Prepare Your House

There are many ways you can better prepare your house to withstand the effects of a natural disaster.

BEFORE A HURRICANE
- If your house does not have permanent shutters, plan to protect your windows and glass doors with the low-cost alternative of plywood panels. Long before storm season approaches, cut 1/4-inch marine plywood to fit each window and glass door. Pre-drill holes every 18 inches for easy installation of screws. Store the panels where you can easily access them during an emergency. Clearly mark each panel so you can quickly determine which window it covers.
- The roof of your house is very vulnerable to hurricane winds. Reinforce the connection between the roof and walls with hurricane straps and bracing to resist a hurricane’s uplift.
- Reinforce double-entry front doors as well as garage doors.
- Clear away dead or weak tree branches that may break off and damage your house in high winds.

BEFORE A FLOOD
- Stock up on building materials such as plywood, plastic sheathing, hammer, nails, saw, pry bar, shovels, and sandbags. In the case of an emergency, you will be better off already having these items on hand.
- Prevent electrical damage by raising the level of electrical components (fuses and circuit breaker boxes, motors, switches, and outlets). This can save you from the expense of replacing a flood-damaged system, and it will help prevent fires caused by short circuits. Remember that a licensed contractor should do this work.
- Keep vegetation, yard debris, and any other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from your house.
- Plant trees far from your house at a distance greater than their mature height. If you do have trees close to your home, trim them to a height of 8 to 10 feet and keep them free of dead or dying wood.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Repair any defective electrical or gas connections.
- Secure your water heater by strapping it to wall studs or bolting it to the floor (this can prevent a possible gas leak and provide a convenient source of clean water after an earthquake).

Support Building Safety!

For more information about building safety codes and local requirements, contact your local building department below.

345 S. Main Ave.
Bolivar, MO 65613

Safety First—Disaster Preparedness
Tips for Your Home and Family

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Prepare Your Family

Although no one can prevent natural disasters from occurring, there are many things you can do to make the impact less devastating for your family.

Every home should have 3 key elements in place before a disaster strikes:
- Evacuation Plan
- Communication Plan
- Emergency Supply Kit

Evacuation Plan
In the event of an emergency such as a flood, wildfire, tornado, or hurricane, you may be instructed to evacuate your house. Depending on the type of natural disaster, you may have to travel 20 to 50 miles to get your family to safety. Establish a “safety drab” (a friend’s or relative’s house some distance away) and plan several different routes to get there so you can drive around roadblocks or hazards. Practice your plan and become familiar with each route so you will be better prepared.

You may need to turn off your gas, water, and electricity before you evacuate. Each member of the household should learn when and how to do this.

Communication Plan
During an emergency it is usually easier to make long distance calls, so choose an out-of-state relative to be your family’s “communication center.” Be sure that each member of your family knows the name and phone number for this person in case you are separated. By having everyone call one central person, it will be easier for you to check on each other and reunite after a disaster.

Teach every family member when and how to dial 9-1-1 for emergency assistance.

Know Your Neighbors
Find out if any of your neighbors will need extra help during an emergency. The elderly, disabled, and people with small children may need you to lend a helping hand.

Emergency Kits

Emergency Supply Kit
Whether you are preparing for an earthquake, tornado, hurricane, flood, or wildfire, you will need the following basic items in your kit:
- battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- flashlight and extra batteries
- canned food
- first aid kit and manual
- prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine, and asthma inhalers
- non-prescription medications (aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever) and dust masks
- large garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- local maps
- infant formula and diapers
- portable container for important family documents
- cash or traveler’s checks and change
- fire extinguisher
- matches in a waterproof container
- paper and pencil
- books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children
- battery-operated lanterns and extra batteries
- blankets
- hand-operated can opener
- durable clothes and change of clothes for each member of your family
- basic tools (wrench, hammer)
- utility gloves
- a picture of you and your pet together
- favorite toys, treats, or bedding
- name and phone number of your veterinarian
- first aid kit (talk to your veterinarian about what is most appropriate for your pet’s emergency medical needs)
- collar with ID tag, harness, or leash
- crate or other pet carrier
- sanitation (pet litter and litter box, newspapers, plastic trash bags)
- a picture of you and your pet together
- favorite toys, treats, or bedding
- blanket

Pet Supply Kit
An emergency kit for your furry friends should include:
- food
- water
- bowl
- medication and medical records