



# Emergency Plan

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## Fact Sheet

### Why create an emergency plan?

Emergencies can be stressful events. By creating an emergency plan for yourself and your family, you can save time in a situation where every minute counts. In addition, having a plan before you need it ensures that members of your family will feel more calm and collected if the plan should ever be put into action.

### Emergency Responses

There are typically two types of emergency responses during emergencies: **shelter-in-place** or **evacuation**. When we are asked to “shelter-in-place” this means that we should stay inside our home or office and await further instruction. When the call is made for “evacuation” we should turn off the water, electricity, and gas lines to the building, lock the doors, and follow the suggested evacuation routes to safety.

### Elements of a Plan

In both types of emergency response, it is important to consider the following:

- Awareness
  - Be familiar with the risks and resources in your neighborhood.
  - Know evacuation routes.
  - Know how to turn off water, electricity, and gas to your home.
- Communication
  - Post important phone numbers in a central location. Include your out-of-state contact person, work and cell phone numbers for all family members, family physicians, etc.
  - Designate an out-of-state contact person. Call this person during an evacuation to communicate your destination. This is especially useful if family members are separated and unable to reunite before an evacuation is started. Remember that local phone lines and cell phone towers may not be functioning in an emergency.
- Transportation
  - Pick two meeting places
    - Choose a location near your home for an incident where everyone inside would need to leave quickly.
    - Choose a location outside of your neighborhood in case family members are separated and cannot return home due to an emergency.
  - Communicate with schools, nursing homes, and other such agencies to find out their emergency procedures. (e.g. Will children be sent home, or moved to another location?)
  - Know that only service animals are allowed in Red Cross shelters. Find out where emergency animal shelters will be opened for family pets.

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#### For more information:

- St. Mary's County Health Department- 301-475-4330
- American Red Cross, Southern Maryland Chapter- 1-888-276-2767