

Stay Connected!

Perhaps the easiest and most effective thing you can do to prepare yourself and your agency for emergencies is to know who to call and how to reach them. Taking ten minutes right now to jot down the numbers of the most important people for you to call is all it takes. You may want to include fellow staff, board members, volunteers, family, or other agencies' phone numbers.



Make sure you fill out the top and bottom of the sheet so you can take one list home and leave one at work! And don't forget to include work, mobile, and home numbers – because you never know where people will be when you need them most!

Emergency Contact List

Staff: _____

Other Contacts: _____

Board/Agency: _____

Volunteers: _____

Emergency Contact List

Staff: _____

Other Contacts: _____

Board/Agency: _____

Volunteers: _____

Did you know?



The majority of damage caused by earthquakes is *due to fires that start when gas and electrical lines are not properly shut off*. Broken water lines can also lead to costly flooding damage.

With this in mind, this month's emergency preparedness homework is to **become familiar with your gas, electric, and water shut-off valves**. Here's what you should do:

1. Locate the shut-off valves for gas and water, and your electrical circuit breaker.
2. Label these shut-offs clearly, so that they will be visible in a time of emergency (you can use the flyers we've provided if you like).
3. Make sure you understand how to use the valves to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
4. Share the location and shut-off procedures for these valves with your staff and volunteers.
5. If you have an emergency, don't forget to shut off those valves!

This small task could save you a lot of trouble in an emergency, and it only takes five minutes to complete!



Get the Heck Out!

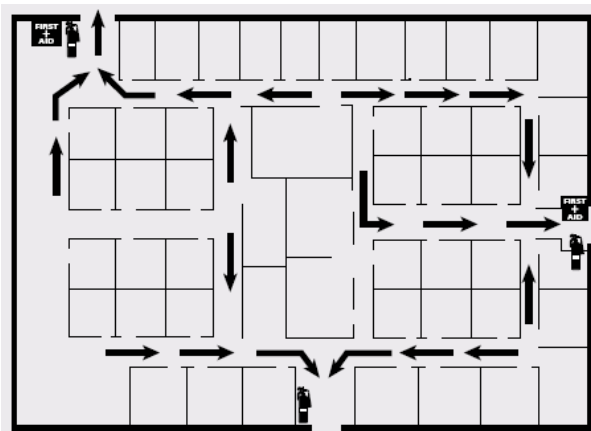
(or, how I learned to stop worrying and figured out how to evacuate my workplace in an emergency)

First of all, it's important to **determine when an evacuation might be necessary**. Evacuation is a good idea during:

- a fire
- a gas leak
- *after* the initial shock of an earthquake

During an earthquake, it's much better to shelter in place, like this →

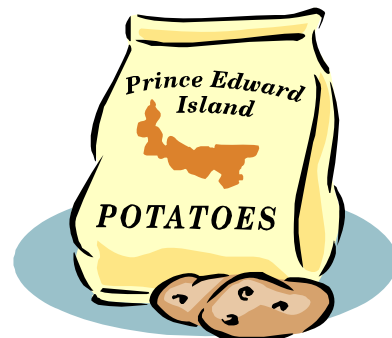
During a pandemic flu or terrorist attack, stay inside and listen to the radio!



Second, you and your staff/volunteers should **know what route to take** from wherever you may be. Making a map is a good idea. You can even label where to find first aid kits, fire extinguishers, gas shut-offs, etc.

It's also a good idea to have a secondary route of evacuation, just in case.

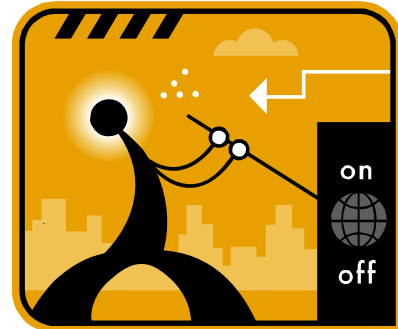
Make sure that **evacuation routes and exits are clear of obstructions**. That means moving that 50 lb. sack of potatoes away from the back door!



(more on the next page)

Hold on a second... before you get too excited and run off in wild abandon, there's a few other things to consider:

First,
Designate someone who can continue or shut down critical operations. This might mean shutting off gas lines (hey, you should know how to do that now!), or turning off equipment.



Second,
Determine how you will deal with clients if they are present. How would you communicate with them, especially if there are language barriers? How will you assist clients with limited mobility? Who can make sure that everyone has been accounted for in the building?

Third,
Determine where you will meet outside, and do a head count once you get there. Is everyone safe?



Some resources on the web:

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/need.html>

(more than you'd ever want to know about when and how to evacuate)

<http://www.firstvictims.org/tools.html>

(some nifty signs you can print and post around work that help others to know where exits and other important things are)

FIRE EVACUATION

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

- MOVE QUICKLY TO EXIT
- EXIT QUIETLY & DO NOT USE ELEVATORS!
- ASSIST GUESTS, VISITORS, AND PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
- DO NOT STOP OR GO BACK INTO BUILDING
- IF A DOOR IS HOT, DON'T OPEN IT!
- STAY CLOSE TO THE FLOOR IF SMOKE IS PRESENT
- STAY CLOSE TO WALLS WHEN EXITING
- GO DIRECTLY TO THE DESIGNATED ASSEMBLY AREA
- REPORT ANY DAMAGE OR DANGEROUS SPILLS

EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY

- TAKE COVER UNDER DESK OR AGAINST INSIDE WALL
- STAY AWAY FROM WINDOWS, DOORS & GLASS
- STAY CLEAR OF HEAVY OBJECTS LIKE BOOKCASES
- USE FLASHLIGHTS, NOT MATCHES
- ONLY USE THE TELEPHONE IF YOU ARE INJURED OR NEED HELP
- WHEN OUTSIDE, GO TO A CLEAR AREA WHERE DEBRIS WILL NOT FALL
- PROVIDE AID TO PEOPLE INJURED
- DO NOT USE ELEVATORS!
- GO DIRECTLY TO THE DESIGNATED ASSEMBLY AREA AFTER INITIAL SHOCK/QUAKE
- REPORT ANY DAMAGE OR DANGEROUS SPILLS

Food and Water

As we all know, **food and water are two of the most important aspects of survival**, whether day-to-day or in an emergency. Even though your food pantry may be well-stocked with these things, **it is important to secure a small amount for your staff** in case an emergency leaves you stuck at your site without access to your usual reserves.



