When Fury Strikes...
Are YOU Ready?

Preparation is the best protection against the dangers of a hurricane.
Lessons Learned
(Hurricane Dolly)

- We quickly forget past storms and their impact
- Storms are unpredictable
- Waves / surge does the most damage
- Public Safety will **NOT** respond to calls when winds exceed 70 mph
- We **WILL** lose electric power -- probably for days/weeks
- Businesses need electricity to operate (food, fuel, etc.)
- FEMA does not provide fuel for citizens / businesses
Lessons Learned
(Hurricane Dolly)

- We are on the downhill side of the Sewer Treatment plant
- Cell phones may not work
- Cordless phones will not work (plug in phones might)
- The Bridge is under TxDOT control – it will close ??????
- The bridge will open ?????
- We do not open shelters on the Island
- Mosquitoes will love it here post storm
- BEST PRACTICES – LEAVE the AREA
Before the Storm

Check into flood insurance
You can find out about the National Flood Insurance Program through your home insurance agent. There is normally a 30-day waiting period before a new flood insurance policy becomes effective for an existing residence. Homeowner policies do not cover damage from the flooding that accompanies a hurricane.

Develop an emergency communication plan
In case family members are separated from one another during a disaster (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), create a plan for getting back together. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, phone number and e-mail address of the contact person.

Prepare your home
Once a tornado, hurricane or major storm hits, it's too late to protect your home and property, but there are preparations you can make in advance to limit future wind and flood damage. Some are fairly simple and inexpensive; others will require a contractor. You’ll need to consider the characteristics of your home, your financial resources and the building codes in your community.

Make sure that all family members know how to respond after a hurricane
Teach family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity and water. Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police, or the fire department, and which radio station to listen to for emergency information.

Create an Emergency Supplies Kit
Because deployment of relief supplies and support to affected communities can be delayed or prevented due to damaged or impassable bridges and roads, assistance from emergency services may not be available for up to 72 hours, or longer, following a major natural disaster.

Re-Entry Stickers
Following a storm and during the clean-up phase; it may be necessary to limit traffic coming onto the Island. Residents need to obtain a re-entry sticker to be placed on their vehicles. Re-entry stickers are also available for non-residents that work on the Island. Employees should identify essential staff and obtain stickers for their vehicles. Stickers are available at the SPI Fire Department during normal business hours. Extended hours may be available in the event of a storm, but issuance of stickers will discontinue 72 hours prior to landfall.
Emergency Kit

Prepare yourself and your family for a minimum of three days
Because deployment of relief supplies and support to storm-stricken communities can be delayed or prevented due to damaged or impassable bridges and roads, assistance from emergency services may not be available for up to 72 hours, or longer, following a major natural disaster.

Keep informed
The South Padre Island Emergency Management Team works with local, state and national weather officials and the media to keep residents informed of the best ways to prepare or respond during a disaster situation. The purchase of a Weather Alert Radio for your home and place of employment can help you stay informed of changing conditions.

Storing your kit
Choose a location to store your kit where it is cool and dark, such as a closet or "safety corner" in the garage. If you live in a condo or have limited space, be innovative. Other possible storage locations include under the bed, under stairways or even a large box or plastic tub that can be covered with a table cloth and used as an end table.

Layer and monitor supplies
Layer supplies and keep them together in a container such as a plastic garbage can with wheels. Check the items every six months for expiration dates and changes in your children's clothing sizes. A good way to remember to inspect your kit is to do it each time you set clocks back or change your smoke detector batteries.

Use what you have
Start with what you already have and prepare as if you are going camping for three days with no facilities. If you’re a camper you’ve got a head start because camping supplies, tents, camp stoves and water jugs can double as emergency supplies.
Use canned foods for easy storage and long shelf life. However, be aware that they must be changed out at least annually. Choose ready-to-eat canned meat, fruits and vegetables that your family likes.

