COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

5 STEP NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION KIT

PROGRAM GUIDE
NEIGHBORHOOD DISASTER PLANNING

WE NEVER THINK
a **disaster** will strike **our neighborhood**

or at least we hope it won't! However, it is not a question of **IF** it will happen, but **WHEN**.

Find out what you can do to make your neighborhood better able to meet disasters head on and bounce back afterwards.

Use this toolkit to build a disaster plan for your neighborhood.

Remember, you are not on your own. The County of Los Angeles and many of our partner cities, non-profits and agencies have plans and resources to share and are ready to help! But, with about 10 million people spread throughout the County, rescuers may not be able to provide immediate support to every neighborhood in need. Neighbors should be prepared to help themselves for several days or weeks – it depends on the size of the disaster!

For additional information visit
espfocus.org

Being prepared also means neighbor helping neighbor. Be sure to include:

- Neighbors with disabilities and others of all ages who may need help following a disaster
- Neighbors who have reduced ability or inability to see, read, walk, speak, hear, learn, remember, understand and/or respond
- Neighbors with visible disabilities such as wheelchair users, people who are blind, and those with hidden needs and disability such as heart conditions, respiratory conditions, emotional or mental health conditions, arthritis, significant allergies, asthma, and/or chemical and other environmental sensitivities
- Individuals who may lack transportation, single working parents, and those who may have limited or no ability to speak, read, or understand English and will need translated information

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLANNING

STEP 1

DEFINE
YOUR AREA

Identify a manageable area, your apartment building, one block, a few small surrounding streets, etc, that you can organize with relative ease.

STEP 2

RECRUIT
LEADERS & PARTICIPANTS

Develop a team of leaders who can help build the plan and carry out emergency support activities when the time comes.

STEP 3

SCOUT
YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Get to know the lay of the land: what resources you have, what the landscape is, and disasters or other emergencies common to your area.

STEP 4

BUILD
YOUR TEAM

Find out who lives in your area, how they can help in a disaster, and who may need extra help.

STEP 5

PLAN
YOUR APPROACH

Create a plan that outlines what your neighborhood will do before, during, and after a disaster!

STEP 1

DEFINE YOUR AREA

TIP: Get to know CERT!
Community Emergency Response Training **prepares communities** for disasters and it is free!

From High Desert to Valleys to Coastal areas, our County is comprised of many different neighborhoods and communities.

In order for you to develop a disaster plan for your neighborhood, it is important to define the area that your plan will cover.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- What size area would be easy for you and a small team to manage? **25 to 40 households is the ideal size**; however, work within existing structures and networks when available (like neighborhood watch programs, etc.)
- Will you be able to easily communicate with everyone? What languages are commonly spoken?
- Will the area allow you to practice "neighbor helping neighbor" so that you can quickly identify who needs help and provide it? If your area is larger than 40 households, divide it into smaller areas with a "block captain" for each block

TIP: The easiest way to accomplish Step #1 is to **walk** your neighborhood, **gathering this information.**

Make sure that you make note of these:

- The number of homes, businesses, schools, churches, and other buildings in the area
- The number of people in the area
- Roads and other entrance and exit points, hills, and waterways
- Earthquake liquefaction zones that may be hazardous

Next, chart your defined area on a map.

Once you know the area that your disaster plan will cover, it is time to identify leaders! Here is what to look for:

People with training and experience such as:

- Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) or those active in neighborhood watch
- Neighborhood councils, human sevices, clergy or business leaders
- Police, fire, military, or health care personnel
- Those with experience providing care for persons with disabilities or those who may need help following a disaster

STEP 2

RECRUIT LEADERS & PARTICIPANTS

How many leaders are needed?

