

ARE YOU READY?

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Important things you should know about:

- Disease Control**
- Natural Disasters**
- Hazardous Materials**
- Injury Prevention**
- Food & Water Safety**
- Coping with Disasters**


Alabama Department of Public Health
Center for Emergency Preparedness

alabamapublichealth.gov/cep



This booklet was written to provide basic
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS EDUCATION.

The Alabama Department of Public Health works with a variety of organizations, businesses and individuals on preparedness and prevention activities. **WE ENCOURAGE YOU** to take the time to review the steps detailed in this booklet **TO BECOME PREPARED**, as well as make your own emergency plans with family, friends, caregivers and co-workers. Remember, **IT IS VITAL** that you be a part of Alabama's efforts **TO BE READY** for whatever disasters may come.



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ESSENTIAL STEPS TO BE READY FOR AN EMERGENCY

The following steps are essential to effectively being prepared to handle an emergency. They will be discussed in further detail throughout this booklet.

- 1. Stay informed.** Knowing about the hazards that may strike your community and the risks you may have to take could be lifesaving. Learn about emergency and weather alert systems.
- 2. Learn about basic injury and disease prevention.** You can find information in this booklet, on the Internet, from your health care provider and in a variety of other places.
- 3. Look for the most current information on emergency preparedness.** Public Health provides print materials, conferences and information on our Web site to help people prepare for emergencies. Additional resources are listed at the end of this booklet.
- 4. Create a family preparedness plan and emergency supply kit.** Make sure everyone knows or carries emergency contact names and numbers to help find each other if separated. Also, include items that family members with special needs may require.
- 5. Become familiar with the emergency plans of your community, school and workplace.** Make copies of the plans and keep them in a safe place to review and refer to if emergencies occur.

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EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT



important documents



food



can opener



water



first aid kit



flashlight



medications



personal care items



clothing



radio

get **10**

Assembling an emergency supply kit can help sustain you and your family during an emergency. To assemble an emergency supply kit, place essential items into waterproof bags and store them in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as plastic tubes, unused trash cans or duffel bags. Your kit should be stored where all family members can locate it.

Collect and store these 10 essential items to get ready for emergencies.

- **Water** – One gallon per person; per day.
- **Food** – Have a two-week supply of non-perishable food per person. Try to pack foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking. Consider diets and special needs for infants, toddlers and the elderly.
- **Can Opener** – Make sure it is a manual can opener in case there is no electrical power.
- **Medications** – Collect one month's worth of all prescription medicines. Rotate stockpiled medicine to ensure shelf life.
- **First Aid** – Include basics, such as antiseptic, gloves, a variety of bandage sizes, thermometer and protective masks.
- **Flashlight** – It is best to get a lantern style light for hands-free use. Also, remember to have extra batteries available.
- **Radio** – Have a battery-powered radio for listening to news and weather. A crank-operated or solar-powered radio would be best.
- **Clothes** – Collect extra clothing, socks and shoes for each family member.
- **Personal Care Items** – Collect basic personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, feminine products, baby wipes and hand sanitizer.
- **Important Documents** – Collect copies of driver's licenses, photo ID, Social Security cards, birth certificates, deeds, titles, mortgage papers, insurance policies, bank account numbers and credit cards. (Refer to page 38 for more information to collect.)

Preparation for Pets

Most people do not consider how they will handle their pets during an emergency. One of the steps you can take is to create two supply kits for your pets. In one put everything your pets will need to stay home. The other kit should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you and your pets if you have to evacuate.

Pets will need the following items:

- Water
- Food
- Medicines
- Collar with ID tag and a leash
- First aid kit – Talk to your veterinarian about what is most appropriate for your pet.
- Crate/pet carrier
- Picture of you with your pet
- Familiar items/toys
- Important documents (including vaccination records and insurance)
- Sanitation items - Include newspaper, trash bags and paper towels.

