

Family Preparedness Plan Concept Outline

Step One- Family



Defining for whom you will be responsible in emergencies is the first step in developing the family emergency plan. Consider those who live in the same residence, as well as extended family members nearby, in care homes and any individuals who are likely to call on you in times of chaos. As well, take note of any special needs they have, mobility restrictions, access to medical devices, allergies and any information that would inform how you intend to care for them during the emergency. In addition, consider all your pets and those who will shelter with you.

Step Two - Shelter in Place Plan

The recommended option is to shelter at home, where your possessions are and where you feel safe. To prepare the residence to support the family you defined above, we recommend you consider being capable of providing for basic needs over a timeline, from a minimum of 3 days to the recommended level of 14 days, without access to power or utilities. When considering your requirements, reflect that there is no guarantee that a public shelter will be available to feed, water and house you after the initial 72hrs, hence the recommended extended timeline.

These basic requirements are food, water, health and safety.

Of note, food and water are a system, it includes the storage, preparation, consumption, cleaning and disposal of the product and all the tools necessary. Your home already likely has everything other than an alternate method of heating food when utilities are disrupted.

It is possible that the family will be separated when the emergency occurs, thus having a communications plan through texting or social media group chats will enable the exchange of information. The plan should encourage all family members to return to the home at an emergency's onset, even if communication is absent, barring an evacuation order.

If applicable, you should become familiar with the school, care home, employer and local municipal emergency plans. This will inform you on how they intend to handle an event. For example, what is your school going to do when an evacuation order is issued? Will you be required to retrieve your children, or will they be transported to a separate location?



Before an emergency, determine trusted sources of information on which you will rely for guidance and instruction. The primary source is your municipal emergency services. Ask how they will communicate with you – website, social media and radio. Knowing these in advance and having links or radio pre-sets will ensure clear communications in a crisis.

Step Three – Evacuation Plan

In the unlikely event you need to evacuate your residence in an emergency, having a well understood and rehearsed plan is key to success. When everyone knows their role, stress and anxiety levels are lower, leading to clearer decision making and less likely that important details and elements will be forgotten.

The key elements of an evacuation plan are a known destination, primary and alternate routes and a packing list. A public shelter or hotel is an option, but not a recommended place for privacy, beginning the work of rebuilding your life or navigating the crisis. A family or friend's home out of the danger zone is the recommended evacuation destination.

Checklists

Having defined for whom you are responsible and their needs, here is the checklist for sheltering in place, as your household already has appropriate clothing, bedding, entertainment, hygiene and other normal support products:

1. Food – up to 14 days for family and pets with alternate cooking equipment & fuel
2. Water – 4 litres per person per day with purification system (tablets or filter)
3. First Aid – Kit and standard training complete
4. Communication – radio, cell phones, power banks, IT data backup drive
5. Safety – lighting, fire extinguisher

With an evacuation plan prepared, here is the checklist for evacuation:

1. Paper maps for your primary and alternate routes to your pre-planned destination
2. Full fuel tank, a normal preparedness behavior is to keep it at a half, minimum.
3. Skill and equipment to repair and change a flat tire
4. Skill and equipment to independently boost your car battery
5. Transportation of the shelter-in-place items
6. Portable sanitation system
7. Your Go Bag.

Go Bag – or evacuation kit:

1. All primary documents – passport, birth certificates, SIN cards, health cards, wills
2. Insurance contact information and documentation – for car, household and life.
3. Items that you deem priceless – this list is created in advance of an emergency.
4. Suitable and comfortable seasonal clothing for everyone

Preparedness is the totality of what you do in times of peace and calm to facilitate the navigation of a chaotic situation and to return to normalcy with the least disruption possible. This information is a guide to spur discussion and the creation of a family preparedness plan, written by you and for your family.

