

Daily Breeze

IMPORTANT FAMILY DOCUMENTS

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:

- Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

FIRST AID KIT

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- Band-Aids and bandages of various sizes
- Germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Two pair large medical grade non-latex gloves
- Anti-bacterial ointment
- Cold pack
- Scissors (small personal)

- Tweezers
- NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**
- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)

GET OUT QUICKLY

If you are told to evacuate by local officials, leave immediately.

- Wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing.
- Take your emergency supplies for yourself and members of your family.
- Follow instructions of public safety officials and use authorized travel routes.
- Lock your home, if possible.
- If you have time, leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Once you are safe, call your out-of-state contact and tell them where you are.



tant prescription medications and medical supplies, as well as important documents with you.

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car.

- Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.

- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

PLAN AHEAD

- Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate. Choose several places — a friend's home in another town, a motel or a shelter.
- Keep handy the telephone numbers of these places, as well as a road map.
- Consider the need to take any impor-

STAY CONNECTED

- Long-distance phone lines often work before local phone lines, so identify an out-of-state contact and provide this person with the contact information of people you want to keep informed of your situation. Share this information with your family and friends locally.

- Avoid making non-urgent phone calls after a disaster — even if phone lines are not damaged, increased phone traffic can jam phone circuits.

- Don't count on your cell phone — increased traffic on cell phone networks can quickly overload wireless capacity.

- Keep coins in your emergency kit. Payphones are likely to work before other phone lines.

- Cordless phones and phone systems require electricity, so make sure you have a backup phone that requires no electricity.

- After an earthquake, check all your telephones to be sure they have not shaken off the hook and are tying up a line.



HAVE A 3-DAY SUPPLY OF FOOD

Store at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of Sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

Include a selection of the following foods:

- Ready to eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

Are you prepared?

KEEP TOOLS ON HAND

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Emergency preparedness manual
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape

- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

- If you smell gas, shut off the main valve and open all windows and doors.
- Turn off the gas only if you smell a leak. Another indicator of a leak is if the unmarked wheels on the gas meter are spinning.
- Once you turn off the gas, it may take a few days to get it turned back on. Never attempt to turn the gas back on; let the gas company do it.

In 2005, the *Daily Breeze* published this guide for readers. Because of an overwhelming response, we are reprinting the page.

There are six basics you should stock for your home in case of an emergency: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies and special items for medical conditions.

Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. Here is a list of what should be included in your kit.

Tips and lists are adapted from 72hours.org and redcross.org.

Daily Breeze
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

FROM LOCAL OFFICIALS

Tips on how to prepare for disasters are readily available from public safety officials, surplus stores and emergency preparedness experts. Here is a sampling to keep on hand:

- When preparing a stash of food for emergency situations, remember salty snacks will make you thirsty, said Jeff Daquila, manager of Union War Surplus in San Pedro.

- "A transistor radio is going to be indispensable," said Redondo Beach Fire Chief Bob Engler. Assuming other communication systems fail, "we'll be given instructions through the emergency broadcast system."

- Attitude is everything when preparing for natural disasters, said Norris Beren, author of *When Disaster Strikes Home* and executive director of the Emergency Preparedness Educational Institute. Get as excited about making emergency

plans as you would preparing for Christmas. "You have to want to do it," he said.

- The Emergency Preparedness Educational Institute recommends families prearrange two meeting places: one near home for evacuation in case of emergency, and one outside the neighborhood in case of wide-area evacuation or inability to return home because roads are closed.

- Water beds hold up to 400 gallons, but some contain toxic chemicals that are not fully removed by many purifiers. If you designate a water bed in your home as an emergency resource, drain it yearly and refill it with fresh water containing two ounces of bleach per 120 gallons, according to tips on the *Los Angeles Almanac*.

- In the event of an emergency situation during the school day, administrators expect parents and caretakers will show up to check on their children, said Laurie Love, assistant superintendent of

educational services for Torrance Unified School District. "If there is an emergency we would urge parents to follow the directions of the site administrator," she said. "The big thing is just to stay calm and follow the direction of the person in charge."

- Los Angeles Unified School District's Office of Environmental Health and Safety suggests parents visit their child's school to ask what will happen during an emergency. At the same time, make sure emergency contact information is up to date and complete.

- Check no-pet policies in emergency shelters, and make sure pets have up-to-date shots, the Emergency Preparedness Educational Institute suggests. Update animals' ID tags and identify emergency care facilities for them.

— Kristin Agostoni, *Daily Breeze*

WHEN FOOD SUPPLIES ARE LOW

- If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an extended period and without any food for many days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women.

- If your water supply is limited, try to avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods, because they will make you thirsty. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content.

- You don't need to buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods, dry mixes and other staples on your cupboard shelves. In fact, familiar foods are important. They can lift morale and give a feeling of security in a time of stress. Also, canned foods won't require cooking, water or special preparation. Following are recommended short-term food storage plans.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- As you stock food, take into account your family's needs and tastes. Try to include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition. Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking are best.

- Individuals with special diets and allergies will need particular attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people. Nursing mothers may need liquid formula, in case they are unable to nurse. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people.

- Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils. And don't forget nonperishable foods for your pets.

FOOD STORAGE TIPS

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot — a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans carefully so that you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

NUTRITION TIPS

During and right after a disaster it will be vital that you maintain your strength. So remember:

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two quarts a day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral and protein supplements in your stockpile to assure adequate nutrition.

How to get water in an emergency

If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use the water in your hot-water tank, pipes and ice cubes. As a last resort, you can use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl).

To stop contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines, you'll need to shut off your incoming water valve.

To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your house at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the house.

To use the water in your hot-water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off, and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve and turning on a hot-

water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty.

Three ways to treat water

In addition to having a bad odor and taste, contaminated water can contain microorganisms that cause diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. You should treat all water of uncertain purity before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene. There are many ways to treat water. None is perfect. Often the best solution is a combination of methods.

Two easy treatment methods are outlined below. These measures will kill most microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals. Before treating, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towel or clean cloth.

Boiling: Boiling is the safest

method of treating water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This will also improve the taste of stored water.

Disinfection: You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular household liquid bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented bleaches, color-safe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners.

Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.

The only agent used to treat water should be household liquid bleach. Other chemicals, such as iodine or water treatment

products sold in camping or surplus stores that do not contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient, are not recommended and should not be used.

Distillation: While boiling and disinfection will kill most microbes in water, distillation will remove microbes that resist these methods, and heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals.

Distillation involves boiling water and then collecting the vapor that condenses back to water. The condensed vapor will not include salt and other impurities. To distill, fill a pot halfway with water. Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right side up when the lid is upside down (make sure the cup is not dangling into the water) and boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.

