

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

Presbytery of Newton
May 14, 2013

What is a disaster and why do we need to plan?

Preplanning is the key to being ready for any disaster. The steps taken before and immediately after an event will have a positive effect on the members of our congregations.

Disasters are events that cause human suffering or create human needs that survivors cannot alleviate without spiritual, monetary, material, and/or physical assistance. An adequate response meets physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. We want to be especially attentive to responding to those in our congregations and community with limited personal options and resources to overcome the chaos often delivered by disasters.

Some possible disasters include: incidents related to public violence, terrorism, chemical explosions, transportation accidents, hazardous waste spills, fires, coastal storms, floods, earthquakes, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes, and hurricanes.

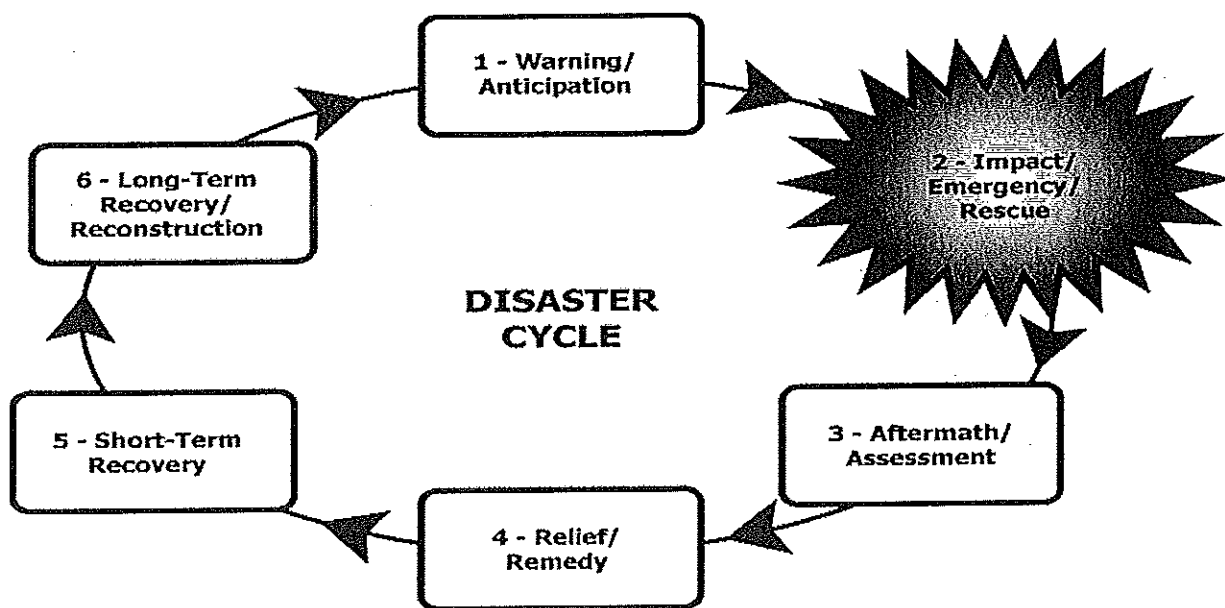
Disaster planning covers three distinct phases:

1. preparation
2. immediate response
3. recovery

A congregation's response philosophy includes:

1. offering a ministry of presence
2. assessing need
3. provide spiritual care
4. coordinating a response

