



I'm Ready

Preparing Children to Respond
to Disasters

A program of the American Trauma Society,
Pennsylvania Division

Are you
ready?

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“I’M READY!”: A COMMUNITY PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR RESPONSES TO DISASTER

This program is designed to educate children ages 5 to 12 on various types of emergencies and disasters. It teaches youth how to prepare for and respond to emergencies, particularly when left home alone.

This program contains information regarding general emergency preparedness and details on specific emergencies including fire, hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, earthquakes and winter storms.

Many children do not have the knowledge or emotional maturity to make decisions during an emergency, which is why this program was created. Keep this booklet nearby and easily accessible for a handy reference.



Emergency Kit & Contacts

Does your house have a stocked emergency kit? Every home should have one, stocked with all items needed (enough for three days) in case of an emergency.

Keep your emergency kit where everyone knows where it is. Be sure it's easily accessible. Keep it there and don't move it until you need it. Be sure to keep its contents up-to-date and replace items as needed (i.e. don't let medications expire).



Basic items needed:

- Blanket
- Breathing mask
- Bottled water
- Flashlight (with extra batteries)
- Non-perishable food (peanut butter, etc.)
- List of emergency contacts
- Sentimental items (if desired, for children)
- Prescription medications
- Family emergency plan
- Baby wipes
- First-aid kit
- Portable, battery-powered handheld radio (with extra batteries)
- Can opener

Emergency Contacts

If you had an emergency, who would you call for help? What if your children are home alone and they can't get in touch with you?

It's important to have a list of people you trust, with their telephone numbers, near every phone in your house. Program emergency contact names and telephone numbers into all cell phones. If there is an emergency, the names and phone numbers are easily accessible and you (or your kids) can make that call for help.

ATTENTION PARENTS: It's a good idea for children to practice calling the people on your emergency contact list. By doing this, these phone numbers and the practice of doing so become familiar. It's also a good idea to notify the people on your list so they can expect a call should an emergency arise.

Family Emergency Plan

Things are always easier when we have a plan. The same is true for emergencies. Without a plan during an emergency we can become confused and start to panic. It's important to have a plan for your entire family to follow during emergencies. That way, family members don't become confused and start to panic.

