

Disasters can strike at a moment's notice so being prepared before they occur is an important step in ensuring the safety of you and your family.

1. Create a household disaster plan.
2. Prepare first aid kits for the home and for each vehicle.
3. Create an emergency supply kit or grab-and-go bag.
4. Keep important papers in a fire-resistant carrying case and bring it with you in case of an emergency.
5. Create a roadside emergency kit for each automobile (breaking down while evacuating could leave you and your family in worse shape than if you had simply done nothing).

Household Disaster Plan

1. As a family, decide on two places to meet in case an emergency occurs in or near your home (one should be near your home; the other, outside of the neighborhood).
2. Pick two out-of-town contacts (family, family friends) for the family to contact in case you become separated.
3. Prepare a checklist of important phone numbers, addresses, and contacts.
4. Develop a "shelter in place" strategy in the event that evacuation is not an option.
5. Prepare an evacuation strategy for different types of disasters that may occur in your area. Practice each strategy with family several times a year.

6. Train all able-bodied family members in the use of CPR, fire extinguishers, and common first-aid procedures.
7. Ensure your yard is prepared for a disaster by trimming branches, replacing gravel or rock landscaping with light-weight mulch, and checking for fire hazards.
8. Purchase a battery-operated radio or NOAA weather radio in case power is lost during a disaster.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit should include the following:

1. A first aid manual
2. Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
3. Cleansing agents such as isopropyl alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, soap, antibiotic ointments
4. Several pairs of latex gloves
5. Petroleum jelly
6. Cotton Balls
7. Tweezers
8. Needles
9. Moistened towelettes or baby wipes
10. Sunscreen
11. Scissors
12. Thermometer.

Emergency Supply Kit

1. Prescription medications
2. Cash, traveler's checks, and loose change
3. A sleeping bag, blanket, and pillow for each family member. Keep additional blankets handy if you live in a cold-weather climate
4. At least one additional change of clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, pants, durable shoes, gloves
5. A bottle of chlorine bleach and a medicine dropper can be used to create a disinfectant or even drinking water if no other options are available. For a disinfectant, combine nine parts water to one part bleach. To treat water, add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water. Avoid scented or color-safe bleaches.
6. A fire extinguisher
7. Waterproof matches and a lighter
8. Personal hygiene items
9. Paper plates, paper cups, plastic utensils, and paper towels
10. Paper, pens and pencils
11. Books, magazines, videos, games, and puzzles
12. Batteries of various sizes and types
13. If you have pets, keep extra food and medicines on-hand. Also, have a travel crate ready for each pet in case you must evacuate your home.
14. A pocket knife, whistle
15. Dust mask
16. Local maps.

Important papers that should be kept in a fireproof, waterproof container:

1. Copies of all insurance policies, wills, deeds, tax returns, driver's licenses, credit cards, automobile titles, and bank records
2. Copies of utility bills which can be used to prove or establish residency
3. Family records such as Social Security cards, passports, as well as birth and marriage certificates
4. List of medical contacts, including family physicians, hospitals, and other medical service providers. It is also a good idea to keep a list of medical conditions, allergies, and drug prescriptions.
5. For pet owners, keep vaccination and veterinary records, along with up-to-date photos of your pet can assist in locating them if you are separated.
6. An inventory of valuable household goods can be helpful when filing insurance claims.
7. A list of phone numbers and addresses of relatives and friends.

Roadside Emergency Kit

1. Jumper cables
2. Flares
3. Several quarts of oil
4. Antifreeze
5. Spare fuses
6. A flashlight and extra batteries
7. A small tool box
8. A can of tire inflator
9. Tire pressure gauge.

Food that should be included in an emergency supply kit:

1. Dried meats (a good source of protein)
2. Canned fish and meat
3. Canned fruits and vegetables
4. Whole grain crackers (can be used in place of bread)
5. Nuts, granola bars, dry cereal
6. Juice boxes,
7. Electrolyte drinks
8. Enough water to sustain each family member for 72 hours
9. A bottle of multivitamins
10. A manual can opener
11. An assortment of Ziploc bags, Tupperware, and a roll of tinfoil
12. A small camping stove or grill that can be used for cooking.

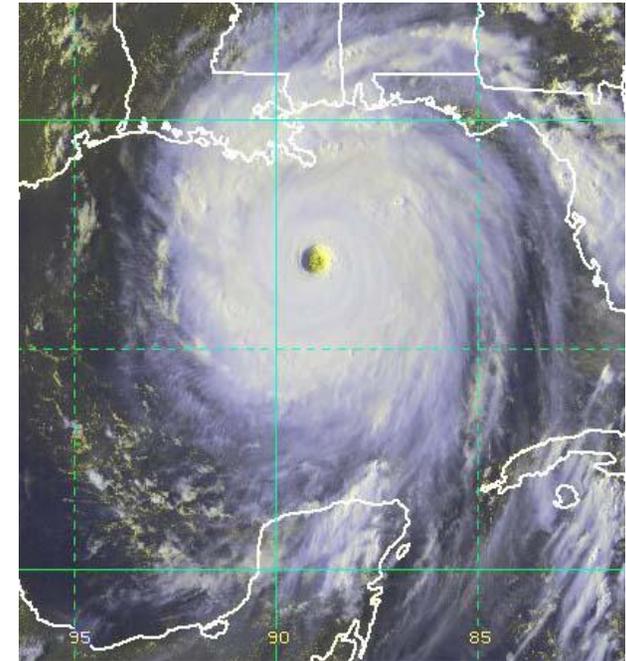


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Satellite Image of Hurricane Katrina 8/28/05
Courtesy of NOAA

Is Your Family Prepared for the Next Disaster?

Important Contacts:

South Mississippi Red Cross
<http://southmsredcross.org/>
601-582-8151

MEMA
<http://www.msema.org/>
866-519-MEMA (6362)