To find out information about where your pets can stay during an emergency, contact local boarding kennels, or check with local animal shelters to see if they provide temporary emergency sheltering.

get10

EVACUATION & SHELTERING

**EVACUATION
ROUTE**

Evacuation

If you are planning to evacuate during an emergency, make sure all family members know where the family meeting place is located. Remember to do the following:

- Decide on transportation and routes to take if separated.
- Allow plenty of time to escape.
- Have your basic emergency kit ready to travel.
- Lock up your home and unplug small appliances.
- Call your utility companies to learn how to turn off utilities properly, and ask what is required to have them turned on again. (It is best to learn how to do this before an emergency occurs.)

Sheltering In Place

If you are planning to shelter in place during an emergency, make sure all family members are aware of the sheltering-in-place location and have an alternate location if you cannot get home. You should also locate your emergency supply kit for use while you shelter in place. Make sure to have a method to hear weather and news alerts while sheltering in place. A battery-powered or solar-powered radio would be best.

Designated Emergency Shelter (Mass Care)

If you are planning to go to a state or locally designated emergency shelter, remember:

- Register upon arrival at the shelter and establish a designated meeting place within the shelter site for your family.
- Take your emergency supply kit with you so that your family members will have the supplies that they will need at the shelter.
- Practice the basic principles of disease control (see page 13), as well as following any specific shelter instructions.
- Remain at the shelter until local authorities say it is safe to leave.

Medical Needs Shelters

People with medical or functional/access needs should make plans with health care providers and personal and community helpers for assistance prior to an emergency event. During emergencies a limited number of medical needs shelters will be opened; therefore, space within shelters is limited.

Medical needs shelters are for those people living with physical and/or mental conditions requiring limited nursing oversight. People seeking admission to a medical needs shelter should be accompanied by a caregiver and bring their own medical supplies including medication, equipment and special dietary needs to last for a minimum of 10 days. Only one caregiver will be allowed to stay in the shelter. Other family members will not be allowed to stay.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS & INFORMATION

During an emergency you may be required to produce several documents. The following is a list of documents and information to gather and store in your basic emergency supply kit. Remember to use waterproof containers to store your information.

- Copies of driver's licenses, immigration papers, work identification badges, Social Security cards, birth certificates, marriage licenses and other legal documents
- Current photos of family members and pets for identification; make sure medical ID bracelets, etc., are up to date
- Copies of credit cards with company names and numbers
- Copy of your family preparedness plan and contact information
- Medical prescriptions, including eyeglasses; serial numbers for pacemakers, etc.
- Vaccination records
- Wills
- Insurance policies
- Stocks and bonds
- Bank account numbers
- Inventory of valuable household goods – If you can, take photos or digitally record your belongings and email the pictures to a friend or family member for safekeeping.
- Deeds, titles and mortgages
- State and local area maps
- Backup of computer files

INSURANCE

DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL



Contact with bacteria and viruses can happen during emergencies or during daily tasks. Some of the most common ways that people come into contact with germs like bacteria and viruses include unclean hands, coughs and sneezes, improperly handled food, unpurified water, animal and insect bites or handling animals, dirty nails and other items that could pierce or scrape the skin.

Hand Washing and Wound Care

- Wash your hands using warm, soapy water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash your hands before and after changing diapers, preparing food or going to the bathroom.
- Keep cuts, scrapes or wounds clean. If the injured area becomes red, swollen, or hot to touch, or if you develop a fever, see your health care provider.

Coughs and Sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue in a trash container. If you do not have a tissue, cough into your sleeve, and wash your hands afterwards.

Immunizations

Check with your health care provider or local county health department to see what immunizations you and your family should have and when they need to be updated. Most immunizations such as those for children, are given based on age, while other vaccines including tetanus, influenza, pneumonia, and hepatitis A and B may be recommended by your health care provider for various reasons.

Influenza (Flu)

The flu virus can be spread various ways – through droplets, in the air and on contaminated surfaces. The droplets from coughs and sneezes can be spread when they enter your eyes, nose and mouth. When the droplets spread out, the viruses can be spread when you inhale.

People exposed to the flu can spread the virus for up to two days before symptoms appear. Following these healthy habits can help reduce the chances of getting the flu:

- Washing your hands
- Staying at home when sick
- Covering your cough and sneezes
- Practicing social distance (6 feet away)
- Limiting contact with those who are sick

Seasonal Flu Facts

People can protect themselves from the seasonal flu by getting the flu vaccine each year to prevent the flu and its complications.

