



**How to prepare for
an emergency**

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Group.

Preface

In 2012 IHC established a Self Advocacy Earthquake Reflection Group as part of the post recovery of the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes. The group identified the need to have an emergency preparedness booklet that would help people be better prepared for a disaster. A partnership between IHC and Civil Defence Emergency Management initiated a collaborative model to undertake this project.

This booklet is a step-by-step guide to help you understand disasters and how to prepare yourself for an emergency. This booklet is not copyright and may be reproduced and is available at: www.civildefence.govt.nz and www.ihc.org.nz.

**“Disasters are always inclusive.
Response and recovery are not,
unless we plan for it.” - June
Isaacson Kailes**



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Foreword

New Zealand is subject to disasters that can happen anytime, anywhere and often without any warning. The Christchurch earthquake in February 2011 changed our world; they moved our work places, shook our homes and affected our feelings in significant ways. Although we don't have any control of disasters we can all make changes to try and be better prepared.

This jolted the IHC's Advocacy Earthquake Reflection Group to take action and look at ways of helping other people get ready for a disaster. The very successful disaster preparedness workshops developed by the IHC Advocacy Group called "Shaken but not Stirred" have been presented to many groups across New Zealand. It was at these workshops that people told us they wanted accessible information to help them prepare for a disaster.

This is important because the information on disaster preparedness for disabled people clearly points to the need to be better informed. It emphasises how well you prepare and how much you practice determines how successfully you deal with and recover from disasters.

A strong relationship was established with Civil Defence Emergency Management Group to collaborate on ways to make an accessible emergency preparedness booklet happen. Partnering with Civil Defence has contributed significantly towards resilience and enhanced the safety of the people we support. IHC is extremely grateful for this support as it indicates the commitment of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group to work alongside the sector.

With substantial funding and support from the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, I have the pleasure of presenting this booklet on how to better prepare for a disaster.

This booklet is intended to raise awareness and provide tips for developing a disaster plan. It has been based on feedback from the IHC Advocacy Earthquake Reflection Group and staff input from the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, as well as complementing key Civil Defence Emergency Management Group preparedness resources.

IHC will continue to work in an inclusive and participative approach to emergency preparedness and will strive towards providing an effective, innovative and reliable response to emergency planning as outlined in this booklet.

I recommend that you use this booklet as a useful reference to help develop your own emergency plan as the most important message to keep yourself safe is easy... "Be Prepared"

Trish Grant
Director of Advocacy
IHC New Zealand

I am writing this foreword on September 4, 2015, five years after that day when our lives changed forever as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes.

We now have a better understanding of how important it is to be prepared for an emergency, by having a plan and an emergency kit. It is by taking action before an emergency that we can ensure we have what we need to help us get through.

This booklet and the accompanying videos have some really useful information on what we should do to prepare for an emergency. It is based on the experiences of the members of the IHC Advocacy Earthquake Reflection Group and highlights what they believe are the key messages for people to know about being prepared.

The project has been a partnership between the Earthquake Reflection Group and the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. We at Civil Defence have been delighted to partner with the members of the IHC Advocacy Earthquake Reflection Group – their efforts will help in that so very important goal of developing a more resilient New Zealand.

I have much pleasure in recommending this booklet – the advice it gives is as important now as it ever was.

Neville Reilly
Controller
Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group



Introduction

Emergencies can be very frightening.

They don't happen often, but, when they do happen you will need a plan.

We all live differently; think about your own situation to get prepared.

Use this guide to make sure you are prepared for an emergency and keep it in a safe place – you never know when you may need it.

What is an Emergency?

Emergency means: A sudden unexpected disaster that usually involves danger. It means you have to do something straight away to keep yourself safe. It is really important you know what to do. For some emergencies you might have to leave your home, this is called evacuating. Civil Defence will let you know whether you have to stay in your home or evacuate. In some emergencies it might be safer to stay at home.