Luckily, this is probably a fairly easy precaution to take. Here are some general tips:

- Make sure to **store emergency food and water somewhere safe**, and near where you usually work.
- **A simple way to gather food and water** might be to gather a few days of supplies from your current inventory; every few months, you can rotate new emergency supplies in and move the older stuff back into your normal inventory, keeping track of expiration dates.

--- Here are some more specific tips: ---

Water



- A good rule of thumb is that you might need one gallon of water per person per day (for drinking, cooking, and sanitary needs). Since it's smart to be prepared for three days, **aim for three gallons of water per person.**
- It's best to **store water in clean plastic, fiberglass, or enamel-lined metal containers.** Plastic containers, like bottled water or soft drink bottles, are best. Avoid milk jugs, since they become brittle over time.
- Make sure to **seal containers tightly, label them, and replace every six months.**
- Be aware of **other sources of water** when your faucets aren't running, both at work and at home:
 - **Your hot water heater** is a good source of emergency water. Accessing the water requires a short procedure:
 1. Make sure gas and electricity are off.
 2. Turn on a hot water faucet.
 3. Shut off the water intake valve on your

Don't worry – you don't have to be a plumber to figure this one out. Still, now would be a great time to review how to shut off your water, electric, and gas valves!

water heater.

4. Open the drain at the bottom of the water heater's tank - out comes the water!

- **Your building's water pipes** also hold some water - here's how you can get it:
 - Open all faucets in your building, from most elevated to least elevated. When you open the lowest faucet, some water should trickle out.
- **Don't forget** water hiding in your freezer as **ice cubes!**
- As a last resort, **drink your toilet water!**



(Ahem, I mean the water in the reservoir behind the toilet, not in the bowl!)

- If you've got some water, but are unsure of its purity, **you can purify water** in a couple different ways:
 1. **Bring to a rolling boil for 10 minutes.** Before drinking, please make sure the water isn't still boiling! Hey, you never know...
 2. **Use household bleach:**
 - Make sure you're using the normal household bleach, with no added colors, scents, or additional chemicals. The only active ingredient should be 6% sodium hypochlorite.
 - Use 16 drops per gallon of water, or 8 for a two-liter bottle, and let sit for 30 minutes.
 - If the water smells like chlorine, you can drink it, otherwise add more and try again.

Food



- Make sure to store **ready-to-eat, non-perishable, high-protein, high-calorie foods that you enjoy.** Peanut butter, canned meats, energy bars, canned fruits and veggies are all good options.
- Don't forget to **keep a can opener with the food.** As you might guess, opening a can without one is a pain in the rear.

One last word of advice:

In the wake of an earthquake, you might be holed up for a long time. Consider packing things that might help make your time more enjoyable, like some chocolate or a bottle of wine! (But remember that liquor can dry you out, so if you do plan enjoying a nice cabernet, store some extra water too!)



Mission: Possible

Creating a Disaster Mission Statement

A disaster mission statement can help unify your organization around disaster preparedness, and better define the steps you will take to ensure the safety of your staff and meet the needs of your clients.

- What role will your organization play in an emergency, especially in regards to your clients and your community?
- What are your strengths, weaknesses, and resources, and how do you plan to use them in a disaster?



Your disaster mission statements will be very unique to your organization, based on the scope of your services, the makeup of your clients, and connections you have with the community. To get you started, here is an example of one food pantry's mission statement:

In the face of a disaster, the Seattle Food Pantry and its staff will continue to serve the community in the best way possible. We will ensure this outcome by:

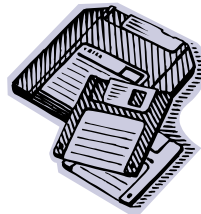
- Responding effectively by formalizing communications and resource sharing with other Seattle-area food pantries and outside agencies;
- Seeking out collaborative preparedness and response efforts with other organizations such as the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Community Information Line, Seattle-King County Public Health, the Seattle Human Services Department, WAVOAD, and others;
- Clearly communicating with the public in the wake of an emergency, and knowledgeably referring our clients to additional resources;
- Training our staff and volunteers to be more prepared at home and at work, and mitigating safety hazards in our facility.

Your Agency Go Kit

In an emergency you may have to leave your building at short notice and continue operating from elsewhere. In cases where you have to “jump ship”, it is important to have all your most important documents with you. Taking the time to create an Agency Go Kit that contains all of these documents will save you much trouble and time – and all it takes now is ten minutes to crack open your file cabinet and make some copies. Here are some ideas for good things to include in your Agency Go Kit:



- Your agency disaster plan
- Insurance policies
- Deed or lease for your facilities
- Legal identification, such as a taxpayer ID number and evidence of exemption status
- Bank information, such as account numbers and contact information
- Emergency contact lists
- Memoranda of understanding
- Inventory of valuable items or equipment
- Small amount of cash and coins
- Backups of electronic files and records
- Contracts
- Emergency line of credit documentation
- Pen and paper



To protect these things, make sure to put everything together in re-sealable plastic storage bags, or in some other waterproof container. Also, making two Go Kits is not much harder than making one, so creating an off-site backup copy is a marvelous idea.



And while you're in a Go Kit frenzy, consider making a Home Go Kit – the same great idea, only with all of your most important personal documents!

Spreading the Love



Sharing Personal Preparedness with Your Staff and Volunteers

This month's emergency preparedness task is a very important one: speaking to your staff and volunteers about how they can prepare at home for emergencies and disasters. This is very important for two reasons, which you should share with your staff:

1. **You care about your staff** and volunteers and want them to be safe.
2. **Even the best efforts to prepare your agency will be thwarted if staff and volunteers aren't prepared at home.** Naturally, everyone needs to tend to their own needs and their family's needs before they can help out at work.

