

Personal Emergency Preparedness Plan

If you pay attention to the headlines after natural disasters, you'll typically notice reports of persons stumbling around, seeking aid and at a lost for what to do. Often there is little an individual can do to control a situation, but any level of planning is preferable to doing nothing. That is the simple philosophy behind the personal emergency preparedness plan (PEP) aka Family Disaster Plan

PEPs give individuals and families a plan of action when a natural disaster (such as flooding, earthquake, serious windstorms, tornadoes, etc.) is eminent or should a severe accident (home fire, structural collapse, utility line or pipe breakage, etc.) occur.

Generally PEPs should have the following objectives:

- Identify safe areas during an emergency – what are safe areas of the home during storm or earthquake? – What safety rules should be followed in event of a fire or flood?
- Escaping from area that is endangering family members – identify escape routes from every room (at least two)
- Establishing means for all family members to re-unite – Determine a safe meeting place immediately outside the home, or a neighborhood location – make sure to have access to working radio to access emergency information
- Ascertain everyone's safety – Check everyone for possible injury – apply first aid or contact emergency personnel as appropriate. Check residence for any dangers created by the emergency event, such as leaking utility lines, structural dangers, fire, etc.
- Establish means to contact other family members and loved ones – have access to working phones, post emergency nos., training children on how and when to make emergency calls – make contact list of family members and emergency contacts (work and/or school numbers and e-mails)

Families should also consider issues that support a PEP, such as maintaining proper insurance, having an adequate first aid kit available and acquiring first aid training. Being aware of an area's emergency plans and procedures as well as information on nearest emergency facilities are also helpful.

The above suggestions are merely plan guidelines. Please seek out competent sources (such as city, state, hospital and similar websites) for information on creating a detailed PEP for you and your loved ones.