**If the electricity goes off:**

**FIRST**, use perishable food and foods from the refrigerator.  
**THEN**, use the foods from the freezer. To minimize the number of times you open the freezer door, post a list of freezer contents on the front. In a well-filled, well-insulated freezer, foods will usually still have ice crystals in their centers, meaning foods are safe to eat, for at least three days.  
**FINALLY**, begin to use non-perishable foods and staples.  

**Your Kit should include:**

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables  
- Canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water)  
- Staples - sugar, salt, pepper  
- High energy foods - peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix  
- Foods and supplements for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets  
- Vitamins  
- “Comfort foods” - cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags  
- Don’t forget food for your pets. Store canned or dry pet food along with an extra collar and leash. Make special arrangements for your pet or seek a hotel/motel that allows pets during emergencies.  
- Store foods in single or family meal-size packaging. Unrefrigerated leftovers can cause food poisoning.  
- Add a manual can opener, and cooking and eating utensils.
Emergency Kit – Water

Store a three-day supply, or more, of water for your family. One gallon per person per day is recommended for drinking, cooking and washing. Remember to include water for pets. Date your water containers and replace them every six months.

Tips for storing and using water:

- Purify water by boiling it for 5 to 10 minutes or by adding drops of unscented household bleach containing 5.25 percent hypochlorite. The Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) recommends 16 drops of bleach per one gallon of water. Purification tablets or a filter system designed for backpackers also work well.

- Store water in plastic three-liter soda bottles instead of plastic milk-type jugs. Milk jugs will break down over time, and soda bottles last considerably longer. You can also freeze water, and it will last until needed. This frozen water also can be used for non-emergency situations such as camping, fishing, hunting, etc. However, don’t forget to replace the water jugs when you get home.

- Learn how to remove water from your hot water heater in case you need it. Be sure to turn off the gas or electricity before draining water for emergency use.
Planning for Your Pet

Basic items for 3 days or longer:

- Water (Dog: 1 gallon for every 10 lbs your dog weighs; Cat: ½ gallon per day)
- Dry food (1-2 lbs food for every 10 lbs the pet weighs per day)
- Food and water bowls
- Vaccination records and medicines
- Collar ID and leash
- Kennel or crate
- Newspaper or litter
- Photo of your pet
- Garbage bags
# Emergency Kit - Tools and Supplies

## HOUSEHOLD ITEMS
- Paper goods, plates, cups, plastic utensils
- Map of area to find shelters or distribution points (street signs may be gone)
- Cash or travelers checks and change
- Battery-powered radio with extra batteries
- Flashlights with extra batteries
- Battery-powered clock with extra batteries
- First Aid kit
- Fire extinguisher, small ABC type
- Duct tape
- Waterproofed matches
- Sewing kit
- Plastic storage containers
- Paper, pencils and pens
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic sheeting or tarps
- Basic tool kit (adjustable wrench, screw drivers, hammer, etc.)

## CLOTHING AND BEDDING
- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Rain gear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Hat and work gloves
- Sunglasses

## FOR BABY
- Diapers
- Formula
- Bottles
- Powered milk
- Medications

## FOR ADULTS
- All prescription medications
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

## FIRST AID KIT
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
SPECIAL ITEMS
- Entertainment - books, toys and games
- Important family documents in a waterproof container:
  - Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)
  - Wills and Insurance Policies
  - Contracts and Deeds
  - Stocks and Bonds
  - Passports
  - Social Security cards
  - Immunization records
  - Bank account numbers
  - Credit card account numbers/company
  - Inventory of valuable household items
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages (3)
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors, Tweezers and Needles
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen

SANITATION
- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags with ties
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Unscented household bleach
- Insect repellent

NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)
Prepare Your Home

This homeowner’s checklist will help you learn what you can do in advance to protect your home from wind and flood damage. For more information about the costs and benefits of each approach, talk to a professional builder, architect or contractor. You should also ask the City of South Padre Island Building Inspections Dept. at 956.761.3219 about building permit requirements.