Mainly, your task is to underscore the importance of preparedness to your staff and volunteers, and to give them some resources to help them learn more. **Perhaps the best place to get this done is at a short staff meeting.** It's best to provide your staff with as much information as possible, so take some time to locate some resources and have them ready for your staff.



Here are some good on-line resources:

- www.prepare.org: hosted by the Red Cross, a site with many disaster preparedness materials, especially for seniors, children, people with disabilities, and pet owners.
- www.ready.gov/america/index.html: a nice site with lots of links to helpful resources, such as a family emergency plan and a disaster kit checklist.

- www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/fdsk.pdf: a downloadable brochure about home disaster kits.
- www.redcross.org/static/file_cont36_lang0_23.pdf: a downloadable brochure to help create a family emergency plan.
- www.redcrossstore.org: the Red Cross On-line Store, with a wide variety of preparedness supplies. Consider giving the gift of preparedness to your staff this holiday season!

Hosting a Short Training for Your Staff and Volunteers

Further, your local Red Cross chapter or Office of Emergency Management is a good source for print materials and ideas. Even better, **they** may be able come to your agency to do a training. This would be an exceptional way to raise awareness among your staff!



Managing Volunteers

Volunteers are most likely a very important part of your operation, so it's important to know how to handle them in the wake of a disaster.

You are probably familiar with the skills and abilities of your current volunteers, but it's good to anticipate how you might manage spontaneous volunteers.



spon•ta•ne•ous vol•un•teer (*n*): a person who steps forward in a time of disaster or emergency to help your agency with without pay, but who has no prior affiliation with your agency. Such volunteers may not possess skills appropriate to usual volunteer activities, but may possess other valuable skills.

Here are some questions to consider as you plan how to manage volunteers:



- Do your current volunteers have skills appropriate for disaster-related work?
- What important operations activities can be assigned to spontaneous volunteers? These could include operational tasks, such as:
 - sorting in-kind donations
 - pre-bagging food or assisting with food distribution
 - communicating with clients (especially in languages other than English)
 - assisting in repair activities



Or working on other projects you've been meaning to tackle, such as:

- organizing or re-arranging file cabinets or shelving
- painting your facility
- et cetera
- What activities should not be assigned to spontaneous volunteers?
- What safety or legal considerations do you need think about? Do you have the right insurance to handle spontaneous volunteers, will you need to do new volunteer background checks before they can help out, or train spontaneous volunteers in food safety or food pantry operations?
- Do you have someone in charge of volunteers? Who might fill that role in a disaster?



Understanding your Emergency Financial Resources



Responding to an emergency takes money. The problem is, in the wake of a disaster, you may not have access to the funds you need. By understanding the financial resources you have, how you can use emergency lines of credit to your advantage, and how to get reimbursed for costs you incur, you can empower your agency in responding and recovering from disasters.



Some Important Things to be Familiar With:



- The normal costs of operation for you agency
- The estimated cost increases you might incur due to a disaster
- If your agency has credit cards:
 - Where are they kept?
 - What are their limits?
 - Who can use them?
 - Do you have an emergency line of credit?

Some Important Actions to Take This Month:

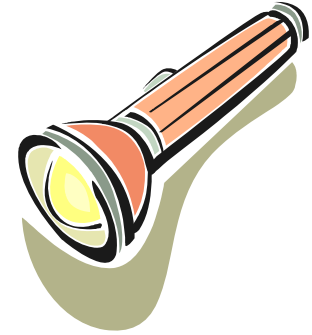
- Review your insurance to understand what it covers (and what it doesn't)
- Make sure to keep a small amount of petty cash, and a good amount of change for use with pay phones
- What is required to be eligible for reimbursements from FEMA and other agencies. Here are some helpful on-line resources:

- <http://www.la.state.la.us/katrina/facts%20on%20fema%20assistance.pdf>
- *Reimbursement of Local Private Nonprofit Organizations Under the Stafford Act*, Congressional Research Service

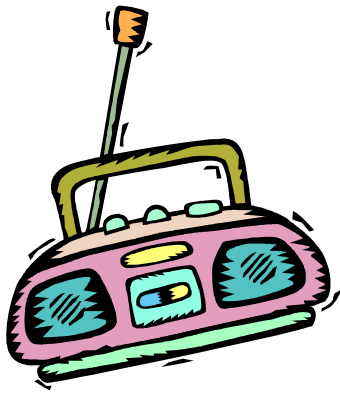


Stocking Up

It's quite likely that you'll have to get by with supplies available to you at home or at work for the first few days after a major disaster. To make sure you're prepared for any situation that might occur, it's a good idea to create an emergency supply kit.



It's best to store your emergency supplies in a container that's waterproof, easy to carry, and durable. A five-gallon pail (with a tight lid) is a good option. You can also



keep individual items in plastic bags within the container - those plastic bags can be used later for other purposes, such as disposing of waste.

Keep your supplies somewhere that will be easily accessible (especially if you have to grab your kit in the dark), and preferably near an exit. You should consider having a supply kit at work, at home, and in your car.

Here's a list of some good supplies to have:

- First Aid Supplies
- Lights/Flashlights
- Radio(s)
- Batteries
- Whistles
- Blankets
- Garbage Bags
- Duct Tape
- Extra Cash
- Necessary medicines
- Alcohol Hand Cleaner
- Thermometer
- Personal Hygiene Supplies
- Gloves, extra clothing, sturdy shoes
- Deck of cards
- Crescent wrench (for utility shut-off)
- Other tools
- Ponchos or other rain gear
- Matches
- Paper, pens and markers (in water-proof containers)
- Rope
- Utility knife

Specifically for Your Car:

- Blankets
- Booster cables and tool kit
- Bottled water
- First aid kit
- Canned food, can opener
- Critical prescriptions
- Emergency flare/distress signs
- First aid kit and reference guide

Remember, you don't need to have all of these things, and you don't have to get everything together in one day. Even having a couple of these items on hand is a great start. To make the task more manageable, consider collecting a few items each week.



