

PERSONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COURSE
CLASS # 1 - YOUR PERSONAL DISASTER PLAN

I. COURSE OBJECTIVE: The objective and goal of this course is to guide each participant to be personally prepared with the supplies and knowledge necessary for themselves and their families to endure a crisis which may involve staying in-home or leaving home for up to seven days without outside assistance or services.

Today we will be covering your personal disaster preparedness plan for yourself and your family. We will also begin to fill in the Operation Hope's guide called "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit", EFFAK (download this from link on Course page, under Class#1). You need to complete this guide before going on to class #2.

II. SPECIFIC DISASTER RISKS:

A. DIFFERENT RISKS:

There are a multitude of different disasters which could necessitate enacting your disaster preparedness plan. I would like to familiarize you with some possible risks. This is only a brief summary of some of the disasters we may face. There is additional detail about each one of these listed on the page called "Disasters". Disasters could take place on a large or small scale. They could involve the whole country, a region of the country, a part of your community, or just your own home. It is a good idea to be aware of these possible events and understand the differences between them too. Different emergencies require different actions to be taken during and afterwards. However, being prepared will give you a better chance of survival no matter what emergency we may be presented with. We could possibly face terrorism, chemical attacks or hazmat accidents, nuclear attacks or radioactive accidents, plagues, diseases, biological attacks, household or workplace fires, hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, floods, extremely hot weather, landslides and mudflows, tsunamis, volcanoes, windstorms and winter storms. The list sounds like a menu from a horror movie ice cream parlor, doesn't it?

B. PICK A DISASTER:

Go to the page titled "DISASTERS" and select the one or two that you are most likely to face in your area of the country. Print out the information and review it. Each time you progress to the next part of this course, you will review another couple of disasters. Please do not try to review all of them at once, it becomes overwhelming and can be depressing too.

III. FOR ALL POTENTIAL EMERGENCY SITUATIONS:

A. Be aware of your surroundings and pay attention to authorities and your radio or television – any major station is fine – they all utilize the emergency broadcast system. If you hear the emergency broadcast system tone, ***don't turn your radio off, turn it up and pay attention to what they are saying*** – it may not be “just a test”.

B. Stay in your home during a disaster unless you are instructed to evacuate or it is unsafe to do so. If you are at work or away from home, only travel home if it is safe to do so.

C. Listen to your radio and television for instructions from authorities – follow their instructions. If you are told to evacuate – EVACUATE! If you are told to stay home, then STAY home! Take these instructions very seriously!

D. Prepare and keep a 7 day emergency supply kit in your home. Have enough water on hand for all family members and necessary emergency supplies. These items will be covered in depth in upcoming classes.

E. Keep a cell phone charged at all times, have a car charger for your cell phone too – keep this phone in your house and when you travel, carry it with you in your car. You can also purchase a cell phone charger that you crank by hand in case the power is out for an extended time period. You do not need to have a cellular phone contract to call 9-1-1 from any cell phone. Any cell phone will dial 9-1-1 whether it is activated on a contract or not, as long as it has a charge. During some disasters, power can be lost for days and cell phones still work - of course this is no guarantee.

F. ONLY CALL 9-1-1 if you are facing a life or death emergency, especially during or after a disaster. Emergency personnel will be overloaded trying to deal with all the different emergency situations and cannot take the time to deal with non-life threatening situations. For example, don't call 9-1-1 if you can't find your pet, or your power is out, or you are trying to find out information. Use common sense before dialing!

G. After any disaster you need to be extremely careful. An awful lot of people get injured or killed AFTER the earthquake or tornado or hurricane, etc. Curiosity seekers need to control their curiosity and stay put! Besides, the emergency workers do not need you getting in their way. If the area has been faced with a mass disaster, I guarantee you that it is a total mess. Be very careful of fallen trees and downed power lines. There is no way to tell whether or not a power line is active just by looking at it. Many trees come down and take down power lines with them, and sometimes it is almost impossible to see the power lines mixed up with all of the branches. Whenever possible, let the authorities deal with the clean up after a disaster. If you made it through the disaster, it would be very sad to become a casualty afterwards. Use common sense and be very careful after a disaster.

H. Keep fuel in your car at all times – DON'T RUN ON EMPTY!! In the event of a large evacuation, gasoline sells out very quickly and the lines at the stations are long. Running out of fuel while evacuating, or being unable to leave if you don't have enough fuel would be a real bummer! Keep a can of fuel in your garage or shed for backup.

IV. PERSONAL DISASTER PLAN

You need to prepare a personal disaster plan for yourself and your family. You need to be able to enact this plan at a moment's notice in the event of a disaster situation.

A. FAMILY EVACUATION PLAN:

1. Please don't forget to include your pets in all of your disaster planning. Many times, pets get left behind or forgotten about before or after disasters – they are members of your family too. I will contradict myself here just a little, however, don't ever put your life or the lives of your family members at risk to save your pets. If you must evacuate and it is impossible to take your pets with you, be sure to leave them plenty of food and water – you don't know how long it will be until you return. Fill sinks with water, leave toilet lids open and leave a huge amount of dry food accessible. For animals that live outside too, they will be better off if they have free access to the outdoors rather than being locked in your home. Animals are smart and will find a way to survive as long as they can get to water and food sources. For livestock, they will have a much better chance of survival if they are left in a pasture with free access to water – do not shut them in a barn.
2. Arrange two meeting places incase family members are separated. One should be outside your home, and one outside your neighborhood in the event that an evacuation is ordered or you are unable to return home. If a mass disaster hits, your neighborhood and your town may look very different than it did before the disaster. Landmarks may be destroyed, familiar buildings may be gone or unrecognizable, street signs may be covered with debris. You need to know how to get to your meeting place without familiar surroundings. Everything will look different, so keep that in mind.
3. Practice or review your evacuation plan every 6 months or so.
4. Arrange a long distance and out of state contact (a friend or a family member) who will act as your emergency contact person. Make sure each member of the family knows how to get in touch with this person.
5. Have the contact information for children's school and elderly relative's nursing homes and daycare on your self at all times. Make sure that the school also has your most current and up to date contact information. Include the information for your out of state contact person in the school's files also. Find out what the school's disaster plan is, and where they would go in the event they are ordered to evacuate. Imagine the panic you would feel if a disaster struck and you didn't know where to find your children.
6. Fill in all the information in the "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit". Keep one copy in a large freezer type zip-lock bag with other important documents. Keep this in your 7 day emergency supply kit, another copy in hidden in your car or at your workplace (if you

feel secure doing so since this contains a lot of personal information). Now this part is VERY important, another copy should be sent to your long distance emergency contact person. Attach recent photos of all family members (especially children), and your pets to your completed guide.

IV. SUMMARY:

Please complete this daunting and not so much fun paperwork part of this course. After large-scale disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, survivors realized that recreating their paperwork was an unbelievably daunting task, which in some instances took many months to complete. This will take a lot less time to complete now rather than having to recreate your financial life after a disaster. *COMPLETE THIS TASK BEFORE MOVING ON TO CLASS #2!*

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