Emergency Preparedness for Coast Guard Members and Their Families

U.S. COAST GUARD

Ready Coast Guard

Are you and your family ready for an emergency?

Emergencies affect hundreds of thousands of people every year. One may hit your installation and community and impact you and your family. When emergencies occur, military and civilian organizations respond, but it takes time to mobilize, and they focus on the most critical needs first. You should get ready to manage on your own for at least three days.

Failure to prepare can put yourself, your family, and your property in jeopardy!

It's up to you. Prepare Strong.

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Start Preparing Today

Take these three simple steps to prepare—***Get a kit, Make a plan, Be informed...***

Get a Kit

Assemble a collection of first aid supplies, food, water, medicines and important papers that can sustain you and your family until a crisis passes. Consider the unique needs of your family and pets, and then assemble emergency supply kits in your home, car and workplace.

Make a Plan

You and your family members may not be together when an emergency strikes. Planning ahead for various emergencies will greatly improve your chances of keeping in touch, staying safe and quickly reuniting.

Be Informed

Emergencies can arise from weather and other natural hazards, industrial and transportation accidents, disease epidemics and terrorist acts. Anticipate the emergencies most likely to affect you and your family. Knowing what to do can make all the difference when seconds count.

This booklet helps you think through the basics of preparing yourself and your family for emergencies. In addition to checklists and sources for further help and information, there is a detachable form for a Family Emergency Plan.

Play it smart. Preparing for emergencies doesn't take a lot of time or effort, but it brings peace of mind. And it could keep an emergency from becoming a disaster for you and your family.

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Get a Kit

When disaster strikes, emergency responders address the most critical needs and may not even be able to reach an area until it is deemed safe. While they work on behalf of the entire community, it is your responsibility to ensure your family's well-being during times of crisis. Emergency kits are an essential tool for meeting that challenge.

To prepare your family for an emergency, get one or more emergency kits that include enough supplies for at least three days. Keep it prepared at home, and consider having kits in your car and at work. These kits will enable you and your family to respond to an emergency more quickly. Your various emergency kits will be useful whether you have to evacuate or shelter in place.

Here are some basic items to consider for a home emergency kit:

- Water - at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- Food - nonperishable food for at least three days
- Formula and diapers for any infants
- Food, water, and other supplies and documents for any pets
- Manual can opener
- Flashlight, NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) battery-operated weather radio, battery-powered cell phone charger and extra batteries
- First aid kit with dust masks, disinfectant and prescription medications
- Sanitation supplies, such as most towelettes, disinfectant and garbage bags
- Important documents – personal, financial & insurance
- Your family emergency plan, local maps, and your command reporting information
- Emergency Cash because ATM's may not be functioning

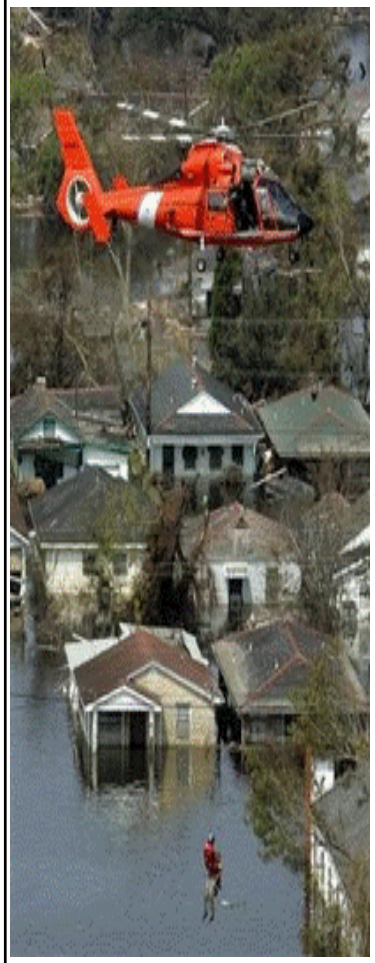
Other items that could prove helpful:

- Fire extinguisher
- Any tools needed to turn off utilities
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Paper plates, paper cups, plastic utensils & paper towels
- Coats and rain gear
- Sleeping bags or other bedding
- A weather-appropriate change of clothes for each person
- Books, games, puzzles, toys and other activities for children

On the Ready Campaign website (**www.ready.gov),** the Department of Homeland Security provides thorough checklists for emergency supply kits, as well as fact sheets about planning for children, pets and other special needs. You can also visit the Virginia Ready website (**www.readyVirginia.gov)** for additional local information.

