

## Get a Plan; Make a Kit

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A disaster strikes and your employer calls you to help. You cannot be mentally prepared to assist if you are distracted about the safety and well-being of your own family. Follow these four basic tips so you have peace of mind and can do your job.

### 1. Get a Plan.

Pre-planning cannot be understated. Think about what types of disasters might strike in your area, and make situation-specific plans. Visit [PrepareDE.org](http://PrepareDE.org) to get started. The website provides information about different types of disasters, such as damaging storms, flooding, severe heat or cold events, chemical leaks, and terrorist attacks. PrepareDE.org provides communication plan templates for parents and a separate one for children, commuters, pets, and evacuations. Most importantly, practice your plan.

### 2. Make a Kit.

After a major disaster, relief workers will be on the scene, but it may take time for them to arrive at all locations. Families should prepare to take care of all household members for up to three days by making emergency supply kits for home and work, and a “go bag” for the car. For recommended supply lists, visit [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) and [PrepareDE.org](http://PrepareDE.org) or use the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) app.

Household emergency supply kits should contain one gallon of drinking water per person per day, for at least three days; and a three-day supply of non-perishable food per person. Kits should also include a battery-powered or hand-crank powered radio or a NOAA weather radio, flashlights, phone chargers, extra batteries, first aid kit, essential medications, paper products, a can opener, and pet food. Consider buying a generator.

All households, regardless of income, should stock an emergency supply kit. It might be easier to make weekly purchases to build the kit. With the Disaster Supplies calendar (<http://delawarepreparedness.pbworks.com/w/file/126826340/Disaster%20Supplies%20Calendar.docx>) an emergency supply kit can be assembled in small steps over a five-month period. Periodically check the expiration dates of food items and batteries and replace as necessary.

For the office, an emergency supply kit should include a first aid kit, essential medications, a change of work clothing; hygiene items such as a toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, and cleansing cloths; and protein bars, canned soup, frozen meals, and drinking water. Also include a cell phone charger and any back-up work equipment or personal items needed in case work hours are unexpectedly extended.

For car emergency supply kits, begin with evacuation route maps pertaining to your residence, worksite, and other places that you visit often. Visit [https://deldot.gov/information/projects/tmt/evac\\_map.shtml](https://deldot.gov/information/projects/tmt/evac_map.shtml) for the Delaware Department of Transportation’s evacuation routes by county. Add a first aid kit, essential medications, a cell phone charger, drinking water, and non-perishable snacks such as dried fruit and protein bars;

blankets or a sleeping bag, a hat, gloves and scarf; jumper cables, a spare tire, flares, a flashlight, a tow rope, an ice scraper, snow brush, and snow shovel; and a bag of sand or kitty litter.

Protect assets by including copies of homeowner's, health, and life insurance policies in Consider purchasing flood insurance and boat insurance as needed. If you have not yet done so, establish an emergency fund consisting of 10 percent of the wage earner's annual salary. Keep cash in small bills on hand, in case ATMs and banks are closed during an emergency. Safeguard important documents including insurance policies and for household members, recent photos of family members, birth certificates, social security cards, and medical records by keeping them in an easily movable portable waterproof container or Ziploc bags.

### **3. Stay Informed.**

The Delaware Emergency Notification System (DENS) is the primary system for public warning and emergency protective action information in Delaware. The system allows local 911 centers or emergency managers to send messages to the specific street, neighborhood, or larger areas affected by the event. Register for DENS at [PrepareDE.org](http://PrepareDE.org).

In case of an emergency, turn on the radio, television, and cell phone and await news and instructions from public safety officials. Use the cell phone and a NOAA weather radio during power outages.

### **4. Access Resources.**

Individuals in all occupations can benefit from taking disaster education courses and advanced training, such as these:

- National Incident Management System Training Program, <https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>
- Emergency Management Institute, <https://training.fema.gov/is/>
- Center for Domestic Preparedness, <https://cdp.dhs.gov>
- National Disaster Life Support Foundation, <https://www.ndlsf.org>.

Households with individuals with access or functional needs often rely on others for assistance. Help them prepare by identifying a Preparedness Buddy, and then complete the "Preparedness Buddy" brochure to develop a personal emergency plan. The Preparedness Buddy brochure can be found online in seven languages at <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/php/preparednessbuddy.html>.

Individuals who want to promote preparedness or volunteer for state emergencies should contact the Delaware Medical Reserve Corps at <https://sites.udel.edu/delawaremrc/>. Federal-level organizations managed by the National Disaster Medical System provide assistance for large-scale disasters and volunteers can be deployed for up to 14 days at a time. Consider registering early with the Emergency System for Advance of Volunteer Health Professionals at <https://www.phe.gov/esarvhp/Pages/default.aspx>.

## **The Division of Public Health (DPH) provides this additional advice:**

### **Food Safety**

During power outages, DPH advises to be very cautious with refrigerated foods. Keeping refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for two or more hours. Cook properly chilled or frozen meat, poultry, fish, or eggs thoroughly to the proper temperature to kill bacteria. Do not eat any food that contacted flood water, and discard canned foods with swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or dents that prevent normal stacking or opening.

### **Drinking Water Safety**

Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water. FEMA recommends stocking one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation. If advised to boil drinking water, heat water at the highest possible temperature so that it bubbles constantly (a rolling boil). Continue to boil water for one minute, and then let it cool. Store in clean, covered containers. Residents can also disinfect water using household bleach. Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach for each gallon of water. Stir it well and let it stand for 30 minutes before using it. Bottled water is another safe alternative.

For bottle feeding infants, use prepared, canned baby formula that requires no added water. When using concentrated or powdered formulas, prepare with bottled water if the local tap water source is potentially contaminated. Wash fruits and vegetables with water from a safe source before eating.

For information on safe drinking water, visit the DPH website at <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsp/i-floodrecovery.html>.

### **Avoid Carbon Monoxide**

A common source of fatalities during and after storms is carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO is an odorless, colorless gas that is released from gasoline-powered generators, camp stoves, grills, lanterns and charcoal-burning devices that are designed for outdoor use only. Never use outdoor equipment inside and always ensure that any outside use is well ventilated.

Being prepared often brings peace of mind and a sense of assuredness. It may also prevent injury and save lives.

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