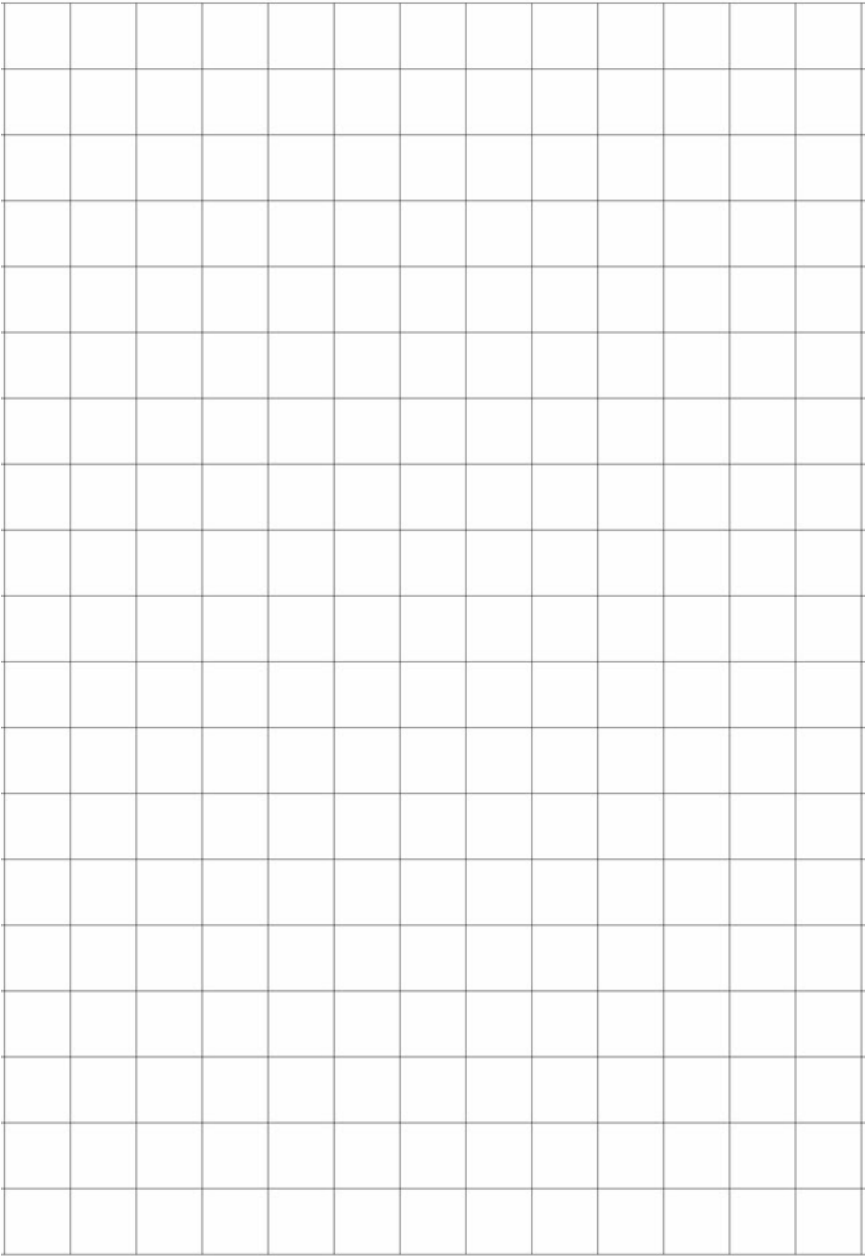
When developing your family's emergency plan, it's important to:

- 1) **Work on the plan WITH your family.** This is not just a parent plan or a kid plan...it's a family plan.
- 2) **Include your address and telephone number.** You'd be surprised what some people forget when they panic.
- 3) **Include your list of emergency contacts** and telephone numbers.
- 4) Go through your house and **write down all the doors and windows that are in each room**, and what is underneath the windows outside. Point out what's underneath all windows to children so they know which windows they can escape from.
- 5) **Practice locking and unlocking all the doors and windows** so you're familiar with how they work.
- 6) Include the information you gathered regarding doors and windows in each room, and **design escape routes for each room in your house.** Make sure to **PRACTICE THEM.** For instance, if you're on the second floor and there's nothing outside your bedroom window upstairs, you'll know that would not be a practical escape route.
- 7) **Include a description of your family's meeting place.** Every family should have a family meeting place **OUTSIDE.** Determine your family's meeting place and write it down in your family emergency plan. This meeting place needs to be somewhere safe, away from traffic.
- 8) **Practice getting out of your house using your planned escape routes** and meeting at your family's meeting place. It's important to have this meeting place so that if there's an emergency, you know that if everyone is there, everyone is safe.



House Escape Routes

Use this space to draw the escape routes for your home.



My Kit, My Contacts, My Plan

MY EMERGENCY KIT

(Don't forget to list expiration dates on items and replace as needed.)

Save the items in your emergency kit for emergencies only. Be sure everyone in your home knows where the kit is and keep it there at all times.

