

*“Do it now. Today will be yesterday tomorrow.”*

*Unknown*

## Being Ready for a Disaster

By acting on the items below, you and your family can be prepared for many types of disasters that may occur in the future.

### Plans to Make Before a Disaster

- Write down, ahead of time, the steps to take for different disasters (e.g., house, fires, floods, etc.). Go through drills for each plan with the whole family. Make sure the car always has gas. This is in case you have to leave an area.
- Know your place of work's emergency plans. Find out about them from your supervisor, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), etc.



- Take a course in first aid from the Red Cross, your police or fire department.
- Give each family member a prepaid phone card with about a ten dollar value. Instruct children how to use the card and a pay phone. Some cell phone services may be overwhelmed in an emergency.
- Set up a “check-in” plan. Choose someone for family members to call or e-mail to check on each other. Pick someone far enough away who would not likely be part of the same event. Of course, call each other on cell, regular, or pay phones.
- Choose two places to meet. One is at home or near your home. Choose another place farther away in case you can't get home. Make plans for the safety of your children.



*“Prepare and prevent instead of repair and repeat.”*

*Unknown*

- If you have children in school, find out the school’s crisis plan. Know the school’s policy for sending children home. Make sure the school has current phone numbers for you and other caregivers in case you can’t be reached. Find out what the school needs to have to release your child to designated caregivers.



- If you have a pet, plan for its safety. For more information, contact the Red Cross or [www.disasterrelief.org/library/prepare/pets.html](http://www.disasterrelief.org/library/prepare/pets.html).

- When you enter a building, find emergency exits and stairways. Plan ahead how to get out quickly from buildings, vehicles, crowded public places, etc.
- Make an emergency supply kit. Put these things in backpacks or containers that one or more family members can easily carry:
  - Three days’ supply of bottled water (one gallon a day per person if possible. Put these next to, not in your containers.)
  - Food that won’t spoil. A hand can opener.

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- A battery powered radio or TV and extra batteries
- First aid kits for the home and the car
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- A change of clothing for each person
- Items for family members with special needs (e.g., baby supplies, medicines, etc.)
- Duct tape and dry towels that you can make wet to make a room airtight
- Bleach
- Important documents, cash, and credit cards



For more information on being ready for disasters, contact [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or call your local Red Cross. Ask about their “Preparing for the Unexpected” class. This one and a half-hour class teaches families and employees safety steps to take for many kinds of disasters.

## Being Prepared for Certain Disasters

Knowledge is power! Be aware of warning signs for certain disasters. Learn actions to take to increase the chance for your safety and the safety of others.

### Weather Disasters

- Find out and be prepared for disasters that are likely to occur in your area (e.g., floods, earthquakes, tornados, etc.).
- Tune in, daily, to weather forecasts. The Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) uses radio and TV stations to issue a WATCH (for an expected emergency) or a WARNING (for an emergency in progress or one that is about to occur).

- Heed the warnings given. Emergency sirens may also sound. Know when your community does a practice drill for sirens (e.g., the first Saturday of the month at 1:00 p.m). Then you won't confuse this with an actual emergency.
- Watch for fallen power lines. Avoid them.

For more information on weather updates, contact The National Weather Service at [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov).

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### Bomb Threats

- Don't touch strange packages.
- Be suspicious if packages have a ticking sound or have wires or aluminum foil sticking out from them.
- Leave the building as fast as you can.
- Call local police and the building manager.
- When leaving a building, try not to walk by windows.



For more information, contact [www.disasterrelief.org](http://www.disasterrelief.org).

### Biological Terrorism

Biological terrorism includes anthrax, smallpox, and other biological agents. If a biological attack occurs, the public will be informed and told what to do. Stay calm and listen for instructions on the radio or television.

For up-to-date information on biological agents, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Call 888.246.2675 (English), 888.246.2857 (Spanish) or visit [www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov).

### Anthrax

Anthrax has already led to illness and death for a limited number of Americans. How concerned should you be about this now? Again, knowledge is power. Don't panic! Know these simple facts:

- Anthrax is caused by a specific bacteria. If caught early enough, it can be treated with antibiotics. It does not spread from person to person.
- Know what anthrax looks like. It can be brownish and grainy. This is a crude form. It can also be a very fine, white powder.

- Know the symptoms of anthrax infections.

Symptoms depend on the way anthrax causes the infection. The most common way to get infected is anthrax exposure through a cut or abrasion in the skin. When treated early, this is curable. Inhaled anthrax is more harmful, but is also treatable if found very early.

