

CHAPTER SIX

Build an emergency kit. Plan what you'll need for yourself and your family if emergency responders can't reach you right away.

- What do you need for yourself and your family if emergency responders can't help you during a disaster?
- Information on emergency kits are often available on your city's Web site (www.your city.gov/emergency) or on the Red Cross Web Site.
- A minimum three-day survival kit is a basic tool for peace of mind, comfort, and even survival during a disaster.
- Store at least one kit at home, in the car, and at work.
- Buy a starter kit or put one together yourself. If you buy a kit, remember to customize it to fit your needs. You may need extra items for children or pets.
- Identify a meeting place outside your home.
- Assign an out-of-area contact person who'll act as the communication hub.

Planning for Emergencies

It's important to have an emergency plan in place for you and your family. Chances are, in an emergency you may not all be together. Make a plan and communicate that plan—along with your vital health information—to your emergency contacts.

The ICE Program (In Case of Emergency)

If you should ever become incapacitated because of an emergency, emergency workers need a quick way to find out who they should contact.

Paramedics, police, and firefighters sometimes waste valuable time trying to figure out which name in a cell phone to call when disaster strikes. They need to talk immediately to a family member or close friend so you can get the medical attention you need as soon as possible. Illinois Governor Blagojevich has successfully launched the Illinois ICE program. It could also be considered a PSN (Personal Safety Net) program.

All you have to do is put the name of your emergency contact in your cell phone address book with the word "ICE" or "PSN" in front of it.

For example, if your emergency contact is Sheila, you should put "ICE-Sheila" or "PSN-Sheila" in your cell phone book. That way, emergency workers treating you can quickly contact Sheila to get vital information about you. You can also have more than one emergency contact; just list them as ICE1, ICE2, and so on. It's an easy way to extend your safety net.

Notes: _____



It is vain to talk of the interest of the community, without understanding what is the interest of the individual.

–Jeremy Bentham

Get involved

Before a disaster, get involved and become familiar with community resources. These will be different in every city, but check out some that seem relevant to you.

- American Red Cross
www.redcross.org
- Citizen Corps
www.citizencorps.gov
- Volunteer agencies
- Police and fire departments
- Ambulance department
- Crisis clinic
- Family crisis services

You can also volunteer to develop site-specific disaster plans for your workplace, child's daycare center, or apartment building.

Crises or change in your life

