

## Make a Plan



Families can make emergencies less stressful by preparing in advance and working together as a team.

Protect yourself and your loved ones by making an emergency plan. You should make a plan for:

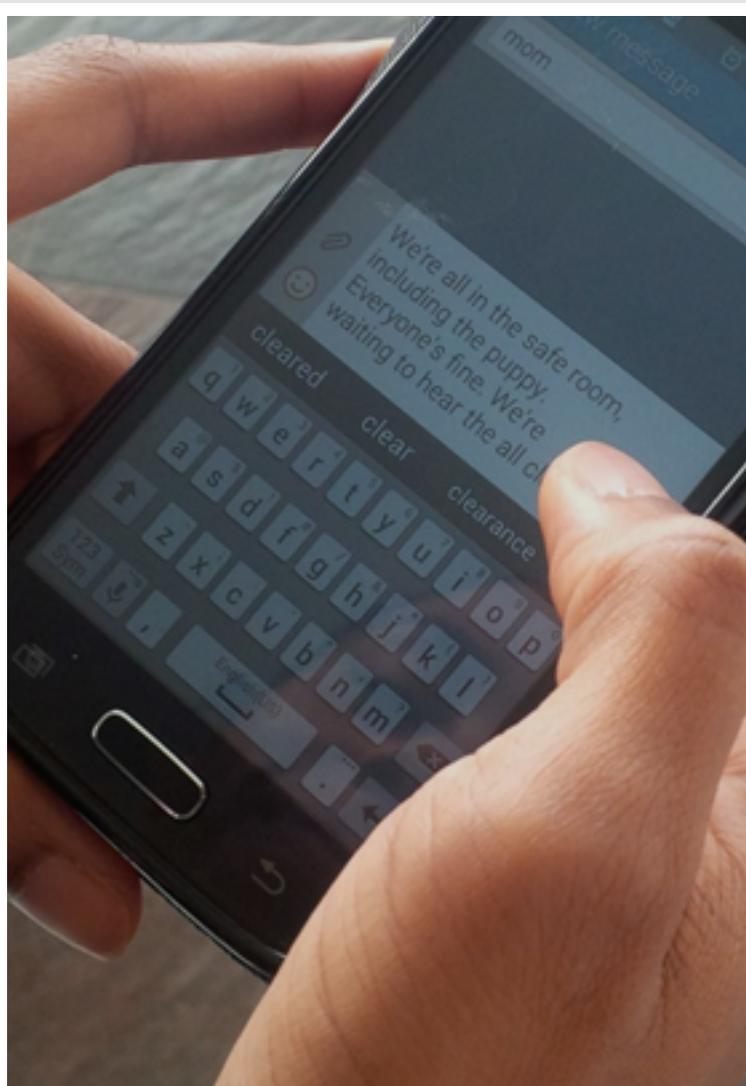
- How you will contact one another, and
- What special steps you will take in different types of emergency situations.

## Make a Family Communication Plan

Phone lines in the emergency area may be busy. It may be easier to make phone calls into a different town than to connect by phone with someone in the same town.

You and your loved ones may not be together when a disaster hits. Make a plan for how you will connect to each other. Start by taking the following steps:

- **Complete a contact card** ([http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Family\\_Emergency\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Family_Emergency_Plan.pdf)) for each family member. Everyone should keep these cards with them at all times.
- **Choose an emergency contact.** Memorize the phone number if you can. A friend or relative who lives out of town might be easier to reach in an emergency. During an emergency, family members can text or call this person to let them know that they are safe.



Text messages may still go through, even when phone lines are very busy.

- **Make sure all your family members know how to text.** Make sure everyone knows how to turn on a cell phone, find the text messaging app, type a message, and send it to a contact.
- **Know emergency telephone numbers.** Keep them in your cell phone and post them near your home phones. Some good numbers to have are your emergency contact, the fire department, police station, and hospital near you

## Make a Family Disaster Plan

Before making your disaster plan, it's important to know what types of emergencies are likely in your area and the best way to respond. For example, if tornadoes are common in your area, you will need to know what the warning signs are and where to take shelter. Check with your Local Red Cross chapter (<http://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter>) or Emergency Management Agency (<http://www.fema.gov/state-offices-and-agencies-emergency-management>) for more information.

- **Find the safe spots in your home** for each type of disaster. For example, during an earthquake you will need to "drop, cover, and hold on" under a sturdy desk or table. However, during a tornado, you would need to seek shelter in a lower level room without windows. Learn more about different types of disasters (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/index.asp>).
- **Choose multiple meeting places.** Different disasters may require you to go to different places.

Make sure you choose a meeting place in your neighborhood, a meeting place just outside your neighborhood, and a meeting place out of town.

- **Determine the best escape routes** from your home. Find two ways to get out of each room.
- **PRACTICE.** Review these plans with all members of your family. Practice your disaster plans by running drills with the whole family.
- **Don't Forget Pets!** Think about what you would do with your pets, because they may not be allowed in emergency shelters. For more information, check out [Preparing Your Pet for Emergencies](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1392389819026-75460345a2f4adcc5418a1da7cb25eef/2014_PrinterFriendly_PetOwners.pdf) ([http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1392389819026-75460345a2f4adcc5418a1da7cb25eef/2014\\_PrinterFriendly\\_PetOwners.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1392389819026-75460345a2f4adcc5418a1da7cb25eef/2014_PrinterFriendly_PetOwners.pdf)) .

## Get your kids ready

- Teach children how and when to call 911 for help.
- Quiz your kids on the plan to make sure they remember what to do.
- Include your kids in planning and drills.

[Ready Wrigley](http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/readywrigley/index.htm) (<http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/readywrigley/index.htm>) can help your kids be ready for many kinds of emergencies!

## Take these additional steps to be prepared



Check and replace your supplies throughout the year, as needed.

- [Make an emergency kit](http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/kit/disasters/index.asp) (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/kit/disasters/index.asp>), and be sure to check and replace your supplies throughout the year, as needed.
- [Stay informed](http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/informed/index.asp) (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/informed/index.asp>); find the best ways to get disaster information from local authorities.
- Make sure that you have enough insurance coverage for your property. Specifically, think about the

types of disasters that are common in your area.

- Learn how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main shut-off locations.
- Show each family member how to use the fire extinguisher, and show them where it's kept.

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## **File Formats Help:**

How do I view different file formats (PDF, DOC, PPT, MPEG) on this site?

(<https://www.cdc.gov/Other/plugins/>)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/Other/plugins/#pdf>)

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