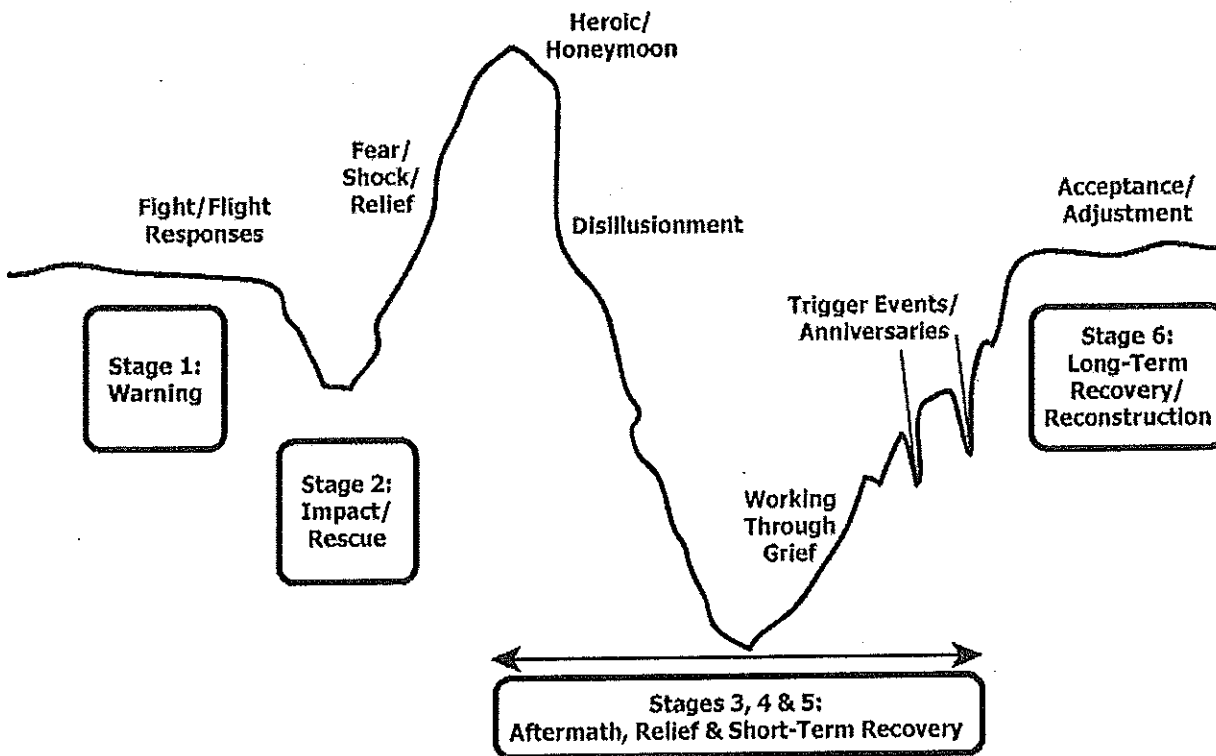
Stages of a Disaster



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

How Individuals and Communities Are Affected by Disasters



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

CONGREGATIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

A local congregation has a number of items to consider in preparing for a disaster. In addition to developing and implementing a preparedness plan for the church, the leadership might think about assisting families with their own preparedness, planning for involvement in the local community response, and participation in long-term recovery. An important aspect of any disaster preparedness plan is education so include this in your implementation.

The following pages provide resources for considering all of these aspects of preparedness and response. This information is compiled from several sources: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), Ken McKenzie, Disaster Response Coordinator for the Presbytery of Flint River, and Community Arise.

Resources Included

Congregational Disaster Preparedness Checklist

Responding to a Disaster: emergency phase, inventory phase, relief phase, recovery phase

Role and Responsibility of the Local Church in Response to Disaster in the Local Community.

Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

Family Disaster Preparedness Checklist

Examples of Preparedness Kits

CONGREGATIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST*

Name of Church

Pastor _____ Clerk of Session _____

Phone _____ Phone _____

Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator _____

CDRC phone _____ Cell phone _____

Preparatory Phase

1. Alert is issued by NOAA, Department of Homeland Security, or state/local EMA.
2. Advise Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator to initiate telephone tree for elder notification.
3. Elders notify members of their respective undershepherd groups of the developing situation, status of local shelters, and plans for disaster mitigation.
4. Special attention given to shut-ins and elderly who may need assistance.
5. Elders report completion of their calls to CDRC, noting special needs.
6. Church Staff backs up computer files, financial data, rolls, etc. and stores electronic and hard copies in a secure location, preferably off campus.

___ CDRC notified Date and Time _____

___ Elders notified Date and Time _____

___ Reports received from Elders Date and Time _____

___ Electronics and Hard Copies of Data Secured Date and Time _____

RESPONDING TO A DISASTER

Emergency Phase

Everyone remains in place, sheltered against the event. Use of NOAA radio encouraged to remain safe until the "all clear" is given.