Items to collect:

Week One: _____

Week Two: _____

Week Three: _____

Week Four: _____

Week Five: _____

Week Six: _____

Week Seven: _____

Week Eight: _____

Week Nine: _____

Week Ten: _____

Week Eleven: _____

Week Twelve: _____

Week Thirteen: _____

Week Fourteen: _____

Week Fifteen: _____

Week Sixteen: _____

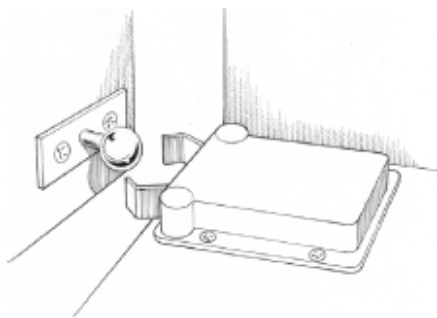
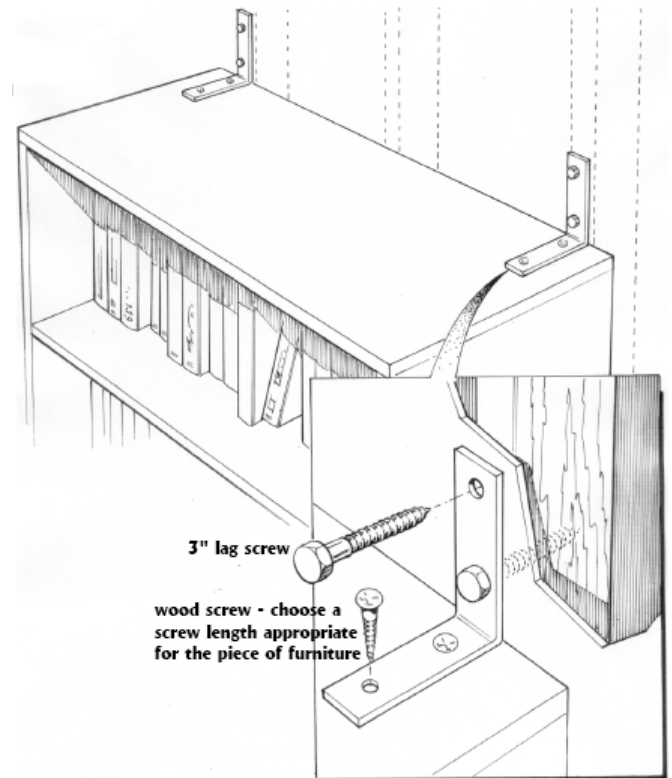
What's Shakin'?

Earthquakes and other disasters can cause things to shift and fall, leading to property damage and injury. There are a number of simple things you can do to prevent this.

SECURING SHELVING AND OTHER TALL FURNITURE

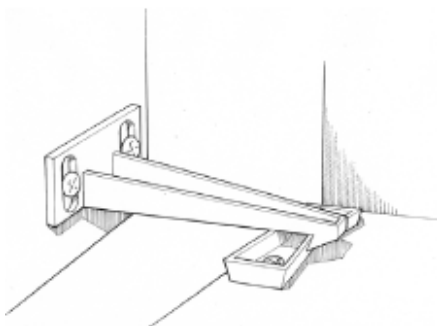
Most food pantries are loaded with shelving to store food and other items. One of the best things you can do to mitigate safety risks is to secure shelving to walls and floors. Your local hardware store can help you find the right brackets and fasteners to get the job done.

Another quick thing you can do is to lower heavier items to bottom shelves, and reserve top shelves for lighter objects.



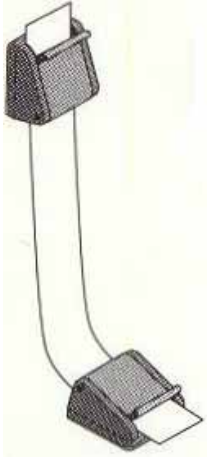
INSTALLING CABINET LATCHES

Cabinet latches help keep cabinets closed, so that plates or other breakables don't come crashing out. Again, you can find them at the hardware store, and their easy to fasten with a screwdriver.



Best Tip Ever: Doing all of this by yourself would be a lot of work. Make it a project for a group of volunteers to undertake - you'll be amazed by how fast it'll get done!

STRAPPING DOWN COMPUTERS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT



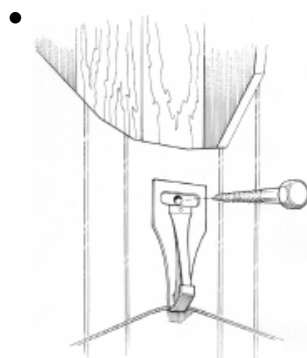
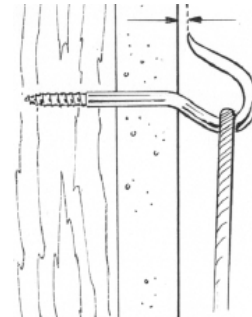
Computers and other valuable equipment can easily slide off surfaces during an earthquake. Heck, maybe you're just clumsy and bump into things a lot. Either way, securing your equipment is easy and smart investment. There are generally two ways to do it:

- With heavy-duty Velcro pads, which you can purchase from the hardware store.
- With specially-designed straps, which you can find at many on-line vendors and at some hardware stores.

SECURING WALL HANGINGS

Broken glass due to fallen paintings and mirrors is one of the most common hazards resulting from major earthquakes. You can cut down the risk by securing your wall hangings, either:

- With specially-made picture hanging hooks that have a metal tab to keep them closed



- With screw hooks or eye hooks, which are easy to find and cheap.

Remember – preparedness starts at home: when you're out buying brackets and straps and fasteners, buy a couple extra to take back to your house!

