



SAFETY & HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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Creating a Family Emergency Plan

With unpredictable weather patterns, it's crucial to be prepared and stay safe during storms. Whether it's a thunderstorm, hurricane, or blizzard, understanding how to protect yourself and your loved ones is essential. A well-thought-out plan can help your family stay safe, organized, and connected when Mother Nature unleashes her fury or in any other emergency. Here are some key details to consider:

- 1. Identify Meeting Places:** Designate both an indoor and an outdoor meeting place. The indoor location should be within your home, away from windows, and easily accessible. The outdoor meeting place should be a safe distance from your home, such as a neighbor's house, a community center, or a designated landmark.
- 2. Contact Information:** Make a list of important contact information. Include phone numbers for family members, close friends, and out-of-town relatives who can serve as emergency contacts. Ensure everyone in your family has a copy of this list and knows how to access it.
- 3. Communication Plan:** Establish a communication plan. Determine how you will contact each other if separated during a storm. Consider using text messages, which can often get through when phone lines are congested. Teach family members, especially children, how to send and receive texts.
- 4. Responsibilities:** Assign responsibilities to each family member. For example, someone could be responsible for grabbing the emergency kit, another for ensuring pets are safe, and another for shutting off utilities if needed. Having clear roles can prevent chaos during an emergency.
- 5. Evacuation Routes:** If you live in an area prone to evacuation orders, map out evacuation routes and share them with your family. Ensure everyone knows where to go and how to get there. Practice these routes periodically, so they become familiar.
- 6. Emergency Contacts:** Program emergency numbers into your phones, including local emergency services, poison control, and medical facilities. Teach children how to dial 911 and when to use it.
- 7. Medical Information:** If anyone in your family has special medical needs, allergies, or requires specific medications, make sure this information is readily available in your emergency plan. Include a list of necessary medications, dosages, and any relevant medical history.
- 8. Special Needs:** Consider any family members with special needs or pets. Ensure their specific requirements, such as medications, mobility devices, or crates for pets, are included in the plan.
- 9. Practice Drills:** Conduct family drills periodically to ensure everyone knows what to do during an emergency. Practice evacuation routes, communication methods, and emergency procedures.
- 10. Emergency Kit:** Mention the location of the emergency kit in your plan and assign someone in your family to be responsible for it during an emergency.

Remember that every family's situation is unique, so tailor your plan to meet your specific needs and circumstances. Keep your plan up-to-date, review it regularly with your family, and make adjustments as necessary. Being well-prepared and organized can make a significant difference in your family's safety and well-being during a storm or any other emergency.