

## Earthquakes

**Before an earthquake:** Find a place in each room where nothing can fall on you, such as in a doorway or under a table. Try to eliminate hazards beforehand by securing hanging or mounted objects.

**During an earthquake:** Remember to **DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON**. Get under something sturdy such as in a doorway or under a sturdy table. Try to stay away from walls with cupboards, bookcases, and tall furniture. Cover your face with your arms.

## Tsunamis

If you are near the coast, be aware of potential tsunami signs, such as a strong earthquake lasting for several seconds, or a noticeable rise or fall in coastal waters. A tsunami will not appear similar to a large wave. Instead, it will appear as a rapidly moving surge of water which may contain debris. If you see a tsunami approaching or if a tsunami warning is issued, move inland and to higher ground immediately!

## Rip Currents

Follow the guidance of the local beach patrol and flag warning system. Do not enter waters that are unsafe. Rip currents can be more prevalent in the vicinity of inlets, jetties, and piers. If caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the beach until you swim out of the dangerous outgoing current. Then, swim to shore for safety.

## Winter Weather

**Before the storm:** Know your winter weather terms.

- A **Winter Storm Watch** is issued to alert the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Winter Storm.
- A **Winter Storm Warning** is issued when hazardous winter weather is imminent or occurring (heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet). Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

**Be Prepared:** Fully check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season. Be sure to carry a Winter Storm Survival Kit in your car. This should consist of the following: a cell phone with charger and batteries, blankets/sleeping bags, a flashlight with extra batteries, a First-aid kit, a knife, non-perishable food, extra clothing, waterproof matches, a bag of sand or cat litter for traction, a shovel, a windshield scraper and brush, a tool kit, a tow rope, jumper cables, a compass and road maps.

Be sure to have a 3 day supply of food and water available in the event that you are trapped in your house during winter weather.

Wear layers of clothing to keep warm. Wear a hat - half of your body heat can be lost from the head. Most of all, try to stay dry!

## Excessive Heat

During an outbreak of hot weather, avoid the heat and limit outdoor activities as much as possible. Prolonged exposure to the heat may cause heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or even heat stroke.

If you must be outside, take frequent water breaks. If you begin to experience heavy sweating, dizziness, muscle weakness, nausea, or headaches, stop what are you doing and go indoors. If your symptoms persist after moving indoors, seek medical attention immediately.

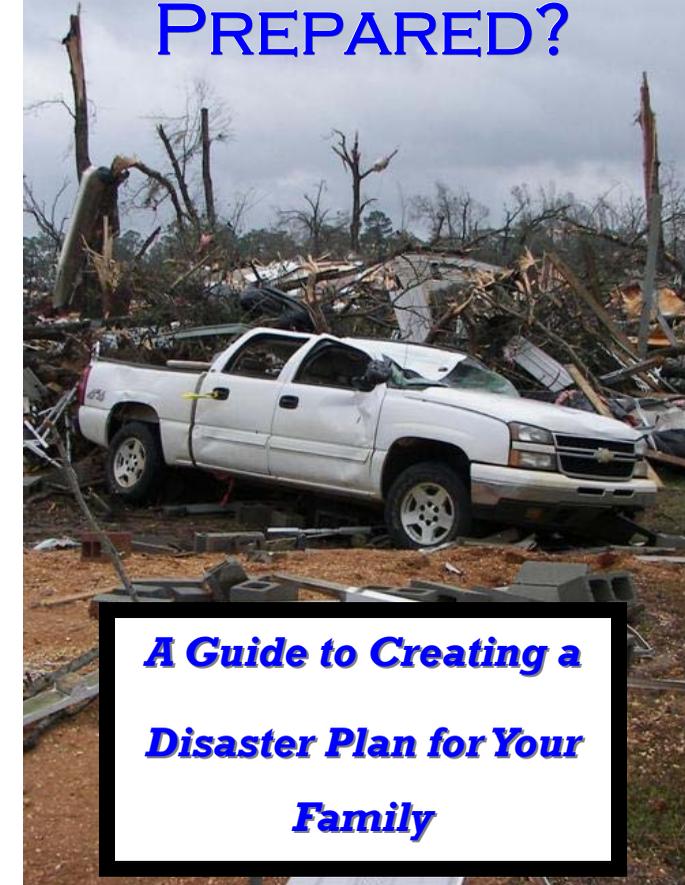
Be a good neighbor - check on groups that may be at risk such as the elderly, children, and persons with chronic ailments. Also, remember to provide plenty of water and a cool place for outdoor pets.