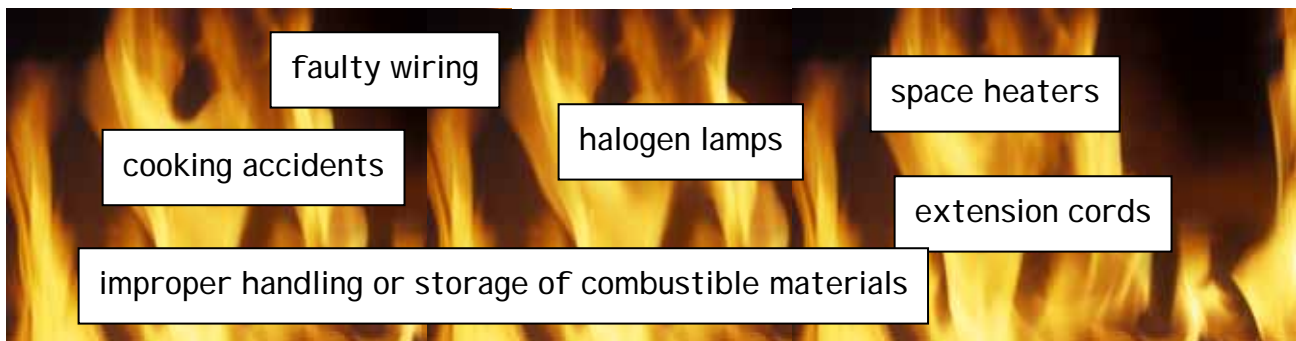
Is it Hot in Here or is it Just Me?



Fire Safety and Extinguishers



One of the most common emergencies you might face is fire.
Fires can be caused by many things:



Furthermore, other disasters like earthquakes, tornadoes, and extreme weather can sometimes cause fires.

Here are some steps you can take increase fire safety at work:

- Understand how to safely evacuate your building, and *make sure exits are clear of obstructions.*
- *Become familiar with the fire protection systems in place at work* (such as fire alarms, sprinklers, fire doors, extinguishers). Where are they and how do they work?
 - If your building has sprinklers, make sure they aren't blocked by shelving or other things.
 - Replace batteries in your fire and smoke alarms regularly.
- *Know how and when to use a fire extinguisher.*

If a fire starts in your building, it is best to notify others, head outside, and call 9-1-1.

You should only try to fight the fire if:

1. *It is small*
2. *It doesn't appear to be spreading*
3. *It is not blocking an exit*



Fire Extinguishers



- Make sure your facility's fire extinguishers are in an easily accessible place. It is better to have several small extinguishers placed around your agency than to have a single large one.
- There are different types of fire extinguishers for different fires (usually called A, B, and C)- check yours to see what kinds of fires they fight. The best kind of extinguisher is actually a combination of all three: surprisingly called an ABC extinguisher.
- Check your fire extinguishers on a regular basis to make sure they are properly charged.

When Using a Fire Extinguisher, Remember the **PASS** Method!



