

***OCEAN CITY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT***

COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

May 13, 2009

Emergencies can occur quickly and without warning. The best way to keep yourself and your family safe is to be prepared before an emergency strikes. In other words, get ready now!

We encourage all households in the City to take these four steps to prepare Before an Emergency Strikes:

- 1. Get Informed,**
- 2. Make a Plan,**
- 3. Make an Emergency Kit,**
- 4. Be Aware.**

Get Informed

Information is the first step in planning for any emergency. Here is what you need to know to protect yourself and your family.

- Learn about the different kinds of possible emergencies and how you and your family should respond to each one.
- Make sure that each member of your family knows how to get official information during an emergency.
- Ask if your employer has an emergency plan. If so, get a copy and review it. Also get the emergency plan for your child's school or daycare center. Review it and go over it with your child.
- Take a basic First Aid and CPR class.

Make a Plan

Preparedness starts with a plan. Create a simple plan that can help you and your family take control during an emergency.

- Hold a family meeting and develop an emergency plan.
- Draw a floor plan of your home and mark two escape routes from each room.
- Learn how and when to turn off utilities (water, gas, and electricity) at main switches.
- Choose an out-of-state friend or relative for all family members to contact if you get separated. Give their name, phone number, and e-mail address to each member of your family.

Make a Plan

- Teach children how to make long-distance telephone calls and how to dial 911 for emergency assistance.
- Program emergency numbers into all phones.
- Choose two places where your family will reunite after an emergency: a place near your home, and a place outside the City in case you cannot return home after an emergency.
- Make sure everyone knows the addresses and phone numbers of both meeting places.
- Know and practice all possible exit routes from your neighborhood.
- Put important family records (birth certificates, healthcare records, passports) in a safe place, such as a fireproof and waterproof safe or a bank safety deposit box.
- Practice your plan with all household members.
- Fill out the Emergency Information Form and post it prominently in your house.
- Fill out the Emergency Pocket Cards on and make a copy for each family member. Everyone should carry one at all times.

Make a Plan

Planning ahead with your neighbors can help save lives and property.

- Before an emergency occurs, meet with your neighbors to plan how you could work together until help arrives.
- Participate in emergency preparedness activities for your community.
- Know your neighbors and consider how you could help those with special needs, such as seniors and people with disabilities.

Make an Emergency Kit

Preparing an Emergency Kit in advance can save precious time if you must evacuate or seek shelter.

Place the following items in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or suitcase with wheels. Keep your kit in an easily accessible place.

- At least a three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Store in sealed, unbreakable containers.
- A three-to five-day supply of non-perishable canned food, and a non-electric can opener.
- Flashlight.
- Battery-powered radio.
- Extra batteries.
- Wrench and/or pliers to turn off utilities.

Make an Emergency Kit

- Whistle to signal for help.
- First Aid kit.
- Prescription medications for at least one week.
- List of family physicians, important medical information, and the style and serial number of medical devices, such as pacemakers.
- Cell phone charger.
- Extra set of eyeglasses, or contact lenses and solution.
- Blankets, bedding, and/or sleeping bags.
- Identification, credit cards, cash.
- Photocopies of important family documents including bank and home insurance information.
- Extra set of car and house keys.
- Local maps.

Make an Emergency Kit

- Rain gear, sturdy shoes, and a change of clothing.
- N95 dust masks to help filter contaminated air (available at hardware stores).
- Plastic sheeting, duct tape, and scissors to shelter in place.
- Tools: screwdrivers, waterproof matches, a fire extinguisher, flares, plastic storage containers, needle and thread, pen and paper, a compass, garbage bags, moist towelettes, and regular household bleach.
- Special items for seniors, family members with disabilities, infants, and young children).

Be Aware

You can help protect yourself and your family by being aware of your surroundings wherever you go.

- **Keep an eye out for suspicious or unattended bags or people acting strangely.**
- **Immediately report unusual behavior, suspicious or unattended packages, and strange devices to the police or security personnel.**
- **Never accept packages or other items from strangers.**
- **If you feel uncomfortable, or if something seems wrong, don't hesitate to leave the area.**
- **Know where the nearest emergency exits are located.**

The first thing you need during an emergency is information. Familiarize yourself in advance with both official (government) and non-official (news media) sources. You may also have to make a critical decision: should you shelter in place or evacuate?