- The seasonal vaccine contains three strains of the flu virus.
- The seasonal vaccine is different every year because the viruses constantly change.

Pandemic Influenza Facts

Pandemic influenza is a new virus not seen in humans before. It causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, because there is little natural immunity. Pandemic influenza can spread easily from person to person and results in a large number of illnesses and deaths.

There have been 11 pandemics in the past 300 years. Four of the pandemics were in the past 100 years: 1918, 1957, 1968 and 2009.

To prepare for pandemic flu, please take the following steps:

- Stay up to date on global flu outbreaks
- Plan for medical care including:
 - Find out about home care from www.adph.org/pandemicflu and your health care provider.
 - Keep a current list of your prescriptions and ask your doctor about getting an extra supply of medications.

- Educate family members on infection control measures:
 - Learn proper hand washing techniques.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes.
 - Stay home when sick and limit contact with sick people.
 - Stay 6 feet away from people during an outbreak.
- Become involved in community planning:
 - Participate in planning with organizations in your area.
 - Contact your county health department for more information on pandemic flu planning.

Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention (NPI)

Non-pharmaceutical intervention decisions may limit the spread of disease in a community. These NPI decisions may include recommending the following:

- Voluntary isolation or quarantine for those who are sick
- Dismissing students from school
- Requiring infection control measures
- Limiting public gatherings and events where people come into close contact
- Modifying business operations
- Caring for family at home

Food Preparation and Storage

During emergency events, water and food supplies can become contaminated.

The following are tips for reducing the risk of contamination:

- Rinse fruits and vegetables well using clean water. Use soap or disinfectant to clean areas where you have placed or cut raw meat.
- Do not eat any food that may have come in contact with contaminated water.
- Keep refrigerator doors closed as much as possible. Refrigerators will keep foods cool for approximately four hours if unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours if it is unopened.
- “When in doubt, throw it out.” Do not eat any food that has an unusual smell, color or texture. Never taste food to determine if it is safe.
- Do not eat food from cans that are dented, rusted or swollen, even if it smells okay.
- Cook meat and eggs thoroughly. Use a cooking thermometer to check temperatures.

NATURAL DISASTERS

FLOODS
ROAD
CLOSED

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are tropical storms that can create tornadoes and strong storm surges with heavy rain. They are divided into five categories based on their wind speed, central pressure and damage potential. A hurricane categorized at three or higher is considered a major hurricane, but categories one and two are still extremely dangerous.

A hurricane watch is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours. A hurricane warning is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in 24 hours or less. This usually means that the winds are at least 74 miles per hour or greater.

Dangers and Threats

- Hurricanes can produce high, damaging winds and heavy rainfall that can cause flash flooding and landslides.
- Injury can occur from flying debris, structural damage, power loss, flooding and sanitation problems.

Protective Tips

- Learn safe evacuation routes before a hurricane occurs.
- Research local shelters and make arrangements for pets, as most shelters do not allow them.
- Protect your windows by either purchasing permanent shutters or having plywood sheets handy that are cut to fit each window. Pre-drill holes to allow for quicker installation during an actual hurricane event.
- Trim back branches from trees near your home that might cause serious damage.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools. Anchor down those objects that cannot be brought inside.
- Store drinking water and turn refrigerator and freezer on coldest settings, opening only when absolutely necessary to preserve food in case of power loss.

Tornadoes

Tornadoes generally occur near the end of a thunderstorm. Before the tornado hits, winds may die down and the air may become very still. Tornadoes can last from several seconds to more than an hour, but typically last fewer than 10 minutes. Winds generated from a tornado can reach 300 miles per hour and create damage paths ranging from one mile wide to 50 miles long.

A tornado watch is issued when conditions exist for a tornado possibly being in the area. A tornado warning is issued when the tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radio.

Dangers and Threats

- Tornadoes can destroy many structures and can easily lift up vehicles and toss them.
- Often, tornadoes bring heavy rain which may cause flooding.
- In some instances, tornadoes may cause hail that may damage vehicles and other items located outside the home.

