

Plan. Prepare. Share.®

A Kid's Guide to Disaster Readiness.



American Red Cross

Genesee-Lapeer Chapter

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Dear Parents,

As a parent, your primary job is to keep your children healthy and safe from harm. You use car safety seats; you child-proof your home; you monitor your children's television viewing, games and social contacts. But what about those hazards that arise unexpectedly? What can you do to keep your children safe from fire, wind, weather, and other natural and man-made emergencies?

This guide is designed to help you prepare your children to react to such emergencies safely and with confidence. Talking with your children about how to prepare your family for fires, floods, tornadoes and other hazards helps to calm their fears and gives them the tools they need to get through these events safely. By sharing this information with your children and letting them participate in your family's planning and preparation activities, you and your children will increase your chances of staying safe, secure and protected.

Visit our Web site: www.geneseelapeer-redcross.org
or call us for additional information: 810-232-1401 and
800-608-4272.

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Meet Homer, your Family Safety Expert!

He knows all kinds of ways that you and your family can be ready for any kind of disaster, so that you can stay safe!

“What is a disaster?”

A disaster can cause lots of damage to people and places. Some are sudden, like fires and tornadoes, and some you might know about in advance, like a big storm or flooding.

**“That sounds scary!
What can I do?”**

Lots of things!
First, your family needs a plan. A plan is a list that tells everyone what to do in case of a disaster. It will tell what steps to take to keep you and your family safe.

“How does my town warn us about disaster?”

Most towns use TV and radio to warn residents of a possible disaster.

For tornadoes and other sudden disasters, sirens may sound. If you're not sure how your town warns people, call your local city hall and ask!

“What should my family do?”

That depends on the kind of disaster!

For a house fire or flooding, you want a **Get Out! Plan**.

For storms and tornadoes, you need a **Stay In! Plan**.

And for any disaster, you want a **Disaster Supplies Kit**.



The **Get Out!** Plan

This is the plan you'll use for a **house fire**, sudden **flooding**, or other **emergency evacuation** (leave quickly and orderly, like a fire drill). On a sheet of paper make a drawing of each level of the inside of your house, showing walls, doors, and windows.

Now, walk around the inside of your house with your drawing and mark with arrows on the drawing at least two ways to escape each room. Then, with your family, decide on a meeting place outside the house, and draw that on your plan. If you want to use



this meeting place in case of fire or flooding, be sure it's on higher ground than the house. Once you've decided on your plan, practice getting out of the house as quickly



as possible! Since in a real fire, the coolest air is near the floor, practice crawling out of the house too. Also, in a real fire, once you're outside, stay out! Run to a neighbor's to call 9-1-1.

If you don't need to leave your house immediately, as when flooding is more gradual, unplug your appliances, bring in your outdoor furniture and equipment, and move your valuables to the highest floor you can. You may wish to take any important papers with you along with your disaster supplies kit. Don't forget your pets! In your plan, decide where your pets can go if you have to go to an emergency shelter; most don't allow them.



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DID YOU KNOW



Most fires start in the kitchen, so be sure to turn off the stove and oven when not in use.

Keep potholders and other burnable materials away from hot surfaces.



Have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.



Make sure that each level of your home has working smoke alarms. Change your batteries once per year.

The Stay In! Plan

This is the plan you'll use for thunderstorms, winter storms, and tornadoes (unless you live in a mobile home – see below). Your home (or another sturdy building) provides the safest shelter from these kinds of weather events.

Thunderstorms are dangerous because they have lightning, strong winds, heavy rains and possibly hail. The early signs of a thunderstorm include dark clouds, lightning and thunder, even before rain starts to fall. If you see any of these signs, go inside or stay inside. Watch television or listen to the radio for warnings. It's a good idea to avoid using the house phone (though unplugged cell phones are OK) or any electrical appliances when lightning is around. Your parents may want to unplug the appliances, including the air conditioner, to avoid damage from lightning. Because metal pipes can be affected by lightning, you shouldn't bathe or shower during a thunderstorm. Stay away from windows, in case they're broken by objects blown by the wind. Follow the 30/30 rule: If you see lightning, start counting to 30. If you hear thunder before you get to 30, go inside – the storm is close by. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the thunder has ended.



If you're caught outside in a thunderstorm, make yourself small! Crouch down, put your hands on your knees, and put your head down. Stay away from trees, phone lines, power lines and fences, and from anything made of metal.

