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Engineering the Edge for Safety *Excellence*



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Emergency Preparedness: Are You Ready?

Preparing for an emergency requires a bit of effort, but it's time well spent. What if an explosion, a landslide or a flash flood forced an evacuation of your neighborhood before you got home from work? Would you know where to find your family? Do you know the emergency plans for your children's school? And at work, do you know your role in your company's emergency response plan? When you prepare for an emergency, you can reduce some of the stress and anxiety experienced by yourself and your family members during a difficult time. Here are some tips to help you prepare for an emergency, at work and at home:



At Work

- ◆ Learn about the hazards of your workplace. Do you know where to find a chemical's MSDS (material safety data sheet), a safety shower or an emergency shut-off switch?
- ◆ Know how to get out alive. Study the company's evacuation plans and memorize two ways out of every area of your workplace - without an elevator. Note the number of doors and workstations between you and the exit so you can find your way out in the dark, if necessary. You should also know the designated meeting place and reporting procedures for personnel after an evacuation.
- ◆ Note the location of the fire extinguishers and learn how to correctly use them.
- ◆ Know where to find the first aid kit and how to contact employees certified to provide first aid.
- ◆ Post emergency phone numbers by your workstation, as well as the address and exact location of your workplace.
- ◆ Keep with you your identification, contact numbers and any necessary medical information.
- ◆ If you have a disability or condition that might interfere with your ability to exit quickly, inform your supervisor.

At Home

- ◆ Pack a disaster kit twice. Keep one kit in the home and a miniature version in your car.
- ◆ Create an evacuation plan of your home. Review it with your family and practice it at least once a year.
- ◆ Designate an out-of-the-area relative or family friend to be a contact - the family point person.
- ◆ If family members are separated during an emergency, they can call the point person and leave or retrieve messages.
- ◆ Pick two meeting places, one in your neighborhood and one far from home in case the neighborhood is evacuated.
- ◆ Talk to your children's schools about emergency plans. Make sure they have your contact information and know who is authorized to pick up your child if you can't get there yourself.

Preparing for an emergency can not only reduce the stress experienced during an emergency, it can also make family members feel more in control of their safety. And during times of chaos, a little control is very powerful.