- Are there a lot of people in one area of the neighborhood? Are buildings spread out?
- Match the number of leaders with the number of people who need to be led! The ideal team size is 3-7 persons

- Here are some ideas for finding and keeping leaders for your Neighborhood Disaster Plan:
- Talk with them, face to face, at community events, meetings, and when you see them day-to-day
- Post messages on social media, neighborhood groups, and other networking websites

STEP 3

SCOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

3.1 THREATS AND RISKS

Get to know what disasters or other emergencies your neighborhood might experience. Here are some helpful hints:

Identify the threats.

Earthquakes, power outages, extreme weather, and disease outbreaks happen everywhere, but tsunamis, landslides, and floods only happen in some places. List the threats that might occur in your neighborhood.

Rate the risk.

Is the disaster very likely, somewhat likely, or not very likely to occur?

Assess the risk.

How vulnerable is your neighborhood to injuries, death or property damage? Classify these risks as high, medium or low. Use the directions under Likelihood of Occurrence and Level of Impact to asses your risks.

Likelihood of Occurrence.

ALMOST CERTAIN: Greater than 90% chance
LIKELY: 50 – 90% chance
MODERATE: 10 – 50% chance
UNLIKELY: 3 – 10% chance
RARE: 3% chance or less

Level of Impact.

MINOR: Some disruption of service possible. Little or no property damage, personal injury, or loss of life, injuries, and fatalities.

MODERATE: Disruption of some services. Minimum property damage, injury, and loss of life.

MAJOR: Many services disrupted and/or structures severely damaged. Multiple persons injured and significant loss of life.

Use a table like the one below to list these threats and risks.

THREAT	LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURRENCE	LEVEL OF IMPACT

3.2 NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIFIC HAZARDS

Los Angeles County is subject to many disasters; decide which are threats to your neighborhood:

Fires. Especially risky if buildings are closely spaced or near thick brush. Fires can come from broken or leaky gas lines too!

Earthquakes. Every Los Angeles neighborhood is at risk of an earthquake, even one of catastrophic proportions.

Landslides. Hillsides, seaside cliffs, and foothills may be subject to landslides, especially after fires and/or rainy seasons.

Flooding. Flooding may result from overflowing waterways, dam failures, heavy rains, or clogged storm drains.

Tsunami. Coastal areas may be subject to tsunamis.

Electricity, Water, and Telephone Service. These utilities may not be available for long periods after a disaster.

Chemical Emergencies. Industrial, freeway, railway, or broken pipeline accidents can cause chemical or hazardous material release.

Disease Outbreak. Outbreaks can result in many people becoming ill and disrupt key services.

Extreme Heat and Cold. Children, older adults, and people with certain types of disabilities or some chronic conditions are more affected when it is very hot or very cold.

Terrorist Attack. Some areas are potential targets for a terrorist attacks like schools, sport settings, or transit stations.

Severe Weather. The County is also subject to very high winds, hail, and thunder storms.

Local Hazards. Be sure to identify hazards and risks that may be specific to your neighborhood, such as overhead electrical transmission lines, natural gas pipelines, chemical storage tanks, and other localized threats.

3.3 NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS

Next, identify neighborhood assets. This includes anyone or anything that would be useful in responding to, or recovering from a disaster. Here are examples:

- Neighborhood emergency supplies
- Physical places like parks, schools, open areas garages and carports
- Organizations like neighborhood clubs, fraternal organizations, radio clubs, local military organizations, and disability service providers
- Persons trained in CERT, medical care, first aid, search and rescue, carpentry, plumbing, or crisis counseling
- Businesses inside or close to the area that might be able to provide supplies or equipment
- Equipment and supplies for clearing debris, boats for rescue during floods, communication equipment, first aid supplies, generators and other items useful during or after a disaster
- Evacuation resources, like accessible vehicles

How do we identify assets?

Make a list of threats and risks to the community, and identify which assets your neighborhood would need in a disaster. Is it vulnerable to damage? What can be done to reduce vulnerability? Be sure to list the location and contact information if necessary. Here is an example of a table that you can use:

ASSET TYPE	ASSET DESCRIPTION	ASSET LOCATION OR CONTACT INFORMATION[1]

[1]Because of confidentiality concerns, names and contact information for skilled personnel are not published, but are maintained by CERT Leaders and Block Captains.