Inventory Phase

1. Elders see to the safety of their families and property first.
2. Elders contact those on their undershepherd list. If phone service is out, individual visitation should be attempted with respect for public safety and National Guard lines. Information should be given to CDRC.
3. Within 24 hours of the incident, the Session holds a Called Meeting at the church or other location if the church is not usable. During this meeting, the following items should be addressed by the CDRC.
 - a. Status of members and their needs to the extent that it can be known.
 - b. Status of church facilities and discussion of possible use for the benefit of the community.
 - c. Status of local shelters, both primary and secondary.
 - d. If the church is a shelter, status of coordination with ARC, Salvation Army or other relief agencies.
 - e. Schedule a time for congregational gathering and worship.

___ Called Meeting of Session Scheduled Date and Time _____

___ CDRC Reports Shared

___ Status of members and needs Date and Time _____

___ Status of facilities Date and Time _____

___ Discussion of availability to community

___ Coordination with relief agencies

___ American Red Cross

___ Salvation Army

___ Local VOAD

___ Other (Specify) _____

___ Gathering and Worship of Congregation Scheduled Date & Time _____

Relief Phase

1. Within 24 hours of the Called Session Meeting, the CDRC, Pastor and/or Clerk contact the Presbytery Disaster Response Coordinator and give a full report of the impact on the church, its members and community.
2. PDRC assimilates information from all churches impacted within the Presbytery and, in conjunction with the Presbytery Executive or his/her delegate, provides information as to injuries, damage, needs etc. to the Presbytery-at-large.
3. PDRC and/or Presbytery Executive notify Presbyterian Disaster Assistance of injuries, damage, needs etc. (PDA #888.728.7228 x5840)
4. CDRC and PDRC assist in the formation of a local VOAD, if one is not already formed and arrange for volunteers, resources, and funding to aid in relief and recovery.
5. During this phase, it is imperative that members with special needs (elderly, shut-ins, chronically ill, families with young children, the poor, etc. are closely supported.)

___ Presbytery Office or PDRC notified and report give Date & Time _____

___ Information received as to the status of Presbytery. Date & Time _____

___ Local VOAD formed, if not already in place Date & Time _____

___ Special-needs members identified and supported. Plans made for on-going support.

Recovery Phase

Each recovery phase is unique to the incident and the community involved. Most often there is not a clear delineation between the Relief and Recovery phases, rather organizations and events take shape in response to the realities present. As infrastructure is being restored, homes and businesses re-built, each congregation can discover its own, unique ministry within the community. Suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Serve as a childcare center for families affected by the disaster. Have someone familiar with childhood trauma and stress available to consult or assist with caregiving.
- ❖ Make facilities available for community meetings. Churches often serve as community activity centers. Hospitality has historically been one of the callings of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Consider offering fellowship halls, education buildings and even sanctuaries as shelter facilities for volunteers. The American Red Cross, Salvation Army and other relief agencies have shelter guidelines for victims. Become familiar with these insofar as possible. Volunteers usually need only a place to sleep, eat and bathe.

- ❖ Warehouse space can often be established in church facilities. Have someone with a knowledge of materials management available to supervise or consult on the reception, cataloging and distribution of materials. Establish early on the type of materials which will be accepted. Beware of an influx of unusable items. This is often termed the Second Disaster.
- ❖ Serve as a clearinghouse for information about people, needs, opportunities, etc. This can be as simple as setting up and maintaining a community bulletin board or as complex as working with USPS to establish a temporary mail center.
- ❖ In all cases, keep the PDRC and the Presbytery informed of what the church is doing. As a connectional church, we celebrate and struggle together.

Distribution: Pastors, Clerks of Session, CDRCs, PDRCs, Synod Disaster Response Officer, PDA

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH IN RESPONSE TO DISASTER IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

When disaster strikes:

The CDRC will notify the appropriate persons that a disaster has occurred and what responses are planned or underway. The Presbytery will be informed as to what has happened in your community and the possibility of involvement. Middle governing bodies need to know as soon as possible who is available to help and how the disaster has affected the congregation, the church building and the ability of the church to minister to the disaster survivors.

