



SENATOR FARLEY REPORTS ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



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Dear Friend:

When the American Red Cross conducted a presentation at the State Capitol called "Preparing for the Unexpected," they asked state legislators to help spread the word about how important it is for families to take certain basic steps to prepare themselves for any type of emergency.

Consistent with that effort, I am pleased to provide you with this brochure, which offers some basic safety tips and checklists.

Cordially,

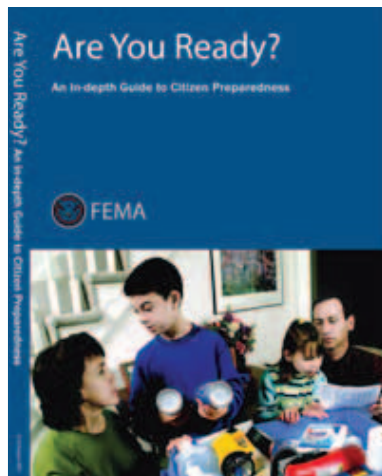


Senator Hugh T. Farley

FEDERAL GUIDEBOOK HELPS YOU PREPARE

Disasters, whether they are nature's work or man-made, happen. While we have many dedicated professionals and volunteers who assist the public during these difficult times, individuals can play an important role by taking certain basic steps to prepare themselves and their families for any type of emergency. It is important to have a family disaster plan ready in case the worst happens.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has published a detailed guide entitled [Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide](#)



[to Citizen Preparedness](#). This 200-page guide provides information on preparing a disaster plan and supply kits, responding to an evacuation order, sheltering in place, and caring for your pets during a disaster. It also offers practical tips for dealing with specific types of natural and man-made disasters. To receive a free copy, call FEMA at (800) 480-2520 or visit www.disasterassistance.gov to view or download it.

You can obtain other information by visiting the websites listed in this brochure or by contacting local responders and Red Cross chapters.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

* Police / Fire / Ambulance: 911

* Doctor _____

* Health Insurer _____

* Home / Auto Insurer _____

* Other family contact numbers (i.e. cell phones, work, school, child care) _____

* Family gathering site in case you are separated and unable to return to your home: _____

* Central contact persons and phone numbers in case your family is separated:

Local _____ Out-of-state _____

Due to disrupted or overloaded phone systems, it may be easier to make long distance calls. Therefore, you should identify one out-of-state person who can serve as a central contact for all family members. Make copies of these phone numbers for each family member.

PREPARATION BASICS

DEVELOP AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

- Consider the types of emergencies that could occur and plan how you would respond
- Review the plan with family members
- Pay attention to the special needs of infants, the elderly and the disabled
- Consider how you and your family will respond if you are at work, school or travelling
- Check with your school or child care provider for their emergency plans
- Make plans for your pets (*talk to your vet or get information from the Red Cross*)
- Take steps to prevent or mitigate the impact of a disaster (*i.e. make housing renovations; identify and eliminate hazards in and around the home; review your insurance coverage; make an inventory of your possessions and keep it in a safe place*)



PREPARE A FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN

In today's society, family members may be in many different locations when an emergency occurs. Also, local communications systems may initially be overwhelmed.

- Make plans on how you will contact each other
- Identify a local and an out-of-state contact to relay and coordinate messages
- Identify a meeting place outside your neighborhood in case you can't get to your home
- Make sure that each family member has these phone contact numbers

ASSEMBLE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLIES KIT

In an emergency, power, water, heat and/or phones may not be working; stores and gas stations may be closed or low on supplies.

- Have water, food and other supplies on hand in case of emergencies
- Keep certain needed items readily available in a portable container in case you have to evacuate quickly



EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

- Essential medications (list medication names)
- One gallon of water per person per day for drinking, cooking and sanitation (a three day supply is recommended)
- Canned and dry food (and a can opener)
- Battery-powered radio (and extra batteries)
- Flashlights (and extra batteries)
- First aid kit and manual
- Special needs items for infants, the elderly, and the disabled
- Bathroom and personal supplies
- Extra car keys, emergency credit cards, cash
- Emergency contact phone numbers
- Copies of important documents (keep in a waterproof container)
- Dust masks / cotton cloths
- Duct tape and plastic sheeting
- Protective clothing (i.e. rain gear, hats, gloves)
- Change of clothes
- Bedding / sleeping bags
- Extra glasses / contact lenses



*** In an emergency, you may be isolated in your home for a few days or may be dislocated in an evacuation. You may not be able to reach a store (or they may be closed or low on stock). These supplies will help you cope when an emergency occurs.**

*** Identify those items you'd need if you have to evacuate quickly, and store them in a portable and readily available container. Also consider including familiar and comforting toys for children.**

*** Rotate food, batteries and medicine to keep the supply fresh; replace the water supply at least every six months.**

UTILITIES CHECKLIST

• Electric company name and emergency phone # _____

• Gas company name and emergency phone # _____

• Water company name and emergency phone # _____

Be sure that each family member knows where the utility mains are located and also knows when (and how) to turn them off in an emergency. Be sure to review the house for any damage prior to turning any utilities back on. Always call a professional for help before turning gas back on.