Is the roof sheathing properly installed?
During a hurricane, wind forces are carried from the roof down to the exterior walls, down to the foundation. Homes can be damaged when wind forces are not properly transferred to the ground. Roof sheathing (the boards or plywood nailed to the roof rafters or trusses) can fail during a hurricane if not properly installed. Examine the sheathing from the attic. If many of the nails have missed the rafters, you may need to re-nail the sheathing. If you are putting on a new roof, make sure the sheathing complies with current recommended practices.

Are end gables securely fastened to the rest of the roof?
In a hurricane or other windstorm, the side walls of the roof (end gables) take a beating and can collapse. Gable bracing often consists of 2x4-inch boards placed in an "X" pattern at both ends of the attic – from the top center of the end gable to the bottom of the brace of the fourth truss, and from the bottom center of the end gable to the peak of the roof.

Is the roof fastened to the walls with hurricane straps?
Hurricane straps (made of galvanized metal) help keep the roof fastened to the walls in high winds, and are required, by building code, on all homes on South Padre Island.
Are double entry doors secured at the top and bottom?
The exterior walls, doors and windows are the protective shell of your home. If the shell is broken during a storm, high winds can enter the home and put pressure on the roof and walls, causing serious damage. For each double door, at least one of the doors should be secured at both the top of the door frame and the floor with sturdy sliding bolts. Most bolts that come with double doors, however, are not strong enough to withstand high winds. Your local hardware store can help you select the proper bolts. Some door manufacturers provide reinforcing bolt kits made specifically for their doors.

Has the garage door been properly secured?
If the garage door fails, winds can enter your home and blow out doors, windows, walls and the roof. Ask the City Building Inspection Department for guidance on securing a garage door.

Are windows protected by storm shutters?
Installing storm shutters is one of the most effective ways to protect your home. Purchase or make shutters for all exposed windows, French doors, sliding glass doors and skylights. There are many types of manufactured storm shutters available made of wood, aluminum or steel. You can also make storm shutters with 5/8-inch-thick, exterior-grade plywood.

Is the main electric panel board located above potential flood waters?
The main electric panel board (electric fuses or circuit breakers) should be at least 12 inches above the projected flood elevation for your home. The panel board height is regulated by code. All electrical work should be done by a licensed electrician.

Are electric outlets and switches located above potential flood waters?
Consider elevating all electric outlets, switches, light sockets, and wiring at least 12 inches above the projected flood elevation for your home. You may also want to elevate electric service lines (at the point they enter your home) at least 12 inches above the projected flood elevation. In areas that could get wet, connect all receptacles to a ground fault interrupter (GFI) circuit to avoid the risk of electric shock. Have electrical wiring done by a licensed electrician.

Are the washer, dryer, furnace and water heater above potential flood waters?
They can be placed on masonry blocks or concrete at least 12 inches above the projected flood elevation, moved to inside a floodwall or moved to a higher floor. All work must conform to state and local building codes.
During a Hurricane Watch

A Hurricane Watch is issued when hurricane conditions are a real possibility for an area within 48 hours.

- Review your family disaster plan and check your Emergency Supplies Kit to include food and water supplies.
- Review evacuation plans. Learn safe routes inland and plan your evacuation route. Be ready to drive 50 to 70 miles inland to locate a safe place.
- Make sure the gas tank in your car is full.
- Make arrangements for pets, and identify pet-friendly hotels if you plan to evacuate.
- Refill prescription medications.
- Secure all watercraft.
- Bring in outdoor objects such as plants, lawn furniture, toys and garden tools; anchor objects that cannot be brought inside.
- Remove outside antennas.
- Secure buildings by closing and boarding up windows.
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly.
- Store drinking water in jugs, bottles and clean bathtubs.
- Trim dead or weak branches from trees.
- Stay tuned to local media and your Weather Alert Radio for updates on the storm.
During a Hurricane Warning

A Hurricane Warning is issued when a hurricane is expected within 36 hours. Begin precautionary action at once.

