

HAYS COUNTY EMERGENCY GUIDE

Making Our Community Safer and Stronger

Family Disaster Planning



As with domestic preparedness, we must also be concerned with and prepared for emergencies right here in Hays County. We have compiled some valuable information to assist you in preparing for just such an emergency or a natural disaster affecting our area. We hope you will find this information helpful. ~ Kharley Smith, Hays County Emergency Management Co-ordinator

Avoid confusion: Make a plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance: How you will contact one another? How you will get back together? What you will do in different situations?

Detailed information on each of the topics below is available at the Department of Homeland Security web site at www.ready.gov.

FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

★ It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.

★ Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has coins or a pre-

paid phone card to call the emergency contact.

★ You may have trouble getting through, or the telephone system may be down altogether, but be patient.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and how you will be notified.

Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via emergency radio and TV broadcasts. You might hear a special siren, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door.

See the box below to register your phone number with the

Emergency Notification System.

EMERGENCY PLANS

You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school.

If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together in the event of an emergency.

You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance.

DECIDING TO STAY OR GO

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the disaster, the first important decision is whether you stay put or get away. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information, including what you are learning here, to determine if there is immediate danger.

In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should monitor TV or radio news reports for information or official instructions as they become available. If you're specifically told to evacuate or seek medical treatment, do so immediately.



You never know when a disaster, like the recent Ace Hardware fire in Wimberley, may strike. Be prepared for anything. Shown above are Hays County CERT members helping first responders in that disaster.

STAYING PUT

Whether you are at home, work or elsewhere, situations may arise when it's simply best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty outside.

In some circumstances, staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as "sealing the room," is a matter of survival. Use available information to assess the situation. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to take this kind of action.

The process used to seal the room is considered a temporary protective measure to create a barrier between you and poten-

tially contaminated air outside. It is a type of sheltering-in-place that requires preplanning.

TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE AND SEAL THE ROOM

★ Bring your family and pets inside.

★ Lock doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.

★ Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced-air heating systems.

★ Take your emergency supply kit unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.

★ Go into an interior room with few windows, if possible.

★ Seal all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting the sheeting in advance to save time.

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Emergency Notification System

The Emergency Notification System (ENS) of the Capital Area Council of Governments is an automated emergency notification tool that enables authorized public safety personnel to notify citizens in an emergency situation where property or human life is in jeopardy.

Register your phone at <http://wireless.capcog.org>. You may register as many phone numbers as you wish at the same location, or for home and work. Cell numbers are kept confidential.

Your location will be marked on Google Maps which is updated frequently. If you do not see your house or building on the map, simply place the dot on the map where you think it should be.

☛ Call 512-916-6035 for more information.



Prepare to keep your family safe by planning ahead

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★ Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to seal gaps so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.

★ Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet of-

ten for official news and instructions as they become available.

LEARN HOW AND WHEN TO TURN OFF UTILITIES

If there is damage to your home or you are instructed to turn off your utilities:

★ Locate the electric, gas and water shut-off valves.

★ Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.

★ Teach family members how

to turn off utilities.

★ If you turn the gas off, a professional must turn it back on. Do not attempt to do this yourself.

EVACUATING

In some conditions you will decide to get away, or you may be ordered to leave in certain situations. Plan how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency.

CREATE AN EVACUATION PLAN

★ Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.

★ If you have a car, keep half a tank of gas in it at all times in case you need to evacuate.

★ Become familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area.

★ If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to.

★ Take your emergency supply kit unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.

★ Lock the door behind you.

★ Take your pets with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency.

If time allows:

★ Call or e-mail the out-of-state contact in your family communications plan.

★ Tell them where you are going.

★ If your home has been damaged and you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving.

★ Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.

★ Check with neighbors who may need a ride.

SCHOOL AND WORKPLACE

Like individuals and families, schools, daycare providers, workplaces, neighborhoods and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans.

Ask about plans at the places where your family spends the most time: work, school and other places you frequent. If none exist, consider volunteering to help develop one. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead, and communicate with others in



advance.

SCHOOLS AND DAYCARE

If you are a parent, or guardian of an elderly or disabled adult, make sure schools and daycare providers have emergency response plans.

★ Ask how they will communicate with families during a crisis.

★ Ask if they store adequate food, water and other basic supplies.

★ Find out if they are prepared to shelter-in-place if need be, and where they plan to go if they must get away.