P: Pull the Pin, Unlocking the Lever



A: Aim at the Base of the Fire



S: Squeeze the Handle



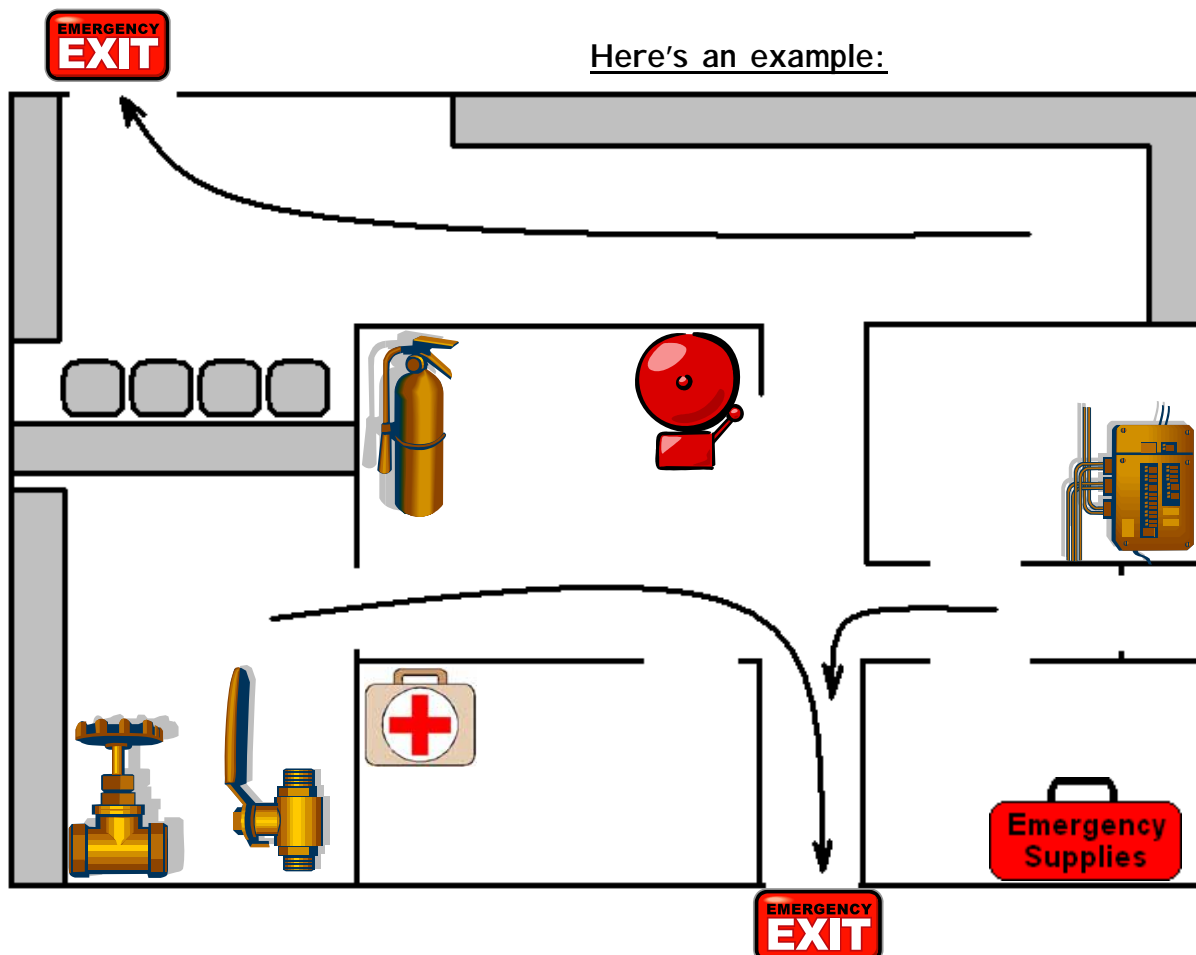
S: Sweep the Hose Side to Side

Sketching a Facility Floor Plan

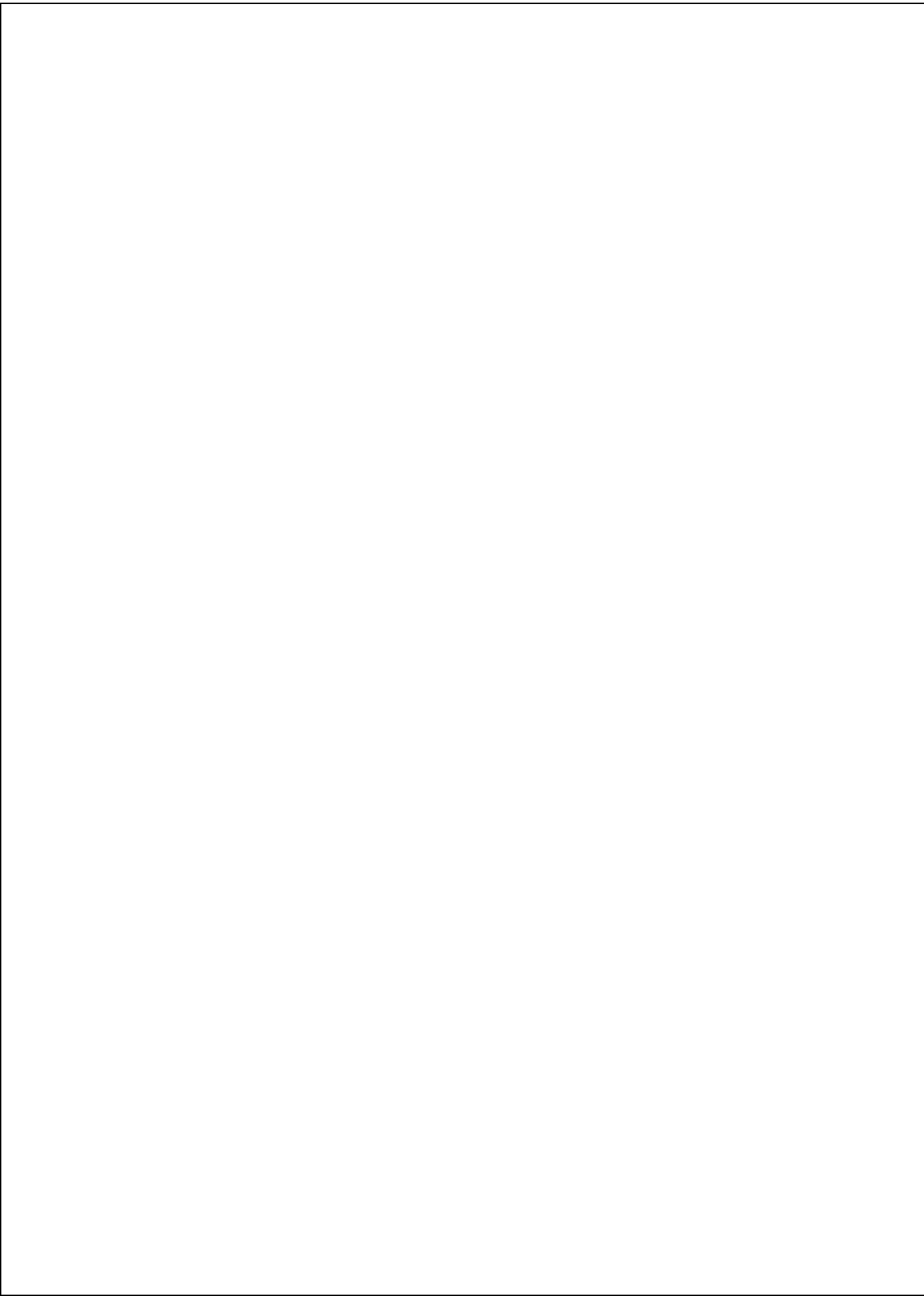


This preparedness activity should appeal to all the artists out there. The task is simple but can help reduce confusion and safety hazards during an emergency. Here goes:

- Make a sketch of your facility's floor plan (you can use the back of this sheet if you'd like)
- Label the floor plan with anything relevant to emergencies, such as:
 - Fire Extinguishers
 - Fire Alarms
 - First Aid Kits
 - Evacuation Routes
 - Agency Go Kits
 - Emergency Supplies
 - Emergency Exits
 - Shut-off Valves for Gas, Electricity, and Water
 - Shelter Points
- Share the locations of these things with your staff and volunteers, and post copies of the emergency floor plan around your building



Emergency Floor Plan



POLICE & FIRE

Your local Police and Fire Departments are some of your greatest allies when facing emergencies and disasters. Be a good friend – get in touch with them and let them know you're out there. If they know who you are and who you serve, and that you are working towards preparedness, you will undoubtedly become a priority to them in the wake of a disaster.

On the other side of this sheet, you will find a sample to use in writing a letter to your local Police and Fire Departments. This is a nice, formal way to establish your relationship.