- Store valuables such as jewelry, silverware, photos and scrapbooks in a safe place, such as a waterproof container on the highest level of your home.
- Park your car in a sheltered area or on high ground.
- All high profile vehicles should be moved off of the Island.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for official instructions.
- Evacuate if the order is given.
- If you must stay at home, stay inside away from windows, skylights and glass doors.
- Keep a supply of flashlights and extra batteries. Avoid using open flames, such as candles and kerosene lamps, as a source of light.
- If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power "surge" when electricity is restored.
- If officials order an evacuation:
  - Leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.
  - Secure your home by unplugging appliances and turning off electricity and the main water valve.
  - Tell someone outside of the storm area where you are going.
  - If time permits, and you live in an identified surge zone, elevate furniture to protect it from flooding, or move it to a higher floor.
  - Bring your pre-assembled Emergency Supplies Kit.
  - Bring blankets and sleeping bags if you are going to a shelter.
  - Lock your home and leave.
Evacuation Information
“Move from the water, and brace for the wind”

If you are advised to evacuate your home and move to a safe, temporary location, there are a few things you should remember:

- Follow the instructions and advice of your local government. If you are advised to evacuate, do so promptly. If certain travel routes are specified or recommended, use those routes. Once an order is given you may not be allowed to select your route. If you plan to leave, leave early.

- Travel considerations:
  - Before leaving your residence, prepare your family Emergency Supplies Kit and take it with you in the car.
  - Leave well in advance to avoid being affected by flooding roads, fallen trees or power lines.
  - Make sure the gas tank in your car is full, and listen to the radio as you travel for additional information and instructions from emergency officials.
  - Make sure you have a Texas highway map in your vehicle.
  - Evaluate and be prepared to use parallel routes out of the community - this may include smaller roads that run parallel to the interstates and other highways.
  - If you must travel with more than one vehicle, plan to leave early to avoid traffic.

- When an emergency is declared and an evacuation order is announced, designated shelters are opened and operated by the American Red Cross and announced on local radio and television stations. **South Padre Island does not open evacuation shelters.**

- While shelters are available in a hurricane situation, there is not enough shelter space in Hidalgo County for all citizens. Therefore, officials urge citizens to use alternative housing options, such as traveling to a friend's or relative's inland home or to a motel. Take your Emergency Supplies Kit with you.

- A shelter should be considered a last resort to use if you have nowhere else to get out of harms way. Citizens who go to a shelter are asked to bring blankets and pillows, some food for the first day and any necessary medications and supplies. It is highly recommended citizens bring their Emergency Supplies Kit.
Evacuation Routes

When a hurricane threatens South Padre Island you may plan to leave voluntarily or you may be ordered to evacuate. Blue hurricane evacuation route signs are posted along roads on the mainland to guide you to safety.

- Local, state and federal officers will be posted along these routes to assist you. Motorists who wish to deviate from the primary evacuation routes may experience delays or may not be allowed to change routes.

- Motorists should be on the lookout for electronic message boards along the evacuation routes and should follow any instructions displayed. These boards may direct motorists to tune in to a local AM radio station to hear route-specific traffic information and other special emergency messages.

A. SH 100 from SPI/Port Isabel—travel to US 77/83 northbound, then to US 77 to Raymondville, continue North on US 77 to I-37 in Corpus Christi and northwest to San Antonio via I-37—Green Solid & Dashed Route (Available only if Corpus Christi is not evacuating).

B. SH 48 from SPI/Port Isabel west to US 281 (Military Highway) in Brownsville and continue west on US 281 to South Pharr, then turn on US 281 North to US 83 West and head west to Laredo—Red Route.

