

# Prepare For Evacuation

No matter how much you may wish to stay at home, there are times when evacuation will be your only choice. These include a nuclear, chemical or biological event as well as any impending disaster that is likely to destroy your home. An evacuation plan is an essential element of your Family Disaster Plan and should include where to go, how to get there and what to bring with you.

## BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES:

Thinking ahead will make evacuation easier, safer, and less stressful. Here are just a few questions to help you get started:

- ❖ If a disaster occurred while your spouse was at work and your children in school, how would you get in touch with one another? What if the telephones weren't working? To be prepared, every household should have a family communication plan as part of their Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- ❖ Have you considered your transportation options in case you have to evacuate? If you do not have a car, find out ahead of time about your community's plans for people without private vehicles.
- ❖ If you were stuck in a traffic jam or ran out of gas, would you have enough to eat and drink until help arrived? Make sure you have what you'd need for at least three days.
- ❖ Have you thought ahead about your pets? Because evacuation shelters generally do not accept pets, plan ahead to ensure that your pets will have a safe place to stay. Do your research early. (Service animals trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability **are** permitted in shelters.)

How will you know if an evacuation is happening? The basic guideline is the same for all: **LISTEN TO THE ADVICE OF LOCAL OFFICIALS ON THE RADIO.** If options are available for you, decide whether it is better to leave the area, stay with a friend or family member who does not live in the affected area, or go to a public shelter. You should bring your Emergency Preparedness Kit with you.

You may need to act quickly. Prepare **BEFORE** an emergency by making evacuation plans and discussing them with your household members.

## WHAT IF YOUR CHILDREN ARE IN SCHOOL?

Schools are required by law to have plans for sheltering and evacuating students. If you do not know what your child's school has planned, you need to contact the school and ask.

You should not try to get to the school if the children are being sheltered there. Getting to the school may be difficult or impossible and you may not be allowed to enter the building and transporting your children may put them, you and others at increased risk.

## IF LOCAL OFFICIALS ADVISE EVACUATION:

- ❖ Act quickly, grab your Emergency Preparedness kit and follow the instructions of local emergency coordinators, law enforcement personnel, fire departments or elected officials.
- ❖ Put your emergency plan for your animals into action. Take your pets with you when you leave, provided you can do so without endangering yourself. But remember, only service animals are permitted in most shelters.

## REMEMBER:

Evacuating to an emergency shelter should keep you safer than if you stayed home or at your workplace.

Evacuations are more common than people realize. Hundreds of times each year, transportation and industrial accidents release harmful substances into the air and thousands of people need to temporarily leave their homes, schools, or worksites. Fires and floods cause evacuations even more frequently.

(developed by: Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Committee)



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