Protective Tips

- If at home, find a windowless, interior room at the lowest level to wait the tornado out. If in a mobile home, get out and find shelter elsewhere.
- If outdoors, find the nearest building. If shelter is not available, lie down in a ditch or low-lying area near a strong building.

** Helmet Safety – Head injuries are common causes of death during tornadoes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a statement saying that if people choose to use helmets, the helmets should not be considered an alternative to seeking appropriate shelter. Instead they should be considered part of an overall home tornado preparation. To avoid delay, helmets should be readily accessible in a location familiar to all family members.*

Floods

Floods can develop slowly over a period of days or quickly within a matter of minutes. Flooding can occur outside a defined river or stream, after a heavy rain or when a dam breaks. The National Weather Service and your local media should alert you of impending flooding by issuing flood watches and warnings. When purchasing a home, be sure to inquire whether or not it is located in a flood plain area. Remember, flood damage is not covered by a homeowner's insurance policy. To find out more information on flood insurance, call the National Flood Insurance Program at 1-800-427-4661.

Dangers and Threats

- Flash floods often have a dangerous amount of roaring water that can carry rocks, and other debris, and can sweep away most objects.
- The appearance of floodwaters can sometimes be deceiving. As little as 1 foot of moving water can move most cars off the road, and just 6 inches of fast-moving floodwater can sweep a person off of his feet.
- Electrocution is a serious danger associated with flooding. Downed power lines and electrical wires can often be hidden underneath floodwaters.
- Floodwaters may also carry other hidden dangers such as nails, broken glass, sewage and chemicals from roads, farms and factories.

Protective Tips

- Be aware of flood hazards where you live, especially if you live in low-lying areas, near streams of water or downstream from a dam.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel if you live in an area susceptible to flooding.
- Keep all important documents in waterproof packaging.
- If possible, construct barriers to prevent floodwater from entering the home.
- Seal walls and basements with waterproofing compounds.
- In the event of a flood emergency, move immediately to higher ground. Also, move important items in the home to higher ground.
- Be prepared to evacuate. If it is necessary to walk from the home and floodwaters are already present, use a stick to check the depth of water and the firmness of the ground before moving.
- Do not drive in floodwaters.

Thunderstorms and Lightning

Strong thunderstorms can include tornadoes, strong winds, hail and flash flooding. Thunderstorms can produce heavy rain in 30 minutes to an hour. Storm winds reach as high as 58 miles per hour causing danger from flying objects.

Lightning usually strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from rainfall. Lightning flashes can be seen long before they are heard. Each year people are injured or killed by being struck by lightning. Lightning strikes can also reach ground and start wildfires.

Protective Tips

- Go indoors if you see lightning and stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.
- If the area surrounding them is safe, help lightning victims immediately. They carry no electrical charge and serious damage can occur if they are not attended to quickly.
- Secure outside items that could blow away or cause damage.
- Secure doors and windows to ensure they can handle strong storm winds.
- Protect cars in covered areas to prevent hail damage.

Earthquakes

It may be surprising to many residents to learn that Alabama is one of eight states that lie on the New Madrid fault line. The New Madrid fault line is a major seismic zone and a source of potentially large-scale earthquakes. Unfortunately, most of this part of the country is seemingly unprepared in terms of infrastructure to survive a big earthquake. Of particular concern in Alabama is the presence of three nuclear power plants of similar design to those in Japan, which endured devastating radiation problems after a major earthquake occurred in March 2011. It is imperative for people in Alabama to become educated and prepare for earthquakes to reduce the loss of life and property should an earthquake occur.

The following information outlines steps to prepare for an earthquake.

- Plan

- Find safe spots in each room of your home that provide the most safety for you and your family. During an earthquake, most deaths and injuries are caused by collapsing building materials and heavy falling objects.
- Learn the safest evacuation routes from your home, school and business. Make sure you understand the school's emergency procedures for disasters.

- Prepare

- Gather supplies for use after an earthquake including a first aid kit and an emergency supply kit for the home. Have enough supplies to last at least three days.
- Collect and store important documents such as birth certificates, social security cards, insurance policies and wills in a fire-proof safe.

