

Preparing for Emergencies: Guide for Refugees

Read this brochure and keep it handy

ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Refugee Resettlement
Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response



Photo courtesy UNHCR

An **emergency** is when there is immediate risk to health, life, or property.

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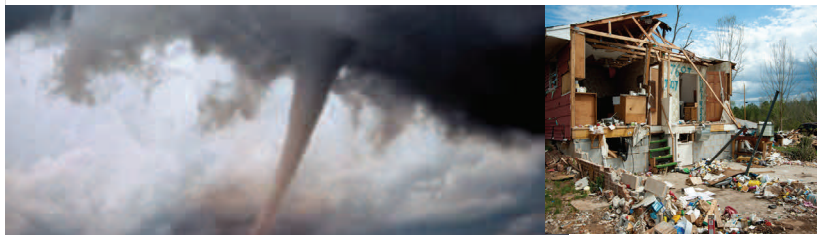
**9-1-1
emergency**

*If there is an emergency, such as a fire, robbery, or serious medical problem (for example, not breathing, unconscious, or bleeding that won't stop), dial **9-1-1** on any phone. Tell them what the emergency is so you can get the right kind of help, such as the police, fire department, or ambulance. Do not delay calling, even if you cannot speak English—they can still get help to you.*

In addition to personal emergencies, large-scale emergencies can be caused by natural or man-made disasters. Many big disasters can knock out heat, power, and communication.

*Below are a few examples of disasters caused by **nature**— and some tips on what to do during them to protect yourself and your family. Other examples of natural disasters include flooding, wildfires, extreme heat, and landslides. Learn more at: <http://www.ready.gov/natural-disasters>*

Tornado: Very strong windstorm over land with a funnel-shaped cloud coming from the sky to the ground. Tornadoes can blow down buildings.



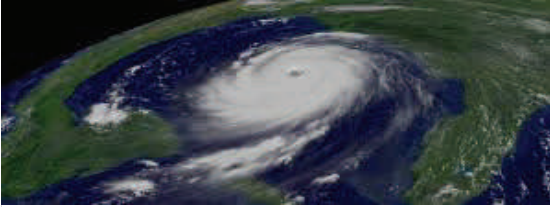
- If your area is under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately!
- Go to the lowest floor if in a building, away from windows and doors.
- Most injuries are from flying debris, so protect your head.

Earthquake: Sudden shaking of the ground. Earthquakes can crack the ground and make buildings fall down.



- If you are indoors, DROP to the ground, take COVER by getting under a sturdy table, and HOLD ON until the shaking stops.
- If you are outside, stay in the open until the shaking stops. Move away from buildings, streetlights, and electrical wires.

Hurricane: Storms that form over the ocean with high winds, strong rain, and tall waves. The wind and flooding from hurricanes can destroy buildings



- If a hurricane is likely, listen to the radio or TV or look on the internet for information on what to do.
- Stay inside, away from windows and doors.
- Evacuate if you are told to do so by local authorities.

Winter Storm and Extreme Cold: Lots of snow, very low temperatures, strong winds, and icing.



- Stay indoors during the storm.
- Keep dry. Wet clothes lead to a loss of body heat.
- Do not drive unless necessary as icy roads can lead to car accidents.
- Do not use stoves to heat the house.

Below are examples of **man-made** disasters— and some tips on what to do during them to protect yourself and your family. Other examples include nuclear power plant accidents, blackouts, and terrorist attacks. Learn more at: <http://www.ready.gov/accidental-emergencies> 4

Chemical Hazards: Some chemicals can damage buildings and be harmful to health if accidentally released. In some cases, there may be an explosion; in other cases, you may not even be able to see or smell the chemical.



- Listen to the radio or TV or look on the internet for information on what to do.
- Evacuate if asked to do so by local authorities.
- If asked to stay indoors, close all windows and doors. Seal any gaps leading to the outside.

Home Fires: Everyday, Americans face house fires. Fire spreads fast and you may only have seconds to get out.

- When the smoke detector sounds, get out fast.
- If there is smoke, crawl under the smoke to the exit.
- If your clothes catch fire, drop to the ground, cover your face with your hands, and roll until the fire is out. Get medical help right away.
- If you can't get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks under the door to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1 and tell them where you are.



Smoke detectors are on the ceilings. They will make a loud sound when there is smoke. Make sure the batteries are working and replace them every year.

Getting Started

You can be prepared for disasters before they happen by planning ahead. It is important to prepare yourself and your family so they will know what to do and where to go until help can come. The next few pages will give you tips on how to be ready and safe.

Find out what disasters are most likely to happen in the area you live. Get information on how to prepare for each. Talk with your family about what to do before, during, and after a disaster. Make sure everyone knows where the exits and fire extinguishers are in your home/building.

If you and your family get separated after a disaster and can't go home, discuss where you should meet. Write down the meeting place here: _____

If you can't stay at home, think of a friend, relative, or sponsor to stay with. Write down their information here:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Address: _____

After some disasters, emergency shelters may be set up. Find out from the media or people you know if you should go to a shelter.