You need to plan for both possibilities.

Stay or Go?

Should you stay where you are or evacuate? This may be the first big decision you'll need to make in an emergency situation. Plan for both possibilities!

Whenever possible, you should follow instructions from emergency personnel in deciding whether to shelter in place or evacuate. If you need to decide on your own, use all available information, including what you are learning here, to determine whether to shelter in place or evacuate.

Shelter in Place

In some types of emergencies, being outside will increase the danger. In these emergencies, the best, safest response is to shelter in place. This means staying inside a safe building—your house, work place, school, or other building—or entering a nearby building and seeking cover.

If you are asked to shelter in place:

- Shelter in a room with the fewest doors and/or windows possible. Ideally choose a room that has just one door and at least 10 square feet per person.
- Seal any doors, windows, and fireplaces.
- If the emergency is airborne (such as a disease, chemical release, or radiation) turn off ventilation and hot air heating systems (radiator heat may remain on).
- Keep at least one phone line open for emergency calls.
- Stay tuned to your radio or television, or scan official websites for information and updates.
- Use your Emergency Kit.

Evacuation

In some emergencies, you may be told to evacuate your home or neighborhood. Officials will tell you when to evacuate.

If you have not received official word or been told to shelter in place, you may decide to evacuate on your own if you sense you are in immediate danger.

If you are being told to evacuate, do so!

If you have time, close windows, lock doors, and unplug appliances. Authorities will tell you if you need to turn off your utilities (water, gas, electricity).

Evacuation

It is important to have an evacuation plan for your pet.

Create a kit for your pet. Including ID collar and rabies tag, carrier and leash, medications, newspapers and plastic trash bags, veterinary records, and at least a two-day supply of food and water.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms may produce heavy winds and lightning. In general, if you are close enough to a storm to hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning.

If caught outside:

- Try to get inside a building as quickly as possible. If a building is not available, move into a car with windows rolled up, if possible.
- In a group of people, spread out so that you are several yards apart from each other.
- Do not stand beneath trees.

Fires

It's important to know that fires spread quickly. In just minutes a fire can become life threatening, and a home can become engulfed in flames.

Remember, the heat and smoke from a fire can be even more dangerous than the flames.

If your smoke detector goes off, or if you see, smell, or hear a fire or explosion:

Leave “immediately”.... If you can do so safely...

Fires

- Use water or a fire extinguisher to put out small fires.
- Never use water on an electrical fire. Use only a fire extinguisher approved for electrical fires.
- Smother oil and grease fires in the kitchen with baking soda or salt, or put a lid over the flame if it is burning in a pan. Do not attempt to take the pan outside.
- If smoke is entering your room under the door, find another way out.
- Before opening any door in a fire, feel the door with the back of your hand. If it is hot, find another way out.
- Close all doors behind you.
- If you must exit through smoke, crawl or stay as close to the floor as possible.

Fires

- Do not use elevators.
- If your clothes catch on fire, stop, drop to the ground, and roll over and over to smother the flames.
- After you get out, call 911 from a safe location.
- Count family members and others who were in the building to determine if everyone is out. Give this information to the firefighters.
- Never go back into the burning building.
- If you become trapped in a burning building, stay close to the floor by a window and try to signal for help.

Explosions

*An explosion can cause a fire or a building collapse.
If there is an explosion in your building:*

- Exit the building as quickly as possible.
- Leave all possessions behind.
- Never use elevators.
- Take shelter under a sturdy table or desk if you can't exit the building.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth or piece of clothing.
- If there is a fire, follow the directions for fires.

Explosions

If you are trapped by debris:

- **Move around as little as possible to avoid kicking up dust.**
- **Cover your nose and mouth with cloth or a piece of clothing.**
- **Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are.**
- **Shout only as a last resort because it could cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.**

Once you are out:

- **Don't stand in front of windows, glass doors, or other potentially hazardous areas.**
- **Move away quickly to leave streets and sidewalks clear for emergency officials or others still exiting the building.**

Chemical and Biological Emergencies

A chemical emergency can result from either an accidental or malicious release of a chemical that can make you sick.

A pandemic or biological emergency can result from either a natural outbreak of disease or a deliberate release of biological substances that can cause illness or death.

