



Planning for Emergencies: Three Steps to be Prepared

An hour of your time could save your life...

Emergencies happen. It could be a tornado, house fire, flood, or terrorist attack. No one wants to think about accidents or disasters. But being prepared for an emergency can help protect your family. The whole point of emergency preparation is to do as much as possible before an emergency happens. And you can be prepared in less than an hour with just three simple steps.

At home, school, work, and even in our cars, you need to know what to do in an emergency and where to go. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has developed a program called Ready in 3. Ready in 3 is an easy way to learn how to prepare for an emergency.

Ready in 3 includes three steps.

- ❑ Create a plan for you, your family, and your business.
- ❑ Prepare a kit for home, car, and work.
- ❑ Listen for information about what to do and where to go during an actual emergency.

Step 1: Create a plan

Develop an emergency plan for you and your family. Your family might not be together when an emergency happens. That's why it is important to have a plan in place. Talk about how you will reach each other in different situations. You might think about a couple of different plans.

Consider contacting the same friend or family member by phone or e-mail. Think about making an out-of-town family member or friend the contact.

Make plans for two situations: staying home or leaving. You should be prepared to stay in one place (like your house) or to evacuate. Deciding whether it is best to stay or go depends on the type of emergency.

Step 2: Prepare an emergency kit

If an emergency happens, you might not be able to get food or water for days or weeks, and your electricity may not be working.

Try to have three days' worth of food and fresh water for each person in your plan. You should have one gallon of water for each person for each day. But food and water aren't the only things you need to have on hand. The following items should be a part of your emergency kit. The kit should be kept in a container that can be easily carried in case you have to leave home. You could use a large bag, plastic container, or a trash can with a lid.

Ready in 3 is an emergency-preparedness program for Missouri. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services sponsors the program. **Ready in 3** aims to help residents and communities prepare for many types of emergencies from tornadoes to terrorism. For more information, visit health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3.

Emergency kit basic supplies:

- ❑ Water and canned or dried food
- ❑ Battery-powered radio and weather radio
- ❑ Flashlight
- ❑ Extra batteries for the radio and flashlight
- ❑ Prescription medicine
- ❑ First-aid kit

Step 3: Listen for information

It is important to stay calm in an emergency. Get as much information about the situation as possible. Many of us rely on TV, the radio, or the Internet for news. But some emergencies might knock out the electricity. Make sure to have a battery-powered radio with extra batteries.

City, county, and state officials have developed emergency plans. During an emergency, it is important to follow their instructions and advice. They will provide you with the latest information.

Pat yourself on the back - and stay alert

You've talked to your family and friends. Your plan is in place. Your emergency supply kit is stocked and ready. Be proud of the fact that you've taken the right steps to keep yourself and your family as safe as possible.

The final step is to remain alert. Review your plan regularly. Be sure to check your food, water, and medical supplies so that they stay fresh.

Remember - emergencies can affect anyone. But by being Ready in 3, you've made the decision to take an active role in your safety and the safety of the ones you love.

For more information or a more detailed emergency kit checklist, contact your local health department or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at 573-526-4768 or at health.mo.gov.



Who's watching out for you?

When you go to sleep tonight, rest a little easier knowing that your public health agencies are there for you...even while you sleep.

Everyone is aware that police, firefighters and hospital staff work around the clock, but did you know your state health department and local public health agencies are also available for emergencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week? State and local public health agencies are working together to protect Missouri's citizens during a public health emergency or terrorist attack.... even while you sleep. Their job is to watch out for the public's health and well-being and to respond quickly to potential biological, chemical or nuclear emergencies, as well as emerging infectious diseases.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services operates a Department Situation Room 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A duty officer is working around-the-clock and serves as the coordination point for all public health responses to emergencies, both natural and deliberate.

Disease investigators are available in each region of the state and provide 24-hours a day, seven days per week coverage for public health emergencies and infectious diseases. A public health team can go on-site to investigate any suspicious illness or disease within an hour of its reporting.

Hospitals, laboratories and public health agencies have joined forces to improve the detection of possible conditions or diseases that could indicate a possible bioterrorism or emergency event. A new hospital tracking system detects possible outbreaks by monitoring the number of admissions and ambulance diversions at hospitals.

The State Public Health Laboratory initiated a powerful DNA fingerprinting system that provides rapid identification of a wide variety of infectious diseases including critical bioterrorism agents. This significantly reduces the time it takes to identify critical agents from three days to two to four hours. In addition, a statewide courier service now ensures that specimens from every county arrive at the laboratory each morning before it opens for business.

This extra protection for Missouri's residents was made possible through federal funding to improve the state's ability to respond to a terrorist attack, outbreaks of infection and public health threats and emergencies.

So tonight when you go to bed, remember that your public health agencies are watching out for you. For more information, contact your local health department or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at 573-526-4768 or at health.mo.gov.

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