3.4 MAP YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Use an online mapping tool or other easy-to-obtain source. Make a sketch of your neighborhood. The free websites maps.google.com or maps.yahoo.com may be useful.

On your sketch, show streets, blocks, and house/building lots. Show units and floors for apartment or multi-unit buildings. Number the lots sequentially (1,2,3). Include all address numbers and the names of occupants for each lot.

Contact information will be checked and updated if needed in Step 4.

Include:

- All area entrance/exit routes that are accessible by foot, wheelchair/scooter, and car
- A Neighborhood Gathering Place (see next section)
- A location where the injured can be given first aid or assessed for medical treatment
- Possible barriers that could make entry/exit difficult (e.g., fallen over/under passes, trees, or power lines)
- Neighbors who may need extra help following a disaster with seeing, reading, walking, speaking, hearing, remembering, understanding, and/or responding
- You may also want to include a Neighborhood Care Center (see next section) where care can be provided for children, older adults, and children and adults with disabilities who may need support after a disaster.

3.5 NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE

This is a space for neighbors to organize response activities. Pick one large central area to gather and organize the next steps in your neighborhood's response. Here is what to look for when identifying a possible Neighborhood Gathering Place:

- Easily seen so others will know this as the main gathering point
- Set in an area that is easy for everyone to be safe from flood, fire, fallen trees and power lines
- Has nearby accessible toilet facilities
- Well lit in case of night evacuation
- Can accommodate service animals and pets
- Big enough for planned number of persons and vehicles
- Is accessible to children and adults with disabilities

3.6 NEIGHBORHOOD CARE CENTER

This is a place where those who may need extra help following a disaster, to include children, older adults, and persons with disabilities or other access and functional needs, can be brought and cared for. Neighborhoods should strive to create a safe atmosphere within the Care Center.

3.7 TRIAGE AREA

This is a place where people injured can be given first aid or evaluated for medical treatment.

STEP 4: BUILD YOUR TEAM

The most important resources you have are one another! Follow these easy activities to build your team.

Form a Group. Make sure it represents the diversity in your neighborhood and includes homeowners, families, businesses, churches, nonprofits, schools, and local organizations **in your defined area**.

Actively include people with disabilities and others who may need help after a disaster.

Also, determine if there are human service organizations; disability service providers; or residential, community care, and assisted living facilities in your neighborhood. If so, invite them to join the planning process and discuss how you may be able to help each other.

STEP 4
BUILD
YOUR TEAM

STEP 4: BUILD YOUR TEAM

Hold a meeting. Ask the leaders you identified in Step 2 to get the word out about the meeting. Make sure that all households are personally invited. Also invite local Fire and Law Enforcement. Use the Facilitator Guide to focus the meeting.

Key meeting activities are:

- Review 5 Step Neighborhood Action Kit Facilitator Guide
- Identify the skills and equipment each neighbor has that are useful in disaster response
- Identify spoken and American Sign languages used in the area

TIP: Use the same phone tree, text and communications system to notify neighbors door to door. If your neighborhood is larger, have block captains lead this.

Encourage neighbors to attend the meeting. A personal invitation is the best way to invite neighbors. Here are a few more ideas:

- Prepare a flyer
- Build a "Be Prepared" page on your neighborhood website
- Set up a Facebook or Twitter page or piggy back off of a site with a larger following
- Develop email lists of community leaders and organizations
- Recruit community, business or homeowner organizations

Using the chart you created in Step 3, write the following for each household/facility:

- Phone, email, text, special skills, resources, number of adults/children, pets/animals/ service animals, persons who may need additional assistance
- Create a phone tree or "notification chart" through which people contact each other to relay news
- Walk the area at the end of the meeting to verify your sketch

5.1 TAKING ACTION

When Disaster Strikes…

Make Sure Everyone in Your Household is Safe
Don't forget your pets!

