



Safe or Sorry: Three Ways to Prepare for an Emergency

September is National Preparedness Month for a very good reason. Two of the worst disasters this country has faced in recent years — 9/11 and the catastrophic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina both occurred in September. The terrorist attack in September 2001 cost nearly 3,000 lives and caused unprecedented destruction. Hurricane Katrina claimed nearly 1,500 lives and nearly destroyed New Orleans.

Ferocious storms, terrorist attacks, fires, floods, chemical releases, and other disasters can happen almost anywhere and at almost any time. You can't control or necessarily predict these terrible events. What you can do is prepare for them. Here are three steps recommended by the Department of Homeland Security to help you prepare for a disaster.

1. Have a family emergency plan. To develop one, ask yourself these questions:

- "Do we have everyone's contact numbers as well as an out-of-town contact?"
- "What is the evacuation route for our neighborhood?"
- "Is there a designated place for everyone to meet outside of the home and neighborhood?"
- "What is the emergency plan and evacuation location of my child's school?"

Only you can answer these questions and develop an emergency plan that will suit your family's unique needs. You can download templates at www.ready.gov to help get you started.

2. Create an emergency kit. The kit should include basic items like water, food, battery-powered radio, flashlight, and first-aid supplies. For a complete list of recommended supplies, go to www.ready.gov.

3. Learn more about specific natural disasters, potential terrorist threats, and other catastrophic events. For general information check the Homeland Security website. For specific questions about threats in your area, contact the Yolo County Office of Emergency Services.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses, and schools. Throughout September, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will work with a wide variety of organizations to highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and promote individual involvement through events and activities across the nation.

The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage you to take action. Throughout the month, Homeland Security asks you to take steps to prepare yourself and your family, including getting a family emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, and being informed about the threats in your community.

WHAT IF YOU'RE AT WORK WHEN DISASTER STRIKES?

- Know your agency's emergency plan, including evacuation routes or where to go to shelter if it's unsafe to go outside.
- Know your emergency duties. Be prepared to execute these tasks under the worst possible conditions.
- Cooperate with emergency response personnel and follow their instructions.



Read the Signs!

There are safety signs and tags all around our members' facilities. Signs provide vital information and call your attention to hazards, such as "Surface slippery when wet" or simply alert you to safety issues like "Keep Area Clean".

Signs and tags also signal different degrees of hazard; for instance:

- ◆ If you see the word "CAUTION," you know that there is a potential risk of injury and you need to keep alert and take proper precautions. Some common examples are "Watch Your Step" and "Wet Floor."
- ◆ If you see "WARNING" on a sign or tag, it means that the risk level is in between DANGER and CAUTION. In other words you need to be very careful to avoid a potentially serious injury.
- ◆ If you see the word "DANGER", it means there is a very high risk of serious injury or death. Some examples are "High Voltage" and "Restricted Area—Do Not Enter."

Treat signs and tags as important safety resources. Go on instant alert when you see a safety sign or tag, and take appropriate precautions to prevent an accident to yourself or others.

Be Security Conscious

Keeping our workplace secure is an ongoing challenge. Here's how you can help:

- ⇒ Keep security doors closed and locked.
- ⇒ Don't lend entry cards, keys or IDs to anyone.
- ⇒ Don't give unauthorized people access into the building.
- ⇒ Escort visitors from reception to work areas after they have signed in, and then escort them back out again.
- ⇒ Know how to contact security and how to contact emergency dispatch.
- ⇒ Lock up purses, wallets, and other valuables.
- ⇒ Notify security or the front desk if you see a stranger with no identification in a work area.
- ⇒ Let someone know when you're working after hours, and don't work alone.
- ⇒ After dark, leave the workplace with a co-worker.

Autumn Safety Scramble:

Safe Climbing

Follow these tips when climbing ladders:

- Use a tool belt to carry equipment.
- Always have 3 points of contact with the ladder, either both hands and one foot, or both feet and one hand.
- Never go above three rungs from the top on straight ladders, or the second step from the top on stepladders.
- Climb down and move the ladder if the work is beyond your reach.

Avoid Traffic Collisions

As the weather turns cooler these tips become even more important:

- Leave early so you don't have to rush.
- Make driving your top priority while in the car and stay away from your cell phone.
- Obey speed limits, and adjust speed for traffic and weather.
- Maintain a 3-second distance in front and behind your vehicle, and increase it to 4-seconds in bad weather and at night.

Safety Question Trivia

If you have a safety question, should you:

- A. Wait for the next safety meeting?
- B. Look for an answer from a coworker or online?
- C. Ask your supervisor?

The correct answer is "c", and you may think it's obvious but you'd be surprised how many employees don't go to their supervisors first. There is no shame in asking about your safety.