

### Introduction

Having a plan is the only way to make sure that you and your family know what to do, how to do it and when to do it when disaster strikes.

### 1. FIND OUT WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU

- ☐ Call your local emergency management office and ask the following questions:
- ☐ What types of disasters are most likely to happen here and how do I prepare for each of them?
- ☐ What type of community warning signals exist and what should I do if I hear them?
- ☐ What kinds of services are available to help elderly or others who have special needs if needed during a disaster?
- ☐ Also, find out if your workplace, children's school or daycare center have emergency plans. If they don't suggest that they develop them.

### 2. CREATE A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

Get together with the family to discuss why you need to prepare for an emergency or disaster. Remember, a disaster to your family could be a house fire. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and other hazards to children in a non-threatening way. Plan ahead to share responsibilities and work together as a team.

Discuss with the family what disasters are most likely to happen and what to do in each case.

Talk about what to do if the power goes out.

Pick two emergency meeting places and make sure everyone knows where they are:

One should be right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire.

The second should be outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home or are evacuated.

Ask an out-of-state friend or family member to be your "family contact". Make sure all family members have this person's name and telephone number. After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Each family member should call this person to tell them where they are.

Talk about what you'll do in the event of an evacuation.

Meet with your neighborhood to talk about developing a neighborhood disaster plan.

### Prepare for Emergency



### 3. Complete a Checklist

- ☐ Check to see if your home and its contents are fully insured **ESPECIALLY FOR FLOOD DAMAGE**. Most homeowners policies do not cover floods!
- ☐ Post emergency numbers by the phones.
- ☐ Teach children how, and when, to dial 911.
- ☐ Show everyone how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- ☐ Turn off the utilities **ONLY** if told to do so by emergency officials or if you are sure the lines are damaged. If you turn the gas off, a professional **MUST** turn it back on to avoid the possibility of an explosion or gas leak.
- ☐ Install smoke detectors on each level of your home especially near bedrooms.
- ☐ Get a fire extinguisher and make sure everyone knows how to use it and where it's kept.
- ☐ Put together a Disaster Supplies Kit.
- ☐ Take a first-aid and CPR class.
- ☐ Find two routes out of every room in your home.

### 4. Practice & Maintain/Update Your Plan

- Quiz the kids every six months so they'll remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Test smoke detectors monthly and change batteries twice a year.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturers instructions.
- Replace stored water in your Disaster Supplies Kit every three months and replace stored food every six months.