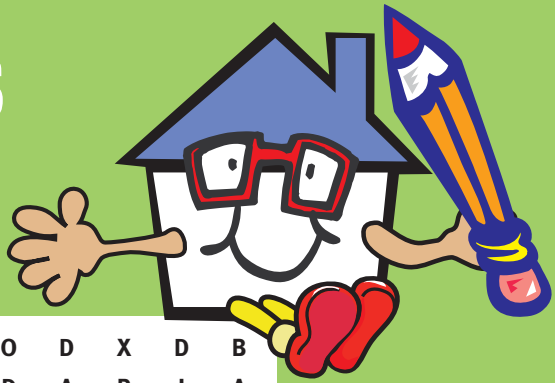
Winter Storms can have strong winds, wind-blown snow and dangerously low temperatures. Stay warm inside! If you go to play outside after the storm, dress in layers, wear a hat, mittens and warm, waterproof boots. Look out for icy spots! Know the signs of frostbite (gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, waxy feeling skin) and hypothermia (confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering). Both these conditions can result from spending too long out in the cold and wind, especially if not dressed properly, and need immediate medical attention.



Tornadoes are fast-moving, cone-shaped winds that can appear suddenly and with little warning. Your town should have a siren that may go off to warn of a tornado, but often the tornado moves so fast that no warning is possible. You should be inside, following the rules for **thunderstorms**, but if tornadoes are possible, you and your family should shelter in the lowest level of your house or apartment building (the basement is best). If you don't have a basement, stay in an interior room with no windows until the danger is past. If you live in a mobile home, leave it and take shelter in a sturdy building. If you are caught outside away from shelter, go to a low place (like a ditch) and make yourself small! (See **Thunderstorms**, above)



Homer's READY! Word Find



P	E	T	F	O	O	D	X	D	B
L	M	S	L	W	D	A	R	I	A
A	E	T	A	R	W	E	G	A	T
N	R	E	S	C	A	P	E	T	T
Z	G	K	H	O	R	A	T	S	E
T	E	N	L	I	N	P	S	R	R
I	N	A	I	D	I	O	M	I	I
K	C	L	G	A	N	A	A	F	E
X	Y	B	H	R	G	D	L	P	S
B	W	A	T	E	R	G	L	O	M

- Kit
- Emergency
- Blankets
- Radio
- Batteries
- Water
- Pet Food
- First Aid
- Escape
- Warning
- Get Small
- Flashlight
- Plan

What kind of disasters can happen in my town?

Put a circle around each kind of disaster that might happen where you live.
Let your parents help too!



Fire



Tornado



Flood



Winter Storm



Earthquake



Hazardous
Waste



Hurricane



Thunderstorm

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How else do we PLAN?



All family members should know how and when to call 9-1-1 in an emergency.

Create A Family Communication Plan. Your written plan should include your family name, street address, and home telephone number; your family's work, school and cell phone numbers; and the names and telephone numbers of emergency contacts, including a close neighbor or relative; an out-of-town contact; local Poison Control office; your doctor, your dentist, and your pets' veterinarian.

Can you think of others you could call in an emergency?

Include those names and numbers too. Have a copy of your Family Communication Plan near each telephone in your home and in your Disaster Supplies Kit.

Go to: www.planprepareshare.com for **FREE** printable samples of **The Family Communication Plan**.

Now we have a PLAN. Are we ready for any disaster?

Your Plan is just the first step. It's important to PREPARE for a disaster in other ways, too. If you need to leave your home quickly, or must take shelter in your home, your family should have a Disaster Supplies Kit. It's a good idea to have a Disaster Supplies Kit for your car(s) also!

For winter travel, add a small shovel, sand or kitty litter, and a colored cloth to tie to your antenna as a signal.

Circle the items you think you will need:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Water
(1 gal./person/day) | Toilet paper | School books |
| Non-perishable foods | Batteries | Flowers |
| Games/playing cards | Warm clothes | Toys |
| Diapers | First aid kit | Sleeping bags |
| Bicycles | Medicines | Halloween costumes |
| Flashlights | Pet food | Can opener |
| Blankets | Radio | Family Communication
Plan |
| | Eating utensils | Cash |
| | Moist towelettes | Car keys |
| | Whistle | Basic tools |



What else can we do to stay safe in a disaster?

There's lots more information about being disaster-ready on the web! Ask your parents or caregivers to look at: www.redcross.org, www.planprepareshare.com, www.fema.gov, and www.ready.gov for more information on preparing your home, what to do after a disaster, disaster evacuation, and other related topics. Also, you can SHARE what you've learned with other kids. Disasters don't happen often, but it's good if everyone knows what to do just in case!



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