Put Your Personal Emergency Plan Into Action
Wear protective clothing, pull out you fire extinguisher, check your utilities and take other steps noted in your plan.

Go to Your Neighborhood Gathering Place
If it's safe, gather at your planned location to check in.

Get Organized
If the Leader in your plan is not available, choose someone to lead the overall response effort.

Form Response Teams
Using your plan, choose team leaders for every 3-7 people with a response role.

Put Neighborhood Plan into Action!
Decide what you want to do, how you plan to do it, and the time you have to respond.

TIP: Shut off the gas only if you smell or hear it. If it does not have an automatic shut-off, turn the valve so that the bar is perpendicular to the gas line. Keep a wrench wired to the gas meter and know the location of water shut-off valves.

STEP 5: PLAN YOUR APPROACH

A practice used by first responders and CERT is to organize using the Incident Command System. The chart below is an example. The **Incident Commander** is the leader. He/she is responsible for deciding what is to be done. **Operations** carries out the decided actions. **Logistics** coordinates resources (transportation, people, supplies). **Planning and Intelligence** monitors information coming in and plans for future activities. Teams include:

Search & Rescue Team. This team will look for the OK/Help signs, as well as check on those listed as needing extra help. They begin with a damage assessment to identify hazard areas and prioritize Search & Rescue operations. Ideal members have completed CERT Search & Rescue training.

Care Teams. Care Teams can consist of the Triage Team – those who determine the priority that injured survivors will receive care; the Treatment Team – those who tend to the injured; the Morgue Team – those who manage the deceased; and the Care Center Team – those who provide extra care during the disaster. Members of these teams ideally have experience in healthcare.

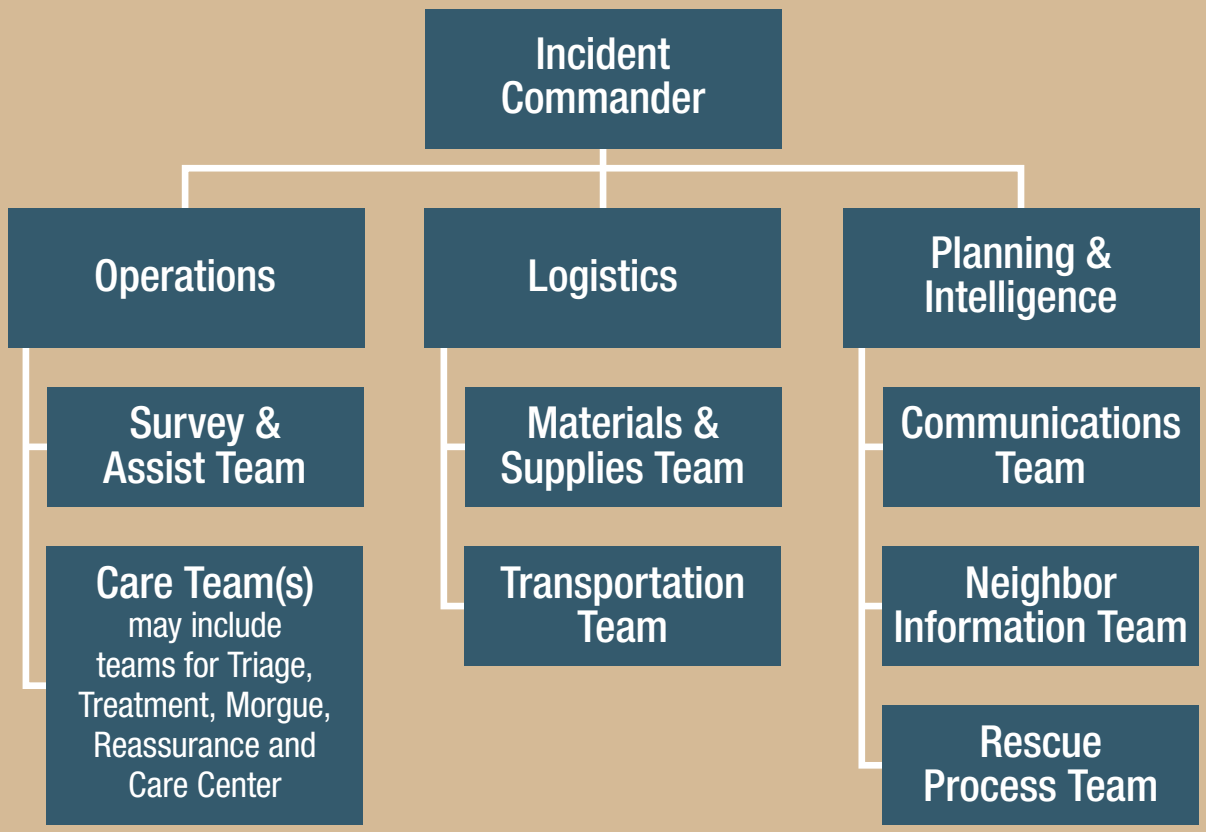
Materials & Supplies Team. This team coordinates needed materials and supplies from within the neighborhood.

