

12. EVACUATION & 72-HOUR KITS

12.01 Introduction:

There are many reasons it may become necessary to evacuate your home, school or workplace. Some evacuations occur as a result of an escalating crisis, such as for an approaching hurricane. Others occur quickly, as from chemical spills or terrorist threats. Some may be ordered by civil authorities and others may occur by our own volition.

In the event of an evacuation, be prepared to provide for your own bare necessities for at least three days. A properly supplied emergency 72-hour kit would provide comfort, warmth, food, first aid, sanitation and shelter for that three-day period.

In most instances, the crisis will either end, or civil authorities will respond by the end of that time. There are circumstances, however, such as a major national crises, when people might be left on their own for a substantial period of time.

12.02 Choosing not to Evacuate:

Evacuation would almost never be necessary if all-hazard shelters were installed throughout the nation. Countries such as Switzerland do not have Civil Defense evacuation contingency plans, as 100% of their population can reach underground shelters within just a few minutes.

Underground shelters would provide protection from hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, wild fire, winter storms, high winds, chemical/biological warfare, and nuclear attack. Properly installed shelters should never be placed into a flood zone; therefore, even flooding is not an issue.

The shelters would provide warmth, safety and protection from the elements, and should be stocked with radios, food, water, clothing and medical supplies. Valuables could quickly be brought into the shelter for safekeeping. People in shelters would then become part of the solution, instead of part of the problem.

12.03 Plan, Equip & Practice (PEP):

In order to properly prepare for an evacuation, we must remember our PEP concept- PLAN, EQUIP and PRACTICE.

PLAN:

- Complete a careful risk assessment of the potential disasters that may require an evacuation of your home, school or workplace. Consider both probability and consequence of these events.
- Include your children in the assessment and planning process.
- Plan for both immediate evacuation and longer, more organized evacuation.
- List items that you would want to save if there were time, in the event of an approaching hurricane or wild fire (valuable books, records, deeds, journals, pictures, etc.).
- Plan what routes the children should take if they were sent home in an emergency. You will want to know where to look for them, if they have been detained.



- Request a copy of the emergency plans the school currently has in place for various disasters. Ask if the children will be bussed, or if you need to pick them up.
- Ask two trusted neighbors to pick up your children for you in the event you are not available. Leave these instructions (with their names and contact information) at the school office.
- Prepare a 24-hour pack for your children and ask the teacher to store it at school.
- Choose more than one destination. Homes of friends and family members should be among your first considerations. Ask their permission, and if possible, pre-position supplies at their location.
- Plan alternate routes to your destination.
- Plan stopping places (way points) every 5 to 10 miles along your intended route, to allow stragglers to catch up. Citizen band radios give good coverage for these short distances.
- You may become separated from your companions or family members. Make sure you provide each with specific directions of where to go and who to contact so that you can be reunited.
- Winds: Many disasters (chemical spills, fire and radiation) require that you travel perpendicular to the wind patterns. Chemicals, smoke and radiation from a “dirty bomb” would travel with local winds. Radiation from a nuclear fission weapon would most likely travel with the prevailing winds. Prevailing winds normally flow from west to east, requiring that you evacuate to the north or to the south.
- Teach everyone how to turn off the utilities (with the reminder that this is to be done, only if directed to do so by the authorities).

EQUIP:

- Keep your car at least half full of gasoline at all times.
- Prepare a 72-hour kit for each member of the family, according to their personal needs. Most people keep their kits in their car.
- Prepare other items for specific emergencies, and place them where they can quickly be accessed.
- Keep your 72-hour kit to a size that can easily be carried. People in good shape should be able to carry one-fourth to one-third of their body weight.
- Check and refresh your kit with each change of season.
- Leave a crescent wrench in a pre-determined location, for turning off utilities.
- Place flashlights near each bed and purchase a battery-powered radio. Rotate the batteries twice yearly at the change of daylight savings time.
- Place sturdy shoes, socks, long pants, long sleeved shirt, and appropriate outer clothing for each person in a designated place.
- If you live in an area prone to hurricanes or tornadoes, pre-position wood and tools to board up windows and doors against high winds.
- Purchase an evacuation packet with bar-coded identification bands for your pets and each member of the family.
- Purchase a 2 weeks supply of food for your pets, in the event that they must be left behind.

PRACTICE:



- Walk with your children on their planned route home from school.
- Remove all items from your 72-hour kits and evaluate their usefulness at each change of the seasons.
- Talk about different emergency situations and play “what if”.
- Surprise the family with an unannounced evacuation exercise.
 1. Place ID wristbands on each person.
 2. Place ID collars on your pets.
 3. Alert others to your intended destination by phone or written note:
 4. Turn on your radio and act as if you are listening to the latest information on evacuation routes.
 5. Quickly dress in the long pants, long sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, hat, & jacket that were previously gathered.
 6. In a real emergency, you may be advised to turn off your utilities. Remember, however, when you turn off your gas it must remain off until your local gas company turns it back on for you. If certain safeguards are not followed, there could be a risk of explosion.
 7. Secure your home. Close & lock doors and windows, unplug appliances. In an actual emergency you may need to drain your water lines if there is freezing weather.
 8. In a real emergency you might also need to board up windows and doors in the event of tornados, hurricanes or high winds.
 9. Quickly grab your 72-hour kits and other items you need and leave the home.
 10. Take the pre-planned evacuation route. In an actual emergency, however, follow the direction of the local authorities as they may have routes designated for the evacuation.
 11. Upon return, turn on your utilities (except for the gas). Turn on only one appliance at a time.
 12. Discard thawed foods and check all refrigerated food for spoilage.
 13. Carefully evaluate the exercise, and adjust your plans accordingly.

