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Plan to Survive

Preparing for an emergency requires a bit of effort, but it's time well spent. What if an explosion, a landslide, or a flash flood forced an evacuation of your neighborhood before you got home from work? Would you know where to find your family? Do you know the emergency plans for your children's school? At work, do you know your role in your company's emergency response plan? Emergency preparedness is considering what can go wrong and what to do if it does. This does not mean you must be in a constant state of worry. It does mean you pay attention to your environment and continue planning how you can stay safe. It also means you develop survival skills and keep survival tools accessible.



Here are some examples of emergency-ready habits:

- ◆ When you are in any building — a home, plant, office, hotel, shopping center— know where you are in relation to at least two exits.
- ◆ Create an evacuation plan of your home. Review it with your family and practice it at least once a year.
- ◆ Figure out how to get to the stairs in case you cannot use the elevator.
- ◆ Notice the location of fire alarms, firefighting equipment, emergency phones, and first aid kits. Read the instructions so you will know how to operate them.
- ◆ On public transport, read the emergency instructions. Locate exits and read how to open windows on trains or buses. Know how to find the break-glass hammers and window latches in the dark. Learn how to use oxygen masks on aircraft. Pay attention to the emergency instructions review presented by the on-board attendant.
- ◆ Dress for the weather outdoors not the weather inside a vehicle when you travel. Many kinds of mishaps can leave you stranded outside an automobile or aircraft in a cold and hostile environment. Carry warm clothing and shoes you can use outdoors.
- ◆ Pack basic repair tools and replacement parts such as extra fan belts in your automobile. Keep the spare tire inflated.
- ◆ When you go to sleep at home or away, be ready for an emergency. Place your shoes under the bed and your clothes nearby. Put eyeglasses and flashlight in a protective spot where you can reach them easily. If you are awakened by fire, you may not have time to search for these items. If an earthquake strikes, the power may go out and you may have to walk through debris.
- ◆ Post emergency phone numbers by your workstation, as well as the address and exact location of your workplace.
- ◆ Keep with you your identification, contact numbers, and any necessary medical information.
- ◆ Pack an emergency kit with survival supplies to maintain your family and pets for at least two days. Keep it ready to take with you in case of a disaster.
- ◆ Pick two meeting places, one in your neighborhood, and one far from home in case the neighborhood is evacuated.
- ◆ Carry a flashlight when you travel. It can light your way to safety from a burning hotel or a crashed transit vehicle.
- ◆ Protect yourself from violence by remaining aware of the people around you. Look into an elevator or hallway before entering. Look through the window before entering a late night convenience store or liquor store so you don't stumble into a robbery.
- ◆ Learn first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Learn how to use an AED (automated external defibrillator).



Wherever you are, be prepared to protect yourself if things go wrong. Emergency preparedness is planning to survive.