- Practice

- Drop down on your hands and knees before the effects of the earthquake knock you down. This position protects you from falling, but still allows you to move if necessary.
- Cover your head and neck under the shelter of a sturdy table or desk. If there is no shelter nearby, get down near an interior wall or next to low-lying furniture that won't fall on you. Try to stay clear of windows or glass that could shatter or other objects that could fall on you.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL



DANGEROUS



Exposure to hazardous materials can result from the accidental or deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid. Some hazardous materials are chemical agents which may be odorless and tasteless, or they may have a clear warning odor, such as gas or most house and garden products. People can be exposed to chemical agents through the food supply, air or by touch. Radioactive materials are also a type of hazardous material which cannot be detected through the five senses. You cannot see, hear, smell, feel or taste radioactive materials. Radioactive materials can only be detected through the use of specialized radiation detection equipment.

Biological

Symptoms and Signs

Symptoms of exposure to biological agents can range from minor reactions such as high fever and headaches to more severe reactions such as respiratory failure and paralysis. The symptoms vary based on the type of biological agent people are exposed to – Category A, B or C, with A being the most severe and C being the least threatening.

Protective Tips

Because there are so many ways to be exposed to a biological agent—consuming contaminated water or food, being bitten by insects or animals, or inhaling or touching microorganisms - it is difficult to take protective measures. The following are tips to follow once you know that a biological agent is present.

- If you feel you have been exposed and are exhibiting symptoms, contact your physician or health care provider to receive treatment if necessary including antibiotics or antidotes.
- If you have been exposed because you have come into contact with the agent by touch, remove all clothing and wash your body thoroughly.
- Avoid people who may have been exposed to an agent and are exhibiting symptoms.
- Become vaccinated if possible against agents you know you may come into contact with.

Chemical

Symptoms and Signs

Symptoms of exposure to chemical agents include difficulty breathing; eye irritation; loss of coordination; nausea; cramps or diarrhea; and/or burning in the nose, throat and lungs and on the skin.

Protective Tips

- Follow house and garden chemical instructions and store them properly.
- Try to define the impacted area and take immediate action to get upstream, uphill and upwind from that area.
- If you believe that most or all of your body has been exposed to a chemical, strip clothing immediately and wash thoroughly with soap and water. Remove and clean eyeglasses. Ask your doctor about cleaning contact lenses.
- Listen for warnings to those in the affected area to evacuate, to take shelter or to seek medical attention.
- If the air is contaminated, and you are in a car, keep car windows and vents closed and use recirculated air. If you are in a building, close doors and windows and turn off and block ventilation, such as furnaces, air conditioners, vents, window fans, and spaces under doors to prevent contaminated air from coming inside. Listen for specific instructions from authorities on sealing rooms and the need afterwards to ventilate the room to clear it of any contamination.
- If in an unventilated room, 10 square feet of floor space per person should provide adequate ventilation for up to five hours. Depending on the time of year, use blankets or extra clothes for warmth or bottled water for cooling.
- Watch for information on when it is safe to leave shelters or to return to the area.

Radioactive Material

Symptoms and Signs

A biological effect of radiation is measured in terms of its effect on living cells. A chronic effect of radiation is the result of a small dose over a long period of time due to primary background or occupational radiation exposure.


Symptoms of chronic exposure include reduced fertility, cataracts, genetic effects and cancer, but typically don't appear until the elder years. An acute effect of radiation is a large dose of radiation in a short period of time. Some symptoms of an acute exposure may be nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, hair loss and infection.