C. CONTRA-FLOW ROUTE US 77/83—travel northbound from Brownsville to Harlingen, then west on US 83 to the Pharr Interchange, then North on US 281 to I-37 to San Antonio—Dashed Blue Route (Motorists could be re-routed from I-37 to US Highway 281 just west of I-37 to San Antonio as traffic demands it—Solid Blue Route).

I-37 from Corpus Christi to San Antonio is also a contra-flowed route.

D. SH 186 from Port Mansfield/Raymondville—travel west to US 281 and continue west on FM 1017 to SH 285 in Hebbronville, then west on SH 359 to Laredo or north on SH 16 to San Antonio—Orange Route.

E. SH 285 in Falfurrias—travel west to SH 16 in Hebbronville and continue north on SH 16 to San Antonio—Maroon Route.

Hurricane Evacuees need to consider the travel path of the hurricane and their destination when choosing their evacuation routes. Listen to local authorities and emergency broadcasts about weather and highway conditions.

TxDOT will have courtesy patrols on major roadways.
After the Storm
Re-Entry

- Monitor local television and radio stations for road closures and safe travel conditions. Watch for flooded or washed out roads along the route you are taking back to the Island.

- Monitor the cities you will be traveling through to determine their re-entry checkpoints.

- South Padre Island will establish and monitor re-entry check points just before entering the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway. South Padre Island Police officers will be verifying and screening all those wishing to return to the Island, only those with official business will be allowed access to the Island.

- Monitor local television and radio stations to determine if the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway has reopened or call 956.761.5454.

- To return to the Island following a hurricane residents will need to have re-entry stickers on their vehicles. Business owners need to determine essential personnel and make arrangements for those people to have re-entry stickers on their vehicles.

- The Island may be without electricity and/or water for several days. Because of these situations and for your safety, curfews may be put in place. These rules will be outlined upon your entry back onto the Island.
Enter your home with caution.
Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the power company, police or fire department.
Beware of snakes, insects and other animals driven to higher ground, such as inside your home, by flood water.
Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
Check the refrigerator for spoiled foods.
Take pictures of the damage, both to the house and its contents, for insurance claims.
Drive only if absolutely necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges.

Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor’s home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.
Check for sewage and water line damage. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water faucets.

Stay tuned to local media for information.
Return home only after authorities advise that it is safe to do so.
Managing Storm Debris

Do your part to help speed up the recovery process. Proper clean-up procedures can go a long way toward regaining your normal way of life. Separating debris maximizes recycling opportunities and reduces the amount of waste that goes into the landfill.

Regular household garbage should be put in its normal place/container and will be picked up by the regular provider. It should not be sorted into the storm debris piles.

Don’t C. H. E. A. T. the environment. Separate your debris into the following categories:

- **C** Construction debris
  - Building materials, drywall, lumber, carpet, furniture, mattresses and plumbing

- **H** Hazardous waste
  - Oils, batteries, pesticides, paints, cleaning supplies and compressed gas

- **E** Electronics
  - Televisions, computers, radios, stereos, DVD players/VCR’s and telephones

- **A** Appliances
  - Refrigerators, washers/dryers, freezers, air conditions, stoves, water heaters and dishwashers.

- **T** Trees and vegetation
  - Tree branches, leaves and logs

**CORRECT placement of debris piles:**
- Curbside within 15 feet of the road
- Between the street and the sidewalk (if there is a sidewalk)
- Pair up with neighbors and consolidate your waste piles

**INCORRECT placement of debris piles:**
- On the road
- On the sidewalk
- On or leaning against trees, water/gas meters, telephone poles or power towers inside your property
Important Phone Numbers

South Padre Island Official Telephone Numbers

City Hall 956-761-6456
Fire Department 956-761-3040
Police Department 956-761-5454
Health and Code Enforcement 956-761-3226
Building Department 956-761-3217
Emergency Management 956-761-3210

Cameron County Judge 956-544-0830
Sheriff 956-544-0860
Office of Emergency Management 956-547-7000
State of Texas Department of Public Safety 956-440-6700
State of Texas Department of Transportation 956-542-2288
National Weather Service 956-504-1631
# Family Communications Plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations.