If the disaster is very big and hurt a lot people, emergency workers may not be able to help you right away. You need to be ready to take care of yourself and your family for at least 4 days—or longer, depending on how big the disaster is.

Getting Ready:

Make an Emergency Kit to Stay at Home

Things to have at home in one place in case of an emergency:

- First Aid Kit (should include bandages, antibiotic ointment, scissors, tweezers, gauze pads and rolls, antiseptic wipes)



- Battery-operated or hand crank radio (in case the power goes out)



- Flashlights & batteries



- Whistle to signal for help



- Duct tape



- Paper and pencil/pens



- Medications



- Sturdy shoes and gloves



- Extra canned/dry food and can opener

- Baby supplies



- Garbage bags & baby wipes/tissue/paper towels to keep clean



- Wrench to turn off utilities



- Extra cash



Have enough food and water for *at least* 4 days:

- Need one gallon of water per person per day.
- We have ___ people in our family x 4 days = ___ gallons of water.

Getting Ready:

Make an Emergency Kit to Go

Things to have ready to go in case you need to leave your home:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medications (prescription and over-the-counter) | <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical devices | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain gear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phones and chargers | <input type="checkbox"/> Toy or game for children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush) | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort items (snacks, stuffed animal, book) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glasses, contacts, dentures | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash and checkbook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable walking shoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Important documents |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Keys |

Special items for babies and young children:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bottles | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby anti-fever medications/syringe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diapers | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby formula, baby food, bibs | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacifier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby wipes | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby blankets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trash bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diaper rash cream | |



Medical Information for Each Family Member

Fill out the medical information for each member of your family, so you will have this information in one place. In an emergency, you can refer to this information to contact your healthcare provider, or show this to the emergency or healthcare workers if you or your family need medical help.

- Name: _____
- Doctor/Clinic: _____
- Phone: _____
- Insurance Type & Number: _____

- Allergies: _____
- Medical Conditions: _____

- Current Medications: _____

-
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Important Names & Phone Numbers

- Home phone number, family member cell phones: _____

- Work: _____
- Pharmacy: _____
- Head Start/Child Care: _____
- School: _____
- Landlord/Mortgage Company: _____
- Home/Rental Insurance: _____
- Car Insurance: _____
- Electric Company: _____
- Gas Company: _____
- Water Company: _____
- City information: _____
- Bus/transportation information: _____
- Religious contact: _____
- Relatives: _____
- Friends: _____
- Resettlement Agency: _____
- Case Worker: _____



Important Documents

Know where your important documents are kept. It may be helpful to have them in one place.

Be ready to take these documents with you if you need to leave your home.

- Birth certificate/I-94 form
- Passport/driver's license/other identification with picture
- Social Security cards
- Insurance cards
- Copy of ATM/credit cards and banking information
- Copy of deeds/mortgage
- Recent tax return
- Immunization records
- Other documents: (list them)_____



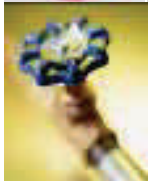
If Something Bad Happens

Check family members for injuries:

- If person is bleeding a lot, press on the wound and lift the body part, if possible, to slow the bleeding.
- Keep person calm and safe.
- Keep person warm.
- Call 9-1-1 for help.

Taking care of your home:

- Listen to the radio or TV or look on the internet for news.
- Put out small fires using a portable fire extinguisher.
- Learn how to turn off the water, electricity, and gas before a disaster.
 - During a disaster, the water supply may get contaminated. Turn off the water coming to your home until the authorities say it is safe for drinking.
 - Turn off the electricity at the main electrical panel or fuse box if you see sparks.
 - Leaking gas can cause an explosion. If gas is leaking, it may smell like rotten eggs. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get out. Call the gas company from a neighbor's house. If you turn off the gas, only the gas company should turn it back on.



Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning!

During disasters, your home may lose electricity. This page explains how some ways of keeping warm or cooking food without electricity can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, and what you can do to protect yourself.

Carbon monoxide is a gas we cannot see, smell or taste, but it can be harmful—and even cause death— if we breathe in too much of it. Carbon monoxide is made by burning fuel. Burning fuel indoors can cause carbon monoxide to build up in the home, which can be deadly.

- NEVER use a gas stove to heat the house.
- NEVER cook indoors on a charcoal or gas grill.
- NEVER use a portable generator indoors, in garages, or in carports. A portable generator is a gasoline-fueled machine that can run a few electrical items when there is no power.
- ONLY use a generator outdoors and far from open windows and vents.
- DON'T start a fire without a working chimney.
- Make sure your home has working carbon monoxide and smoke detectors

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning:

Headache, tiredness, hard to breathe, dizziness, nausea.

If you think you have carbon monoxide poisoning:

Leave the home and get fresh air. Get medical attention.

Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors may sometimes be combined in one device, or they may be separate devices. Make sure you know which devices are in your home!



**Put This in Window to Let Neighbors Know
You Need Help**

HELP

**Put This in Window to Let Neighbors Know
You Are OK**

OK

EXTRA NOTES

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For more information:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) / www.ready.gov

American Red Cross / www.redcross.org