Protective Tips

If you live within 10 miles of a nuclear plant, you should receive an emergency information calendar. If you need copies of the materials, contact your local emergency management agency or the Alabama Department of Public Health, Office of Radiation Control, 334-206-5391. The emergency information calendar will include the following instructions:

- Advise on when to take shelter indoors
- Advise on when to leave (evacuate) the area
- Evacuation routes
- School safety
- How to receive assistance for special needs
- Emergency supplies checklist
- Information for farmers and gardeners

Sources of radioactive material are used and transported in Alabama on a daily basis. An incident that involves the use or transport of radioactive material could constitute a "radiation emergency situation," i.e., fires, industrial accidents and weather-related incidents. In today's society we must also be able to respond to emergencies involving the use of radioactive material including a radiological dispersion device (RDD), also referred to as a dirty bomb, a radiological exposure device (RED), an improvised nuclear device (IND)



or a radiological weapon of mass destruction (WMD). Radioactivity may be dispersed in low concentrations in the air within a limited immediate vicinity. Precautionary tips may include:

- Limiting the amount of radiation you are exposed to through:
 - Time – minimizing time spent being exposed to reduce your risk.
 - Distance – the farther you are away from the source of radiation, the lower your exposure.
 - Shielding – a thick shield (lead, steel, concrete) between yourself and radioactive materials will allow more of the radiation to be absorbed in the shield to lessen the exposure.
- If inside, closing windows and doors; turning off air conditioners, heaters and other ventilation systems.
- If outside, immediately covering your nose and mouth and moving quickly inside to the nearest building.

If you believe that you have been exposed to radiation, take off your clothing and seal it in a plastic bag for disposal or testing. Wash yourself thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible.

INJURY PREVENTION



Natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes and floods, as well as explosions and other mass trauma events can result in serious injuries and death. The following information can help you and your family protect yourselves and prevent injuries.

First Aid Kit

The majority of injuries that occur in a natural disaster are cuts caused by flying glass and debris and also puncture wounds from exposed nails, metal and glass. Many injuries are not life threatening and do not require immediate medical attention.

Having a first aid kit in your home can help make a difference in an emergency. First aid kits come in various sizes and contain items that can assist you in treating minor injuries, as well as help to stop and prevent infection. Check the kit regularly to make sure the contents have not expired.

Animal and Insect Safety

Following a natural disaster, wild or stray animals, including snakes and dogs, may be disoriented and dangerous. Flooding may also lead to mosquitoes, which may carry disease. Follow these tips to prevent being harmed after a disaster.

- Be cautious. Snakes may hide in unusual places after flooding. If you are bitten, try to identify the snake so that if it is poisonous, you can be given the correct anti-venom. Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck the venom out.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants. When outside, wear insect repellents. Insect repellents that contain DEET are very effective. Drain all standing water left in open containers outside your home.
- Using gloves and a shovel, remove any dead animals to avoid attracting rats.

Extreme Heat or Cold

During a natural disaster, power outages may occur unexpectedly. This may result in extreme hot or cold temperatures indoors. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are serious heat-related diseases. Hypothermia is also a serious concern that occurs in cold temperatures. Elderly populations, children and those who are ill are more prone to develop heat and cold stress-related health effects.

Heat

- Drink a glass of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes and at least one gallon each day. Avoid alcohol and caffeine. They both dehydrate the body.
- Take frequent cool showers or baths.
- Wear light-weight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- If you feel dizzy, weak or overheated, go to a cool place immediately. Sit or lie down, drink water and wash your face with cool water. If you do not feel better soon, get medical help quickly.
- Visit older adults at risk at least twice a day and watch for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Cold

- Have adequate food, clothing, shelter and sources of heat.
- Wear layers of clothing, which help to keep in body heat.
- Move around. Physical activity raises body temperature.
- Avoid swimming or wading in water if possible.

Chainsaw Injuries

The risk of injury from using chainsaws increases after a natural disaster when they are widely used to remove fallen or partially fallen trees and tree branches.

To avoid injury, use the following tips:

- Properly sharpen and lubricate chain saw blades.
- Choose the proper size chainsaw to match the job.
- Wear appropriate protective equipment.
- Cut branches at waist level or below.
- Bystanders or co-workers should remain at least two tree lengths (150 feet) away.

- Take extra care in cutting trees or branches that have become bent, twisted, hung up on, or caught under another object during high wind.
- Operate, adjust and maintain the chain saw according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Mass Trauma Injuries

Mass trauma events such as explosions and fires can cause a variety of serious injuries including burns and brain injury.