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<th>Out-of-Town Contact Name</th>
<th>Telephone Number</th>
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## Fill out the following information for each family member and keep it up to date.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Social Security Number</th>
<th>Important Medical Information</th>
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## Where to go in an emergency. Write down where your family spends the most time: work, school and other places you frequent. Schools, daycare providers, workplaces and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans.

### Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Neighborhood Meeting Place</th>
<th>Regional Meeting Place</th>
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### Work

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<th>Address</th>
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<th>Evacuation Location</th>
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### School

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### Other place you frequent:

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<th>Evacuation Location</th>
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## Important Information

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<th>Doctor(s)</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Pharmacist</th>
<th>Medical Insurance</th>
<th>Homeowners/Rental Insurance</th>
<th>Veterinarian/Kennel (for pets)</th>
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## Other useful phone numbers: 9-1-1 for emergencies.

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<th>Police Non-Emergency Phone #</th>
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Planning Tips for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs

WHO SHOULD READY THIS GUIDE?

You should read this guide if you have a disability, special need or just are not as strong and active as you used to be. This guide is for everyone who has trouble walking, hearing, seeing, breathing, understanding, learning, or responding quickly. These reduced abilities can be temporary or permanent. They can be due to conditions such as allergies, age or disability. Throughout this guide the terms “people” or “individuals” refer to this varied group of people. If your family member is in a nursing facility or has home hospice care, make sure you contact them regarding their emergency procedures.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Use this guide with other preparedness information obtainable from the Disability Resource Center and American Red Cross.
Why Prepare?

You are less likely to have problems in either large or small emergencies if you are prepared. A power failure or your pharmacist running out of your medications are examples of small emergencies. Large emergencies affect a wide area, overload emergency services, and may mean that you have to be self-sufficient for a week or more.

Systems that people rely on may not work in a major disaster. The situation can be even harder for people with disabilities and activity limitations. For example, your ability to get to exits or to gather up your personal items and emergency supplies may be reduced. People with vision or hearing loss or speech disabilities can have more trouble than usual in communicating, especially when regular systems are down or overloaded. These problems can occur just when communication may be crucial to survival and safety. Planning is important in order to deal with these problems.

Avoid the common tendency to not think about and plan for possible emergencies. You need to plan for all kinds of hazards. These include chemical, biological and radiological events, explosions, transportation accidents, fires, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, power outages, etc. Make your plans, then practice, evaluate and update them.

Preparing takes time and effort. You might want to do a little at a time. The important thing is to start. The more you do, the better you can protect yourself.

ABILITY SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Use a checklist when considering your abilities and what type of help you will need in an emergency. An Ability Self Assessment Checklist is available on the City of South Padre Island website at www.myspi.org.
Establish a Support Team

Build a support team of people who will help you in an emergency if necessary. They should be people who are regularly in the same area as you. The first people to assist in an emergency are often your neighbors, friends and coworkers.

These people, not professional first responders, make seventy percent of rescues in major disasters. The support team approach is based on the idea that if everyone is trained, everyone can help! When you train many people, you create a universal team. Build support teams with many people at every place where you spend a large part of your day: at work, home, school, or volunteer site. This is especially important when it is hard to predict who will be where you are at any given time.

Practice with different people to figure out who will best be able to help you. Personality traits to look for may include: strong; calm; listens well; communicates clearly; can guide you safely; and attends to important details.

Work with people who are dependable and have the physical and emotional ability to assist you reliably.

Buddy system and attendants – Do not rely on one person.

Do not depend on any one person. Buddy systems (choosing and training one person to assist you in an emergency) have weaknesses. You and your buddy may not be able to contact each other quickly in an emergency.

If you rely on personal assistance services (attendants), they may also not be available when you need them. Therefore, it is important that your support team include several people.