MY EMERGENCY CONTACTS (also save in cell phones)

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My Kit, My Contacts, My Plan

MY FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

FAMILY MEETING PLACE: _____

OTHER PLAN NOTES: _____

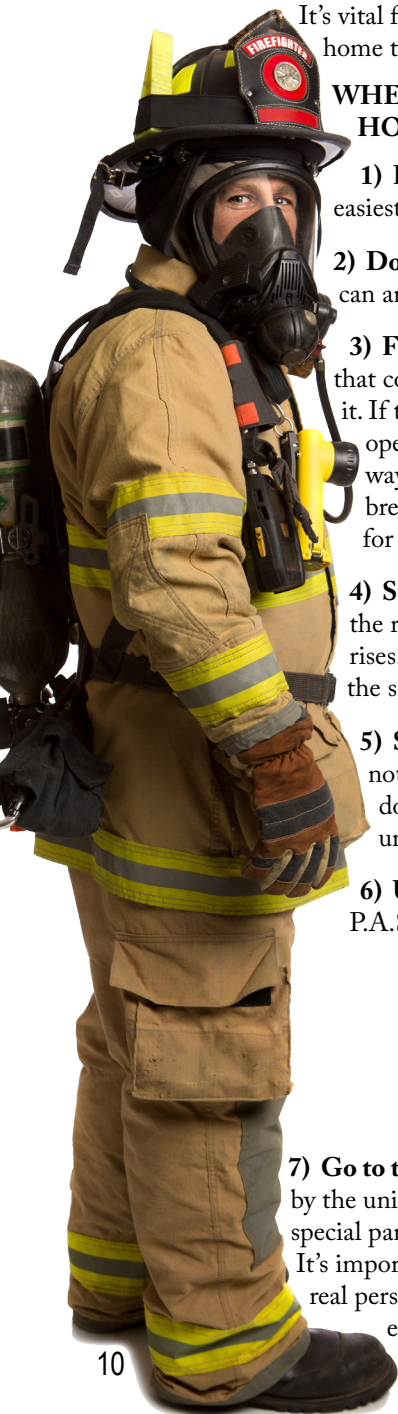
This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Fire

It's vital for children to know that if there is a fire in their home to get out and stay out until help arrives.

WHEN TRYING TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE HOUSE:

- 1) **Follow Your Family Emergency Plan** - Find the easiest way out of the house.
- 2) **Don't Wait for Anyone** - Get outside as soon as you can and go right to your family's meeting place.
- 3) **Feel the Door** - If you're inside a room with a door that could lead to a way out, feel the door before opening it. If the door is hot, the fire may be nearby. Do NOT open it. Try to find another way out. If there is no other way out, open a window and stand by it so you can breathe easier. Try to scream and signal to get attention for help.
- 4) **Stay Low, Away from Smoke** - If smoke is coming in the room where you are, get down on the floor. Smoke rises. You'll breathe easier if you're down low, away from the smoke.
- 5) **Stop, Drop & Roll** - If your clothes catch on fire, do not try to take them off. Stop what you're doing, drop down to the floor, cover your head and roll all around until the fire goes out.
- 6) **Use the Fire Extinguisher** - Just remember to P.A.S.S.
 - P: Pull out the metal pin & point the extinguisher away from you.
 - A: Aim low, at the base of the fire (not high up at the flames).
 - S: Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly.
 - S: Sweep the nozzle slowly, from side to side.
- 7) **Go to the Firefighter** - Many small children are frightened by the uniform that firefighters wear. Firefighters wear special pants, jackets, masks, etc. to protect them in a fire. It's important children understand that a firefighter is a real person wearing a uniform to stay safe. During a fire, encourage children to go to firefighters if they are trapped in a house so they can take them to safety.



PREVENTING THE FIRE

WHEN COOKING:

1. **Always stay in the kitchen while cooking.**
2. **Do not wear loose, dangling sleeves.** They could catch on fire while reaching into an oven or over a stove.
3. **Turn all appliances off when finished** (oven, stove, microwave).
4. **If a fire starts inside the oven or microwave, turn the appliance off and keep the door closed.** Don't open the oven/microwave door.
5. **If a fire starts in a pot or pan on the stove, immediately put the appropriate lid on the pot/pan and turn off the burner.**
6. **Don't put anything metal in the microwave.**
7. **Don't start the microwave without anything in it.**

MATCHES & LIGHTERS: Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children. It's a good idea to keep all matches and lighters in one place. That way, they are not scattered through the house and you know exactly where they are. Teach children to always give you any matches or lighters they find. Emphasize to children that matches and lighters are only for grown-ups.