VEHICLE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

- Flares / emergency reflectors
- Flashlights and batteries
- Jumper cables
- Water / snacks
- First aid kit
- Cell phone, calling card; change for a pay phone
- Brightly colored cloth to signal for help
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Extra mittens, socks and hat
- Small shovel
- Sand, rock salt, kitty litter

*** Whether your car breaks down or you are stuck in a winter storm or traffic emergency, you will want to have these items available. When travelling in bad weather, let people know where you are going and what time you plan to arrive.**

*** In blackout situations, gas pumps may not work, so always try to keep your gas tank at least half full. If you are stuck in winter weather, an adequate supply of gas will ensure that you can occasionally run the engine and use the heater (but read your owner's manual about preventing carbon monoxide poisoning in such a situation).**

FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Smoke detectors:

- Locations _____
- Battery replaced on _____

Carbon monoxide detectors:

- Locations _____
- Battery replaced on _____

(TIP: Be safe and replace the batteries at least once, and preferably twice, a year. Test the detectors on a monthly basis.)

Fire extinguishers:

- Location _____

- Always call 911 **before** trying to extinguish a fire yourself.
- Make sure your extinguisher is properly rated for the type of fire you are likely to experience.
- If you try to fight a small fire, be sure you have a clear exit route in case the fire gets out of hand.
- For a kitchen grease fire, **do not** use water; instead, place the cover on the pan or try to smother it with baking soda or salt.

Prepare a fire escape plan with your family

- Be sure to have escape routes from each floor; obtain a safety ladder if necessary.
- Check to make sure that routes are not blocked and that windows can be opened (and that each family member knows how to open or remove screens and storm windows.)
- Emphasize to children that they should not hide in a closet or under a bed – tell them how to escape the house, and run practice drills.

- Do **not** go back in the house. To quickly determine whether everyone has gotten out, you should pre-select a safe location outside where the family will immediately gather after exiting the house.

Undertake preventive measures, such as:

- having your chimney, wood stove and furnace inspected and cleaned yearly
- installing ground fault circuit interrupters to protect outlets located near water sources
- using properly rated extension cords; do not overload extension cords or outlets

In a fire, touch doors with the back of your hand and do not open them if they feel hot – this means the fire is on the other side. Also, do not open a door if your window is open – the resulting draft may draw the fire into your room and place you in danger. In exiting, stay low to the floor where there is air to breathe.



FLOODING

- Review your house's vulnerability to rivers, streams, culverts, dams and rising groundwater
 - Identify the safest route from your house to higher ground
 - Consider whether you need flood insurance
 - Undertake preventative and mitigation measures, such as installing backflow valves or plugs for drains and other sewer connections, and sealing basement walls
- Be sure your supplies kit is stocked and readily available, and that you have at least a half tank of gas in case you need to evacuate quickly. If you have time and the items are dry, unplug (and possibly move) electric appliances. More important documents and irreplaceable items (such as photographs) to a high spot, or take them with you.
 - Do **not** drive over a flooded road. Also, beware of downed power lines, which can cause fatal shocks through flooded waters and wet ground.
 - After a flood, water systems may be contaminated. Check with your municipality to see if there is a boil water advisory. If there is any doubt about the safety of your water, err on the side of caution and boil cooking and drinking water for at least 10 minutes. Check for structural damage that can occur from floods. Carefully clean any mud or debris from the heating and plumbing systems.

SEVERE STORMS

- During any storm, try to be inside a sturdy building or car. If you can hear thunder, lightning is nearby and may strike close to you. Do **not** seek cover under a small shed or tree. If you are boating or swimming, get out of the water.
- Do **not** use a corded telephone or computer, as these items and electric appliances can conduct an electric shock. Unplug any appliance not being used to prevent them from damaging power surges.
- Avoid showering, bathing and washing dishes, since plumbing fixtures can also conduct electricity.
- If there is a tornado warning, go to the basement or an interior room on the lowest floor level of your building. Stay away from the windows. If you are outside, do not try to outrun a tornado with your car. Instead, abandon the vehicle for safety. If there is no nearby shelter, lie flat in a ditch in the lowest spot around and use your arms to shield your head.

WINTER SAFETY

- When is the last time these heating items were inspected and cleaned?
 - **Furnace** _____
 - **Chimney** _____
 - **Wood stove** _____
- TIP: Annual maintenance is recommended for your furnace, chimney and wood stove. This can reduce the risk of fire, while also improving energy efficiency.*
- Are hot air registers clear and not obstructed by furniture, carpeting or drapes?
 - Is my home properly insulated and are my pipes safe from freezing?
- Implement energy conservation measures: these can reduce your utility bills, keep you warmer and help prevent important utilities from freezing. A temporary but quick and effective measure is to tape plastic film to the inside of the windows. If left in place, these storm window kits usually last up to three years. Installing a vapor barrier in your attic will reduce the flow of moisture from inside your home, thereby eliminating condensation that reduces insulation efficiency.
 - Never operate kerosene or propane heaters inside without proper ventilation. Never burn charcoal in the house or garage. For portable space heaters, follow the safety guidelines in the owner's manual. Be especially careful to keep them away from water sources and any fabrics or flammable material.



OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Federal websites:

www.ready.gov
www.fema.gov
www.disasterassistance.gov

Other assistance:

www.redcross.org
www.redcrossny.org
www.redcrossadironacksaratoga.org

State websites:

www.semo.state.ny.us
www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc/
www.health.state.ny.us

Local Red Cross chapters:

Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady: 458-8111, Saratoga: 792-6545

* Other valuable sources of information and assistance are your local fire, ambulance and police departments, and your county emergency management office.

