

If Disaster Strikes

If you are instructed to take shelter immediately, do so at once. If you are instructed to evacuate

- ◆ Listen to the radio or television for the location of emergency shelters and for other instructions from local emergency officials.
- ◆ Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- ◆ Take your disaster supplies kit.
- ◆ Use travel routes specified by local authorities and don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.

After a disaster

- ◆ Administer first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- ◆ If the emergency occurs while you are at home, check for damage using a flashlight. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches.
- ◆ Check for fires, electrical, and other household hazards. Spilled bleaches, gasoline, and other liquids may produce deadly fumes when chemicals mix, or be a fire hazard. Contact your local fire department for information on how to clean up spilled chemicals.
- ◆ Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.
- ◆ Shut off any damaged utilities.
- ◆ Check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled. 11
- ◆ Call your out-of-town contact — do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- ◆ Stay away from downed power lines.
- ◆ Listen to local radio and TV for information about where you can get disaster relief assistance.

If electrical power is lost

- ◆ Call your local power company.
- ◆ Use a flashlight or battery-operated lantern. Do not use candles for emergency lighting. Candles and kerosene lanterns are fire hazards.
- ◆ Turn off all major appliances. They could overload electric lines when power is restored, causing a second outage.
- ◆ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Food can be kept cold for a day or two if the doors are kept closed.
- ◆ Use portable generators cautiously. Make sure they are operated only out-of-doors in a well-ventilated area. Refuel a generator only after it has cooled. Do not connect a generator to your home's electrical system except through an approved transfer switch installed in compliance with local electrical code.
- ◆ In cold weather, drain pumps, supply lines, water heaters, and boilers can freeze when the power is lost. Traps in drains of tubs, sinks, commodes, washing machines, and dishwashers can also freeze. To avoid burst pipes, close the main water valve and open the spigots and supply lines and drain them.