

# Community & Family Preparedness: How You Can Help During a Major Incident

## Section 1: Before an Incident (Your Home Plan)

- **Have a "Go-Bag" and a "Stay-Kit":**
  - **Go-Bag:** A backpack for each family member with 3 days of water, non-perishable food, medications, a flashlight, a battery-powered radio, and a first-aid kit.
  - **Stay-Kit:** A larger supply (1-2 weeks) of the same items in case you must shelter in place.
- **Know Your Information Sources:** Identify your official local sources for emergency info (e.foo., your city's emergency management website, local news radio). Do not rely on social media rumors.
- **Family Communication Plan:** Designate an "Out-of-State Contact." In a local disaster, it is often easier to make long-distance calls than local ones. Everyone in the family should know to call this person to check in.
- **Medical Information:** Keep a printed list of your medications, allergies, and doctor's contact info for everyone in your household.
- **Get Trained:** Consider taking a basic First-Aid/CPR class. Trained citizens reduce the strain on the 911 system.

## Section 2: During an Incident (What to Do)

- **Stay Safe, Stay Informed:** Your first job is to not become another victim. Follow all "shelter in place" or evacuation orders from official sources.
- **Stay Off the Roads:** Do not drive toward the incident or the hospital "to see" or "to help." You will block ambulances, police, and fire trucks.
- **Keep Phone Lines Clear:**
  - Do NOT call 911 unless you have a *new* life-threatening emergency.
  - Do NOT call the hospital or ER. Their lines are needed for command and control.
  - Use text messages to contact family; they use less bandwidth than calls.
- **Do Not Go to the Hospital (Unless...):**
  - Do NOT go to the hospital to volunteer. You will be turned away.
  - Do NOT go to the hospital to find a loved one. You will be sent to the Family Reception Center.
  - **ONLY** go to the hospital if you have a life-threatening injury that cannot be handled by first aid.

## Section 3: If You or a Loved One Needs the Hospital

- **If You Are Injured:**

- If possible, go to an Urgent Care center for minor issues (cuts, sprains). This keeps the ER free for critical patients.
- If the ER is on diversion or you are told to go elsewhere, it's vital to know **what to do if you need immediate care but can't reach the ER.**
- If you *can* get to the ER, expect long waits, loud noises, and a stressful environment. Be patient.

**Do not self-deploy as a volunteer. Official volunteers will be coordinated by the city or Red Cross at a separate location.**