

EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR FAMILIES

BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

The best time to prepare for an emergency is well ahead of time. When you prepare from a position of safety and calm, you and your family can better cope with an emergency or disaster situation when it occurs. Be prepared to care for your family for at least three days without outside assistance.

Prior Planning before a disaster **Prevents Poor Performance** during a disaster.

Things to do to prepare for an emergency:

1. **Form a personal support network.** A personal support network are the people you should involve in your emergency planning and can help you in an emergency situation. They include your nearby family, friends, caregivers, neighbors, and co-workers. Be sure to give at least one trusted member of your support network a key to your home. They should also be aware of where you store your emergency kit, in case you need assistance in an emergency.
2. **Complete a personal assessment.** Make a list of your personal needs and your resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. You need to take into account what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during, and after a disaster. Items to consider include; personal care equipment, electric dependent equipment as well as your ability to get around before, during, and after a disaster.
3. **Be informed.** Know about the specific hazards that threaten your community (hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, etc...), learn about community disaster plans and community warning systems (sign up for SwiftReach on the Montour County EMA website). During an emergency, be sure to listen to public announcements, weather reports, local radio and television, as well as the Montour County EMA website and facebook page.

4. Make a plan. You and your family should create your own personalized Family Disaster Plan. Creating a plan is simple and only takes a few minutes. Be sure to update your plan frequently. Planning information (emergency preparedness guides) can be obtained, free of charge, from the Montour County EMA office. Please feel free to contact the Montour County EMA office for assistance. Contact information is listed on our web page.

5. Designate a location to meet
 - a. Determine ahead of time where you will meet and ensure that all family members know the location and address/phone number of the meeting place.
 - b. In case it is not possible to enter your neighborhood, have an alternate meeting place outside the neighborhood.
 - c. Have a contact person from out of the area who would most likely not be affected by the emergency. This person can act as a point of contact for all family members to check in with, in case the family is separated during the emergency. Be sure that all family members have the contact information for this person (ex: relative in another town).

6. Assemble an emergency kit. Your emergency kit should have supplies specific to your special needs. Be prepared for a power outage. Plan ahead of time for back- up power (generator). Take care using alternative heating devices as they may create hazards of their own. Back- up power can provide you with heat, electricity, plumbing, and internet when power is out. Below is a guide to get you started;

Disaster emergency kit

(adjust as necessary for your specific needs):

WATER

- Pack at least one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
- Store water in tightly sealed, non-breakable plastic containers
- Change your water supply every six months

FOOD

- Pack enough food to last each family member at least three days
- Include canned and boxed foods because they require little preparation and stay fresh for longer periods of time (remember to pack a manual can opener).
- Replace food every six months
- Be sure to include food for all family members—infants, special diets, and pets

FIRST AID KIT---Can be purchased from local stores or assembled personally. Some basic supplies are listed below (add specific items as needed):

- Adhesive bandages
- Antibiotic ointment
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Aspirin pain reliever
- Cleansing agents (isopropyl alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, etc...)
- Cotton balls
- Gauze pads and rolls
- Medical gloves
- Antiseptic towelettes
- Sunscreen
- Thermometer
- Scissors

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- Battery powered radio
- Weather radio
- Spare batteries
- Resealable plastic bags
- Bath towels
- Paper products-plates, cups, silverware, etc...
- Garbage bags
- Change of clothing for each person
- Sleeping supplies-blankets, pillows, sleeping bags
- Personal hygiene supplies-toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes

PERSONAL ITEMS

- Personal handicap needs (medication, special equipment, etc...)
- Personal photo identification
- Road maps to assist in evacuation
- Prescription medication
- Copies of important personal papers; birth certificates, etc...
- Photos/videos of your home, property, and possessions to document the pre disaster condition to your insurance company.