- Thermal burns are caused by contact with flames, hot liquids, hot surfaces or other sources of high heat. Chemical and electrical burns are also possible. For burns, immediate first aid care can be lifesaving.
- Brain injuries are caused by a blow or jolt to the head. In a mass trauma event, brain injuries can be caused by flying debris or by persons falling and hitting their heads. A blast from an explosion can also cause a brain injury, even where there is no direct contact with an object. The signs of brain injury may be slight and the person may look fine. If you think you or someone else has a brain injury, see a doctor as soon as possible.

Home and Outside Safety

Utility Hazards

Utilities, including electricity and gas, can be dangerous before, during and after a natural disaster. During a tornado, hurricane or flood, problems such as leaking gas lines, damaged or leaking gas propane containers, and leaking vehicle gas tanks may explode or ignite. Debris can also become easily ignited, especially if electrical wires are severed. Be aware that pools of water produced during the disaster, and even appliances, can be electrically charged. The following are additional tips to follow:

- If your home has sustained flood or water damage, and you can safely get to the main breaker or fuse box, turn off the power.
- Be aware of and avoid downed power lines. Do not drive over lines or under low-hanging lines. Report downed power lines to your utility company or emergency services.

- Make sure that all electrical equipment and appliances are completely dry before you use them.
- Look for and replace frayed or cracked extension cords, loose prongs and plugs.
- Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately leave the house and leave the doors open.
- If you believe there is a gas leak, do not use matches, electric switches, cars, battery-operated equipment such as flashlights or cell phones, or other ignition sources. Any size spark or flame can cause an explosion. Once you are out of range of the smell of gas, call your gas company to report it.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) gas is often called the silent killer. It is a colorless, odorless gas that you will not see or smell. Its fumes can quickly overwhelm you indoors or in confined spaces.

CO poisoning is of concern in the home when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil and methane) are used for heating and cooking. Other sources of CO are generators and automobiles. The following are tips for preventing carbon monoxide dangers.

- Get a carbon monoxide detector if you rely on fuel for heating and cooking.
- Place portable generators outside of your home or building and away from any air intake vents.
- Place gasoline-powered pressure washers outside the building in well-ventilated areas.
- Never enclose yourself in an automobile in a confined space while the engine is running.

Fire Hazards

Natural disasters can sometimes result in power outages, and people often create fires or other dangers using generators, candles, camp stoves and similar items to deal with the outage. It is important to take the time to learn how to prevent injury and death from these dangers.

Generator Safety

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines when using generators.
- Generators or other fuel-powered machines stored outside the home should not be operated near open windows or doorways. CO fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.
- Use the appropriate size and type of power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to the cord may go unnoticed.
- Always refuel generators outdoors.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. This can cause electrocution to unsuspecting utility workers.
- Before using a generator, make sure you have installed a carbon monoxide alarm near sleeping areas to alert you in the event of increased levels of CO in your home.
- Never connect a generator to the home's electrical system. This can seriously injure you and any power company employee working on lines in your neighborhood. Instead, plug what you want to power directly into the generator.

Fire Safety

- Be careful when using candles. Keep the flame away from combustible items such as cloth, hair, gasoline, cleaning fluids, oils and fireworks. Keep on a stable surface away from children and pets.
- Some smoke alarms are dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home, within 10 feet of the family sleeping area.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of debris for easy access by the fire department.
- Do not use devices such as portable stoves to dry clothes or furnishings.
- Never thaw frozen pipes with a blow torch or other open flame. Use hot water or an Underwriter's Laboratory (UL®) tool such as a hand-held dryer.

COPING WITH DISASTERS

talk about it with a family member, friend or professional.

Traumatic stress reactions often occur as a result of traumatic events. These reactions are natural and may occur immediately, or weeks or months after an event. People of any age may experience traumatic stress reactions which can lead to emotional, physical, cognitive and interpersonal effects.

The following are some ideas about how to deal with the stress and anxiety caused by disasters.

- Get plenty of rest.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat balanced meals.
- Talk with others and share your feelings with those you can trust.
- Monitor yourself and your children's access to disturbing news on disasters.
- Avoid using alcohol or self-prescribing medication to relieve stress and anxiety. See a health care provider or a professional counselor to find ways to help you cope.
- Maintain your usual routine, but give yourself breaks.
- Journal or maintain a diary describing your thoughts and feelings.

