

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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Disaster planning materials can be obtained through a variety of sources: federal, state and local governments; state fire marshals and local fire departments; the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); the American Red Cross and numerous related websites.

Emergency planning is essential in preventing injuries and minimizing property losses in the event of an emergency. Listed below are basic steps of formulating an effective disaster plan.

- Identification of exposures and a method of dealing with each exposure
- Monitoring and modification of the disaster plan on a regular basis
- Evaluation of your telephone system: will it work in the event of a power failure? What are other options?
- Development of an emergency contact list with primary, alternate and cell phone numbers
- Development of emergency notification procedures and evacuation plans
- Plans for prompt, safe and efficient evacuation of all occupants including children, older adults, and people with physical disabilities
- Development of a system to announce emergencies (fire alarm, public address system, etc.)
- Assignments of evacuation routes posted appropriately throughout the facility
- Predetermined assignment of responsibilities, including back-up assignments
- Plans for computer system back-up/off-site storage
- Identified options for an alternate business site in case of displacement by an emergency
- Development of first aid procedures (blood borne pathogen training is recommended for first responders)
- Your kit should include non-perishable food, water, first aid supplies, flashlights, camping supplies (stove, battery-powered lantern, radios etc.), extra batteries, and blankets. Personal supplies, such as medication and other essentials should also be considered as necessary.
- Basic preventative measures before an earthquake include securing any furniture such as bookshelves and cabinets to the walls to minimize risk of falling over during a quake. Secure cabinet doors to help keep dishes and other contents from falling out.
- Knowledge of utility shut-off locations and how to operate them

- Training on the use of fire extinguishers, and review of their locations

Once your plans are formulated:

- Post the Emergency Procedures flip chart in a location that is well identified and easily accessible by all.
- Perform periodic training and evacuation drills as needed.
- Keep in contact with your local fire department. The fire department should be familiar with your facility and any associated hazards.
- Consider installing a "Knox box" for after-hours access by emergency personnel.
- Post emergency telephone numbers.
- Advise parents/guardians of emergency procedures.
- Post procedures near telephones and review the plan with staff.
- Assure that alarm and fire protection systems, including fire extinguishers, are maintained on a regularly scheduled basis by a qualified contractor.