

# Evacuation Planning Guidelines

## What to do before, during and after to be prepared!

An order to evacuate is never taken lightly and can be given in response to a wide variety of emergencies. Regardless of whether it is due to fire, flood, hazardous materials, terrorism, or other extreme danger, you need to follow carefully the orders of authorities to ensure your safety and the safety of those you love. The following outlines some of the recommended steps to being prepared and surviving an evacuation order.

### Pre-Planning

- Discuss evacuation with your family. Create a common plan for everyone to follow.
- Check with schools, work place, and other frequently visited locations to find out about their evacuation plans.
- Identify possible places to reunite with your family if you are not together when the evacuation order is given. This might include schools, churches, or other common landmarks.
- Make plans to care for your pets. Shelters do not accept pets into their facilities. These plans should include a way to secure and transport your pet as well as adequate food, water, and other necessary supplies.
- Create a self-help network of relatives, friends and neighbors who can assist if you are asked to evacuate or if you are out of town when an evacuation order is given.
- Make a visual or written record of your household possessions. Record model and serial numbers as much as possible.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home and place of business. Become familiar with alternate routes.
- Create a list of items to take with you if time permits. Once the list is made, prioritize it so that you retrieve those items most critical first. These items typically include:
  - Driver's license or identification
  - Proof of residence, such as deed or lease
  - Insurance policies and contact information
  - Birth and marriage certificates
  - Stocks, bonds, and other negotiable certificates
  - Wills, deeds, and copies of recent tax returns
  - Credit cards and contact information
  - Personal phone / address book
  - Photographs and videos
  - Computer hard drive (components such as a monitor are easily replaced)
  - Medications
  - Eyeglasses
  - Detailed maps of the area
  - Family heirlooms including jewelry, artwork, etc.
  - Collections
  - Important comfort items for children (blanket, pillow, stuffed animal, etc.)

- Basic emergency preparedness supplies (water, food, flashlights, radio, first aid, blankets, etc.)
- Cash (recommended amount to have on hand is approximately \$500)

## **If An Evacuation Order Is Given**

- Remain calm!
- Follow the instructions of officials carefully.
- Maximize available time. If asked to prepare, do so quickly, yet thoughtfully and methodically, utilizing the list mentioned above. Spend as little time as necessary on the phone.
- Secure pets in carriers or other suitable containers.
- Be sure you have necessary medications and medical equipment.
- Protect your valuables as warranted by the emergency. This will vary based on conditions – flood, fire, high wind, etc.
- Turn off electricity and water at the mains. Unless otherwise requested, leave natural gas on.
- Be sure you have your car keys and your house keys with you.
- Secure the building as much as possible
- Leave a note indicating your destination. Paper blows away - so consider a more permanent method such as marker or paint on a door or window.
- Be sure to check in with the designated shelter location even if you do not plan to stay there. This will assist those persons conducting family reunification services. It will also be a place to acquire the latest information on the disaster.

## **After the Emergency is Over**

- Do not attempt to re-enter the area until directed to do so by the authorities.
- Do not be a “lookie-loo”. This behavior blocks access to roads and makes victims very uncomfortable.
- Seek mental health and recovery assistance sooner rather than later. Such services are offered free of charge by the local Red Cross and may be available from your employer or local religious institution.
- If your home is not damaged, be sympathetic and compassionate to those who have been affected. They may not know where to start so if you see a need and are able to, meet it.
- If your home is damaged, proceed with caution. Do not make any decisions in a hurry.
- Seek the assistance and support of family, friends, and neighbors.
- Work closely with your insurance company to find out what assistance is available and what steps need to be taken to begin the rebuilding process.
- Take advantage of coordinated victim services to find out what local, state and federal aid may be available to help you in the recovery process. This includes loans, grants, and assistance for both individuals and businesses.