Make your basic home emergency kit portable, or create a portable emergency kit for situations requiring evacuation. Every member or your family should know where it is located and be able to access it easily.

Emergency kits should be evaluated to ensure they will provide your family with basic needs during emergency situations. Remember to update supplies periodically as medications and food expire.



Make a Plan

Make and practice a family emergency plan.

Consider the range of potential emergencies and all the places you and your family might be. Some emergencies require different responses than other, but a family communications procedure will be helpful in any case. Knowing how to keep in touch and find one another will help your family stay safe and cope with the confusion and fear that most of us experience when serious emergencies strike.

Make a Plan

Making a plan is simple… just think of the 5 Ws!

- **Who:** Gather input from all members of your family to consider all possibilities and make them more likely to remember important steps when an emergency happens. Choose a contact person, a family member or friend living somewhere else whom you can all contact if an emergency strikes when you are separated.
- **What:** Plan for the various emergency situations or disasters that could strike your family, considering potential hazards and weather patterns in your region. Think through each possible emergency situation, and determine how your family should respond.
- **Where:** Think about all the places you and your family may be throughout the day, such as home, office, school and in transit. Establish meeting places and discuss situations when it makes sense to use them.

- **When:** Emergencies can happen at any time, so make your family emergency plan immediately. You can use or model it after the form at the back of this booklet. Review the plan annually and whenever there are major changes in your family situation, schedule or activities.
- **Why:** Plan for the various emergency situations or disasters that could strike your family, considering potential hazards and weather patterns in your region. Think through each possible emergency situation, and determine how your family should respond.

Practice Your Plan

Making an emergency plan is just the first step; you should practice it at least twice a year. Describe to family members a hypothetical event and tell them to follow the family emergency plan. Practice gathering your emergency kit and important documents, communicating with one another, and meeting at a designated place. Afterwards, discuss the actions you took and how the plan would change in a different type of emergency.

Important Note: The Hampton Roads area is particularly vulnerable in regards to natural disasters and evacuation procedures. Most notably, significant attention should be paid toward area bridges and tunnels which may be closed well before conditions are at their worst, thereby limiting evacuation options.

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Be Informed

Identify and learn about the hazards that could affect you and your family.

Many events can trigger emergency situations with the potential to escalate into disaster. Hazards such as power outages or disease breakouts can happen anywhere at any time, so you should become familiar with the spectrum of possible dangers and how you will be notified about them. It also is important to give special consideration to any particular hazards that are more likely to affect your local area, such as hurricanes, tornados, flooding, earthquakes, or severe winter weather. Living abroad presents additional preparedness challenges and, in some area, less familiar hazards, like volcanic eruptions and tsunamis.

While the potential threats can seem overwhelming, keep in mind that most of what you address in your family emergency plan or put in your emergency kits will be useful regardless of the hazard. And in many cases, the same basic protection alternatives apply: evacuate or shelter-in-place.