Transportation Team. This team coordinates transportation of supplies, equipment and people.

Communications Team. The Communications Team listens to the Emergency Alert System, Family Radio Service (FRS)/ham radio, or National Weather Radio. The Communications Team is responsible for communicating information within the neighborhood, and to/from the neighborhood and first responders and other agencies like fire and police.

Neighbor Information Team. This team coordinates information about survivors and relays information about rescue progress and survivor status (injured, missing, etc.) from the Command Post to the Care Center.

Rescue Progress Team. This team keeps track of the rescue progress of survivors.



5.2 COMMUNICATION

Be sure to call 9-1-1 if you need help in an emergency.

In LA County you can dial 2-1-1 for information after a disaster

Telephones. Don't rely on telephone service, but if you need to call someone keep the conversation brief.

Ham Radios. When planning for communications in your neighborhood see if you have neighbors who are Ham or Amateur Radio operators who can get information from the County's Disaster Communication Service.

FRS Radios. Your neighborhood can also decide to use small Family Radio Service radios to keep in touch with one another.

Other places residents can find emergency information include the following:

Alert LA County. Alert LA is a community mass notification system that will provide recorded phone, text and email messages. Register at www.alert.lacounty.gov and click on the link to "Alert LA County".

SNAP. SNAP is a voluntary web-based registry for persons with access and functional needs who may need assistance in an emergency. Register at <http://snap.lacounty.gov/>

TIP: Remember that your car radio might be the easiest way to listen to emergency broadcasts.

Emergency Alert System. Messages will be broadcast to the public via radio and television stations. These are voice messages with text scrolling on a television screen.

Public and Commercial Media. Television, radio, and satellite will transmit emergency alert messages. Your car radio might be the easiest way to listen to emergency broadcasts.

Social Media and Mobile Applications
The American Red Cross has several mobile applications that can be downloaded for free information on earthquakes, fires, first aid and other topics. Be careful and selective of using social media for information after a disaster and always verify with a trusted agency before acting on information from non-official sources.

5.3 PUT IT IN WRITING

The next step is to put your plan in writing!
Feel free to increase or decrease the amount of information you include in your plan – Make it Yours!

Basic Plan

Should include threats, risks, your neighborhood sketch, and your basic approach to response.

Support Annexes

"Support Annexes" provide detail that goes beyond the Basic Plan. They outline specific tasks, such as how you will communicate or notify neighbors before, during and after a disaster. Other tasks that Annexes describe could include:

- **Shelter-in-Place**
  Following a disaster, local authorities may determine that it is safer for individuals and families to remain in their places of residence, or "shelter-in-place". A Shelter-in-Place Annex would detail how the neighborhood will support if required to shelter-in-place for an extended period.
- **Mitigation**
  Address ways that you can lessen the impact of disasters. Neighborhoods can establish "neighbor helping neighbor" programs for delivering food, medicine and water to people that are unable to get these items on their own.
- **Evacuation**
  If an evacuation is required, police and fire departments will reach out to notify residents but your Annex helps get the word out to everyone in your neighborhood. Listen and take directions from officials on which evacuation routes should be used. An evacuation annex describes how the neighborhood will assist authorities to evacuate the area.