Participate in and help organize the faith community response:

All disasters are local. Even in the midst of national organizations and regional and state bodies arriving to help with emergency assistance and relief, the local congregation is the most important body in deterring what happens next. Outside agencies only help for a little while, and much of the aid and support that will be available in the long term will be determined shortly after emergency phase is over. It is essential that the local congregations in the area of a disaster quickly become involved in the faith community's response. Without the involvement of the local congregation – and frequently without the leadership of the pastor or trained laypersons – the long-term response will leave many survivors without adequate resources to rebuild... resources that would readily have been available with a faith community organized to receive them.

Use buildings as shelter, when appropriate:

There are two meanings in English of the word *sanctuary*; a holy place of worship, and a safe place in the midst of danger. Church buildings can be both a place of worship and a vital place of safety and shelter in a disaster.

If your church is remodeling or building a new structure, consider upgrading the facilities to make it useful as a shelter or staging area for those coming to help. Making a building disaster resistant may increase the cost; but it may also lower insurance costs and mitigate damage in a disaster. Churches in particularly disaster prone areas should seriously consider a program of mitigation which includes building renovation and strengthening.

Adding showers and planning the facilities for mass shelter can provide an opportunity for ministry to the community in times of crisis. In addition to survivors, those who arrive following a disaster to restore communications and power lines need facilities to prepare meals, shower and recoup after the day's work. In the recovery phase of a disaster, churches can host work teams from other parts of the country. Churches have been used as service centers in the relief phase and then gone on to provide support for long-term recovery efforts organized by the faith community.

Some churches have done it all!

During the Ice Storm in Northern New York in 1998, the Peru Community Church made its kitchen available to the power company for the preparation of food for line crews, its fellowship building for survivors, and its parking lot for wood donated by local maple farmers for home heating in Peru... and as far north as Quebec. Of course, the ability of the Peru Church to respond so quickly and so positively to this crisis depended upon the willingness of the church to be used by the community, the accessibility and usability of the church facilities, and the prompt response of the middle judicatory to the church's request for support.

Resources available to local congregations:

Advisors

Members of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Team are available to congregations:

- When they are in the area following a disaster to provide support and pastoral care for the congregation.
- On an as available basis to provide consultation with churches planning mitigation.
- To provide advice to congregations on becoming involved in the recovery stage of the disaster.

Note: PDA must be invited into the disaster area by the Presbytery!

Coordination for work teams

PDA can provide information about opportunities for work teams in areas affected by disasters. Initial information is available on the PDA website: <http://pda.pcusa.org>. In addition, PDA can provide written material on organizing and managing a work team and copies of the Safety Manual. Work teams may register on-line at the PDA website or by calling 888.728.7288 x5839.

When work teams identify a prospective site and make arrangements to schedule a mission trip, PDA will provide PDA t-shirts for the whole team.

Print material

Several publications on disaster response and organizing a disaster team are also available from PDA.

Support while in the field

When local congregations become involved in the faith community response to a disaster, PDA provides support and counsel both to the faith community and to the local congregation.

While early work teams need to be self-supporting in the field, the PDA office is available for support and consultation in case of emergencies or difficulties while on site. Work teams relate directly to the faith communities where they go to serve and are encouraged to work out difficulties directly with their host community. However, at times problems arise that can't be solved by the local congregation or the faith community to cope with. PDA can be helpful in finding solutions and facilitating better outcomes.

CONGREGATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE COORDINATOR*

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Congregational Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC) shall serve as the resource person in the local church for the purposes of disaster preparation, mitigation, response and recovery. To this end, the CDRC should:

1. Have current knowledge of members of the congregation and access to their addresses, phone numbers and special needs.
2. Be thoroughly familiar with community infrastructure, roads and emergency shelters.
3. Be knowledgeable as to the roles and responsibilities of local organizations active in disaster, e.g. local government, ARC, Salvation Army, local EMAs and VOADS.
4. Participate in disaster response training provided by PDA, and/or presbytery and synod.
5. Coordinate the disaster response of the local church with the Presbytery Disaster Response Coordinator.

