

Disaster Preparedness for College Students

A disaster can occur when we least expect it and regardless of where we happen to be at the time - home, work, or school. Most universities and colleges encourage students and faculty to develop an emergency plan. Developing an action plan and disaster supply kit is the first step in preparing for the unexpected. Practicing your plan and knowing how to respond can save time and lives.

Here are a few tips for developing your disaster plan:

- Be aware of the types of emergencies/hazards that can potentially affect your area of residence.
- Plan a meeting with your family, roommates, and co-workers to discuss disaster preparedness.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation: driving routes, meeting places, list of contacts.
- Update your phone contacts and add an "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) contact. Be aware that cell phone service may be unreliable during the aftermath of an emergency. Sometimes texting or communicating via social media may be possible when making phone calls is not.
- Determine how you will exit your apartment, dorm, or house in case of an evacuation. Know at least two ways to get out.
- Plan for several different meeting places. One place should be directly outside of your residence. The other should be a site away from your neighborhood in the event you cannot return home. Give your family members and roommates a copy of this information.
- Choose an out-of-state contact person. It is often easier to call long distance than locally during an emergency situation. As soon as possible, let the designated person know that you are safe. Share this contact person's information with your family and roommates.
- Discuss how to "shelter in place." The type of incident will determine how you should shelter.
- Discuss and practice how to turn off electricity, water, heating, cooling systems, and gas. Make sure you have the necessary tools on hand.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit for at home, at work, and in your vehicle.
- Take a course in first aid and CPR
- Become familiar with information hotlines for your area that provide emergency information regarding: closest evacuation routes and access to water, food and shelter as well as information on other health and human services available across the state.

Ideally, students should have supplies on hand and "ready to go" in case they are trapped in their residence for up to three days or have to evacuate away from the residence and need to leave in a hurry (they can grab the kit and go).

Ready-made, emergency preparedness kits are available for purchase on-line at a variety of sites, including www.redcrossstore.org.

The following websites provide more information on developing an emergency plan and building a disaster supply kit:

- <http://www.ready.gov/>
- <http://www.redcross.org/>
- <https://www.fema.gov/>

Adapted from: <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/disaster-preparedness-information/college-students/>

Emergency Supply Kit/List for College Students

Here is an example list of items you might include in an Emergency Preparedness Kit for a College Student:

- Backpack with multiple pouches to hold the kit items
- Three days-worth of food totaling 2,400 calories per day (example items include noodle packs, protein bars, canned goods, dried fruit, nut butter, nuts, juice boxes)
- Can opener
- Water (if there isn't room to store 3 gallons, keep one gallon on hand and have collapsible water pouches or other containers available that can be filled if a storm is approaching).
- Hygiene comfort kit (including toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, lotion, soap, deodorant, washcloth, comb, lip balm, and mesh shower bag)
- First aid kit, including adhesive bandages, first aid tape, antiseptic wipes, hand sanitizer, gauze, and latex-free gloves, scissors, tweezers, disinfectant, compresses, antibiotic, pain medicines, antacids
- First aid reference book
- A three-day supply of any meds that are taken regularly
- Large Battery powered flashlight (2D cell batteries included) or a crank flashlight
- Hand Crank Emergency Radio
- Emergency blanket (foil thermal)
- Rain poncho (adult sized)
- Solar or crank charger for phone
- Copies of important papers, such as health insurance cards, identification, family contact information, etc.
- Toilet paper
- A set of clean underwear, extra socks, gloves, and a hat/cap
- Comfortable, weather appropriate shoes
- Personal items (e.g., contact lens supplies, feminine products, extra glasses)
- Extra cash and coins
- Area map
- Moist towelettes (individually wrapped) or a small box of baby wipes (in case showering isn't an option)
- Small pack of facial tissues
- Garbage bags and ties
- Roll of duct tape
- Whistle
- Utility knife
- Sunscreen and bug repellent
- Small Pen light
- Glow sticks
- Pencil/pen and paper
- Waterproof matches
- Procedural breathing mask
- Deck of cards, book, or other non-electronic amusements
- Small comfort items (candies/mints, fiddle toy, family photo, etc.)

Check your kit 2-3 times a year to use any items that will expire and replace them with fresh items.