On the Ready Campaign Website (**www.ready.gov**), the Department of Homeland Security provides fact sheets on the following hazards, with useful information and coping strategies:
For identified Virginia specific hazards, please visit the Virginia Ready website **(www.readyVirginia.gov).**

- Biological Threat
- Blackouts
- Chemical Threat
- Earthquakes
- Explosions
- Extreme Heat
- Fires
- Floods
- Hurricanes
- Influenza Pandemic
- Landslide and Debris Flow (Mudslide)
- Nuclear Threat
- Radiation Threat
- Thunderstorms
- Tornados
- Tsunamis
- Volcanoes
- Wildfires
- Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

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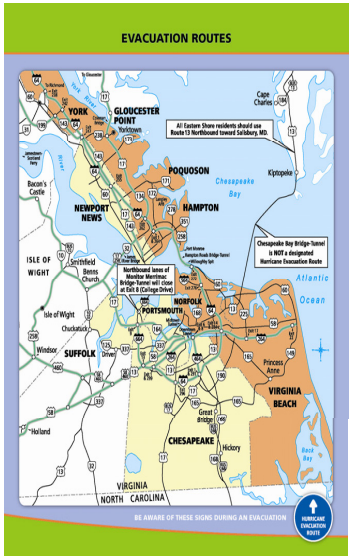
Notification and Emergency Actions

You should understand the local mass warning system (s) and, when notified, be prepared to evacuate, move to an identified shelter or designated safe haven or temporarily shelter in place.



- **Mass Warning Systems:** Each local community is responsible for warning the public of impending danger due to an emergency.

In the United States, the primary Federal agencies that warn of natural hazards are the National Weather Service (NWC) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). NWS uses the following terms for specific natural hazards:

- **Watch -** Conditions are favorable for a hazard to develop or move in. Stay alert.
- **Warning -** A hazardous event is occurring or imminent. Take immediate protective action.
- **Evacuation:** If advance warning and other circumstances permit, the preference for non-essential and non-emergency personnel is evacuation using specified routes and transportation methods. Local emergency management organizations have plans and procedures to direct evacuation or direct movement of citizens to identified safe havens or shelters. Also see the Virginia Ready website **(www.readyVirginia.gov)** for additional information and the Virginia DOT Website **(http://www.VirginiaDOT.org/travel/hurricane.asp)** where you can download all evacuation routes.

Safe and effective evacuation requires planning ahead - there may be no advance warning. You should plan primary and alternative evacuation routes in advance, with appropriate maps to take along in your emergency supply kit.

- **Moving to a Designated Shelter:** A shelter is a publicly - identified, certified, supplied, staffed and insured mass care facility where endangered people can find temporary protection for a limited time. The American Red Cross is the U.S. resource for development, management and operation of certified shelters.

- **Moving to a Designated Safe Haven:** A local safe haven is a facility that provides temporary protection during sudden incidents, such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

Please look at your local emergency management websites for additional information concerning the location of any designated Shelters and/or Safe Havens in your particular area.

- **Sheltering-in-Place:** In some instances, evacuating or moving to a shelter or safe haven is more dangerous than remaining where you are. When there is a short– or no-notice emergency such as a hazardous materials event, you may be directed to shelter in place, that is, take temporary protection in a structure or vehicle, typically your workplace or residence. It is important to know for different emergencies which part of the building is safest and how best to keep the air safe to breathe.

On the Ready Campaign website (**www.ready.gov),** the Department of Homeland Security provides information about evacuating and sheltering-in-place. Additionally, you need to learn about systems in your particular area to alert people about real or impending emergencies, as well as area evacuation procedures and shelter options. This can be found at the Virginia Ready website (**www.readyVirginia.gov).**

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Federal Resources

Ready Campaign (www.ready.gov) - Information, checklists and printable forms to educate and empower Americans to prepare for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. Sponsored by DHS.

- *People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs* (www.ready.gov/America/getakit/) provides information and an instructional video.
- *Pet Owners* (www.ready.gov/America/getakit/pets.html) provides tips, downloads and a video.

American Red Cross (www.redcross.org) - Preparedness guides and information for home, school, work and community.

- *All Disaster Types* provides specific guidance for the range of natural and manmade disasters.
- *Safe and Well List* (https://disastersafe.redcross.org) provides a way for disaster victims to communicate with family members about their well-being.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) - CDC is the principal federal agency for protecting the health and safety of all Americans (under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

- *Emergency Preparedness & Response* (www.bt.cdc.gov) provides information on agents, diseases and other threats.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov/plan) - FEMA's "Plan Ahead" site offers information on the range of natural and manmade disasters and guidance for protecting your family and property.