RESOURCES

websites & phone numbers

Alabama Emergency Preparedness

- ▼ *Alabama Department of Public Health Center for Emergency Preparedness*
 - www.alabamapublichealth.gov
 - www.alabamapublichealth.gov/cep
- ▼ *Alabama Emergency Management Agency (FB and T)*
 - www.ema.alabama.gov
 - www.disaster.ema.alabama.gov
- ▼ *State of Alabama Government Offices (FB and T)*
 - www.alabama.gov
- ▼ *Injury Control Research Center*
 - www.uab.edu/icrc

Animals, Agriculture, Food Products and Water

- ▼ *Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (FB)*
 - www.agi.alabama.gov
- ▼ *American Humane Association (FB and T)*
 - www.americanhumane.org
- ▼ *American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (FB and T)*
 - www.asPCA.org
- ▼ *American Veterinary Medical Association (FB and T)*
 - www.avma.org/disaster
- ▼ *Humane Society of the United States (FB and T)*
 - www.hsus.org
- ▼ *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (FB and T)*
 - www.epa.gov/safewater
- ▼ *U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FB and T)*
 - www.fda.gov

Federal Emergency Preparedness Resources

▼ *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

- www.cdc.gov (FB and T)
- www.flu.gov (T)

▼ *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (FB and T)*

- www.fema.gov
- www.usfa.fema.gov (fire safety facts) (T)

▼ *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FB and T)*

- www.fws.gov

▼ *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

- www.ready.gov (FB and T)
- www.dhhs.gov (FB and T)

▼ *World Health Organization (FB and T)*

- www.who.int

▼ *Google Flu Trends*

- Google.org/flutrends

National Disaster Relief Organizations

▼ *American Red Cross (FB and T)*

- www.redcross.org

▼ *United Way (FB and T)*

- www.unitedway.org

▼ *Salvation Army (FB and T)*

- www.salvationarmyusa.org

▼ *Serve Alabama (FB and T)*

- www.servealabama.gov

Travel and Weather

▼ *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (FB and T)*

- www.cdc.gov/travel

▼ *National Hurricane Center (FB and T)*

- www.nhc.noaa.gov

▼ *National Weather Service (FB and T)*

- www.weather.gov

▼ *Alabama SAF-T-NET*

- www.Alabamasaftnet.com

▼ *Road Conditions, Alabama (FB and T)*

- www.dot.state.al.us

Phone Numbers

- **211** (Provides emergency preparedness information in most major Alabama cities.)
- **Alabama Power Company (FB and T):** 1-800-888-2726
- **Alabama Road Conditions:** 1-888-588-2848
- **Alabama Rural Electric Cooperative:** 1-800-410-2732
- **CDC Emergency Response:** 1-800-232-4636
- **Alabama Poison Center:** 1-800-462-0800
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:** 1-800-344-9453

Hearing and Visual Assistance

▼ *Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (FB and T)*

- www.rehab.state.al.us

▼ *Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind*

- www.aidb.org

DISASTER CHECKLIST

Family Contacts:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Number: _____

DOB: _____ Blood Type: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Number: _____

DOB: _____ Blood Type: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Number: _____

DOB: _____ Blood Type: _____

Other Contacts:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency Supply Kit:

Family

Pets

Medications:

Name: _____ Dosage: _____

Pharmacy: _____

Name: _____ Dosage: _____

Pharmacy: _____

Name: _____ Dosage: _____

Pharmacy: _____

Emergency Contacts:

County Health Department: _____

County Emergency Management: _____

Local Shelter(s): _____

Police: _____

Fire: _____

Poison Control Center: _____

Utilities: _____

Church or Community Center: _____

Insurance Policies:

Home: _____

Auto: _____

Health: _____

Additional Things to Remember:



This book was created with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For additional copies, please contact:

**Alabama Department of Public Health
Center for Emergency Preparedness
334-290-6300 and 1-866-264-4073
alabamapublichealth.gov/cep**