

**PART I:**  
**GETTING READY**

**The Basics of Being Prepared**

Most of us are not ready for a flood, tornado or other type of disaster whether it be large or small. A common position that most of us occupy is the one which believes that a disaster will not happen to me! Well, disasters do happen and in Delaware County we **expect** them to happen again. We also know that **you** can be prepared!!

Here is your recommended **List of Things to do:**

- 1] Get informed about hazards and emergencies that may affect you and your family.
- 2] Develop an emergency action plan.
- 3] Collect and assemble disaster supplies kits.
- 4] Learn where to seek shelter from all types of hazards.
- 5] Identify the community warning systems and evacuation routes.
- 6] Include in your emergency plan the required information from community and school plans.
- 7] Learn what to do for specific hazards and/or disasters (for example: floods).
- 8] Practice and maintain your plan.

## Completing the Things to do List:

- 1] Read this booklet and use the resources in this book.
- 2] Sit down with your family and write down a plan of action. Give everyone a task with a deadline. Get each family member involved and excited. Have regular meetings and review your progress.
- 3] Do you know your County and local community? Plan family visits to your village and/or town hall. See Delaware=s Emergency Services Department in Delhi at the Public Safety Building on Phoebe Lane.
- 4] Read and study these two disaster classics: Contact the American Red Cross and ask for a copy of ***Your Family Disaster Plan*** or go to their website listed in Part 5 on page 30. Contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and request a copy of their booklet, ***Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness*** or go to their web site also listed in Part 2 on page 14.
- 5] Discuss your disaster preparation efforts with neighbors, friends, school officials and colleagues from work. Share your ideas and information and encourage these other members of your community to prepare also.
- 6] Look at yourself, how do you feel? What is the status of your health, both physical and mental? Acquaint yourself with the signs of stress and the methods for reducing stress and coping with it effectively. The effects of trauma and stress will increase significantly during a disaster. Learn to use stress-reducing activities such as deep breathing (refer to Part 4 for more information and tips).

## Highlights of Family Disaster Plans

- 1] Escape Routes - Every member of your household must know what to do in case of a fire or any other life-threatening event that occurs while in the home. We recommend that you have two different routes that can be used as an escape route from each room in the house. It is important that each household member understand how and when to leave the house as well as where to meet once outside.
- 2] Family Communications - Your family may or may not be together during a disaster. Know how you will communicate with each other in different situations. Complete a contact card with each household member and have each member keep their card with them in a wallet, purse, backpack or similar carrying case. It is recommended that the card include an out of area phone number.
- 3] Utility Safety & Shut-offs - All responsible household members should have the basic knowledge where utilities enter the house and how each can be shut-off. Electricity, gas and water utilities each have a shut-off. Teach all responsible household members how to shut-off each utility and have the necessary tools close at hand. We recommend that after a disaster has struck that you not turn back on your utilities yourself but that you get a professional to do so.
- 4] Vital Household Records B Important personal and family papers should be kept safe and stored in a manner they will survive a disaster including use of a bank safe deposit box for deeds, wills, passports, birth certificates and related papers. Make sure you include insurance policies in these papers. It will also help with claims and documentation if you have a video or current photos of your house and its possessions. The use of an inventory of home possessions can be very helpful. Copies of important papers should be kept in disaster supplies kits. A small amount of cash or travelers checks in the disaster supplies kit can also be helpful.
- 5] Get Ready Your Own Disaster Supplies Kits - Develop your own Kits from suggestions by the experts; Go to the American Red Cross and get a copy of ***Your Family Disaster Plan*** or go online Ready.gov and look for the ***Resolve to be Ready*** icon. Download the free family emergency plan template today. Have a disaster supplies kit in your home and carry a smaller one in your vehicles.
- 6] What About Your Pets? - Make sure your plan includes your pets. It will be helpful if you have located a pet shelter or kennel that will be able to receive your pet. Keep your veterinary records and other important documents in a safe place B we recommend you place copies in your disaster supplies kit. It will also be helpful if you identify area motels that will allow pets. Keep in mind that many emergency shelters can not or will not admit pets. It will help if you have pet carrier and leash handy. For larger animals, see the section “Guidelines for Large Animals” located on page 30 of FEMA’s ***Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness***.
- 7] Safety Skills B We strongly recommend that you learn first aid and CPR. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for a course schedule. It is very helpful if you repeat the course twice a year to stay sharp. We strongly recommend you retain a fire extinguisher in your home and learn how to use it.