Whatever the situation: **YOU MUST BE READY AND PREPARED**

To find out about the types of emergencies that can affect the area you live in, go to the Civil Defence website: www.civildefence.govt.nz

Examples of Emergencies

Earthquakes

If you feel the ground shaking or things start to move this could be an earthquake. Most people are injured in earthquakes from objects falling, like glass or furniture. Earthquakes are very quick and often don't last longer than a minute. Safe places are under a strong table or desk and in a clear space outdoors. Unsafe places are near windows.

If you are indoors or outdoors it is best to DROP, COVER and HOLD.



"Earthquake damage - Bridge Street" by Martin Luff is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

DROP down on to your knees

COVER yourself by going under a table or desk. If you don't have a table or desk cover your head and neck with your arms and hands

HOLD on to the table and cover your head and neck until the shaking stops.



If you use a wheelchair stay away from windows or dangers that may harm you, lock the wheels of your chair and cover your head with your arms and hands.

If you cannot get out of bed cover your head with pillows or bedding.

If you are outdoors try to move away from trees, power lines or buildings.

Drop, Cover and Hold until the shaking stops.

REMEMBER

After an earthquake there are usually aftershocks, which can keep happening, sometimes days or months later.

These aftershocks can cause further damage: it is important that you continue to keep yourself safe.

Tsunami

A tsunami is a series of waves in water, such as the ocean or a large lake. A tsunami may come after a strong, or long and rolling earthquake.

A tsunami wave can be small or it can get much bigger to become a fast moving wall of water.

Official warnings are provided by the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management. Your local council may also issue warnings. If you live near the sea, ask your council about your tsunami warning arrangements.



Some tsunamis can arrive quickly and there may not be time for an official warning. It is important to recognize natural warning signs and act quickly.

If you are at the beach these signs could be:

- Feeling a strong earthquake that makes it hard to stand up, or a weak rolling earthquake that lasts a minute or more
- You see a sudden rise or fall in sea level
- Hear loud and unusual noises from the sea

Move immediately to the nearest higher ground, or as far inland as you can. Take your getaway kit with you if possible. If you cannot escape the tsunami, go to the top of a sturdy building, or climb onto a roof or up a tree, or grab a floating object and hang on until help arrives.

REMEMBER

Never go to the shore to watch for a tsunami. Stay away until the official all-clear is given.

Be aware it may not be safe for up to 24 hours, or longer. Listen to your local radio station for advice.

Fires

House Fires

Most house fires start in the kitchen. Keep yourself safe by following a few simple steps:

- If you leave your kitchen always make sure you turn off the cooker
- If a pan catches fire throw a wet towel over it
- Never pour water onto burning oil
- Clean the cooker regularly so you don't have old fat gathering
- Keep tea-towels away from where you cook

For other areas of your home make sure that you don't leave clothes over a heater to dry and never leave candles unattended.

Install smoke alarms and make sure you check these regularly.

If a fire does happen, call 111 from your mobile phone or from your neighbour's house.



Bush Fires

Fire can start in bush or grass, particularly when it is hot, dry and windy in summer. They can travel very fast and destroy property and lives. Bush fires don't always happen in the country, they can happen in parks or where there are lots of trees.

If you get told to leave because of a fire, you must use your emergency plan and evacuate.



Storms

Lightning and Thunderstorms

Lightning and thunderstorms can happen at any time of the year and can be very dangerous. You will need to get inside as soon as you can. Close the curtains and windows.



Major Storms

Major storms affect wide areas and can be accompanied by strong winds, heavy rain or snowfall, thunder, lightning, tornadoes and rough seas.

When a storm warning is issued there are some things you can do to prepare:

- Secure, or move indoors anything that could get blown about and cause damage in strong winds
- Bring pets inside.
- Close windows, external and internal doors. Pull curtains and drapes over unprotected glass areas to prevent injury from shattered or flying glass
- Stay inside away from doors and windows and shelter further inside the house
- Put your household emergency plan into action and check your getaway kit in case you have to leave in a hurry. If you do have to evacuate, take your pets with you.

If you are unsure about what to do, listen to your local radio station.