Hurricanes

WHAT IS A HURRICANE?

A hurricane is a storm with high winds that usually occurs in tropical areas. However, it can travel to the north and cause serious damage.

FIVE CATEGORIES OF HURRICANES:

There are 5 categories of hurricanes. These categories are determined by wind speed and the amount of damage the hurricane is likely to cause. For example, a Category 1 hurricane may have 74 to 95 miles-per-hour winds and only cause slight damage (fallen branches), whereas a Category 5 hurricane could have winds of 155 miles-per-hour and cause catastrophic damage (buildings completely ripped apart).

WHERE & WHEN DO HURRICANES HAPPEN?

Because hurricanes usually occur in warmer, more humid climates, most hurricanes happen in southern states (Florida, Georgia, Louisiana). Hurricanes form during warmer weather, usually between the months of June and October.

HOW DO HURRICANES FORM?

Hurricanes form from the heat of the ocean. From this heat, a small storm forms.

The storm develops wind and eventually, the wind turns inward, flowing in a circle. The hurricane, including rain and strong winds, begins to move and can cover a large area.



Hurricanes

PREPARING FOR A HURRICANE:

- 1) Pay attention to the news and weather reports.
 - **HURRICANE WATCH:** A hurricane is possible in the next 36 hours.
 - **HURRICANE WARNING:** A hurricane is going to happen within 24 hours.
- 2) Contact people on your emergency contact list to touch base about your plan.
- 3) If you live in a mobile home (trailer), plan to leave your home and go to a safer place. Make sure to take your emergency kit with you.



DURING A HURRICANE:

- 1) **STAY INSIDE** (unless you live in a mobile home). During the storm, it will get very windy and rain very hard. If you go outside, you could be hit by flying debris. Keep all doors and windows closed.
- 2) Be alert for the “eye” of the storm. The rain and wind may slow down or stop altogether. It could look like the hurricane is over but it may not be. After a short time the winds could change direction and quickly become strong again.

AFTER THE HURRICANE:



- 1) It may be wise to use bottled water for a day or two to allow the water system to clear up.
- 2) Wait before heading outside. Hurricanes can produce lots of flooding.

Flooding

WHAT IS A FLOOD?

A flood is a great flowing or overflowing of water, especially over land. Flooding



can range from a few inches of water to enough water to cover a house.

Flooding is the most common of all natural hazards. Flooding happens during heavy rains and depends on two factors: (1) how hard it rains and (2) how long it rains. Floods can happen in any area but occur most often in low areas, particularly along streams and rivers.

TWO TYPES OF FLOODS

- REGULAR: Water gradually overflows onto land
- FLASH: Water overflows the land suddenly and quickly

SIGNS OF A FLOOD:

- 1) Muddy water
- 2) Rising water
- 3) Roaring sounds -- could mean water is moving very quickly nearby



Flooding

DURING A FLOOD

- 1) Get out of areas that can flood and get to higher ground.
- 2) If the flooding is minimal and relocating is not necessary, get things off of the floor that may be damaged by water.
- 3) Contact someone on your emergency contact list to touch base.

TRAVELING BY CAR

DO NOT DRIVE INTO FLOODING WATER, no matter how passable the area may seem. Flooding water can be deceiving.

If you drive while roads are flooding, there's a good chance your car will stall and stop. When that happens, your car could float away. Most cars will float and can be swept away in just 18 to 24 inches of moving water.

If your car does begin to float, get out of the car before it is swept away. Once cars are swept away, they often roll to one side or flip over.