Hazard Specific Annexes

Hazard Specific Annexes describe how the neighborhood will respond to a specific disaster like a large fire, an earthquake, floods, and other threats that face your neighborhood.

Safe and Well Website

Encourage neighbors to register on the Red Cross "Safe and Well" website <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>, or other form of social media, to let friends and family know they're OK.

Emergency Signs

One way your neighborhood might track the status of neighbors immediately after a disaster is to use a sign or Emergency Door Hanger. Following a disaster, place the green side of the door hanger facing out if you are "OK" or the red "HELP" side if you need help. In this way neighbors and local responders can save time and effort when surveying your neighborhood. Emergency Signs are not appropriate for every neighborhood so discuss your plan to use them in community meetings before your plan is finalized.

Make your plans available in languages commonly spoken in the neighborhood and use email, a neighborhood website, or other ways to be sure the plan is understood by those unable to read the document.

Hold regular meetings, at least one a year, to review, improve, exercise, and update your plan.

Sample emergency signs can be found in the Forms packet available to Facilitators.

DISASTER INFORMATION RESOURCES

American Red Cross
Prepare SoCal
http://preparesocal.org/

American Red Cross
Safe and Well
https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php

Emergency planning and preparedness information for Los Angeles County?
LA County Chief Executive Office, Office of Emergency Management - Emergency Survival Program (ESP)
213-974-1166
www.espfocus.org

Get training on preparedness?
American Red Cross
www.redcrossla.org/classes/

Salvation Army
www.disaster.salvationarmyusa.org/training/

Tzu Chi
www.us.tzuchi.org/us/

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training?
LA County Fire Department
Community Emergency Response Teams
(CERT) 1-323-890-4132
www.fire.lacounty.gov

Fire Department requirements for damaged structures?
LA County Fire Department
1-323-881-2481
www.fire.lacounty.gov

Information on Wildfire Mitigation?
www.wikihow.com/protect_your_home_from_a_wildfire

Community and personal protection issues?
LA County Sheriff Department
Emergency 911
General Information
1-323-526-5541
www.lasd.org

Road closures and conditions in Los Angeles County?
LA County Department of Public Works
1-800-675 HELP (4357)
www.ladpw.org

Clearing and repairs to County maintained roads and bridges?
LA County Department of Public Works Road Maintenance
1-800-675 HELP (4357)
www.ladpw.org

Building inspections and permits?
LA County Department of Public Works Building & Safety Division
1-800-675 HELP (4357)
www.ladpw.org

Flood control and drainage issues?
LA County Department of Public Works Flood Control
1-800-675 HELP (4357)
www.ladpw.org

Road closures and conditions for State Highways?
Caltrans
213-897-0383
www.dot.ca.gov

County-provided emergency social services including CalWORKs, Food Stamp, Medi-Cal, and General Relief programs?
LA County Department of Public Social Services
1-866-613-3777
www.ladpss.org

Mental Health services for disaster victims?
LA County Department of Mental Health
1-800-854-7771
www.dmh.lacounty.gov

Communicable disease control, preventive health measures, contamination control and health inspections.
LA County Department of Public Health
800-427-8700

DISASTER RESOURCES

Assistance with injured animals and information on animals displaced by a disaster?
LA County Animal Care and Control
1-562-940-6898
www.animalcare.lacounty.gov

National Association of Professional Pet Sitters
www.petsitters.org

National Lost Pet Hotline
1-900-535-1515 report lost pets
1-800-755-8111 report found pets

Humane Society
www.humanesociety.org

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals International
www.spcai.org

Schools and school districts in the County?
LA County Office of Education
www.lacoe.edu

