Preparing for
an Emergency:
The Smart Thing to Do

This brochure can help you to plan to keep your family safe in an emergency. It will help you to:

- Make an emergency kit
- Make a family communications plan
- Make a family evacuation plan
- Make a plan for people with in-home care needs

Why Prepare?

If you think about it, you take precautions every day, not just when a snowstorm is coming. For instance, you wear your seat belt in the car just in case you are in an accident. You make your children wear helmets when they ride their bicycles. You double check your iron to make sure it is unplugged.

Preparing for emergencies is not new. Your grandparents probably had extra supplies in their home: soap and shampoo in bathroom closets, onions and potatoes stored in the basement, and canned goods on pantry shelves. They understood the value and wisdom of having a little extra on hand for emergencies.

All states have disasters, even New Hampshire. We have ice storms, tornadoes, floods, and power outages. It is smart to prepare for the unexpected.

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services
www.dhhs.nh.gov
and
New Hampshire Department of Safety
Homeland Security & Emergency Management
www.nhoem.state.nh.us
Step 1: Make Your Emergency Kit

Making a kit is easier than you think. In fact, you can start with the basics and add on over time. The checklist below gives ideas on what might go into a kit from the most basic to the most complete. Use this list to choose the things that best meet your own needs.

Your Car
If you have a car, keep your gas tank filled above halfway. In an emergency you may not be able to get fuel. Other items to have in your car include:

- Bottled water
- Food (granola/energy bars)
- First aid kit
- White distress flag
- Flashlight & extra batteries
- Flares/light sticks
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Emergency reflective blanket
- Jumper cables
- Tire jack and spare tire
- Fix-a-flat
- Shovel
- Maps

Think about keeping your Grab Bag in the trunk of your car. You'll be ready to go quickly and will have what you need if you are stuck on the road.

Your Grab Bag
It is important to have a Grab Bag ready to go in case you ever need to leave your home quickly in an emergency. Your Grab Bag should include:

- One day's clothing and shoes for each family member
- Personal care products (for example: toothbrush, feminine hygiene products, diapers)
- Towel
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Flashlight & extra batteries
- Granola bars/trail mix
- Extra set of car keys
- Cash
- Prepaid phone card
- Copies of important documents: medical and prescription information, passports, birth certificates, drivers license, insurance papers, bank account information ...

If you have to leave your home quickly, don't forget your prescription medications, eyeglasses and/or hearing aids.

Your Home
In an emergency, having these few items in your home can help keep your family safe.

- Water: at least 1 gallon, per person, per day
- Can opener (non-electric)
- Battery powered radio
- ABC-type fire extinguisher
- Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors
- Prescription medications
- Wired telephone (not cordless)
- First aid kit
- Flashlight & battery powered lantern
- 3-day supply of canned or dried foods
- 3-day supply of baby food and formula

If you lose power, eat the food in your refrigerator first. Without power, a refrigerator should keep food at a safe temperature for about four hours. If the power is off longer than that, use your emergency food supply.
Step 2: Make a Family Communications Plan
If you are separated and cannot get in touch with your family, each family member should call the same contact out-of-state. Fill out the card above and give copies to all family members to keep with them. Identify:
- An emergency contact in your local area
- A contact out-of-state in case the emergency affects your local contact
- A neighborhood meeting place

Step 3: Make a Family Evacuation Plan
In an emergency, you may need to leave your home quickly. If you think you might need to evacuate, listen to the radio for more information. Make sure everyone knows:
- The best exits out of your home
- A neighborhood meeting place
- Local radio station
- Location of: Grab Bag, fire extinguisher and first-aid kit
- A plan for pets in case you need to evacuate

Step 4: Make a Plan for People with In-Home Care Needs
If someone needs special assistance in an emergency:
- Tell your local fire department about their special needs
- Identify a neighbor or family member who can help if a care provider cannot get to them
- Talk with a care provider about what should be done in an emergency
- Consider helping neighbors who may have special needs
Twice each year
When you change your clocks you should also:

- Check the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Check the pressure gauge on your fire extinguishers
- Practice getting out of your home quickly with your family
- Update your Grab Bag
- Use and replace any food in your kit that will expire soon

To help prevent the spread of disease and illness:

- Use a tissue when coughing or sneezing or sneeze into your elbow
- Wash hands often, especially when handling food, and after coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom
- Stay home when you are sick

Safe drinking water in an emergency

If your water comes from a city or town system, obey “boil water” orders from officials. Heat water to a rolling boil for 2 minutes. Do not use water from a well that has been submersed in flood water. Check with officials about testing for well water contamination. Never use flood water for any purpose because it could be contaminated.

This brochure was designed and produced by the Community Health Institute in cooperation with New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, New Hampshire Department of Safety, and Capital Area Public Health Network. For more information about emergency preparedness, visit the following websites:

- www.ready.gov
- www.fema.gov
- www.cdc.gov
- www.redcross.org
- www.nhoem.state.nh.us
- www.dhhs.nh.gov