

Action Checklist – Items to Do Before a Disaster

□ Utilities

Know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves and share this information with your family and caregivers. Keep any tools you will need near gas and water shut off valves. Turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged, you suspect a leak or if local officials instruct you to do so.

(Note: Gas shut-off procedure – As part of the learning process, do not actually turn off the gas. If the gas is turned off for any reason, only a qualified professional can turn it back on. It might take several weeks for a professional to respond. In the meantime, you will require alternate sources to heat your home, make hot water and cook.)

□ Fire Extinguisher

Be sure everyone knows how to use your fire extinguishers (ABC type) and where they are kept.

□ Smoke Alarms

Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near the bedrooms. Individuals with sensory disabilities should consider installing smoke alarms that have strobe lights and vibrating pads. Follow local codes and manufacturer's instructions about installation requirements. Also, consider installing a carbon monoxide alarm in our home.

□ Insurance Coverage

Check if you have adequate insurance coverage. Homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage and may not provide full coverage for other hazards. Talk with your insurance agent and make sure you have adequate coverage to protect your family against financial loss.

□ First Aid/CPR & AED (Automated External Defibrillation)

Take American Red Cross first aid and CPR/AED classes. Red Cross courses can accommodate people with disabilities. Discuss your needs when registering for the classes.

□ Inventory Home Possessions

Make a record of your possessions to help you claim reimbursement in case of loss or damage. Store this information in a safe deposit box or

other secure (flood/fire safe) location to ensure the records survive a disaster. Include photographs or video of the interior and exterior of your home as well as cars, boats and recreational vehicles. Also, have photos of durable medical equipment and be sure to make a record of the make and model numbers for each item. Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles, artwork, or other items that may be difficult to evaluate. Make copies of receipts and canceled checks showing the cost of valuable items.

□ **Vital Records and Documents**

Vital family records and other documents such as birth and marriage certificated, social security cards, passports, wills, deeds, and financial, insurance, and immunizations records should be kept in a safe deposit box or other safe locations.

□ **Reduce Home Hazards**

In a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. **Take these steps to reduce your risk.**

- ◆ Have a professional repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections.
- ◆ Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves and hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
- ◆ Use straps or other restraints to secure tall cabinets, bookshelves, large appliances (especially water heater, furnace and refrigerator), mirrors, shelves, large picture frames, and light fixtures to wall studs.
- ◆ Repair cracks in ceilings and foundations.
- ◆ Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products away from heat sources.
- ◆ Place oily rags or waste in covered metal cans and dispose of them according to local regulations.
- ◆ Have a professional clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, connectors and gas vents.