _____ Retirement accounts
- _____ Annuity accounts

_____ **Estate planning documents**

- _____ Summary of your will, durable powers of attorney and health care proxy
- _____ Living trusts

_____ **Asset protection documents**

- _____ Life insurance policies
- _____ Medical, homeowners and auto insurance policies
- _____ Disability, umbrella and long-term care policies

_____ **Household utilities**

- _____ Electricity
- _____ Gas
- _____ Water
- _____ Telephone
- _____ Cable
- _____ Internet

_____ **Proof of identity and relationships**

- _____ Social Security card
- _____ Armed Forces discharge papers
- _____ Birth certificate
- _____ Marriage certificate
- _____ Divorce certificate and settlement
- _____ Prenuptial agreements

_____ **Social media accounts**

_____ **Attorney's information**

APPENDIX C:
INVENTORY OF BELONGINGS AND INSURER INFORMATION

Getting reimbursed for lost or damaged goods after a disaster will require you to have an inventory of belongings. Please use this page to record your items. Photographs and/or video of the belongings will be very helpful. It is also important to be as detailed as possible in your descriptions. This list should be updated regularly as valuable purchases are made.

APPENDIX D:
ITEMS TO KEEP IN THE RECOVERY PHASE

Correspondence to and from:

- _____ Insurance adjusters
- _____ FEMA or other aid organizations
- _____ Contractors

_____ Estimates

_____ Contracts and change orders

_____ Building permits

_____ Construction plans and details

SPECIALIZED EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINERS:

Thank you to the USW Specialized Emergency Response Trainers (SERTs), who, with their commitment and dedication to the health and safety of all communities and workers, built the foundation of this resource guide. All of the photos are also courtesy of the SERTs.

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Resource Guide