WALKING

If you **MUST** travel during flooding, do so by walking, but:

- 1) Do not walk through flooding water unless you have to. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- 2) When walking through water, use a pole or stick to make sure the ground is still there and step carefully.
- 3) Be sure to stay away from power lines and electrical wires. Electric current can travel through water and you could be shocked.



Tornadoes

What is a Tornado?

A tornado is a column of wind that starts in the air with a thunderstorm and reaches to the ground. It looks like a funnel and we often can't see tornadoes until they start to pick up dirt.

Where & When do Tornadoes Happen?

The central United States, known as the Great Plains, tend to have the most tornadoes, but they can happen anywhere. Tornadoes usually occur between 3 to 9 p.m., but can happen anytime.

How do Tornadoes Form?

Tornadoes form when warm, moist air meets with cool, dry air. This collision can cause air to start swirling, which then rises and moves.

How do Tornadoes Travel?

Tornadoes can move in any direction and at any speed. Typically, they travel around 30 miles-per-hour.

WEAK, STRONG & VIOLENT TORNADOES

Weak tornadoes: The most common type, these last one to 10 minutes with winds less than 110 miles-per-hour.

Strong tornadoes: These usually last 20 minutes or longer, with winds of 110 to 205 miles-per-hour.

Violent tornadoes: These rarely occur but when they do, violent tornadoes can last an hour or longer, with winds more than 200 miles-per-hour.

SIGNS OF A TORNADO

- 1) Dark, often greenish sky
- 2) Large pellets of ice falling (known as hail)
- 3) A loud roar, similar to the sound of a freight train.

PREPARING FOR A TORNADO

Watch vs. Warning:

- **Watch:** A tornado is possible in your area. Remain alert and be ready to seek safe shelter.
- **Warning:** A tornado has been sighted or indicated in your area by weather radar. Get to your safe shelter right away.

If there's time, call someone on your emergency contact list to let him or her know what is going on and about your plan of action.

If you live in a mobile home (trailer), leave your home and find a safer shelter, even if there is only a tornado "watch."

DURING A TORNADO

- If you have a basement in your home, grab your emergency kit and head there immediately. Stay there until the tornado is over.
- If a basement is not available, move to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor of your home and get under a strong, sturdy piece of furniture. If you live in a large apartment building, go to the lowest floor of the building.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- Get out of vehicles and seek safer shelter right away. If you cannot find safer shelter after leaving your vehicle, lie face down in a ditch or in a low-lying area, hands over your head, away from the car.
- Regardless of where you are, be aware of flying debris.

AFTER A TORNADO

- Check in with the people on your emergency contact list.
- Turn on your portable, battery-powered radio for the latest news/weather update.
- Return home to survey any possible damage. Do not go into your home if it's been damaged. You could be hurt by falling debris.

Earthquakes

What is an Earthquake?

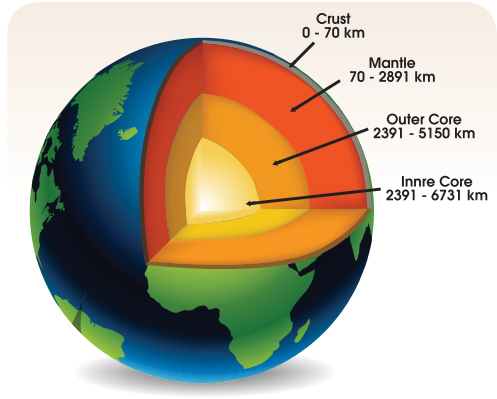
An earthquake is the shaking of the earth's surface, which can cause either a little or a lot of damage.

Earth's Four Layers

- 1) Crust -- Much thinner than the other layers. It is rocky and brittle, so it can crack at times.
- 2) Mantle -- Most of the earth is made up of the mantle.
- 3) Outer Core -- HOT
- 4) Inner Core -- VERY HOT

What Causes an Earthquake?

