

17. ON THE ROAD

Developing a communication and evacuation plan

WHY ACT?

Evacuation should be addressed as part of your emergency planning efforts, both for your home and all places you spend time. City officials will tell you when to evacuate through the media and direct warnings. Evacuation is used as a last resort when a serious threat to public safety exists. If you must evacuate, whether for a local emergency such as a fire or a more widespread evacuation such as a hurricane, your first plan should always be to stay with friends or family.

For evacuees who have no alternative shelter, the City will open American Red Cross-managed shelters throughout the five boroughs. Disaster shelters may be set up in schools, municipal buildings, and places of worship.

PREPAREDNESS ACTION

- Create your evacuation plan:
 - Step 1: Identify two places your household can reunite after an emergency: one right outside your home and another outside your neighborhood, such as a library, community center or place of worship.
 - Step 2: Identify all possible evacuation routes from your home and neighborhood. Evacuation routes change based on the emergency, so stay tuned to the local news, access NYC.gov or call 311 for the latest information.
 - Step 3: Special hurricane evacuation procedures are in place for people living near water. Find out if you are in a hurricane evacuation zone by logging on to the Emergency Management Online Locator System (EMOLS) at nyc.gov/emols or by calling 311 for a free *Ready New York* guide called *Hurricanes and New York City*.
 - Step 4: Designate an out-of-state friend or relative that household members can call if they become separated during an emergency. If local circuits are busy, long-distance calls may be easier to make.
 - Step 5: Make a map of your evacuation routes; include the addresses and phone numbers of both of your agreed upon meeting places, and the out-of-state contact person's phone number.

Step 6: Make plans for your pet in case you need to evacuate (see Action 22, pg. 48).

Step 7: Ensure that all household members have a copy of this plan to keep in their wallet or backpacks.

- Practice your plan: With your plan in place, choose a time when all family members are available and practice. Only with practice can you feel secure that in an emergency everyone really knows what to do.

Step 1: Set a date with your household to take the trip to your two meeting places.

Step 2: Secure your home before you leave: close and lock windows and doors, and unplug appliances. Shut off your electricity, gas and water at main switches or valves if possible. Place the tools needed to do this (e.g., adjustable pipe and crescent wrenches) nearby. In cold weather, if you live in a house, drain water pipes to prevent damage.

Step 3: Have each household member grab his or her Go Bag (see Action 14 pg. 32), and practice meeting at each of the designated meeting points. If you discover breakdowns during the practice, set up another time to practice again, and continue until it really works.

NOTE: Find out the evacuation plan for any place you spend time. If you have children, contact their schools and find out about their evacuation plans. If possible, always seek shelter with friends or family first.

MATERIALS

A plan and your Go Bag.

TIME

A few minutes to a few hours.

RESILIENCY GAIN

With your life in tow, you are portable enough to adapt to most any emergency.