Floods

Flood water is dangerous. Don't try and walk or drive through flood water as there could be dangerous objects in the water. Fast moving water can knock you over.

Lift any items you can high above the water level.

If you are unsure about what to do, listen to your local radio station.



REMEMBER

Emergency: means you have to do something straight away to keep yourself safe

Evacuate: means you will need to leave your home because of extreme danger

Don't know what to do? Listen to your local radio station

What you can do to prepare for an emergency

– You will need a plan

Create a support network

Sometimes in a disaster you won't be able to get in touch with your family, friends or support person. You need to create a support network, someone you can contact when you need help.

Write a list of your family, friends, neighbours and support people. Choose at least three people that will be able to support you in an emergency.

Before an emergency happens, talk to your support network about who will be your main contact person. This will be a person that you will call to talk about what you should do.

Each person in your support network needs to have some idea of where you are on different days of the week. Even though you might be in a different place each day there will always be a plan you can put in place.

Here are some things that you can do with your support network

A support network is essential for emergency planning. They can help you in many different ways by:

- Making sure you have emergency first aid equipment and food supplies in the house
- Connecting you with other people so you have someone to go to if you are upset
- Knowing what to do and checking you are OK
- Knowing where to go if you had to evacuate

REMEMBER YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK IS THERE TO HELP YOU IN AN EMERGENCY

How will you contact your support network during an emergency?

It is really important that you work out how you will get in contact with each other during an emergency. If the telephone land lines are not working a cell phone would be really helpful. You can text your support network to let them know what help you need. If you don't have a cell phone you will need to work out the best way of getting in touch. This could be that you meet at an agreed location such as your local park or petrol station.

Consider having an out of town contact. Sometimes it can be easier to text someone outside the city that you live in, as sometimes the local telephone and mobile network might not be working.

Practice your plan

Practice your plan with your support network so that when an emergency happens you know exactly what to do. It means you are PREPARED!

What you can do to prepare for an emergency

– Get to know your neighbours

Knowing your neighbours means that you can work together when an emergency happens. It also means that your neighbourhood becomes a friendlier, safer and nicer place to live. In an emergency your neighbours could be your main support. Together you can make things happen that you couldn't do on your own. When you know your neighbours you are more likely to look after each other, this is especially important during and after a disaster. It could be days before you have water, or power, or road access.

REMEMBER IN A DISASTER THE MOST IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF HELP WILL BE YOUR NEIGHBOURS.





If you are worried about meeting your neighbours there are some things you can do:

- Pop round and introduce yourself. If they look busy ask them when would be a good time
- Share some baking
- Invite them over for a morning or afternoon tea
- Find out what events are happening in your community through your local community papers and supermarket notice boards
- Chat over the fence
- Get involved in Neighbours Day Aotearoa. The website www.neighboursday.org.nz has information and ideas on how to take part

For more ideas on how to get to know your neighbours check out the following website: www.getprepared.org.nz/neighbours

What you can do to prepare for an emergency

– Supplies you will need

Food and Water

After an emergency it could be days before you have power or access to buy food and provisions. If you have to stay at home you will need enough food and water for three days.

Each person will need 3 litres of water a day. Water can be stored in recycled plastic bottles, or you can buy plastic water containers. Try not to store water in a milk container as it could go off very quickly. When you fill your containers put the lids on tightly and store the water in a cool, dark place like a cupboard. Put the date on your container and refill the containers every 12 months.

You may have to go and buy some food for an emergency. If it is too hard to buy all your items at once start by buying one or two things a week.

Try and have foods that don't need to be kept in the fridge like canned or dried food. Use the food in your fridge first, then the freezer, then the pantry before you use your emergency supplies. Keep your food items in a cool place and make sure you check the expiry dates of the food in your emergency supplies.





