

26 WEEKS TO FAMILY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

A Guide for Actions to Take

WEEK

1. Get a large **portable container** with a lid to use as an emergency kit. A plastic storage bin or garbage can works well, particularly one with wheels. Choose an accessible location for the container near an exit and label the container. Make sure all family members know what it will be used for and where it is. (You may also want to pack items into individual wheeled carts, carry-alls or packs to make them easier to carry by individual family members.)
2. Stock your kit with *at least* a **three-day supply of water** for every family member and don't forget to include water for pets. It is best to plan for four litres of water per person, per day—two for drinking and two for food preparation and hygiene. You might consider the addition of **water purification tablets**.
3. Stock your kit with several varieties of **packaged foods, canned meats and dried fruit**. Include a **manual can opener**. If needed, include **infant supplies** including disposable diapers, disposable bottles, formula, etc. Plan for *at least* a three-day supply of food for each family member. (Some agencies are now recommending stocking up to a one-week supply.)
4. Arrange an **out-of-area phone contact** person, and keep this and other emergency phone numbers near each telephone. Teach family members these numbers.
5. Add **food items and supplies for pets** to your kit.
6. Get a **portable radio and extra batteries** for your emergency kit.
7. **Learn about hazards**. Know the hazards in your community. Find out if the area where you live is vulnerable to landslides, flooding, interface fires or other threats such as hazardous material spills. Also do a home hazard hunt to make your home safer. Secure appliances and heavy furniture and move beds away from overhead objects like heavy mirrors and windows.
8. **Prepare a first-aid kit** that includes prescription medications, eyeglasses, bandages, sterile gauze pads, tape, scissors, tweezers, antibiotic ointment, hydrogen peroxide and other items such as over-the-counter pain pills.
9. Give every family member **specific safety tasks** to do in an emergency. For example, designate one person to be in charge of turning off electricity, one to collect the emergency container, one to track down family members and make sure people with disabilities or special health needs are provided for. Make sure someone is also delegated to looking after any pets.
10. **Identify safe places** in your home and on your property. Plan and practice earthquake “drop, cover, hold” or evacuation drills using different escape routes. Know that your community may set up a **reception centre** for evacuees during an emergency.

11. Identify a **family meeting place** away from home but close to your regular spots (between work and home or school).
12. Add a **flashlight and extra batteries**, along with **candles and waterproof matches** to your kit.
13. Add some **dried soups and other items** such as peanut butter to your emergency kit.
14. **Check your insurance policies** and make records of your possessions.
15. Stock your kit with both large and medium-sized **plastic garbage bags** (orange or yellow make good visible signals). Large bags can also be used as ponchos, ground covers or blankets. Add **plastic or paper dishes and cups** as well.
16. Add a **change of clothing** for each family member to your kit. Be sure to include warm clothing, heavy work gloves and sturdy shoes.
17. Add additional **canned or freeze-dried food** like stews, tuna fish, baked beans and vegetables to your kit.
18. Enroll a family member in a **first-aid course**. Pack **HELP/OK signs** in your kit.
19. **Assemble important documents** like wills, insurance papers, medical records, credit card numbers, inventory of possessions, identification, etc. Make copies and store originals in a fireproof/waterproof container that will be accessible if your home is damaged.
20. Add **personal items** such as toilet paper, handi-wipes, soap, detergent, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, sanitary supplies, etc. to your emergency kit.
21. Add **evaporated, canned or powdered milk** to your kit.
22. **Get a large bucket** with a tight-fitting lid to use as a toilet, and put it with your emergency kit. Use the bucket to store other **emergency tools** like an axe, a folding shovel and rope.
23. Add **sleeping bags or blankets** (foil blankets take up less space) and consider adding **plastic emergency ponchos** to your kit.
24. Add more **canned, freeze-dried, or dehydrated food products** to your kit until you have *at least* a three-day supply for each family member.
25. Add a **pocket knife, cutlery, a whistle** and **spare set of house and car keys** as well as items such as **books, toys and cards as well as a family photo album** to your kit.
26. **Meet with neighbours to discuss emergency preparations** and the possibility of sharing items such as generators.

Now you and your family are personally prepared for most emergencies.

Once your emergency kit is assembled and your emergency plan is in place, don't forget to rotate and replace items as they expire. And most importantly – practice your plan and update it as your family's needs change.

Go to www.pep.bc.ca for more information.

September 2007