



Police Department

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TERRORISM – PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Devastating acts such as the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have left many concerns about the possibility of future incidents in the United States and their potential impact. They have raised uncertainty about what might happen next, increasing stress levels. Nevertheless, there are things you can do to prepare for the unexpected and reduce the stress that you may feel now and later should another emergency arise. Taking preparatory action can reassure you and your children that you can exert a measure of control even in the face of such events.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE

Finding out what can happen is the first step. Once you have determined the events possible and their potential in your community, it is important that you discuss them with your family or your household. Develop a disaster plan together.

I. Create an emergency communications plan.

Choose an out of town contact your family or household will call or e-mail to check on each other should a disaster occur. Your selected contacts should live far enough away that they would be unlikely to be directly affected by the same event and they should know they are the chosen contact. Make sure every household member has that contact's number and each other's numbers, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers (home, work, pager, and cell). Leave these contact numbers at your children's schools, if you have children, and at your workplace. Your family should know if telephones are not ringing they need to be patient and try again later or try e-mail. Many people flood the telephone lines when emergencies happen, but e-mail can sometimes get through when calls don't.

II. Establish a meeting place.

Having a predetermined meeting place away from the home will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected or the area evacuated. You may even want to make arrangements to stay with a family member or friend in case of an emergency. Be sure to include any pets in these plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters and some motels will not accept them.

III. Assemble a disaster supplies kit.

If you do not evacuate your home or asked to shelter in place, having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable. Prepare a disaster supplies kit in an easy to carry container, such as a duffle bag or small plastic trash can.

Include special needs items for any member of your household (include formula or items for people with disabilities or older people), first aid supplies (including prescription medications), a change of clothing for each household member, a sleeping bag or bed roll for each, a battery powered radio or television, extra batteries, food, bottled water, and tools. It is also a good idea to include some cash and copies of important family documents (birth certificates, passports, and licenses) in your kit.

Copies of essential documents such as power of attorney, birth and marriage certificates, insurance policies, life insurance beneficiaries designations, and a copy of your will should also be kept in a safe location outside your home. A safety deposit box or at the home of a friend or family member who lives out of town is a good choice. For more complete instructions ask your local American Red Cross chapter for the brochure titled “Your Family Disasters Supply Kit”.

IV. Check on the school emergency plan of any school-aged children you may have.

You need to know if they will keep children at school until parent or designated adult can pick them up or send them home on their own. Be sure that the school has updated information about how to reach parents and responsible caregivers to arrange for pickup and ask what type of authorization the school may require to release a child to someone you designate if you are not able to pick up your child. During times of emergency, the school telephones may be overwhelmed with calls.

For more information on putting together a disaster plan, request a copy of the brochure titled “Your Family Disaster Plan” from your local American Red Cross chapter. You may also want to request a copy of “Before Disaster Strikes, How To Make Sure You’re Financially Prepared” for specific information on what you can do now to protect your assets.

IF DISASTER STRIKES

- Remain calm and be patient.
- Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- Listen to your radio or telephone for news and instructions.
- If the disaster occurs near you, check for injuries, give first aid, and get help for seriously injured people.
- If the disaster occurs near your home while you are there, check for damage using a flashlight. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches. Check for fires, fire hazards, and other household hazards. Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact. Do not use the telephone unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors especially those who are elderly or disabled.

A word on what could happen.

As we learn from the events of September 11, 2001, the following things can happen after a terrorist attack:

- There could be a significant number of casualties and/or damage to buildings and the infrastructure, so employees need to update information about any medical needs you may have and on how to contact your designated beneficiaries.
- Heavy law enforcement involvement at local, state, and federal levels follows a terrorist attack due to the events criminal nature.
- Health and mental health resources in the affected communities can be strained to their limits, maybe even overwhelmed.
- Extensive media coverage, strong public fear, and international implications and consequences can continue for a prolonged period.
- Workplaces and schools may be closed and there may restrictions on domestic and international travel.
- You and your family or household may have to evacuate an area; avoid roads blocked for your safety.
- If you evacuate from work, use the stairs and stay to the right to leave a clear path for firefighters and other emergency personnel; if you evacuate from home, put on sturdy shoes to protect your feet from debris; take your pets with you to your prearranged meeting place.
- Cleanup may take many months.

Evacuation.

If local authorities ask you to leave your home they have a good reason to make this request, and you should heed the advice immediately. Listen to your radio or television and follow the instructions of local emergency officials and keep these simple tips in mind:

- Wear long sleeved shirts, long pants, and sturdy shoes so you can be protected as much as possible.
- Take your disaster supplies kit.
- Take your pets with you. Do not leave them behind. Because pets are not permitted in public shelters, follow your plan to go to a relative or friend's home or find a pet friendly motel.
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities; don't use shortcuts because certain roads may be impassible or dangerous.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

Listen to local authorities.