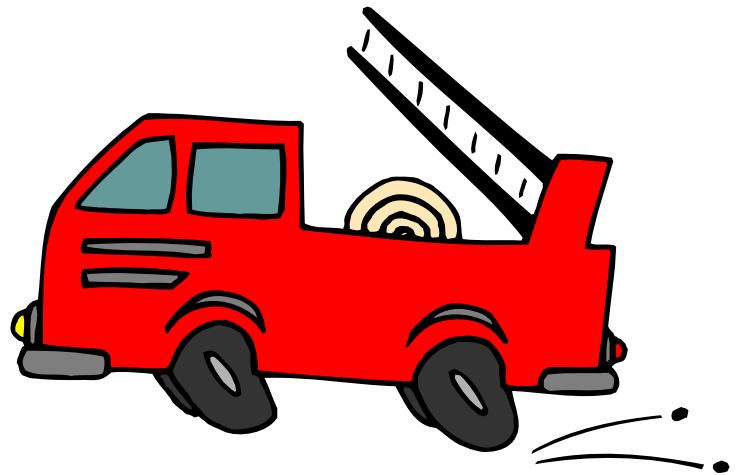
On the other side of things, make sure that your staff and volunteers have access to the Police and Fire Departments' non-emergency numbers, and know where those departments are. Below is a space to write down your local Police and Fire contact information. Please post this information somewhere visible to your staff and volunteers.



Police Department

Station: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____



Fire Department

Station: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____

January 1, 2007

Smallville Police Department
Precinct #12
1100 Main Street
Smallville, WA 98122

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to introduce myself on behalf of the Smallville Food Pantry. As executive director of the Smallville Food Pantry, I oversee a program that serves 4,000 unduplicated households over 300,000 pounds of food every year. Clearly, our program is integral in meeting the needs of many of our community's most vulnerable members.

As an important part of our local community, the Smallville Food Pantry has begun to prepare for emergencies and disasters. We have started this process by educating our staff and volunteers about workplace preparedness, by establishing evacuation and communications plans, and by starting to collaborate with the Red Cross.

The Smallville Food Pantry believes that it is important to nurture relationships with other organizations who serve our community, whether day-to-day or during an emergency. Naturally, your precinct is of utmost importance to the safety and well-being of our community. So it is with this letter that we hope to start a mutually beneficial relationship with you as we work towards emergency preparedness.

We have recently posted your address and contact information at our food pantry so that you will be easier to contact in the event of a disaster, and we hope that you will also take note of our address and contact information, so that you may contact us when needed. We look forward to working with the future, and are excited to hear from you about ways we can better work to prepare ourselves for our community. Please do not hesitate to contact us to let us know that you've received this letter, or to start a more personal conversation about emergency preparedness.

Thank you for the valued work you do in our community!

Sincerely,

Jane Smith
Executive Director
Smallville Food Pantry
123 Broadway Avenue
Smallville, WA 98123
Phone: (206) 555-1234
Fax: (206) 555-1234
E-mail: Jane.Smith@SmallVilleFoodBank.org

Forget the Wild Goose Chase

Know Where Your Local Community Resources Are Now

Your local community resources are of utmost importance in an emergency – they may be the only ones you have! It's hard to know right now exactly what you might need when disaster strikes, but knowing where to find it will make all the difference.

With that in mind, take the time to **locate potentially important resources in your neighborhood**. Even better, **post a large map on a wall at your agency, and label the following** (this will help everyone better understand the resources in their area):



Food:

- Other food pantries
- Grocery stores
- Restaurants
- Corner stores
- Soup kitchens/meal programs

Gathering Points:

- Community center
- Shelters
- Schools
- Public library
- Churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.

Supplies:

- Hardware stores
- Sports/camping stores

Medical:

- Nearest public health clinic
- Hospital
- Veterinary clinic
- Drug store/pharmacy

Other:

- Other social services organizations
- Pay phones

(more on the next page)

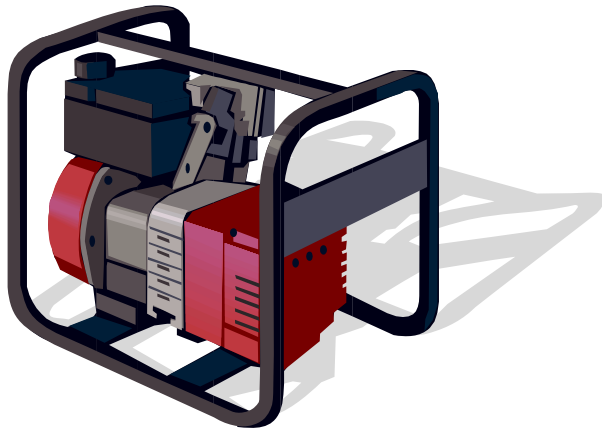
Some important information and ideas:

- Mapping all these resources takes a lot of work and time. Consider using some of your volunteers to help you complete the task.

- Pay phones are a part of the emergency services network, which means that they are some of the first phones to be restored to operation after a disaster. If your phones aren't working, head to your nearest pay phone (*but don't forget to keep some change handy!*)



- Some local gathering points might be a potential places where you could set up shop temporarily if your site is inaccessible. Talk with your community center, schools, churches, etc., to see if this is a possibility. If so, *get an agreement in writing.*



- If you don't have a generator, try to find a local store or organization that is willing to lend or rent you one in an emergency. *Get an agreement in writing.*

- Remember, preparedness starts at home, so make sure you understand the resources available near your house.



Spread the Word

Communicating in an Emergency



How you communicate in the wake of a disaster can make or break your ability to respond effectively. Whether it means working with the media to get your message across or simply hanging fliers on your door to tell people when you'll be open, what you communicate will help you to better serve your community when they need it most.

A few simple questions to get you started:

What will you need to communicate?

- About your operations: when you're open, if you've moved, if your services have changed, etc.
- About your agency's status, damages to your facility, etc.
- Your agency's needs: for funds, for volunteers, for food or other supplies
- Where clients should turn if you're not open: shelters, feeding sites, other food pantries

Who will you need to communicate to?