12.04 72-hour Kits

72-hour kits should match the anticipated crisis. People in areas prone to wild fire would prepare differently from those living in flood-prone areas.

Consider your 72-hour kit for use in the short term to reach long-term survival.

Earthquakes may result in closed and impassable roads. The 72-hour kits should be light enough to carry. Most people can carry one-third to one-fourth of their body weight. The items in the kit, therefore, must be chosen carefully. Commercial kits may not meet your particular needs, and you may need to add or remove items accordingly.

Some disasters result in long-term re-location. People in those potential areas should think well ahead of time, to pre-position supplies at another location.



12.05 Kit Containers

Backpacks make excellent 72-hour kit containers. Boxes or filled buckets would be difficult to carry. An empty bucket, however, can be strapped to a backpack and becomes very useful in a number of situations.

Dress according to the weather. Prepare for the coldest temperatures that you expect. Store foods that can be eaten without cooking.

Do not leave personal information in the car-pack (such as birth certificates, names on pictures, SS numbers, and full names on telephone numbers). Do gather this information and put it in one location in your home so that you can grab it quickly in an emergency.

12.06 Kit Items:

There are some general items that should be considered for the 72-hour kits. Some items (those in **bold**) should be in every kit. Other items can be used by the entire group, and may not need to be duplicated. Use these suggestions only as a guide.

72-Hour Car Kit Suggested Items

- **Purified water (2 liters/person)**
- **Food, (3 day supply requiring no cooking)**
- **Blanket, sleeping bag or emergency metallic space blanket**
- **Large plastic garbage bag, poncho or rain gear**
- **Eating utensils, can opener**
- **2 rolls toilet paper**
- **Compass, mirror, whistle**
- Small 2-man tent
- Small water filter or iodine crystals
- Flashlights (extra batteries & bulb)
- Sharp knife
- Matches, light sticks
- FRS or small transistor radio with extra batteries
- Rope (20 lb test min.), fish line, hooks
- Leather gloves, dust masks
- Personal Items:
 - Shower cap (to keep fallout out of your hair)
 - Chapstick, hairbrush, hand lotion
 - Feminine supplies,
 - Toothbrush & toothpaste
 - Soap, washcloth, small towel, razor
 - Extra eyeglasses (even if you wear contacts)
 - Baby wipes, deodorant
 - Change of clothing, jacket, shoes, socks, underwear, hat
 - Infant needs, if necessary
 - Family pictures



- Important telephone numbers
- Paper, marker, pencil, money
- First aid supplies & essential medications
- Over counter meds (Benadryl, Imodium Calamine lotion, Aspirin, Decongestant)
- Insect repellent, sun screen
- Bandages, antibiotic ointment
- Needle, tweezers, scissors
- Triangular bandages, gauze, elastic bandages
- Hot pack, cold pack
- CPR face mask, rubber gloves

This is a fairly complete kit. Items in **bold** are considered necessary.



FROM THE WEB SITE OF MEDICAL CORPS

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Evacuation Planning

Radiation, Biological or Chemical events (accidents or attacks) may make it necessary to evacuate because of the long-term danger. Your state has an evacuation plan. You should have one too in case theirs becomes unworkable.

How your local or state government will tell you to evacuate:

- You will hear from the local police, emergency management, or other government agency by radio or television that you need to evacuate your area.
- Pay attention, if there is a "severe" terror alert, your area may execute an evacuation order.

How to Respond to Local Evacuation Plans:

- Quickly follow the instructions of the local emergency management. Local authorities could give you specific instructions to follow for a specified situation.
- Emergency Management may direct you to evacuate your home or workplace and go to a designated shelter. If you have children in school, they will either be sheltered at the school or in some other designated shelter.
- Emergency Management will tell you what emergency supplies you may bring. Be sure to bring any medications you are taking. Emergency Management will let you know when it is safe to leave the shelter.

Making Your Own Evacuation Plan

Ultimately, you are responsible for your own safety. If, because of a disaster, local government cannot respond, then you need to make your own evacuation plan.

Where to go?

- You should select more than one place to go in case your number one choice is in harms way.
- You may need help; therefore family and friends should be your destination. Talk it over with them first and find out if they have plans too.

How to get there?

- Roads may be impassable with jammed traffic or because the surface is damaged.
- Get a map and determine what side-roads can be used for your evacuation. You may end up walking so too much gear to carry will be a problem---think light and compact.

Communications:

- You may become separated from your companions or family members. Make sure you provide each with specific directions of where to go and who to contact so that you can be repatriated. Without this contact information it can take months to find your loved ones.
- Radios (if they can still operate) will help from becoming separated. Simple hand-held "walkie talkies" will keep you in communication with companions who might be just out of sight and your communication will keep them from getting lost.

Waypoints:

"Way-points" is a term, which means stopping-places along your intended route. It helps you manage your evacuation AND it is an along-the-way gathering place for stragglers.

- Pre-determined waypoints of 5 to 10 miles along the route are workable for a journey.
- Security is another word for staying safe from harm. Harm can come in the form of humans, or animals.
- At the very least, carry pepper spray. It does no permanent harm. If you are threatened, or feel you are in danger - spray first and apologize later--if you make a mistake!

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