Status of Los Angeles Unified School District schools?
Los Angeles Unified School District
213 241-4500
www.lausd.k12.ca.us

Organizations that provide response and recovery assistance in the event of a disaster?
211 LA County
211
www.211lacounty.org

FEMA
www.fema.gov/assistance

General Government Assistance
www.disasterassistance.gov

Small Business Administration
www.sba.gov

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
www.hud.gov/info/disasterresources_dev.cfm

California Department of Conservation
www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geologic_hazards/earthquakes

Maps with earthquake and landslide hazards?
California Earthquake Authority
www.earthquakeauthority.com

Questions or reports about outages?
Southern California Edison
800-684-8123
www.sce.com

Southern California Gas Company
800-655-4555
www.socalgas.com

Information on exposure to toxic substances?
Poison Control Center
1-800-222-1222
www.aapcc.org/DNN

Emergency Financial First Aid Kit?
Operation Hope
www.operationhope.org

Disaster loan and grant information?
U.S. Small Business Administration
800-659-2955
www.sba.gov

Preparing and planning for disasters?
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
www.ready.gov

Information and services for individuals, families and businesses needing disaster recovery assistance?
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
www.disasterhelp.gov

Latest earthquake information?
U.S. Geological Survey
www.quake.usgs.gov/recent

Latest weather information?
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
www.noaa.gov

Information on environmental disasters?
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/ebtpages/emergencies.html

DURING A **DISASTER**

you may only have **seconds** to make **big decisions.**

Do you know **WHERE** to find your disaster supplies?
Here are some examples of disaster supplies you may need:

DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Identification: Driver's licenses, birth certificates, passports, social security cards & bank account information, recent photographs of family members
- ☐ Insurance, loan documents, wills, trusts, certificates
- ☐ A list of family members with contact information (home, cell, work, address) Copy important documents to a flash drive and place in another secure remote location

MEDICAL

- ☐ Medical provider information
- ☐ Medications and when you need to take them
- ☐ At least a seven-day supply of prescribed medicines and if possible, copies of prescriptions
- ☐ If medications require refrigeration or special handling, make special plans (e.g., cold packs, ice cooler, mini refrigerator)

FIRST AID KIT

- ☐ Bandages, gauze, wipes, rubber gloves
- ☐ Rubbing alcohol and hydrogen peroxide

FOR BABY / CHILDREN

- ☐ Formula and bottles
- ☐ Diapers
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Sanitary supplies
- ☐ Familiar toy or book
- ☐ Car seat

DISASTER RESOURCES

TOOLS

- ☐ Battery, solar powered or hand-crank AM/FM radio
- ☐ Flashlight with extra batteries
- ☐ Wrench for turning off gas

SUPPLIES

- ☐ Cash - at least $100-200 in small bills per person, as possible
- ☐ Soap, toilet paper
- ☐ Toothbrush/paste
- ☐ Plastic bags
- ☐ Two complete sets of clothing and shoes per person
- ☐ Blankets or sleeping bags for each person
- ☐ Extra set of keys
- ☐ Feminine products

WATER AND FOOD

- ☐ Water – 1 gallon per person per day including infants and children (a week's supply labeled with expiration date)
- ☐ Non-perishable food that does not require refrigeration, preparation/cooking, and little or no water
- ☐ Extra food (remember special dietary needs)

DISABILITY OR LIMITED MOBILITY

If you are a person with a disability, have a sensory or cognitive disability, or limited mobility, make sure your emergency kit includes items specific to your needs and have a list of the following:

- ☐ Adaptive or supportive equipment and extra batteries
- ☐ Instructions on how to operate any special equipment

FOR PETS/SERVICE ANIMALS

- ☐ Identification tags
- ☐ Extra food and water
- ☐ Clean-up supplies
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Transport case
- ☐ Leash

For a listing of additional items visit
espfocus.org

This 5- Step Neighborhood Action Kit is adapted from a program created by the City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department