



**Benton County  
Emergency Management**

*Emergency preparedness:  
one step at a time.*

# Emergency Preparedness Tips

## **ASSESS**

**Assess** your community hazard-risks (earthquake, flood, winter storms, power outages, etc.) and your vulnerability to them. Do you live close to the hazard? Do you cross the hazard on the way to work, school? Is your structure (home, office, school, hospital) more vulnerable than others?

## **MITIGATE**

**Take actions to mitigate** your vulnerability where feasible (non-structural/structural seismic measures, elevation above the flood zone, smoke detectors, removing fire fuels from around your home, etc.) Many measures are both easy and affordable, and most importantly are effective in reducing your risk. Consult local professionals and peers for information and advice.

## **FAMILY PLAN**

Have a **family plan**. No one can effectively continue to work if they are worried about family members during and after a disaster. Do you know that everyone in your family knows what to do in an emergency? Will they be safe? How do you get in touch with each other if you are separated after an emergency or disaster? Establish an assembly point in your neighborhood - in the event of a fire evacuation, for example, where you can assemble and ensure that everyone is accounted for. Designate a meeting place in the community the community in case you are unable to return to your neighborhood.

## **OTHER PLANS**

**Know what plans yours schools, employers, etc. have for emergencies and disasters.** Are there evacuation plans? Are there emergency provisions for you? Will children be safely sheltered until parents can pick them up? Will parents be notified? Would your employer and community need you to come to work in an emergency? If so, and if there was no telephone communications, do you know how to check in or where to report? If you can't get to your normal workplace, where are you expected to go? (Some professions tell their employees to report to the nearest plant or like-professional facility -- even if not their employer, for example, if they cannot make it to their normal worksite.)

## **PROTECTION**

**Know what to do ... and what NOT to do** when disaster occurs, such as take immediate cover and protect your head and neck ("Drop, Cover, Hold" is taught in the U.S., for example) when earthquake shaking starts and until it stops, then carefully pick your way outside; don't drive or walk through flood waters; "Stop, Drop and Roll" if your clothing catches fire, etc. Make sure every member of your family knows what to do and what not to do.

## Being prepared is another form of insurance

### **PRACTICE**

**PRACTICE.** Everyone. Everyone at work, at home, at school. Physically going through the motions of a fire evacuation, or what to do in an earthquake, as examples, will imprint them into your memory and help you remember what to do when you are under even the worst stress and frightened. The risk of not practicing is that you will not do the right thing when you need to. Instinct may take over and may not be the best action, and you could suffer or die as a result. Practice emergency response skills such as first aid and CPR to keep them current and correct.

### **EMERGENCY KIT**

Assemble an **emergency supply kit** for all family members and pets to keep you properly warm, dry, protected, nourished, hydrated and medicated/first aid treated for at least 5-7 days. Store supplies in a container that keeps them dry and protected from rodents or bugs and that is portable should you need to take it with you in an evacuation situation. Place your emergency supply kit where you can readily get to it (I keep mine in my car all the time -- it serves as my travel/home/and office emergency preparedness kit along with all my search and rescue gear). - i.e., not in the weakest point in a structure in an earthquake zone or buried beneath a pile of other closet items.

### **CAR KITS**

Have an **emergency supply kit or supplies in each car.** You never know when you might need it if you get stuck, run out of gas, or encounter another person in trouble. I also keep a backpack in my car that I can stock from the emergency preparedness kit for hikes, skiing, snowmobiling, or search and rescue missions. For emergency response professionals, you may wish to keep supplies for your work in a ready kit too.

### **KEEP CURRENT**

**Keep your kit(s) current;** checking any expiration dates annually (fall is a good time, follow the example of nature that readies itself for winter), and restocking when you use supplies. Check for any damage from mice or bugs.

### **RELAX**

**Relax.** Enjoy each and every day to the fullest with the confidence that you know your risks, know what to do in an emergency, have mitigated against damage and injury, are prepared with basic supplies if you need to be.

### **For more information:**

[www.co.benton.or.us//sheriff/ems/hazard\\_information.html](http://www.co.benton.or.us//sheriff/ems/hazard_information.html)



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**Together we're building a more disaster resilient community!**