If you become aware of an unusual and suspicious substance:

- **Get to a safe area (either by evacuating or sheltering in place).**
- **Inform authorities.**
- **Protect yourself by covering your mouth and nose with layers of fabric to filter the air.**
- **Seek information from governmental authorities via official alerts or the media.**

Chemical and Biological Emergencies

If you believe that you have been exposed to a dangerous chemical or biological agent:

- Get to a safe area.
- Remove all clothing immediately and wash thoroughly.
- Seek medical assistance.

Get informed...

During a pandemic or biological emergency, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide information on what you should do. Watch for official alerts that give you the following information:

Chemical and Biological Emergencies

- Are you in the group or area authorities consider in danger?
- What are the signs and symptoms of the disease?
- Are medications or vaccines being distributed? If so, where? Who should get them?
- Where should you seek emergency medical care if you become sick?

During a pandemic or biological emergency, take steps to avoid exposure:

- Practice good hygiene: wash your hands regularly; don't share food, drinks, or utensils; and cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid areas where the threat has been identified.
- Avoid crowded areas.

Chemical and Biological Emergencies

If you or someone in your family becomes sick:

- Take the illness seriously—don't just pass it off as a cold.
- Follow the steps provided in official alerts to determine if you have been exposed.
- If your symptoms match those described and you are in the group considered at risk, immediately seek emergency medical attention or follow any specific instructions that have been provided by public health officials.

Radiological Emergencies

A radiological threat can result from an accidental or intentional release of radiation. An intentional release can be the result of either a “dirty bomb” or other radiological dispersion device, or a nuclear explosion. Radiation is odorless and invisible, and unless there is some form of explosion, you may not be immediately aware of the risk.

Radiological Emergencies

In a radiological emergency, there are three keys to increased safety:

- **Time**: Reduce the amount of time that you are exposed to radiation (either by evacuating to a safe area or by sheltering in place in a safe area).
- **Distance**: Moving farther away from the radiation source will reduce your exposure.
- **Shielding**: If you shield yourself from the radiation source (for example by staying within the walls of building), you will be exposed to less radiation.

Radiological Emergencies

If you have advance warning of a nuclear explosion or radiation release:

- Take cover immediately, preferably below ground.
- If you can't get underground, any shield or shelter will help protect you.

In the event of a radiation release outside:

- Cover your nose and mouth and immediately seek shelter inside a building.
- If you are already inside a building and the building is stable, shelter in place—close and seal (using plastic or other materials) all doors, windows, and fireplaces. Shut off air conditioners, hot air heating, and other ventilation systems (radiator heat may remain on).

Radiological Emergencies

If the release is inside a building where you are located:

- Cover your nose and mouth.
- Get out of the building and to a safe area.

In the event of a nuclear explosion:

- If you are outside, immediately take cover from the blast and cover your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Take immediate steps to either seek shelter and remain there, or evacuate to a safe area outside the area of radiation.
- If you shelter in place, try to do so below ground.
- Close and seal (using plastic sheeting and duct tape if available, or other materials) all doors, windows, and fireplaces.
- Shut off air conditioners, heating, and other ventilation systems.

Radiological Emergencies

Get informed. Watch for official alerts that provide the following information:

- Are you in an area where radiation is present? Or are you in a safe area?
- Are authorities instructing you to remain sheltered in place, or are you being told to evacuate?
- What routes do authorities want you to use to evacuate?
- Who should seek medical care and where is such care available?
- When is it safe and appropriate to seek such care?

If, after a radiological release,

- You feel nauseous, vomit, or feel generally sick, you may have been exposed to radiation.
- Remove all clothing and wash thoroughly.
- Put contaminated clothing and other items where you will not be exposed to them.
- When safe and appropriate, seek emergency medical assistance.

Loss of Utilities

If Your Power Goes Out

- **Loss of utilities (electricity, gas, or water) can occur for many reasons including severe weather, blackouts, or equipment failure.**
- **Use a flashlight. Do not use candles or kerosene lanterns—they are a fire hazard.**
- **Turn off and unplug major appliances and sensitive electric equipment, such as computers, VCRs, and televisions.**
- **Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.**
- **Do not use your range or oven to heat your home—this can cause a fire or fatal gas leak.**
- **Use extreme caution when driving. If traffic signals are out, treat each signal as a stop sign—come to a complete stop at every intersection and look before you proceed.**
- **Do not call 911 to ask about the power outage.**
- **Listen to the media stations for updates.**
- **Always keep a traditional, non-cordless telephone available. Cordless phones may not work when the power is out.**

If You Need Clean Water

Flooding can contaminate water supplies, and contain microorganisms that cause diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, and hepatitis.