Note: Your disaster kit should be readily available to sustain a family if isolated at home during a disaster. It should also be portable (packed ahead of time in a tote) in the event you must evacuate prior to a disaster. Also, in the event you are not able to evacuate by automobile, and must evacuate by foot or by rescue, you will not be able to take your entire kit (and most likely will not need it at a shelter) so be sure to have a smaller bag, inside the kit, that is stocked with your basic personal needs (medications, photo ID, emergency contact information, etc...) that you can take with you in a moment's notice.

In case an Evacuation Order is given:

In a disaster situation, it may be necessary to evacuate your residence for several days or longer. Because disasters can strike with little or no warning, you should be prepared to leave at a moment's notice.

NOTE: DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT TO EVACUATE

Knowing beforehand the steps to take in case of evacuation can make a big difference in your safety and comfort.

- Follow recommended evacuation routes. Watch for washed-out bridges, flooded areas and downed power lines. Be aware that some routes may not be usable, depending upon the actual nature of the disaster. Be sure to have planned several evacuation routes to safety.
- Discuss with your family members the possibilities of evacuation, evacuation shelter locations, and “rally points” if everyone is not at home at the time the evacuation order is given.
- Find out your child's school evacuation policy
- Verify that your disaster supply kit is assembled and ready to go
- Make certain that your car is fueled. Fuel may be limited for some time after a disaster.
- Be sure to wear any medical alert jewelry, and take any necessary medication (and medication list) with you.

When authorities tell you to evacuate

- **Listen to them! Evacuate when you are so advised. Do not wait! Rescue personnel may not be able to reach you until after a disaster has passed.**
- Bring your disaster supply kit
- Wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing, considering weather conditions
- Unplug electronic devices, if time is available
- Lock all doors and windows—secure your home
- Turn off the main switches for utilities, if instructed, and if you feel comfortable doing so
- Inform a friend or relative of your route and planned shelter location
- Follow recommended evacuation routes.

If you are going to a public shelter

- Be aware that alcoholic beverages and weapons are not allowed in public shelters
- Take your pet with you when you evacuate. Keep in mind that your pet may need to be sheltered in a separate part of the building than you. You will be able to visit, feed, and care for your pet (See next section for more information about pets).
- Practice patience and cooperation. Sharing space with many others can be a challenge
- Stay in the shelter until authorities advise you that it is safe to return to your residence or to leave the shelter.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PETS

- Pets should not be left behind during a disaster, but do not risk your life attempting to find shelter for a pet.
- Attach ID tags to pets with your name and address
- Be sure to include a copy of your pet's immunization records in your family emergency kit. This will make it easier in the event your pet must be sheltered near other people or animals.
- Include your pet's needs in your family emergency kit; food, bowl, leash, medication, etc....
- Shelters in Montour County will accept pets. However, all pets will have to be crated and will most likely be placed in an area separate from humans. You will, however, be able to visit and care for your pet while at the shelter.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING CHILDREN

- If you child has questions about a disaster, answer them truthfully. Provide reassuring words, affection, and encouragement.
- Monitor the amount and content of media coverage your child is exposed to, as children can easily be traumatized. Be careful what adults say concerning the disaster situation while children are present.
- Be sure to include your children in the planning and emergency kit stocking process. This will help them to understand that preparation is not a bad thing and the better prepared you are will go far in remaining calm in an emergency. Much like teaching children to dial 911, and the fire prevention lessons they are taught in school, they are more at ease when prepared and will become a valuable asset in an emergency.

WHAT TO DO AFTER A DISASTER

- Beware of new dangers that may have been created by the disaster
 - Washed out roads
 - Down power lines
 - Structural damage to your home or property
 - Electrical, gas, or other utility damage, leaks, etc...
 - Check your refrigerator/freezer for spoiled food
 - Do not enter your home if it is unsafe to do so. Contact a qualified professional to determine structural stability.
- Contact your insurance company if your property is damaged
- Take photos/videos to compare to your predisaster situation
- If your property is damaged, contact Montour County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)—see website home page or Facebook information for contact information. Montour EMA will assist with damage assessment and help you begin any disaster relief efforts that may be available.