Here are some suggestions for your emergency food items:

- Dried fruit
- Ready to eat canned meat, fruit or vegetables
- Nuts and crackers
- Cereal
- Muesli or fruit bars
- Dry pasta or rice
- Some comfort food that you enjoy like chocolate

REMEMBER YOU NEED TO STORE ENOUGH FOOD AND WATER FOR THREE DAYS



Prepare a getaway kit

If you have to leave home in a hurry it is a good idea to have a bag packed of essential items. Leave it somewhere where you can grab it quickly. Items for this could include;

- A pair of walking shoes
- Rain coat
- Hat
- Torch
- Small first aid kit
- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Toiletries – soap, towel, toothbrush
- Pet supplies
- Some food
- A card that provides your contact details

An emergency toilet

After a large earthquake, do not flush your toilet as the sewerage system could be broken. You can dig a hole in your garden, to find out how to make an emergency toilet see: www.getprepared.org.nz/toilets



Is your home safe?

There are some things you can do to make your home safe.

Here are some suggestions to prepare your home:

- Check for heavy or loose objects that can move or fall, such as a picture or a shelf, and secure them
- Don't hang heavy items near where you sleep or sit as they could fall on you
- Clear your hallway or stairs in case you need to evacuate in a hurry
- Plan and practice how to escape from where you spend a lot of your time, like your house or work place
- Practice: Drop Cover and Hold

Civil Defence Centres

If it is unsafe in your home and you need help you can go to your local Civil Defence Centre, which is a hub for the coordination of any community emergency response.

A Civil Defence Centre provides a safe place if you have nowhere else to go. There will be people at the Centres who will look after you.

Remember; only go to a Civil Defence Centre if you need help.

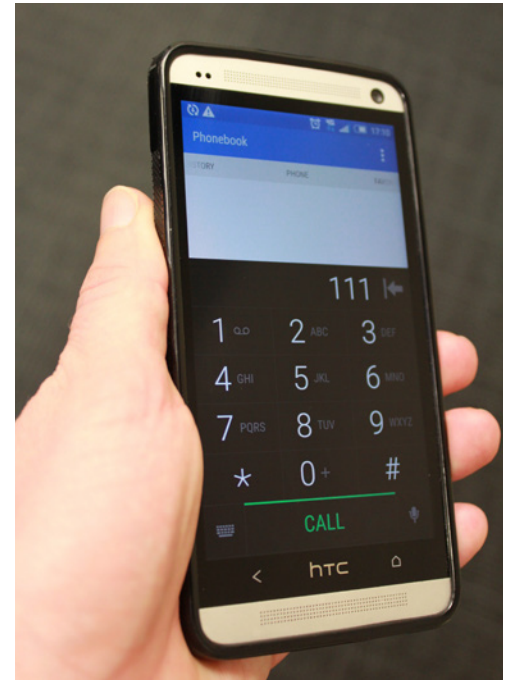
To find your nearest Civil Defence Centre during an emergency listen to the local radio station or you can check the Civil Defence website: www.getprepared.org.nz



What to do after an emergency

Some tips to help you straight after an emergency are:

- Try to stay calm
- If you have no electricity use your battery-operated radio from your emergency kit to listen for information and instructions
- Put on sturdy shoes and protective clothing to help prevent injury from debris such as broken glass
- If your building is not safe then you must leave at once
- If you have to stay at home then eat your food supplies from your emergency kit
- If you are injured and need immediate assistance call 111



Breathing exercise

Sometimes we can become anxious after an emergency. If this happens you can practice some breathing exercises to help you feel more relaxed. Go to a safe place like your bedroom and:

- Sit or stand in a relaxed position
- Slowly inhale through your nose, counting to five in your head
- Let the air out from your mouth, counting to eight in your head
- Repeat several times

Notes

Useful contacts and resources

The Civil Defence website has a list of local Civil Defence groups throughout the country, as well as lots of information on getting ready for a disaster:

www.civildefence.govt.nz

To view videos of the IHC Advocacy Earthquake Reflection Group, see the IHC Advocacy playlist on the IHC YouTube channel:

www.youtube.com/user/IHCNZLtd

To get in touch with IHC Advocacy visit www.ihc.org.nz or email advocacy@ihc.org.nz

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