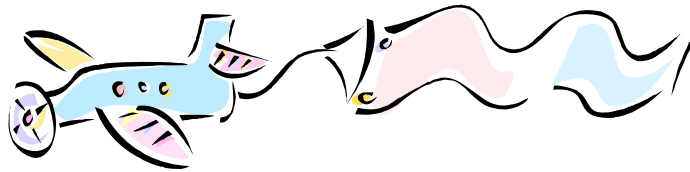
- Your clients
- Partner agencies in disaster relief efforts
- Your food banks or distributors
- Other food pantries
- Your board and funders
- The media and general public

How will you communicate?

- Via email or the web
- With paper, fliers, etc.
- Verbally



- Phone or voicemail
- Radio
- A plane with a banner behind it



Who will communicate your message?

- Do they know who to contact and how?
- Do they have the proper training and authority?
- Are your messages consistent with one another?

What can you do to prepare in advance?

- Define your agencies talking points or key messages (these may be related to your mission statement)
- Anticipate the information your clients might need, create those fliers in advance (and in multiple languages!)
- Create a press release about your response: if you ever need to use it, it will be ready to use with (probably) some minor changes
- Create some emergency-related funding solicitations
- Have your emergency contact lists in hand!





Making a Display

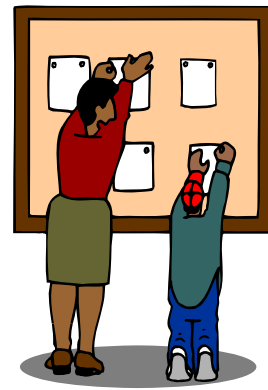
Hopefully your board will be more organized than this. But hey, it's a good start!

Most disaster relief experts say that people should expect to be on their own for the first 72 hours after a major disaster – first responders will not be able to meet every person's needs. This fact points to the need for people to be prepared to take care of themselves. *As food pantries, we have a special opportunity to educate many of the most vulnerable members of our communities about preparedness.*

One great way to start educating your clients is to create a **bulletin board or display at your food pantry**, and to provide resources and written materials for clients to take with them.

Creating such a bulletin board can be a **fun project for a small group of volunteers** to undertake. This could involve:

- finding and printing information off the internet
- gathering print materials from your local Red Cross Chapter or other organizations
- designing and arranging the look and content of the board
- finding a place for the board and any copies of print materials that accompany it
- changing or updating the theme of the display every few months



Get those volunteers involved!

(more on the next side)

Here are some ideas about what to include...

- an attention-catching title or graphics
- general information about preparedness
- handouts or brochures for clients to take
- information about other resources clients could turn to in an emergency
- information on what the food pantry plans to do in a disaster
- the above information in multiple languages



... and where to place the display:

- somewhere highly visible to all clients
- perhaps on a wall along where clients have to wait in line

An important thought...

Communicating an emergency preparedness message to your clients can be challenging. Many of your clients may already feel vulnerable or disempowered, so hearing about a topic as threatening as disasters can create anxiety or seem paralyzing. For people who are struggling with their day-to-day needs, being told to store emergency food or put together an emergency supplies kit may seem unrealistic or even condescending. It is therefore important to be sensitive to these considerations by emphasizing realistic and simple things your clients can do (especially things that don't necessarily involve material resources). It is also important to present preparedness in a positive light. Preparedness should not be about fear and impending tragedy. It should instead be about empowerment and strengthening your community. It should ultimately be an expression of love and care for the people you serve.

Pandemic Flu

Planning and Responding Effectively

Pandemic flu has gained attention recently as a very real threat to our society. The way a pandemic flu could affect your clients, surrounding community, and agency, is quite different from other large disasters, and so it is important to make some special considerations.

During a pandemic flu, people will be told to stay home to avoid spreading the virus. People will stock up on supplies and it is likely that grocery stores' stocks will be depleted. This may increase the need for people to use your food pantry.



A Few Flu Facts:

- A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a flu virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity and no vaccine exists.
- Avian (bird) flu is just one type of flu strain that could become a pandemic.
- Flu pandemics are spread person-to-person in three ways:
 - Through coughing and sneezing
 - By touching things that are contaminated and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
 - Though the spread of particles in crowded, enclosed spaces
- Symptoms are likely to be similar to normal flu, but more severe.

Proper Sneezing and Coughing Etiquette: instead of coughing or sneezing in your hand, which often goes back to touching things and spreading germs, you should sneeze into your elbow or a hanky.

Things you can do to prepare:

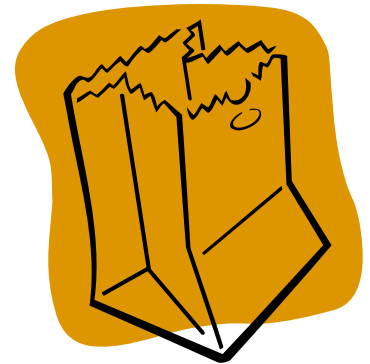
- Ensure that you minimize the chances of spreading flu at your agency by encouraging staff and volunteers to wash their hands regularly and following proper coughing and sneezing etiquette.
- Keep hand sanitizer, rubber gloves, and masks on hand to help suppress chances for infection.
- Educate your clients on how infections are spread and to keep themselves healthy.

Changing the Way Your Agency Operates During an Outbreak

A pandemic flu outbreak will change the way your agency operates. You will not want clients showing up all at once in large numbers, or touching items in the food pantry. Here are some options you should consider:

Pre-bag food for clients. This will suppress the spread of infection by limiting what your clients touch, and by shortening client lines and crowding in your facility. If you prepare for this option:

- Do you have enough bags to package the food you will distribute?
- Where will you set up the food-bagging operation?
- Who will staff the operation?
- Could you hand the bags to clients through a door or window?



Have volunteers with rubber gloves hand food to clients as they go through the line. This will limit what your clients touch, but may not lessen crowding during your open hours.

- Do you have enough rubber gloves and volunteers to staff such an operation?



Extend your hours so that people don't all show up at once.

- Do you have enough staff to undertake such an option?
- How will you communicate this arrangement to your clients?

Move your operation outside. This can help lessen the chances of transmitting the flu.

- Is there an area nearby that you could use?