- *Are You Ready* (www.fema.gov/areyouready) is a comprehensive online resource on individual, family and community preparedness.

PandemicFlu.gov/AvianFlu.gov (www.pandemicflu.gov) - Current information on pandemic and avian flu.

United States Coast Guard Emergency Notification System (http://LANTCGinfo.com/ENS) - Current information on the operational status of Coast Guard Units and Commands.

Local Resources

Virginia Ready Campaign (www.readyVirginia.gov) - Information, checklists and printable forms to educate and empower Virginia Residents to prepare for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. Sponsored by the State of Virginia.

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (www.vdes.state.va.us/) - Protecting the lives and property of Virginia's citizens from emergencies and disasters by coordinating the state's emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery efforts.

- **Hurricane and Storm Surge Information (www.vaemergency.com/threats/hurricane/stormsurge.cfm) -** Provides predicted flood and storm surge maps that depict how hurricane storm surges will affect specific areas in the Tidewater area.

You can also check your local city website for additional information concerning hurricanes and their projected / likely impacts:

- Chesapeake: www.chesapeake.va.us/services/depart/fire/em/emergman.shtml
- Hampton: www.hampton.va.us/eoc/index.html
- Newport News: www.nngov.com/emergency-management
- Norfolk: www.norfolk.gov/emergency
- Portsmouth: www.portsmouthva.gov/eoc
- Suffolk: www.suffolk.va.us/em/index.html
- Virginia Beach: http://www.vbgov.com/search.aspx
- Williamsburg: www.ci.williamsburg.va.us/Index.aspx?page=31
- Yorktown: www.yorkcounty.gov/fls/em/index.htm

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Family Emergency Plan

Family Evacuation Procedure

Where the family will meet near home: _____ Phone (if any): _____
Alternate meeting place if access to home is blocked: _____ Phone (if any): _____

Family Communications Procedure

Fill in the information below. Add other important information to suit your family's circumstances.
Keep this plan with your emergency supplies kit, along with your command's standard and emergency reporting procedures.
Make sure every family member has the most important contact information for each other.

Where the family spends time

Work:
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

Work:
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

School:
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

Other:
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

Other:
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

Contact information

Out-of-Town Contact: _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____
Alternate Phone Number: _____

Family members

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____ Social Security #: _____ Drivers License #: _____
Passport #: _____ Prescriptions/Medical Information: _____

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Family members (con't)

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Name: _____ Birth Date: _____ Social Security #: _____ Drivers License #: _____
Passport #: _____ Prescriptions/Medical Information: _____

Insurance policy numbers and contacts

Medical/Dental: _____ Homeowners/Renters: _____
Automobile: _____ Life: _____

Provisions for Utilities

In various emergency situations, whether you evacuate or shelter-in-place, you may be advised to cut off ventilation systems or utilities. Write the locations of, and instructions for, these controls and any tools necessary to change them. (Note: Like fire and evacuation plans, this is good information to review and practice with the whole family.)

Electricity: _____ Gas: _____
Water: _____ Ventilation: _____

Important Records

Use these checklists to help collect important papers to keep with your emergency supplies kit for ready access in case of evacuation.

Personal

- Military ID Cards
- Birth Certificates
- Social Security Cards
- Passports
- Citizenship papers
- Marriage licenses, divorce records
- Vehicle registration/ownership records
- Medical records
- Power(s) of attorney (personal/property)
- Wills

Financial

- Bank/credit union statements
- Credit/debit card statements
- Income records (including government benefits, child support and alimony)
- Mortgage statement or lease
- Bills (electricity, gas, water)
- Health insurance cards and records
- Other insurance records (auto/property/life)
- Tax returns, property tax statements
- Investment/retirement account records

Other important information:

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To: