

## Hurricane Preparedness Planning for MRC Volunteers

### “Plan to Respond”

*Hurricane planning for responders is a little bit different than for those who plan to evacuate with their loved ones or stay home and ride it out. This is a quick guide to help you make sure your loved ones are taken care of so that you can respond as you planned. For our purposes, “loved ones” includes household members, pets, and anyone you are responsible for during a disaster. This document is not all-inclusive, but hopefully will point you to resources that will help you take care of those you are responsible for. You cannot take care of others in your community if your loved ones are not safe!*

#### **Step 1 – Are you in an evacuation zone? Find out at <http://www.hcoem.org/Documents/EvacuationMap.pdf>**

- YES – Make plans to evacuate with your loved ones to a non-evacuation zone inside Harris County. This may be a friend’s house, a relative’s house, or a hotel. If you know someone in a non-evacuation zone that plans to evacuate further north, this opportunity to house-sit may be a win-win situation. Alternatively, you may want your loved ones to stay with relatives further north, but you should plan to stay in a non-evacuation zone inside or near Harris County so that you can help in the response if necessary.
- NO – Then plan to stay put! If you choose to send your loved ones further away from the coast, make sure you have a communication plan to stay in touch with them while they are away.

#### **Step 2 – Make a communication plan**

- This communication plan can be used in a variety of situations, from an early-dismissal day from school to a house fire to a hurricane. FEMA has a communication planning guide available online at [www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/appendix\\_c.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/appendix_c.pdf).
- Every member of your household should have an “ICE card” and know the plan. (ICE stands for “in case of emergency”). You can download a printable card at [www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/commplan.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/commplan.shtm).
- Your ICE card will include phone numbers for all household members (cell, work and home), phone numbers for your evacuation location, and an out-of-town contact in case local phone lines are overloaded.
- You may want to use this opportunity to plan for a local evacuation (such as flood or fire) and include numbers for your local evacuation location(s) as well.
- The ICE card could also include any medical conditions, medications or doctor contact information.

#### **Step 3 – Build a kit (or, more realistically, kits)**

- Especially if you live in an evacuation zone or plan for your loved ones to evacuate, pack an evacuation kit. A suggested list of basic supplies can be found at [www.ehow.com/how\\_2259148\\_create-emergency-evacuation-kit.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2259148_create-emergency-evacuation-kit.html) or [www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/pdf/EVACBOOK3.pdf](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/pdf/EVACBOOK3.pdf).
- Have an emergency kit at home to get you through the storm itself as well as a few days without water or electricity. A list of suggested supplies can be found at [www.ready.gov/america/downloads/checklist.pdf](http://www.ready.gov/america/downloads/checklist.pdf).
- Make sure all important legal documents, family photos and heirlooms are protected. Your homeowners or renters insurance company can help you identify any documents you would need to submit a claim, and you can get appropriate documents together before the storm. We recommend scanning all important documents and special family photos, saving them to a CD/DVD/flash drive, and keep the electronic copies as part of your evacuation kit, as well as leave a copy with someone else in case your copy and originals are lost.

- Build your responder’s kit to take with you when you respond. A supply list for this kit is included as part of this document.
- Prepare special kits for pets or any loved ones with special needs. See special sections below for more information.

### **Planning recommendations for people with special needs**

- “People with special needs” is a wide-reaching term, and includes anyone who would need special help to evacuate or take care of themselves without water and electricity. This includes many adults with medical conditions that are easily controlled under normal circumstances, but who would need help with no water or electricity.
- Anyone taking medication should keep an updated list of medications, including name, description, dose, and what it is taken for. Keep the list, along with one week’s supply of all medication, in your kit.
- Include in your first aid kit any special supplies that might be needed.
- If financial considerations permit, consider purchasing a generator for anyone with electric-powered equipment (oxygenator, electric wheelchair, etc.). This may allow them to stay comfortably at home during the aftermath of the storm.
- Further information for people with special needs can be found at [www.disabilitypreparedness.gov](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov).

### **Planning recommendations for infants and small children**

- Make sure to include diapers, formula/baby food, or packaged food that your toddler/small child is familiar with. Familiar snacks like crackers can go a long way toward settling a small child. Small children change sizes often, so make sure that you update diapers and clothes to keep up with your little one(s).
- Include an infant first aid kit with your emergency supplies, with either infant or children’s fever-reducing medication.
- Pack a couple new age-appropriate toys/games. Like on any trip, small children are easily bored and can be distracted by something new. On the flip-side, don’t forget to throw in a favorite toy, blanket, doll or pillow on your way out the door.
- If you plan to have your small child evacuate while you stay to respond, include a picture of you with the child for them to look at when they get to their evacuation site.

### **Planning recommendations for pets, service animals and livestock**

- If your household is planning to evacuate, include your pets in your evacuation plan! Check [www.bringyourpet.com](http://www.bringyourpet.com), [www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com), or [www.pets-allowed-hotels.com](http://www.pets-allowed-hotels.com) for hotels along your evacuation route that allow pets.
- If you will not be able to evacuate with your pets, make an agreement with a nearby friend or neighbor who can care for your pet. If you are staying to respond but your family is evacuating, keep in mind that you will be working 12-hour shifts and travel time may be longer than normal due to closed roadways and detours.
- For pets and service animals, include their supplies in your emergency kit(s). You can find a list of suggested supplies along with other planning/preparedness suggestions at [www.petfinder.com/disaster](http://www.petfinder.com/disaster) or [www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal\\_rescue/tips/disaster\\_preparedness\\_for\\_1.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/disaster_preparedness_for_1.html).
- There are many other planning resources for pets at [http://www.ready.gov/america/toolkit\\_pets/index.html](http://www.ready.gov/america/toolkit_pets/index.html).
- Special considerations for horses can be found at [www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal\\_rescue/tips/disaster\\_preparedness\\_for.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/disaster_preparedness_for.html). Suggestions for other types of livestock are available at [www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal\\_rescue/tips/disaster\\_preparedness\\_for\\_livestock.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/disaster_preparedness_for_livestock.html).

## Supply List for your Responder's Kit

- Extra set of clothes (scrubs are appropriate if you are a medical volunteer), MRC t-shirt or vest
- Hat
- Water bottle (sport/gym-type reusable bottle)
- Personal hygiene travel-sized supplies (toothbrush/paste, deodorant, liquid hand/body soap, sunscreen, bug repellent, sanitizer gel)
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Basic first aid kit
- Notebook with pen/pencil/marker
- Non-perishable snacks (energy bars, crackers, dried fruit, etc.)

Ensure that your kit is easily identifiable and distinguishable from other kits by attaching a "luggage tag" or some other marker.