- If you think your water may be contaminated, you should purify it before using it. This includes water used for drinking, cooking, cleaning dishes, or bathing.
- The best way to purify water is to bring it to a boil for 3–5 minutes, and then allow it to cool before drinking.
- If necessary, you can use bleach to treat water by adding 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use bleach if it has added cleaners, or if it is scented or color-safe.

During and after an emergency, stay tuned to local media sources and the City's emergency AM radio station, WQKF629 Ocean City, MD at 1670 kHz and follow the advice of emergency personnel. Unless told to evacuate, avoid roads to allow emergency vehicles access.

Family Records and Financial Recovery

Taking steps to protect and ensure access to important family records and financial information can make recovery easier.

- Keep copies of your identification and other important family papers, such as marriage licenses and birth certificates.
- Keep a record of all your financial accounts (bank accounts, loans, credit cards), including the name of each institution, its contact information, and your account numbers.
- If you keep important information on your computer, regularly back up your data. Keep a copy of this information in your Emergency Kit.
- You may want to store important information in a fireproof and waterproof safe, or in a secure place away from your home, such as a bank safety deposit box.

Seniors and people with disabilities may have special needs that you need to consider in preparing for emergencies. If you or someone in your family has special needs, consider the following tips when preparing your emergency plans.

Seniors and People with Disabilities

Seniors and people with disabilities may have special needs that you need to consider in preparing for emergencies. If you or someone in your family has special needs, consider the following tips when preparing your emergency plans.

- Create a personal support network of family and friends who can help you in an emergency.
- Make sure that someone in your network has a key to your home and knows where you keep emergency supplies.
- Keep at least a week's worth of medications on hand. Also keep a copy of all prescriptions as well as dosage or treatment information.
- If you undergo any regular medical treatments, or if you require home health care services, talk to your service provider about its emergency plans.
- Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you need to prepare.

Seniors and People with Disabilities

- If you are dependent on electricity for a wheelchair or any life-sustaining device, consult your power provider.
- Make copies of important documents, including your health insurance and Medicare and Medicaid cards. Keep this list in your Emergency Kit, along with the names and phone numbers of the people in your support network.
- Keep emergency cash or travelers checks on hand.
- For your Emergency Kit, consider items such as eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries, oxygen, dentures, and emergency foods that meet any special dietary needs.
- If you have elderly or disabled neighbors, offer to help them prepare for any emergency. Become part of their personal support network.

Parents and Families

- **Include your children in your planning, practice your plans with them, and periodically quiz them to make sure they understand what to do. Always stress that this is a “just in case” plan.**
- **Get a copy of your child’s school or daycare emergency plans.**
- **Make plans for where you can meet your child after an evacuation.**
- **Make sure that the school has up-to-date contact information for you and other family members.**
- **If possible, authorize a friend or family member to pick up your child in an emergency if you are unable to do so.**
- **If you have young children, make sure your Emergency Kit includes toys, books, and other personal items for your child.**

What Your Child Needs to Know

- How to dial 911 for emergency assistance
- His/her name, phone number, and address.
- How to reach you and other family members.
- Contact information for the family's out-of-state contact.
- How to make long-distance telephone calls.

Special Emergency Kit Items for Infants:

- Formula, bottled water, bottles, nipples
- Jars of baby food and baby spoons
- Diapers and diaper rash ointment
- Medications
- Moist towelettes and hand sanitizer
- Blankets, pacifiers, and layers of clothing, hat's for warm and cold months
- Several small, lightweight toys

You can Volunteer

In addition to preparing yourself and your family to respond to emergencies, you can also volunteer to help the Town of Ocean City and your neighborhood become better prepared through the following programs.

Ocean City Citizen Corps

- Creates opportunities for people to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies by providing training and exercise opportunities.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

- Volunteer program trains individuals in basic emergency preparedness and response. When emergencies occur, CERT members assist and support first responders, provide assistance to victims, and organize volunteer response efforts.

Before an emergency occurs, fill out the provided forms. Post a copy of the Emergency Information Form on your refrigerator or by a phone. Give each family member an Emergency Pocket Card and make sure they carry it at all times.

Thank You