

If You Needed to Evacuate Due to a Disaster,

Would You Know What to Do? I.I.I. Offers Tips

NEW YORK, August 1, 2007 — In the event of a sudden emergency, you may have just minutes to gather your family and important papers, and get out of your house, possibly for good. Are you prepared? Where would you go? What would you take with you?

Taking the time to map out an evacuation plan ahead of time will ensure that when a fire, a hurricane or a flood threatens you and your family, you will know how to respond quickly. By planning ahead, you will know exactly where to go, and what your family will need while away from home, according to the Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.).

“With preparation and practice, families stand the best chance of getting out with what they need, and ending up in the right place,” said Jeanne Salvatore, senior vice president and consumer spokesperson for the I.I.I. “The key is to plan ahead, so your evacuation will be smooth, fast and easy.”

The I.I.I. suggests a five-step plan to get you and your family on the road to safety:

1. Plan Your Evacuation Route

- Map out a primary route and a backup route in case roads are blocked or impassable.
- Ask an out-of-town friend or family member to act as a contact person in case your family is separated during the evacuation and make sure that everyone (especially children) has the necessary contact information.
- Identify a specific place to meet in case your family members are forced to flee separately.
- Listen to local radio and television reports when disaster threatens. Use travel routes specified by local authorities—don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- Keep your car fueled if evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during an emergency, or they may run out of fuel or be unable to pump gas during power outages.

2. Create a Home Inventory

Create a complete home inventory of your personal property. An inventory will help you ensure that you have purchased enough insurance to replace your possessions. It will also speed the claims process, and will substantiate losses for income tax purposes.

The free, downloadable I.I.I. software, Know your Stuff home inventory software can help you organize and list your possessions on your computer. You can then save the finished inventory on a CD or print a copy for your records. Whether you do your inventory electronically or on good, old-fashioned notepaper, make sure you keep a copy with your important papers and a duplicate copy in a safe place outside your home (in a safe-deposit box, or with an out-of-town family member or friend).

3. Organize Important Items to Take

- Medicines, prescriptions and toiletries
- Clothing for at least three days
- Blankets and toys

- Flashlight and battery-powered radio
- Computer hard drive or laptop
- Photographs
- Cash (as ATMs may not be working)

4. Pet Planning

- Disasters can be deadly for pets, so include them in your evacuation plans. Identify pet-friendly hotels and motels (ahead of time) outside the immediate area as most shelters exclude pets with the possible exception of seeing-eye dogs and other service animals.
- Prepare an emergency kit for your pets. Include collars and leashes, a three-day supply of food, bowls, litter boxes, and a week's supply of medications that your pet may be taking.
- Make sure your pets wear collars with current license and rabies tags, and identification tags that include information on where you will be staying during the emergency.
- Use a pet carrier for each of your pets to make transportation easier.

5. Gather Important Financial Documents

Keep important financial documents in a safe place that you can access easily. In the event of an evacuation take the following documents with you, preferably in a secure, waterproof container.

- Insurance policies
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Passports
- Drivers license or personal identification
- Social Security cards
- Recent tax returns
- Employment information
- Wills, deeds and recent tax returns
- Stocks, bonds and other negotiable certificates
- Bank, savings and retirement account numbers
- Home Inventory

6. Take the Ten-Minute Challenge

To find out if you are ready, do a real-time test. Give yourself just 10 minutes to get your family and belongings into the car and on the road to safety. By planning ahead, families are able to gather their children and pets, along with the most important items they will need, calmly and efficiently, with a minimum of stress and confusion.

For more information about insurance and creating and keeping a home inventory, go to the I.I.I. Web site: <http://www.iii.org> The I.I.I. is a nonprofit, communications organization supported by the insurance industry.