

Are you prepared to be safe?

Taking a moment now can spare confusion or even heartache later on

By Joni Branch

Aside from the people paid to do it, hardly anyone wants to think about disaster — it can feel as if concentrating too long on what could happen in the event of a fire or tornado might invite that very catastrophe into our lives. But failing to picture the worst won't keep it away, and safety officials urge us all to do what we can to prepare for when things go wrong. Along with a handful of other essentials, a household disaster plan is one of the most basic and potentially life-saving elements in your home safety kit, and it's well worth the time to create one.

Meanwhile, you've seen the equipment list before and ... everything is in its place? Does the smoke detector work? Is the first aid kit fully stocked and in date? If the answer to any of those questions is "no," "don't know" or "maybe," now is a good time to make note of what you need and set a hard-and-fast deadline for getting it.



AN EQUIPMENT STARTER LIST

Fire extinguisher: A home needs at least one multipurpose A-B-C fire extinguisher stationed in the kitchen in case of a small fire, and possibly a second extinguisher in the garage. Note that fire extinguishers carry an expiration date and must be periodically replaced.

First-aid kit: The basics include adhesive bandages, roller bandages, gauze pads, cloth adhesive tape, an instant cold compress, aspirin, antibiotic salve, antiseptic, hydrocortisone ointment, compress dressings, tweezers, scissors, a thermometer, latex gloves and a first aid booklet.

Risk detectors: Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are recommended, and many units perform both functions. Change batteries in detectors every six months, the U.S. Fire Administration specifies. Be aware, also, that detectors lose sensitivity over time and should be replaced every 10 years or when the manufacturer recommends.

Battery-powered flashlight, radio and batteries: Make sure yours haven't wandered off or been buried in a closet.



Quick tip

Should disaster strike

What would your household need to get by for just three days without electricity, running water and access to stores? Check your personal emergency supply list alongside one of the many available online at sites such as www.ready.gov/build-a-kit.



Can everyone pass the quiz?

Come fire, flood or other emergency, it's wise to have a household game plan for dealing with trouble. Guidance in creating one is available online at sites such as www.redcross.org/prepare. Once there is a plan, adults and older children should know, among other things:

- Where the fire extinguisher is kept, plus when and how to use it
- Where and how to shut off the water and electricity
- What to do if you wake up to an alarm or the smell of smoke
- Which room offers the best shelter during a tornado
- Where to meet outside after evacuating the house

On the flip side

It came from within!

By Elise Oberliesen

Sometimes the most pressing danger stems from the everyday things — even invisible ones — inside our homes. Here are three potential threats that shouldn't be ignored:

Carbon monoxide gas, produced when any carbon-based fuel is burned, is colorless, odorless and potentially deadly. It can enter a house because of a blocked chimney or damaged furnace heat exchanger, and be released inside by gas stoves, woodstoves and unvented fuel-burning space heaters. Headache, dizziness, nausea and confusion are commonly reported symptoms of exposure. Smart move: Install a **carbon monoxide detector** or a combination smoke/carbon monoxide detector to alert the household to a gas buildup.

Household cleaning chemicals might add sparkle to your countertops, but they're also ranked as the third most common cause of poisonings in the U.S., according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, and the numbers track similarly in Canada. Among the most dangerous products are **drain and toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, rust removers and furniture polish.** Even less hazardous cleaners can produce irritating fumes and affect indoor air quality. Smart moves: Use the most hazardous chemicals only when necessary and store all cleaners safely out of the reach of children.



Mothballs' unmistakable smell does more than repel moths and silverfish. **Considered a pesticide,** old-fashioned mothballs contain the chemical naphthalene, which causes a burning sensation when in contact with skin or eyes, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Excessively inhaling this noxious fume **may cause sickness,** especially in young children. Mothballs are also **toxic to pets,** and pose a special danger to cats. Smart moves: Minimize mothballs' use, keep out of reach of kids, and make certain kitty is never accidentally trapped in a space near them.

Buying. Selling. Improving. Connecting.
HOMES&LAND
OF MALIBU TO BEVERLY HILLS
HOMESANDLAND.COM

REACHING THE RIGHT AUDIENCE

No one delivers more **premium online reach** than Homes & Land
Homes & Land offers a unique marketing solution for your luxury properties. We **automatically update your advertised listings** to websites that attract affluent prospects.



Exclusive **Direct Mail** Programs
Reaching buyers and sellers with Direct Mail throughout the **Westside** and in partnership with **Luxury Publications**

Delivering the magazine **in print** and **online** including special print distributions to readers of the Wall Street Journal, duPont Registry and Robb Report. All a part of our commitment to reaching the most **influential buyers & sellers** locally and worldwide.