Your local authorities will provide you in the most accurate information specific to an event in your area. Staying tuned to local radio and television stations and following their instructions is your safest choice. If you are sure you have time, call your family contact and tell them where you are going and when you expect to arrive. Also, shut off water and electricity before leaving if instructed to do so. Leave natural gas service on unless local officials advise you otherwise. You may need gas for heating and cooking

and only a professional can restore gas service in your home once it has been turned off. In a disaster situation it could take weeks for a professional to respond.

Shelter in place fact sheet.

If you are advised by local officials to shelter in place, what they mean is for you to remain inside your home or office and protect yourself there. Close and lock all windows and exterior doors. Turn off all fans, heating, and air conditioning system. Close the fireplace damper. Get your disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working. Go to an interior room without windows that is above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed. Using duct tape, seal all cracks around the doors and any vents into the room. Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told “all is safe” or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

Additional positive steps you can take.

Raw unedited footage of terrorism events and peoples reactions to those events can be very upsetting especially to children. We do not recommend that children watch television news reports about such events especially if the news reports show images over and over again about the same incident. Young children do not realize that it is repeated footage and think the event is happening again and again. Adults may also need to give themselves a break from watching disturbing footage. However, listening to local radio and television reports will provide you with the most accurate information from responsible governmental authorities on what is happening and what actions you will need to take, so you may want to make some arrangements to take turns listening to the news with other adult members of your household.

Another useful preparation includes learning some basic first aid. To enroll in a first aid or CPR course, contact your local American Red Cross chapter. In an emergency situation you need to attend to your own well being first and then consider first aid for others immediately around you, including possibly assisting injured people to evacuate a building if necessary. People who may have come into contact with a biological or chemical agent may need to go through the decontamination procedure and receive medical attention. Listen to the advice of local officials on the radio or television to determine what steps you will need to take to protect yourself and your family. As emergency services will likely be overwhelmed, only call 9-1-1 about life threatening emergencies.

First aid primer.

If you encounter someone who is injured, apply the emergency actions steps “check, call, care”. Check the scene to make sure it is safe for you to approach, then check the victim for unconsciousness and life threatening conditions. Someone who has a life threatening condition, such as not breathing or severe bleeding, requires immediate care by trained responders and may require treatment by medical professionals. Call out for help. These are some steps that you can take, however to care for someone who is hurt but whose injuries are not life threatening.

Control bleeding.

- Cover the wound with a dressing and push firmly against the wound (direct pressure).
- Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart if you do not suspect that the victim has a broken bone.
- Cover the dressing with a roller bandage.
- If the bleeding does not stop, apply additional dressings and bandages, and use a pressure point to squeeze the artery against the bone.
- Provide care for shock.

Care for shock.

- Keep the victim from getting chills or overheated.
- Elevate the legs about 12 inches (if broken bones are not suspected).
- Do not give food or drink to the victim.

Tend burns.

- Stop the burning by cooling the burn with large amounts of water.
- Cover the burn with dry clean dressings or a cloth.

Care for injuries to muscles, bones, and joints.

- Rest the injured part.
- Apply ice or a cold pack to control swelling and reduce pain.
- Avoid any movement or activity that causes pain.
- If you must move the victim because the scene is becoming unsafe, try to immobilize the injured part to keep it from moving.

Be aware of biological/radiology exposure.

- Listen to local radio and television reports for the most accurate information from responsible governmental and medical authorities on what is happening and what actions you will need to take.

Reduce any care risks.

The risk of getting a disease while giving first aid is extremely rare. However, to reduce the risk even further:

- Avoid direct contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Use protective equipment such as disposable gloves and breathing barriers.
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately after giving care. It is important to be prepared for an emergency and to know how to give emergency care.

FOR EXPLOSIONS AND FIRES

- If you hear an explosion nearby, take cover under a desk or sturdy table and away from falling items. If you are in a building, exit the building as quickly as possible.
- If there is a fire, stay low and cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth. Seek a safe escape route away from heat or flames.
- There are additional first aid tips in the white pages of your telephone book.

During a power outage.

- Have a back-up telephone that does not rely on electricity.
- Do not call 9-1-1 to ask about a power outage, but contact the local utility company for updated information.
- Turn off electrical equipment that was on prior to the outage.
- Leave on one light to indicate when the power is restored.
- Minimize driving.
- For people using battery-powered mobility or breathing equipment, assure that batteries are fully charged each day.
- Have an alternate plan to fall back on in the event of an emergency, so as to assure continuity of power to operate assistive technology, and to make sure the local utility is aware of any special electrical-powered life support or medical devices.

OPENING MAIL

Teach your family and friends to be aware when opening the mail. Signs of suspicious mail include the following:

- It is unexpected or from someone you don't know.
- It is addressed to someone no longer at your address.
- It is handwritten, has no return address, or bears a return address that you cannot confirm is legitimate.
- It is lopsided or lumpy in appearance.
- It has wires or other unusual contents that are protruding or can be felt through the envelope or wrapping.
- It is sealed with excessive amounts of tape.
- It is marked with restrictive endorsements such as "personal" or "confidential".
- It has excessive postage.

What should you do with a suspicious piece of mail?