The CDRC shall oversee and maintain emergency communications within the congregation and share necessary information with the Pastor, Clerk of Session and the PDRC. It is anticipated that this will be accomplished through the use of systems such as a telephone tree, e-mail, or house-to-house welfare checks by members of the Session or their designees.

The CDRC shall conduct an in-house disaster drill at least annually to maintain an adequate level of preparedness. This shall additionally serve to insure the accuracy of congregational information and special needs.

Following a disaster, the CDRC shall participate in the formation of an Interfaith Response Team under the direction of PDA or Church World Service.

The CDRC shall assist the Pastor and Session in assessing and responding to needs within the congregation and community, giving special attention to individuals and families who are in danger of "falling through the cracks" of relief efforts.

ACCOUNTABILITY: The CDRC shall report to the Head of Staff, the Session, and the PDRC.

TERM: The CDRC will serve on a yearly basis, subject to renewal by the Session. There will be no specific limitations on renewals.

**Ken McKenzie, Presbytery of Flint River*

FAMILY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

WHO WE ARE

Full Name	Address	Phone (Home, Work, Cell)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

WHERE WE ARE

Our Shelter in Place location in the house will be the _____

Our Rally Point if we must leave the house will be the _____

Our closest shelter facility is the _____

Our secondary shelter facility is the _____

WHAT WE HAVE

Non-perishable food for three days Potable water for three days

First Aid Kit Sanitation Supplies Prescription Medications

Battery Operated Radio Flashlight Important Papers

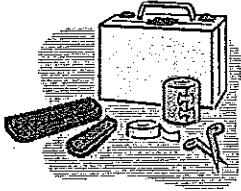
All of the above are located in the _____

WHO TO CALL

Name	Relationship	Address	Phone
_____	_____	_____	_____

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KITS

PORTABLE KIT

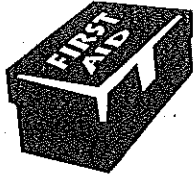


Emergency Supplies

Water, food, and clean air are the essential items for survival. Each family or individual's kit should be customized to meet specific needs, such as medications and infant formula. It should also be customized to

Recommended Supplies to Include in a Portable Kit:

- Water, amounts for portable kits will vary. Individuals should determine what amount they are able to both store comfortably outside the home and be able to transport to other locations.
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt to help filter the air
- Moist towelettes for sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Unique family needs, such as daily prescription medications, infant formula and diapers, and important family documents.
- Garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.



FIRST AID KIT

In any emergency a family member or you yourself may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. If you have these basic supplies you are better prepared to help your loved ones when they are hurt. Remember, many injuries are not life threatening and do not require immediate medical attention. Knowing how to treat minor injuries can make a difference in an emergency. Consider taking a first aid class, but simply having the following things can help you stop bleeding, prevent infection and assist in decontamination.

Things you should have:

- Two pairs of Latex, or other **sterile gloves** (if you are allergic to Latex).
- **Sterile dressings** to stop bleeding.
- **Cleansing agent/soap** and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect.
- **Antibiotic ointment** to prevent infection.
- **Burn ointment** to prevent infection.
- **Adhesive bandages** in a variety of sizes.
- **Eye wash solution** to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant.
- **Thermometer** (Red more: Biological threat)
- **Prescription medications** you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates.
- **Prescribed medical supplies** such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies.

Things it may be good to have:

- Cell phone
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Non-prescription drugs:

- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for upset stomach)
- Laxative



WATER & FOOD

Water

- One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.
- Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water.
- If you live in a warm climate more water may be necessary.
- Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles.
- Keep *at least* a three-day supply of water per person.

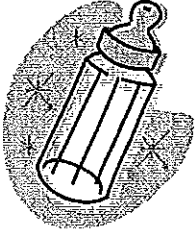


Food

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water.
- Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils.
- Choose foods your family will eat:
 - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
 - Protein or fruit bars
 - Dry cereal or granola
 - Peanut butter
 - Dried fruit
 - Nuts
 - Crackers
 - Canned juices
 - Non-perishable pasteurized milk
 - High energy foods
 - Vitamins
 - Food for infants
 - Comfort/stress foods

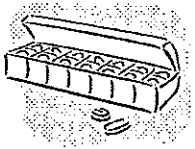
SPECIAL NEEDS ITEMS

Remember the special needs of your family members. **Infants, the elderly and persons with disabilities** need the same planning as everyone else, and sometimes a little more, to be prepared for a terrorist attack.



