

Terrorism

Devastating acts, such as the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, have left many concerned about the possibility of future incidents in the United States and their potential impact. They have raised uncertainty about what might happen next, increasing stress levels. Nevertheless, there are things you can do to prepare for the unexpected and reduce the stress that you may feel now and later should another emergency arise. Taking preparatory action can reassure you and your children that you can exert a measure of control even in the face of such events.

What You Can Do to Prepare

Finding out what can happen is the first step. Once you have determined the events possible and their potential in your community, it is important that you discuss them with your family or household. Develop a disaster plan together.

Create an emergency communications plan.

Choose an out-of-town contact your family or household will call or e-mail to check on each other should a disaster occur. Your selected contact should live far enough away that they would be unlikely to be directly affected by the same event, and they should know they are the chosen contact. Make sure every household member has that contact's, and each other's, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers (home, work, pager and cell). Leave these contact numbers at your children's schools, if you have

Check on the school emergency plan of any school-age children you may have.

You need to know if they will keep children at school until a parent or designated adult can pick them up or send them home on their own. Be sure that the school has updated information about how to reach parents and responsible caregivers to arrange for pick up. And, ask what type of authorization the school may require to release a child to someone you designate, if you are not able to pick up your child. During times of emergency the school telephones may be overwhelmed with calls.

For more information, refer to [Your Family Disaster Plan](#) on putting together a disaster plan. You may also want to request a copy of [Before Disaster Strikes . . . How to Make Sure You're Financially Prepared \(A5075\)](#) for specific information on what you can do now to protect your assets. These documents

Evacuation

If local authorities ask you to leave your home, they have a good reason to make this request, and you should heed the advice immediately. Listen to your radio or television and follow the instructions of local emergency officials and keep these simple tips in mind-

- * Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sturdy shoes so you can be as protected as much as possible.
- * Take your disaster supplies kit.
- * Lock your home.
- * Use travel routes specified by local authorities-don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- * Listen to local authorities. Your local authorities will provide you with the most accurate information specific to an event in your area. Staying tuned

children, and at your workplace. Your family should know that if telephones are not working, they need to be patient and try again later or try e-mail. Many people flood the telephone lines when emergencies happen but e-mail can sometimes get through when calls don't.

Establish a meeting place

Having a predetermined meeting place away from your home will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected or the area evacuated. You may even want to make arrangements to stay with a family member or friend in case of an emergency. Be sure to include any pets in these plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters and some hotels will not accept them.

Assemble a disaster supplies kit

If you need to evacuate your home or are asked to "shelter in place," having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable. Prepare a disaster supplies kit in an easy-to-carry container such as a duffel bag or small plastic trash can. Include "special need" items for any member of your household (infant

are also available at www.redcross.org.

If Disaster Strikes

- * Remain calm and be patient.
- * Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- * Listen to your radio or television for news and instructions.
- * If the disaster occurs near you, check for injuries.
- * Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.

If the disaster occurs near your home while you are there, check for damage using a flashlight. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches. Check for fires, fire hazards and other household hazards. Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.

- * Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- * Confine or secure your pets.
- * Call your family contact-do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- * Check on your

to local radio and television, and following their instructions is your safest choice.

If you're sure you have time:

- * Call your family contact to tell them where you are going and when you expect to arrive.
- * Plan to take your pets with you; do not leave them behind. Because pets are not permitted in public shelters, follow your plan to go to a relative or friend's home, or find a "pet-friendly" hotel.
- * Shut off water and electricity before leaving, if instructed to do so. Leave natural gas service ON unless local officials advise you otherwise. You may need gas for heating and cooking, and only a professional can restore gas service in your home once it's been turned off. In a disaster situation it could take weeks for a professional to respond.
- * Stay away from downed power lines.

formula or items for people with disabilities or older people), first aid supplies (including prescription medications), a change of clothing for each household member, a sleeping bag or bedroll for each, a battery powered radio or television and extra batteries, food and water and tools. It is also a good idea to include some cash and copies of important family documents (birth certificates, passports and licenses) in your kit.

