

# LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS



## MAKE A DISASTER KIT

It's always a good idea to be prepared for the unexpected. Having an up-to-date emergency disaster kit in your home and [car](#) can help your family better fare an emergency of any type, be it an extended blackout, a category 5 hurricane or a terrorist attack. Pack your emergency disaster kit in a waterproof, airtight container, such as a garbage can or plastic tote box, and store it in a safe and accessible location. Make sure all members of your family know where the kit is and how to use its contents.

Inside the main container, which should hold supplies for at least four days, keep essential items such as food, water and a first-aid kit. Within that, keep a backpack with an additional three days of supplies in case you have to move quickly in an evacuation. (You may want to keep another one in your car.) All together, this should enable you to survive on your own for a week. Be sure to take an inventory of your kit at least once a year to update expired food, old batteries, or to simply replace clothing for growing children.

### ***Documents***

Copies of important documents and records should be kept safe and on hand in a waterproof container within the disaster kit. This should include your will, insurance policy, deeds and family birth, death and marriage records as well as personal identification papers such as passports, social security cards and immunizations records. It's also a good idea to include copies of your bank and credit card account numbers here. An inventory of your possessions backed by photographs or video can also be helpful later.

### ***Water***

Having clean drinking water on hand is crucial in an emergency. Pipeline breaks or flooding can often leave normal tap water undrinkable. Assume at least one gallon of water per person per day, and keep in mind medical conditions that may require a higher water intake. Also, hot weather can double the amount of water needed.

Other tips:

- Be sure to keep an eye on the expiration date of bottled water and replace as needed.
- Before bottling water yourself, sanitize the containers with a solution of one part bleach to one quart water and rinse well with clear water.

## **LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS**

- If you are using well water for your supply, add two drops of chlorine bleach to keep the water clean.
- Be sure to date all self-stored water and replace every six months.

### ***Food***

Try to select foods that are low in salt, high in liquid content and don't require heat or water to prepare. Keep an eye on expiration dates and rotate your stored food every six months. Also, don't forget the can opener.

Both FEMA and Red Cross suggest:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk and [soup](#) (if powdered, store extra water)
- Staples, such as sugar, salt and pepper
- High energy foods, such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons with special dietary needs
- Comfort foods, such as cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee and tea bags

### ***First Aid***

Check with your local Red Cross for a basic first aid manual. According to FEMA, your kit should include:

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes " 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape " Triangular bandages (3)
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pair)
- Sunscreen
- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid
- Laxative
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

### ***Clothing & Bedding***

Store at least one head-to-toe change of clothing for each family member. It is a good idea to pack protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Keep

## **LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS**

weather conditions in mind and don't forget sturdy shoes, rainwear, and hats, gloves and scarves. You should also back a sleeping bag and blanket for each member of your household.

### ***Sanitary Products***

Keeping your living area clean and sanitary in a disaster is less complicated given the right tools. Bleach, soap and disinfectant are key supplies, as are toilet paper and plastic bags for controlling human waste. Also, don't forget personal hygiene items and the special needs of contact and denture wearers. Contact wearers: You might want to consider keeping a set of glasses in your kit as well.

### ***Medications & Other Special Needs***

It is important to include any special prescription medication in your family's disaster kit. Talk to your doctor about getting emergency backups of these prescriptions and make sure to ask for storage directions for each specific medication. Also, be sure to prepare for the special needs of babies, such as diapers and formula.

### ***Tools***

A simple set of tools and utensils can prove itself very useful in case of an emergency.

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Portable, battery-operated radio or television and extra batteries " Flashlight and extra batteries
- Charged cell phone and a 12-volt cellphone charger for you car
- Cash or traveler's checks and loose change " Nonelectric can opener, utility knife " Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Duct tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)
- Light sticks
- Niosh-N95 dust mask
- Garbage bags and ties
- Twine

For heavier duty home repairs and recovery, you may also want to have on hand:

- 50-ft of heavy-duty rope
- Chain saw and fuel, or bow saw and ax
- An assortment of nails, screws and bolts
- Flexible repair clamps for burst pipes

## **LOCUST VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY TIPS**

- Buckets, rubber gloves, floor squeegee, absorbent cleaning supplies
- A tarp large enough to cover half of your house's roof
- Scrap framing lumber to effect small repairs

### **STAY IN TOUCH**

A disaster can seriously impair communications, so your plan should include safe meeting spots to reconnect with friends and relatives. One of these spots should be outside your home, in case of fire; another should be outside your neighborhood, ideally along an evacuation route.

During a major disaster, it is often easier to for victims to call out of the impacted area than it is for concerned relatives to call in. Designate a non-local friend or family member to keep tabs on loved ones. That person can act as a middleman for victims who can't reach each other directly.

If you have family members with hearing or mobility impairment, make sure to plan for their needs as well. And don't assume your children will be with you. Give them cards with contacts and meeting places, and provide their schools with a copy to keep on file. While you're there, find out the school's emergency plan, which may include a building lockdown.

### **PROTECT PETS**

Belinda Mager of the Humane Society of the United States cautions that pet owners should plan in advance, and never leave animals behind. Red Cross shelters don't allow companion pets (only service animals) because of state [health](#) and safety regulations, so ask area hotels if they permit pets during emergency situations and, if so, if they have any size or species restrictions.

Mager also suggests finding friends or family out of the disaster area who wouldn't mind having your pets as temporary houseguests. Be sure to keep these phone numbers in your emergency disaster kit along with a bundle of pet supplies--leash, harness, current veterinary records, food, water and toys.

In the event that you become separated, microchips can reunite owners with lost pets. Usually the size of a grain of rice, these devices cost between \$10 and \$40 and are painlessly inserted under an animal's skin. Make sure your cell phone number is on your pet's ID collar, and register the microchip with the manufacture's database. It is also important to tag caged animals for emergency workers who arrive after you've left.

Websites such as Petfinder.com can be a resource for both pet owners and rescue workers. Petfinder's Animal Disaster and Emergency Response site was developed as Hurricane Katrina prepared to make landfall. The site allows people to log "Lost" and "Found" reports complete with photographs and up-to-date location information for both parties. The site also keeps a record of an animal's movement in case pets have to be cleared from local shelters to make room for newcomers.