



## Disaster-Ready Guide 2

# Is your household disaster-ready?

*This leaflet is designed to get you thinking about your personal preparedness so you can assess if you are disaster-ready. Use it as a conversation starter with your family and friends.*

## 1. Getting ready

- **What kind of disasters are likely in your area?** Are they storms, tornadoes, floods, sea-level rise, drought, heat, fires, or other hazards?
- **Are you mentally ready for a disaster?** How do you react to stress? How does your body feel when stressed? What can you do to manage your feelings and thoughts so you prepare your mind for an emergency, e.g. breathing, positive thoughts.
- **Do you have a household disaster plan?** What does it include? Does everyone in the household know where it is and what to do in an emergency? Has everyone in the household practised the actions in the plan? Do you review the plan? If so, how often? Does the plan include where you will go if you need to evacuate, how you will communicate with each other, who will take care of your pets and plants, and what documents and supplies you will need?
- **How will you find out about a disaster?** Are you familiar with the early warning systems in your area and where to get information about current disasters?
- **What if you are away from home?** Do you know what to do if you are on holiday or away from home during a disaster? What if you have visitors staying with you?
- **Do you know your neighbors?** They may be the first people you call on for help in a disaster.

- **Do you know first aid?** Have you had training in first aid and mental health/psychological first aid?
- **What will you pack in an emergency kit?** Does it include water, food, flashlight, radio, first aid kit, cash and important documents. Can you carry it easily?

## 2. What does your household disaster plan include?

*Print out your plan, make sure everyone knows where it is, and take it with you. Don't rely on your phone for information as there may be no power.*

Does your plan include:

- **Your emergency information:** This includes your name, contact details, medical conditions, medications, allergies, and any support network or out-of-town contacts you have.
- **Your important services:** This includes the company name, account number and contact details for electricity, gas, water, internet, phone, insurances, and roadside assistance.
- **Your local radio emergency broadcast frequency:** This is the radio station that broadcasts emergency information and alerts in your area.
- **Your agreed meeting places:** This is the location where you can meet with your family or friends near your home, or where you will evacuate to during an emergency. It could be a friend's house, a relative's house, a hotel room, or a public shelter.
- **Your medical plan:** This includes the name and contact details of each person who can

help you in an emergency e.g your doctor, hospital emergency department, chemist, optometrist, dentist, and any other medical providers you need to contact in an emergency.

- **Your medical conditions** and how you plan to manage these conditions during and after an emergency.
- **Your current medications, medical aids and equipment:** This includes the name and dose of each medication you are currently taking and contact details for the prescribing doctor, any allergies and sensitivities (food, medication). Note the serial numbers of medical aids/ equipment in case they are lost or damaged.
- **Your pet management plan:** Can you take your pet with you? What about large animals? Do you have a plan for them if you are not at home when the emergency happens?
- **What else** would you include in your plan?

### 3. What to pack?

How quickly may you need to leave your home?

- *What would you keep packed and ready to go within 5 minutes?* (For example, the police have knocked on the door and you need to get out now)
- *What you would add if you had 30 minutes warning?* (For example, rising flood waters)
- *What you would add if you had a day's warning?* (For example, cyclone approaching)

How will you pack and carry the items?

- Will you use a backpack so your arms are free or a small suitcase with wheels, or boxes?

**Discuss this checklist with your household members. Which items will you need?**

#### Water and Food

- Will you need food and water? If so, how much? How often will you rotate it in your disaster kit?
- Will you need to purify water, such as boiling, filtering, or chlorinating?
- Do you need food for people with special dietary needs, such as infants, elderly, or people with allergies?

#### Medical Supplies

- What will you put in your first aid kit?
- Can you quickly access prescription medications, eyeglasses, contact lenses, hearing aids, and other medical devices that you or your family members need?
- Will you need face masks and hand sanitizer?

#### Clothing and Footwear

- How many changes of clothes and footwear per person will you take? Will you need, jackets, hats, gloves, boots etc?
- Will the clothing need to protect you from rain, wind, sun, cold, heat, etc?
- Will you need sleeping bags, blankets, a tent, or tarpaulin?

#### Tools and Equipment

- Do you have a flashlight, a radio, and extra batteries to receive information and see in the dark?
- Will you need a whistle, a signal mirror, or a flare to attract attention and call for help?
- Will you need a knife, a multi-tool, a can opener, and a fire starter to cut, open, and cook food and other items?
- Will you need a map, a compass, and a GPS device to navigate and locate your position?
- Do you have a phone, a charger, and a power bank to communicate and access information?

#### Important Documents and Money

- Do you have
  - ◇ copies of your identification, passport, birth certificate, marriage certificate, insurance, bank account, property deed, etc.
  - ◇ contact information of your family, friends, neighbors, doctors, employers, etc.
  - ◇ cash and coins in local currency and small denominations.
- Can you store all documents in a waterproof and fireproof container or a digital format?

#### Personal items / Irreplaceable items

- Are there photographs, paintings, family heirlooms, awards, or jewellery that you want to take with you?
- What about children's toys?

## 4. Write your plan

Now you have discussed the plan, it is time to write it down. Many organisations have templates to help you write a disaster plan for your household. Check what resources may be available in your country from your:

- government disaster agency or
- national Red Cross or Red Crescent agency.

Alternatively, get started by downloading the Australian Red Cross [RediPlan](#) resources. Watch Liz Witham's [presentation](#) (ZC Prowers County, District 12) where she shares how she prepares for evacuation from cyclones and fires.

The Zonta Says NOW [Disaster-Ready Guides](#) support *Action Guide 02: Disaster Preparedness and Response*.