- Do not handle a letter or package that you suspect is contaminated.
- Stay away from the package and don't shake it, bump it, or sniff it.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling.
- Notify local law enforcement authorities immediately.

YOUR COMPUTER

Teach your family about cyber safety and use of the Internet. Many Americans do not know that their computer systems are used to launch attacks against government and industry often to steal or destroy information such as financial data or even personal identities. To protect yourself, do the following:

- Be wary of strangers.
- Report unusual activities to the authorities.
- Use passwords that cannot be easily guessed.
- Make regular backups of critical data.
- Use virus protection software.
- Use a firewall as a gatekeeper between your computer and the Internet.
- Disconnect computers from the Internet when they are not in use.
- Regularly download security patches from your software vendors.

AT THE AIRPORT

Allow extra time.

- The heightened security at airports requires more time to properly screen travelers. Travelers should contact their airline to find out how early they should arrive.
- Take public transportation to the airport if possible.
- Parking and curbside check-in may be controlled and restricted. Travelers should contact their airline to see if a curbside check-in is in place at the airport.

Check-in.

- A government issued photo ID (federal, state, or local) is required.
- Have your ID's and boarding passes out and ready as you approach the checkpoint.
- Travelers may be asked to show this ID at subsequent points, such as at the gate, along with their boarding passes.
- E-ticket travelers should check with their airline to make sure they have proper documentation. Written confirmation from the airline, such as a Fax, letter, or e-mail may be required.

Screener checkpoints.

- Only ticketed passengers are allowed to be on the screener checkpoints, except for those with specific medical or parental needs.
- Each traveler is limited to one carry-on bag, and one personal, such as a purse, laptop, or briefcase.
- All electronic items, such as laptops and cell phones, may be subjected to additional screening.

- Be prepared to remove your laptop from its travel case so both can be x-rayed separately.
- Wear as few metal objects as possible and remove all metal objects before passing through the metal detectors to facilitate the screening.
- Most airports require passengers to put their coats and jackets through the x-ray conveyer. You'll save time in line if you have it off and ready as you approach.
- Do not gift-wrap carryon items. They may need to be opened during security screening.

You must transport the following items as checked baggage, or risk their confiscation at the x-ray security checkpoint. The items are:

- Knives of any length, composition, or description.
- Cutting instruments of any kind or of composition, including carpet knives, box cutters, and spare blades.
- Any device with a folding or retractable blade.
- Ice picks, straight razors, double edged razor blades, metal scissors, and metal nail files
- Also cork screws, baseball bats, golf clubs, pool cues, ski poles, or hockey sticks.

The following items are permitted aboard the plane as carryon items:

- Walking canes and umbrellas, following the inspection.
- Nail clippers without an attached metal nail file.
- Safety razors including disposable razors.
- Syringes with documented proof of medical need.
- Tweezers.
- Eyelash curlers.

At all times.

- Be patient.
- Keep control of all bags and personal items.
- Do not bring anything on board for another person unknown to or not traveling with you however innocent or small the package or item may appear.
- Report any unattended items in the airport or aircraft to the nearest airport or airline personnel.

On the plane.

- Listen carefully to the safety briefing and follow any instructions from airline personnel.
- Be aware of your surroundings and report anything suspicious to airline personnel.
- Review the passenger safety card before taking off and landing.
- Be able to locate emergency exits, both in front and behind you. Count the rows between you and the nearest front and rear exits.

- Make a mental plan of action in case of an emergency.

While traveling Internationally.

- Americans residing abroad or are considering traveling abroad should monitor current events and review their latest information on their countries they plan to visit. Most important are the bulletins on the Department of the States website at www.travel.state.gov. Travelers may also call the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate or the State Department's Overseas Citizen Services at (202) 647-5225. Assistance is available at this number 24 hours and day, 7 days a week.
- When traveling, dress conservatively.
- Bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead of cash. Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your traveler's checks with a friend or relative at home. Carry your copy with you in a separate place and as you cash the checks cross them off the list.
- Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, airlines tickets, driver's license, and the credit cards. Leave one copy with family or friends at home. Pack the other in a place separate from where you carry your valuables. Bring an extra set of passport photos.
- To avoid problems when passing through Customs, keep medicines in their original labeled containers. Bring a copy of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying the prescription drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country first.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, pack an extra pair.
- List your name, address, and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity.
- Precautions to take while traveling: Use the same common sense when traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in or avoid areas where you are most likely to be victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, market places, festivals, and marginal areas of cities. Do not use shortcuts, alleys, or poorly lighted streets. Don't travel alone at night. Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances. Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments. Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters among strangers. Try to seem purposeful when you move about, even if you are lost. When possible ask directions only from individuals in authority. Consider registering with the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate and continue to monitor the Department of States website for information about the country or region in which you are traveling.

For more information, you may want to look at the following websites.

The American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.bt.cdc.gov

The U.S. Department of Energy: www.energy.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.ris.fema.gov

Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/swercepp

Federal Bureau of Investigation: www.fbi.gov