For Baby

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered Milk
- Medications
- Moist towelettes
- Diaper rash ointment



For Adults

- Ask your doctor about storing prescription medications such as heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin and other prescription drugs.
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

For Seniors:

- Plan how you will evacuate or signal for help.
- Plan emergency procedures with home health care agencies or workers.
- Tell others where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach others how to operate necessary equipment.
- Label equipment like wheelchairs, canes or walkers.

- Additional supplies for seniors:
 - List of prescription medications including dosage in your supply kits. Include any allergies.
 - Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries
 - Extra wheelchair batteries or other special equipment in your supply kit.
 - A list of the style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers in your emergency supply kits.
 - Copies of medical insurance and Medicare cards.
 - List of doctors and emergency contacts.

For people with Disabilities:

- Create a support network to help in an emergency.
- Tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Give one member of your support network a key to your house or apartment.
- Contact your city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- If you are dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility.
- Show others how to operate your wheelchair.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair, in addition to whether or not it is collapsible, in case it has to be transported.
- Additional supplies for People with Disabilities:
 - Prescription medicines, list of medications including dosage, list of any allergies
 - Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries
 - Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen
 - Keep a list of the style and serial number of medical devices.
 - Medical insurance and Medicare cards
 - List of doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified if you are hurt.

For more information on supplies, see "Your Family Disaster Supply Kit" from American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

For more information on special needs, see Disaster Preparedness for People With Disabilities from FEMA, and Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors from the Red Cross.



CLEAN AIR

Many potential terrorist attacks could send tiny microscopic “junk” into the air. For example, an explosion may release very fine debris that can cause lung damage. A biological attack may release germs that can make you sick if inhaled or absorbed through open cuts. Many of these agents can only hurt you if they get into your body, so think about creating a barrier between yourself and any contamination.

Nose and Mouth Protection

Face masks or dense-weave cotton material, that snugly covers your nose and mouth and is specifically fit for each member of the family. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children.

Be prepared to improvise with what you have on hand to protect your nose, mouth, eyes and cuts in your skin. Anything that fits snugly over your nose and mouth, including any dense-weave cotton material, can help filter contaminants in an emergency. It is very important that most of the air you breathe comes through the mask or cloth, not around it. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children. There are also a variety of face masks readily available in hardware stores that are rated based on how small a particle they can filter in an industrial setting.

Given the different types of attacks that could occur, there is not one solution for masking. For instance, simple cloth face masks can filter some of the airborne “junk” or germs you might breathe into your body, but will probably not protect you from chemical gases. Still, something over your nose and mouth in an emergency is better than nothing. Limiting how much “junk” gets into your body may impact whether or not you get sick or develop disease.

Other Barriers

- Heavyweight plastic garbage bags or plastic sheeting
- Duct tape
- Scissors

There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as “shelter-in-place”, is a matter of survival. You can use

these things to tape up windows, doors and air vents if you need to seal off a room from outside contamination. Consider pre-cutting and labeling these materials. Anything you can do in advance will save time when it counts.

Use available information to **assess the situation**. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you can use these things to tape up windows, doors and air vents if you need to seal off a room. Read more: [Deciding to Stay or Go](#).

HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air Filtration) Filter Fans

Once you have sealed a room with plastic sheeting and duct tape you may have created a better barrier between you and any contaminants that may be outside. However, no seal is perfect and some leakage is likely. In addition to which, you may find yourself in a space that is already contaminated to some degree.

Consider a **portable air purifier**, with a **HEPA filter**, to help remove contaminants from the room where you are sheltering. These highly efficient filters have small sieves that can capture very tiny particles, including some biological agents. Once trapped within a HEPA filter, contaminants cannot get into your body and make you sick. While these filters are excellent at filtering dander, dust, molds, smoke, biological agents and other contaminants, they will not stop chemical gases.

Some people, particularly those with severe allergies and asthma, use HEPA filters in masks, portable air purifiers as well as in larger home or industrial models to continuously filter the air.