Over a period of time energy starts to build up underground. Because the crust is so brittle, it sometimes cracks. If energy builds up under one of these cracks, the energy forces its way out. When the energy makes its way out through these cracks, pieces of rock on either side of the crack begin to move and the earth shakes.



Where do Earthquakes Happen?

Alaska has more earthquakes than any other state in the country, BUT earthquakes can happen in any state.

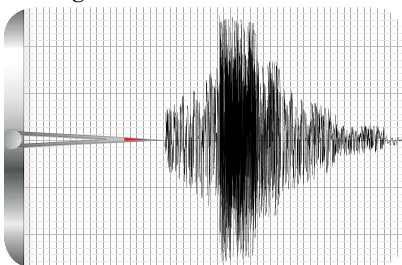
When do Earthquakes Happen?

There is no earthquake season. Earthquakes can happen at any time, on any day, at any point during the year.

The Richter Scale

The Richter Scale was developed to measure the intensity (strength) of the earth's shaking during an earthquake. Earthquakes are measured on a scale of 3.5 to 8.

The higher the number, the worse the earthquake is. We may or may not be able to feel an earthquake that measures a 3.5 on the Richter Scale. However, a quake that measures an 8 on the Scale can cause tremendous damage across several hundred miles.



Earthquakes

PREPARING FOR AN EARTHQUAKE

Because there is no “earthquake season,” there is no way to know when an earthquake will happen. So the time to prepare is NOW.

- 1) Stand in the center of each room in your home and determine which objects or pieces of furniture could fall or move during an earthquake.
- 2) Move all breakable and heavy objects to low, closed cabinets with latches.
- 3) Fasten heavy bookcases, cabinets, etc. to the wall. This will keep the furniture from toppling onto you during an earthquake.
- 4) Be sure beds and cribs are not near windows. Earthquakes can break windows. If you're in bed and the window breaks during an earthquake, you could be badly injured or even thrown out during the shaking.

***Note: You won't have time to do all of this once an earthquake begins.
Be prepared ahead of time.***

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

1) Bend down and cover your head. If you can find a sturdy piece of furniture, crawl under the furniture and hold on.

2) If no furniture is available, duck down and cover your head inside or near a doorway, away from windows and tall furniture, in the interior of your home.

3) If outside, stay away from trees, bridges, buildings and telephone poles.

4) If you're in a car, pull over to the side of the road and stop. **DO NOT GET OUT OF THE CAR UNTIL THE SHAKING STOPS.**



AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

After the earthquake, the earth will begin to go back to normal. If it was a very strong earthquake, be prepared for “aftershocks,” which are smaller earthquakes that occur as the earth adjusts to the shock from the stronger earthquake. Aftershocks can cause additional damage.

Winter Storms

TYPES OF WINTER STORMS

- 1) SNOW STORMS include blizzards and snow squalls. A blizzard is snow falling with 35 mile-per-hour winds for three hours or more. A snow squall is a brief but intense snow shower. Both types of storms can leave an accumulation of snow.
- 2) SLEET is rain that turns into ice pellets after it falls, before it reaches the ground. It collects on the ground and makes things very slippery.
- 3) FREEZING RAIN is regular rain that freezes when it hits the ground because the ground is so cold. When the rain hits the ground it immediately freezes, creating a coating of ice on roads and walkways.

PREPARING FOR A WINTER STORM

Be sure to listen for:

- **Winter Storm Watch:** Winter Storm conditions are possible in the next day or two. Start to prepare now.
- **Winter Storm Warning:** Severe winter storm conditions will begin in 24 hours, or less.

DURING A WINTER STORM

- 1) Stay inside.
- 2) IF YOU LOSE HEAT: (A) Close doors to rooms you aren't using, (B) Stuff towels in the cracks at the bottom of doors to keep cold air out, (C) Be sure to use blankets, hats, gloves, etc. to keep warm.
- 3) IF YOU LOSE ELECTRICITY: (A) Don't open the refrigerator unless you have to; this lets out cold air, (B) Use flashlights or light some candles for a steady source of light. Be careful with the candles and check them often.