### Signs and Symptoms of Inhaled Anthrax

Fever

Cough (dry, not with phlegm)

Muscle aches

A hard time breathing

Chest discomfort

**A runny nose is not a symptom.**

### Signs and Symptoms of Skin Anthrax

A raised, itchy bump that looks like a bug bite

Within two days, this changes into a fluid-filled sac.

A painless ulcer with a dark or black area in the center

### What Else Can You Do?

- Get a flu shot at the start of flu season. This lessens the chance of getting the flu. Then you won't confuse flu symptoms with those of anthrax.

- Seek medical care for anthrax symptoms listed in the charts on this



page. This is most important for persons who could have been exposed to anthrax where they work or live.

- Take antibiotics only if they are prescribed. Don't take them "just in case" to prevent getting anthrax. Taking antibiotics when they are not needed could lead to resistant



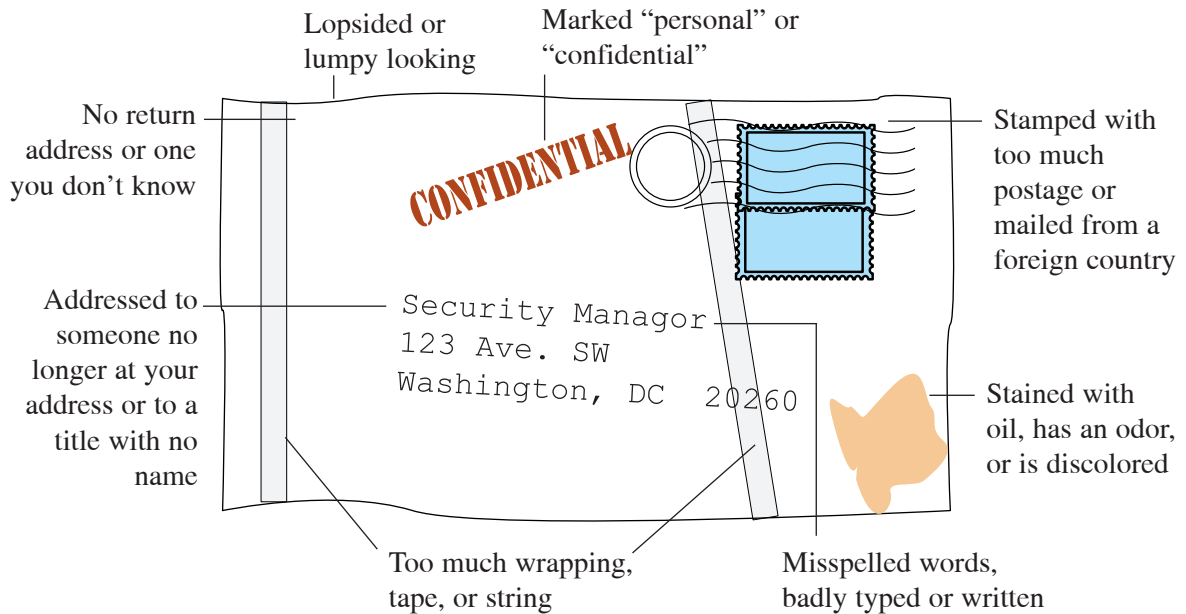
bacteria. This means the medicine will no longer work against the germ.

*“Hope for the best and be ready for the worst.”*

*Anonymous*

### Examine Your Mail

Anthrax has been sent through the mail. Be wary of the following:



### Other Tips

- When you open mail keep it away from your face.



- Don't blow or sniff the contents.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS WELL AFTER YOU HANDLE MAIL!**
- For more information about handling mail, contact [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).
- For more information on anthrax, contact [www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov).

*“We make our future by the best use of the present.”*

*Unknown*

## Smallpox

Smallpox is caused by a specific virus. It was wiped out as a disease in 1977, but may exist in labs in some foreign countries. This makes it possible for use in germ warfare. Smallpox is very contagious.

## What Can You Do?

- Listen to the news on a regular basis. If a confirmed case of smallpox occurs, the public will be informed and told what to do.
- Know the symptoms of smallpox.

- For people exposed to smallpox, a vaccine (from an emergency supply) can be given to lessen the severity of or even prevent the illness. The vaccine needs to be given within 4 days after exposure, though.

{**Note:** Besides anthrax and smallpox, there are other biological agents that terrorists could use. The government will provide information if this is an issue to be concerned about.}

## Signs and Symptoms of Smallpox

These occur about 12 days after exposure.