For more information on developing emergency preparedness plans for schools, please visit the U.S. Department of Education web site at www.ed.gov/emergencyplan.

WORKPLACES

If you are an employer, make sure your workplace has a building evacuation plan that is regularly practiced.

Take a critical look at your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system to determine if it is secure or if it could feasibly be upgraded to better filter potential contaminants, and be sure

you know how to turn it off if you need to.

★ Think about what to do if your employees can't go home.

★ Make sure you have appropriate supplies on hand.

NEIGHBORHOODS

A community working together during an emergency makes sense.

★ Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together during an emergency.

★ Find out if anyone has specialized equipment like a power generator, or expertise such as medical knowledge, that might help in a crisis.

★ Decide who will check on elderly or disabled neighbors.

★ Make back-up plans for children in case you can't get home in an emergency.

★ Sharing plans and communicating in advance is a good strategy.

IN A MOVING VEHICLE

If there is an explosion or other factor that makes it difficult to control the vehicle, pull over, stop the car and set the parking brake.

★ If the emergency could impact the physical stability of the roadway, avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs and other hazards.

★ If a power line falls on your car you are at risk of electrical shock, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.

★ Listen to the radio for information and instructions.

Basic Emergency Supply Kit

When preparing for a possible emergency situation, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air, and warmth. Here's a check ✓ list.

Recommended Items to Include in your Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water—one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation.
- Food—at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Dust masks to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food).
- Local maps.



Additional Items to Consider Adding to your Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses.
- Infant formula and diapers.
- Pet food and extra water for your pet.
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.
- Cash or traveler's checks and change.
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding for cold weather.
- Complete change of clothing including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing for cold weather.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper. When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color-safe, or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items.

Check Your Readiness with Homeland Security

Through its Ready campaign, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security helps all Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

Ready asks individuals to do three key things: assemble an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses.

Everyone should have some basic supplies on hand in order to survive for at least three days if an emergency occurs. Listed on Page 2 are items every emergency kit should include.

However, it is important to consider your own situation and unique needs of your household in order to create a kit that will meet those needs. It's also important to consider having at least two emergency supply kits—one full kit for home and other smaller portable kits for the workplace, vehicle or other places such as hunting camps and watercraft.

➔ Visit the web site at www.ready.gov for more information.





The CERT Program

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is an emergency preparedness program supported by the Department of Homeland Security. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began promoting nationwide use of the CERT concept in 1994 based on a model created and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985.

Hays County CERT was established by Commissioners Court in April 2003 and is organized under the leadership of Hays County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Sheriff's Office. It receives special training that enhances their ability to support the OEM and county first responders — fire, law enforcement and Emergency Medical S. In 2006, Hays County CERT was recognized as one of the top three teams in the United States.

CERT PROVIDES COUNTY-WIDE SERVICE

The ability of a community to recover from the devastating effects of a disaster requires that citizens actively plan and participate in preparedness. By encouraging preparedness efforts, hazard identification and mitigation, CERT members can minimize the effects of a disaster and facilitate recovery.

CERT training provides community self-sufficiency through the development of response teams that can assist others by providing vital services in the absence of emergency responders, whose arrival may be delayed due to a large event.

Since its establishment, Hays County CERT has grown from a handful of volunteers to nearly 100 organized into four geographic teams and a special Search and Rescue team serving all sections of the county.

It has supported a large number of emergency operations including providing rehab for firefighters at structure and wild land fires, managing and operating shelters for hurricane victims, assisting in searches for evidence and missing persons, as well as assisting first-responders at special events.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AND WELCOME

CERT provides an excellent opportunity for the people of Hays County to play an important role in helping to safeguard, prepare for and respond to major emergencies and disasters in our community.

If a disastrous event overwhelms or delays the community's professional response, CERT members can be called upon to assist others by applying the basic response and organizational skills they learned during training. These skills can help save lives and property until help arrives and continue to assist professionals in many ways.

The FEMA course required for CERT membership and follow-up training benefits anyone who takes it. Graduates are better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of disasters — and to help their families in emergency situations. CERT training provides people with information and experience that is not available anywhere else in most communities.

WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

Currently we are seeking CERT team members who are at least 18 years of age and reside in Hays County. The primary qualification



CERT members are ready to assist during any emergency or disaster whether on foot, on horseback, on a four-wheeler, or with any other vehicle necessary.



All CERT members receive CPR certification from county EMS and Health Department professionals.



