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Disaster Preparedness

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When a major disaster occurs, it is impossible for emergency services to respond to everyone's needs immediately. You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for at least the first 72 hours, and possibly for an entire week. When making a family disaster plan, remember to include any special needs for children, seniors, people with disabilities, family members who don't speak English and pets.

The following steps will help you prepare for any emergency:

- Designate an out-of-area contact person. Ideally, this person should be out of state, or at least far enough away to not be affected by the same disaster. Give the out-of-area contact person a list of the names and contact information for all the people you want them to inform about your situation. Make sure everyone in your family knows how to reach the out-of-area contact person and carries their contact information. If you are separated from your family during a disaster, all family members should check in with the out-of-area contact person.
- Have at least one "traditional" phone with a cord connecting the base to the handset. Remember

that portable phones need power to function.

- Duplicate important documents and keep them somewhere other than your house, like a safety deposit box or with someone you trust. Important documents include drivers license, passport, social security card, wills, deeds, financial statements, insurance information and prescriptions.
- Make a written and photographic record of all your valuables. This should also be kept off-site.
- Prepare a disaster supply kit that could support the needs of your family for at least three days.

You should have a basic emergency kit stored somewhere on your property, preferably outside the house in case your house collapses or cannot be occupied. Your kit should include:

- 2 gallons of water per person per day (one gallon for drinking and one gallon for sanitation), and unscented liquid household bleach for water purification
- Ready-to-eat food and a manual can opener
- Flashlight, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Cash in small denominations, copies of important documents and phone numbers
- First Aid kit, essential medications, eyeglasses, hearing aids or other vital personal items
- Any special needs items for children, seniors or the disabled
- Personal hygiene items including toilet paper, diapers, soap and feminine products
- Warm clothes, hats, rain gear, sturdy shoes and heavy gloves
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- A local map
- Plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows
- Large plastic bags for waste and sanitation
- Extra keys to your house and car

You should also prepare a “go-bag” in case of an evacuation. Have go-bags for each member of the family that are easy to carry and include an ID tag. Keep go-bags at home, at work and in your car. Go-bags should include:

- Some water, food and manual can opener
- Flashlight, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Basic First Aid kit and instructions
- Whistle, pocket knife and dust mask
- Personal medications and prescriptions, eyeglasses and hearing aids
- Special needs items for children, seniors or people with disabilities
- Walking shoes, warm clothes, a hat and rain gear
- Toilet paper, plastic bags and other hygiene supplies
- Extra keys to your house and vehicle
- Cash, copies of insurance and identification cards, out-of-area contact person information
- Paper, pens and tape for leaving messages

Everyday citizens can learn how to come to the aid of the community during a widespread emergency as a member of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and through Personal Emergency Preparedness training (PEP). For more information, go to <http://www.fremontCERT.org/> or to <http://www.fremont.gov/>

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