Copies of essential documents-like powers of attorney, birth and marriage certificates, insurance policies, life insurance beneficiary designations and a copy of your will-should also be kept in a safe location outside your home. A safe deposit box or the home of a friend or family member who lives out of town qualifies.

For more complete instructions, refer to [Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit](#)

Additional Positive Steps You Can Take

Raw, unedited footage of terrorism events and people's reaction to those events can be very upsetting, especially to children. We do not recommend that children watch television news reports about such events,

neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled.

You and your family or household may have to evacuate an area, avoiding roads blocked for your safety.

Clean-up may take many months.

A Word on What Could Happen

As we learned from the events of September 11, 2001, the following things can happen after a terrorist attack:

There can be significant numbers of casualties and/or damage to buildings and the infrastructure. So employers need up-to-date information about any medical needs you may have and on how to contact your designated beneficiaries.

Heavy law enforcement involvement at local, state and federal levels follows a terrorist attack due to the event's criminal nature.

Health and mental health resources in the affected communities can be strained to their limits, maybe even overwhelmed.

Extensive media coverage, strong public fear and international implications

Shelter in place

If you are advised by local officials to "shelter in place," what they mean is for you to remain inside your home or office and protect yourself there. Close and lock all windows and exterior doors. Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Close the fireplace damper. Get your disaster supplies kit, and make sure the radio is working. Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed. Only seal off doors, windows and vents if advised to do so by emergency management authorities. Listen to emergency broadcast information and carefully follow instructions regarding sealing your home or business facility. Stay listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

Be Aware of Biological / Radiological Exposure

- Listen to local radio and television

especially if the news reports show images over and over again about the same incident. Young children do not realize that it is repeated video footage, and think the event is happening again and again. Adults may also need to give themselves a break from watching disturbing footage. However, listening to local radio and television reports will provide you with the most accurate information from responsible governmental authorities on what's happening and what actions you will need to take. So you may want to make some arrangements to take turns listening to the news with other adult members of your household.

- Another useful preparation includes learning some basic first aid. To enroll in a first aid and CPR course, contact your local American Red Cross chapter. In an emergency situation, you need to tend to your own well-being first and then consider first aid for others immediately around you, including possibly assisting injured people to evacuate a building if necessary.
- People who may have come into

and consequences can continue for a prolonged period.

Workplaces and schools may be closed, and there may be restrictions on domestic and international travel.

reports for the most accurate information from responsible governmental and medical authorities on what's happening and what actions you will need to take. The Web sites referenced at the end of this brochure can give you more information on how to protect yourself from exposure to biological or radiological hazards.

Reduce Any Care Risks

The risk of getting a disease while giving first aid is extremely rare. However, to reduce the risk even further:

- * Avoid direct contact with blood and other body fluids.
- * Use protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and breathing barriers.
- * Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately after giving care.
- * It is important to be prepared for an emergency and to know how to give

contact with a biological or chemical agent may need to go through a decontamination procedure and receive medical attention. Listen to the advice of local officials on the radio or television to determine what steps you will need to take to protect yourself and your family. As emergency services will likely be overwhelmed, only call 9-1-1 about life-threatening emergencies.

emergency care.

More Information

All of these recommendations make good sense, regardless of the potential problem. For more information on how to get ready for disaster and be safe when disaster strikes, or to register for a first aid and CPR course, please contact your local American Red Cross chapter. You can find it in your telephone directory under "American Red Cross" or through our home page at www.redcross.org under "your local chapter."

- For information about your community's specific plans for response to disasters and other emergencies, contact your local office of emergency management.
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- For information on what a business can do to protect its employees and customers as well as develop business continuity plans, you may want to get a copy of the Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry and/or Preparing Your Business for the

Unthinkable from
your local American
Red Cross chapter
or see
[http://www.redcross
.org/
services/disaster
/beprepared](http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared)

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- For more information about the specific effects of chemical or biological agents, the following Web sites may be helpful:

[Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention](#)

[Federal Emergency
Management Agency](#)

[U. S. Department of
Health and Human
Services](#)

[Johns Hopkins University](#)

[Environmental Protection
Agency](#)