CERT Mounted Search and Rescue on a field exercise on the Blanco River at Old Glory Ranch in Wimberley.



CERT members training for a victim evacuation.



CERT's Rodger Parker demonstrates what should go into a GO Pack.



CERT assists the Hays County Sheriff's Office in a search for human remains along the Blanco River.

for volunteering with this team is making a commitment:

- ★ To take classes and training provided by CERT in emergency preparedness, response capabilities, first aid, fire suppression and search and rescue procedures.
- ★ To use CERT training to support Hays County first responders when the need arises.
- ★ To participate in volunteer opportunities that will make the community safer.
- ★ To maintain skills learned during CERT training.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

For more information or to request an information packet, please contact us by e-mail at citizencorps@co.hays.tx.us or through the CERT website www.visitwimberley.com/cert.



CERT members receiving instruction at a recent Disaster Fair.

Emergency?

Call 911

NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS

HAYS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dispatch 512-393-7896
 Administration 512-393-7800
 Crime Prevention 512-393-7373

BUDA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Administration 512-268-0859

KYLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dispatch 512-268-3232
 Administration 512-268-0859

SAN MARCOS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dispatch 512-753-2108
 Administration 512-753-2110

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Hays County Area 512-353-7000

ANIMAL CONTROL

Buda 512-312-0084
 Kyle 512-268-8800
 San Marcos 512-393-8340
 Hays County 512-393-7896

POISON CONTROL

Toll Free 800-222-1222



FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

EMERGENCY MEETING PLACE _____
 (outside the home)

MEETING PLACE _____
 (outside the neighborhood)

Phone _____
 Address _____

FAMILY CONTACT _____
 Phone _____ (day) _____ (night)

Neighborhood Watch works

Crime and fear of crime impact neighborhoods nationwide. Neighborhood Watch brings us together to make our communities safer.

WHAT IS NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

1. A crime prevention program that is designed to reduce neighborhood crimes.
2. It combines two areas of citizen responsibility:

★ Action taken by calling law enforcement after or during the commission of a crime or suspicious activity.

★ Action taken by improving the security of their homes.

THE OBJECTIVES OF NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

★ Reduce crimes, especially residential burglaries and theft by target hardening techniques.

★ Encourage neighbors to work together and watch for suspicious activity in the neighborhood.

★ Maintain a continuing system for the dissemination of information.

★ Educate the community on how to make themselves, their families, and their homes safer.

★ Make your neighborhood safe and more enjoyable to live in.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

Talk to your neighbors and find out if they are interested in this program. Solicit or appoint a Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and Block Captain(s).

The Block Captain will serve as the liaison between the assigned group and the Watch Co-

ordinator.

The Watch Coordinator will be the liaison person between your neighborhood and your local law enforcement Crime Prevention Team.

Now is the time to contact the Crime Prevention Team and set up a meeting to learn more about the program.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH E-MAIL ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Hays County Sheriff Tommy Ratliff has a unique Neigh-

borhood Watch E-mail Alert and Notification system that informs county residents of crimes that have occurred throughout the county.

Severe weather and press releases are also sent through the automatic notifications.

For more information, or to be added to the notification list, contact the Crime Prevention Team at 512-393-7373.

★
The National Sheriff's Association has a wide range of materials to assist you. Visit their web site at www.usaonwatch.org.
 ★



Work with your neighbors

Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how your neighborhood can work together after a disaster until help arrives. Know your neighbors' special skills and consider how you could help others who have special needs. Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

Do You Know About the Citizen Academies?

This proactive overview of the Hays County Sheriff's Office offers a hands-on experience for citizens. Participants can take back to their communities a working knowledge of Sheriff's Office structure and operations. Topics cover law, jail operations, 911 communications, patrol ride outs, investigations, firearms, and specialized training including negotiations and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT).

The Academy is offered twice a year, with either Tuesday or Thursday evening classes extending over a 10-to-12-week period.

Completion of the Academy qualifies participants to join the Alumni Association which assists the Sheriff's Office with various projects. For more information, phone 512-393-7373.

The San Marcos Police Department also offers a Citizen Academy. For information on their program, call 512-753-2110.



CERT wins awards

Hays County's Community Emergency Response Team was recognized as one of the top four CERT programs in the nation by FEMA in 2011.

CERT also received the President's Award from the North Hays County Fire/Rescue for CERT's support in the devastating wildfires of summer 2011.