## Wildfires

**Prevention:** Most wildfires are started by people. Unattended campfires and backyard burning of trash and debris are responsible for a majority of wildfires. Design and landscape your home with materials that will create a buffer to flames - not materials that will add fuel to the fire. Clear away dead vegetation from your property on a regular basis. Report hazardous conditions capable of causing wildfires to the local authorities.

**If You Are Threatened:** Obey the wishes of local emergency officials. Be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice, and take your disaster supply kit with you.

# IS YOUR FAMILY PREPARED?



## A Guide to Creating a Disaster Plan for Your Family



## Creating a Disaster Plan

The key to surviving a disaster is being prepared and knowing how to react when your family is affected. This brochure will provide information to Alabama residents on how to better prepare for the natural hazards that affect the state—both *before* and *during* the event.

### ■ Develop a Family Disaster Plan

The first step in preparation is determining which natural hazards may affect you and your family. This brochure is a great place to start, but you can also consult your local emergency management officials, the Red Cross, and the National Weather Service for more information.

- Meet with your family members and develop a Natural Hazards Action Plan.
- Choose meeting locations for if/when you become separated from fellow family members. Designate a common relative that each family member can contact .
- Create a disaster supply kit for your home with essential survival supplies (see below) and a smaller one to keep in your family's vehicles.
- Practice and maintain your plan.

### ■ Your Disaster Supply Kit

Ideal supplies for a disaster supply kit include: a 3 day water supply, food that won't spoil, blankets or sleeping bags, a first aid kit, prescription medicines, emergency tools and electronics, and extra batteries.

## Severe Weather

### ■ Tornadoes

**Before the Storm:** Designate a place where your family can take shelter when a Tornado Warning is issued for your area. Storm shelters and basements provide the best protection. The safest place to be is an interior room on the lowest floor away from windows. Mobile homes are not safe locations during a tornado. Mobile home residents are advised to designate a sturdy building nearby to take shelter in during a Tornado Warning.

**During the Storm:** Move to your designated shelter and protect your body with pillows and blankets. Protect your head!! Abandon your vehicle if caught in a storm. If there is not a shelter nearby, lie flat in a ditch or culvert, covering your head with your hands.

### ■ Lightning

Lightning can strike many miles away from a storm, so be sure to watch for signs of developing thunderstorms if outdoors. This is particularly important when you participate in outdoor sporting events and other outdoor recreational activities. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. Move to a fully enclosed building and stay away from windows. Avoid contact with corded phones, electrical equipment and plumbing. Always remember—

**When Thunder  
Roars, Go  
Indoors!**



## Hurricanes

**Before the Storm:** Know the hurricane risks in your area. Do you live in a flood zone? Does your insurance cover all of the hazards that may affect your house and your family?

Fuel and service vehicles in advance of an approaching storm. Learn evacuation routes inland - and know more than one. Congested roadways will make it more difficult to escape impending danger. Find out where shelters are located.

Test emergency equipment such as flashlights and battery-powered radios. Make sure that you have enough food and water for 3 days in case you are trapped in your home. It may take some time for rescue personnel to reach you.

**Have extra cash on hand.** Do not rely solely on bank/debit/ATM cards.

Gather important legal paperwork and irreplaceable belongings. You may not have time to gather these items if a storm makes a last minute shift in its track towards land. Have these belongings in one area, in a lock-box or other container, where they can be quickly accessed and taken in the event of an emergency.

Prepare to cover windows and doors with shutters or other shielding materials. Bring in light-weight objects that are normally left outside.

**If ordered to evacuate, do so immediately!!  
If in doubt of your safety, evacuate! It is  
much better to be safe than sorry.**

## Flooding

Aside from heat-related fatalities, flooding causes more deaths annually than any other weather phenomenon. Around half of those deaths are vehicle-related. The key to safety during floods is to use common sense. Don't drive your vehicle into areas where water covers the roadway. It is impossible to determine how deep the water is just by looking. Floodwater is usually murky, and may be hiding debris beneath the surface of the water. The road itself may be washed away. Always remember—



**Before a Flood:** If flooding is anticipated in your area, avoid low-lying flood prone areas. If you live in an area susceptible to flooding and a Flash Flood Warning is issued, move to higher ground immediately!

**During a Flood:** Avoid areas that are already flooded, especially if water is flowing quickly. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams or any water of unknown depth in a car or on foot. The roadway may be washed away. It only takes 6 inches of moving water to sweep a person off their feet and a foot of moving water to move a vehicle. If your vehicle stalls out, get out of it and move to higher ground.