IF TRAPPED IN A CAR DURING A STORM

- 1) Turn on the four-way flashers to alert people or tie a piece of cloth from the window or antennae.
- 2) Use road maps, seat covers and floor mats as blankets to keep warm until help arrives. If with other people, huddle together to stay warm.
- 3) Start the car and run the heat for 10 minutes each hour. This will make sure you have enough heat inside the car until help arrives.
- 4) Unless you can see a building from where you are, do not leave the car except to clear the snow away from the tailpipe.

Winter Storms

Cold weather doesn't just bring with it slippery roadways. It can also lead to cold weather related injuries. If you don't take time to prepare for winter storms, you may find yourself very cold and in danger of hypothermia and/or frostbite.

COLD WEATHER-RELATED INJURIES

HYPOTHERMIA: Hypothermia happens when your body temperature drops to 95 degrees or below. Normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees. Hypothermia occurs when people are exposed to very low temperatures, wind and moisture over a period of time.

FROSTBITE: Frostbite occurs when parts of the body are exposed to freezing temperatures. Blood circulation lessens and ice crystals begin to form in the affected body parts, actually freezing that part of the body.

| INJURY | SYMPTOMS | TREATMENT |
|--------------------|--|---|
| HYPOTHERMIA | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Can't stop shivering2. Shivering decreases and then stops altogether3. Slurred speech4. Trouble with normal movement (clumsiness)5. Blurred vision6. Numbness and/or drowsiness7. Stiff muscles, dark and puffy skin, and irregular heartbeat | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the person out of the cold.• Take off the person's clothes if wet/damp and put dry clothes on. If no clothes are available, wrap the person in blankets or towels.• Slowly give the person liquids if conscious. Nothing with caffeine.• DO NOT RUB THE SKIN. This can push coldness toward the heart, causing the heart to stop beating. It can also cause severe damage to the person's skin and muscle. |
| FROSTBITE | <p>STAGE 1: Skin reddens and then turns white. Skin is itchy and painful. Area begins to feel numb.</p> <p>STAGE 2: Skin feels hard but muscles still feel soft.</p> <p>STAGE 3: Skin and muscles feel frozen and hard. Skin turns grayish-blue in color.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. DO NOT RUB THE SKIN! This can push coldness toward the heart, causing the heart to stop beating, and cause severe damage to skin and muscle.2. Gently warm the affected area against another warm body part or by blowing warmly on the affected body part. If this doesn't help, put the affected area in warm water (NOT HOT). The person may have pain as area warms up.3. Warm the person's core (belly and chest) by wrapping a blanket around him/her. |

Information Sources

Fire Extinguisher: 101

www.fire-extinguisher101.com

Flood Safety

www.floodsafety.com/national/life/statistics.htm

National Fire Protection Association

www.nfpa.org

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

www.noaa.gov

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Floods: The Awesome Power

www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/resources/FloodsTheAwesomePower_NSC.pdf

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/tornadoes

Play Safe! Be Safe!

www.playsafebesafe.com

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/earthquakes

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/flooding

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/hurricanes

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/winter-storms-extreme-cold

U.S. Dictionary

www.dictionary.com

United States Geological Survey

www.earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/kids

Weather Wiz Kids

www.weatherwizkids.com/hurricane.htm

Wikipedia

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/frostbite

Are you
ready?

What is the ATSPA?

The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) is a non-profit trauma prevention education organization dedicated to reducing the suffering, disability and death caused by trauma throughout the Commonwealth.

The broken red tulip symbolizes the pain, suffering and lifestyle change caused by traumatic injury. It not only symbolizes the person/people directly devastated by trauma, but also their families, friends and others that care about them.

The goal of the ATSPA is to keep that tulip strong, straight and unaffected by trauma.



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