High fever

Fatigue

Headache

Backache

Skin rash, mostly on the face and then on the arms and legs a few days later

The rash starts out flat and red and then becomes pus-filled.

Crusts form early in the second week.

Scabs form and fall off after three to four weeks.

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### Explosions and Fires

- Follow fire prevention measures. Install and maintain



smoke alarms. Plan escape routes from both your home and your place of work. For a more complete list of fire prevention tips, contact: National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or contact [www.firesafetytips.com](http://www.firesafetytips.com).

- Know the building's emergency plan.
- Know where fire exits are.
- Keep fire extinguishers working. Know where they are and how to use them.
- Learn first aid.

- Keep a battery-operated radio, flashlights and extra batteries, a first-aid kit, and bright tape to mark off unsafe areas on each floor.
- Stay calm and exit the building quickly.
- If things are falling, get under a strong table or chair.

For more information on fire safety, contact [www.disasterrelief.org](http://www.disasterrelief.org).

### When Inside a Building Where a Fire Occurs

- Get out! Stay low (crawl) and exit the burning building as fast as you can.
- Feel the top, middle, and bottom of a closed door for heat. If the door is not warm, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly. If the door is warm, find another way out.
- Always stay below the smoke.
- After you are out, call 911!





**When Trapped in a Collapsed Building**

- Use a flashlight, if you have one.
- Don't move more than necessary so you won't kick up dust. Cover your mouth with clothing.
- To help someone find you, tap a pipe or wall or whistle. Don't yell. Doing so can cause you to breathe in dangerous amounts of dust. Shout only as a last resort.
- Wait for emergency workers. (Untrained people should not try to go inside a collapsed building for any reason.)

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### Harmful Chemical Exposures

Once in awhile, you hear about chemical leaks from industrial sites. The threat of chemical warfare is also on the minds of Americans. Of utmost concern is to keep your home safe.

### What Can You Do?

- Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home and garage. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- If the alarm sounds, open windows and doors. Leave the building right away. Call 911 if persons are dizzy, weak, short of breath, confused, etc. If not, turn off all appliances that use fuel and have a qualified person inspect your home.
- Don't run cars and lawn mowers in the garage. Don't use gas ranges for heat.
- Have your home furnace, chimney, and flue checked by a qualified person every year. If you think there is a gas leak, call the local gas company and follow their advice.

- Use common sense. Buying biohazard suits and expensive gas masks are a waste of money.
- If you work at a company where a harmful chemical leak or exposure could occur, follow your workplace safety guidelines. Use Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's), which tell you how to use chemicals safely. Know where this data is. Use the information given.
- In the event of a chemical leak or exposure, follow the advice of local officials. You may be told to "evacuate" or "shelter in place."

### Evacuate

- If officials tell you to leave the area, do so right away.
- Take your disaster supply kit, if available.
- Wear pants, long-sleeved shirts, and sturdy shoes for protection.
- Lock your home.
- Travel routes approved by local officials. Shortcuts could be dangerous or closed.
- Take pets. (See at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com).)



- Watch for fallen power lines and avoid them.

### Shelter in Place

If local officials recommend to “shelter in place,” stay in your home or workplace.

- Close and lock windows and outside doors.
- Turn off heating and cooling units and fans.
- Close the fireplace flue.
- Get your disaster supply kit, if available.
- Turn on the radio and listen for what to do.
- If you can, go to an inside room with no windows above ground level.

- Seal vents and cracks around doors with duct tape and wet towels. Tape all the faucets and drains, too.

Contact with chemicals can kill. For this reason, do not leave the shelter to help victims. Persons trained to deal with harmful chemicals should treat victims.

For information on other types of disasters, such as shootings, arson, hijackings, and kidnappings, contact [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov) and [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov).

*“It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little. Do what you can.”*

*Sydney Smith*

## **General Tips to Stay Safe**

- Be alert and aware of what’s around you (e.g., a strange car parked in the same spot for a long time or an odd package). Report these and threats of violence to local police.

Since the attack inside Columbine High School in 1999, plans for violence in other schools have been prevented because people have found and told police



about notes with plans, materials to make bombs, etc. Stay calm and patient.

- Listen for sirens that alert you about a possible disaster.
- Tune into the TV or radio for news as well as what to do. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) decides what actions should be taken. For more information, contact [www.fcc.gov/eb/eas/](http://www.fcc.gov/eb/eas/).
- Check for injuries and give first aid, if needed.