

Emergency



Preparedness



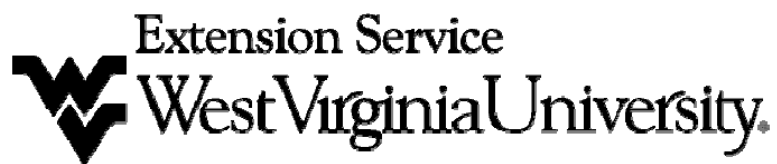
Manual



for Seniors



The following educational information
is being brought to you by the
collaborative efforts of



Families and Health Programs
and
Safety & Health Extension

How can this manual help you?

Disaster can strike quickly, without warning and can leave confusion and devastation in its aftermath. Knowing what to do is your best protection and a personal responsibility. In a major disaster, besides the effects on your physical health, feelings of acute anxiety, confusion and fear will be issues, especially for seniors. Seniors can cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a community team. Seniors are strongly encouraged to develop a buddy system or personal support network. Someone who can check in on you following an emergency will become an important ally in alleviating emergency-induced stress.

The key to disaster planning for seniors is being prepared. While it is not possible to plan for every potential emergency, it is beneficial to make preparations prior to an event. This manual includes planning materials, checklists and contact numbers to assist you in your preparations.

A key element in your preparations should be the development of a disaster supply kit for your homes, and a portable kit for use during evacuation. It should include items in six basic areas: 1) water, 2) food, 3) first aid supplies and medications, 4) tools and emergency supplies, 5) clothing and bedding, and 6) important family documents. A checklist for these items is provided in this manual (pages xx-xx).

Steps for Planning

Step 1: Making a general plan for disasters and emergencies

Step 2: Making a Disaster Supply Kit

Step 3: Planning for family members or friends with special-needs and pets

Step 4: Completing worksheets and check-lists for disasters and emergencies.
(Examples of checklists, contact number worksheets and essential contact numbers are included in this manual)

Step 5: Learning about natural and man-made threats

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Making a Family Plan for Disasters & Emergencies

Assess

- Identify potential threats in and around your community, such as flood prone areas, industrial plants, and hazardous materials.
- Contact your local emergency management office. Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen for your area. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Discuss with relatives, friends and neighbors how natural and man-made threats could affect you and your community.
- Evaluate your property's vulnerability to hazards, such as winter storms and flooding. Check your insurance coverage. Flood damage, for example, is not usually covered by a homeowner's insurance policy.

Prepare

- Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you stay put or go to a safer place. You should understand and plan for both possibilities.
- Discuss with your neighbors and plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives.
- Identify the safest area of your home. In many circumstances, the safest area may not be your home but elsewhere in your community.

- Plan how you will evacuate or signal for help. Make a plan to evacuate the area if required.
- Specify alternate get-away routes from your home and places for family members to meet.
- Select and arrange for a friend, family member, or out-of area contact who would check on you on a regular interval or who you could go for help.
- Plan emergency procedures with home health care agencies or health workers.
- Tell others where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach others how to operate necessary equipment.
- Make a plan for your pets if you would need to evacuate.
- Fill out the Personal Emergency Information, in the appropriate sections provided in this manual.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones or enter them into your cellular phones if you own one.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Assemble and maintain a disaster supply kit.
- Get trained in first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) procedures.
- Reduce the economic impact of disasters to your financial well being. Review property and health insurance policies and make sure they are current and meet your needs such as, type of coverage, amount of coverage and hazard covered.
- Use this manual as a tool for preparing. Check other resources mentioned in this manual to get more information specific to you and your family's needs.

Watch and Act

- When a disaster occurs, listen to news sources (TV and radio) for information and instructions. Community sirens and public announcements may also be used in special circumstances.
- Evacuate or seek medical attention quickly if authorities tell you to do so. Follow the plan that you have prepared.

Making a Disaster Supply Kit

During a disaster essential services (electric, water and gas) may be cut-off and local disaster relief and government responders may not be able to reach you immediately. You might also need supplies if you have decided to evacuate or move to a safer place until adequate help arrives. In these circumstances you would require supplies and other essential commodities. A well planned Disaster Supply Kit should help you to survive on your own for three days or more.

Tips for making your kit

- Keep loose items in plastic bags, preferable sealable types (zip lock).
- Put the kit's items in easy to carry containers or duffel bags. Put them within reach, near an exit you use most often.
- Check and update your kit and family needs at least once a year.

Facts for water & food

- A normally active person needs at least two quarts of water daily for drinking. Very hot temperatures can double this amount. Those with special needs may require more.
- Food preparation and sanitation require at least another gallon per person per day.
- Purchased bottled water that has been sealed is good for storage. If you store water that has been treated commercially by a water utility, make sure you store them in safe containers.

- Choose familiar, lightweight and nutritious foods that do not require refrigeration, cooking or preparation, and foods that use little or no water in preparation.
- Date each food item with a permanent marker and check or replace every six months as specified on individual packages.

Disaster Preparation for Families or Friends with Special Needs

If you have special needs or have family members with special needs, extra steps are needed to ensure their maximum preparedness. If you know of friends or neighbors with special needs, they might need your help in planning for their needs. The following are suggestions from the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Supplies to consider for special needs individuals:

- Hearing or mobility impaired may need to make special arrangements to receive a warning.
- At least a two-week supply of medications, prescription and non-prescription medicines (based upon availability).
- Copies of prescriptions for medical equipment, supplies and medications.
- Respirators, other electric-dependent medical equipment or oxygen - make prior arrangements with physician's or check with oxygen suppliers about emergency plans.
- Two week stock of disposable supplies such as dressings, nasal cannulas, suction catheters, etc.
- Electrical back-up for medical equipment.
- Adequate emergency food supply for special dietary needs.
- Arrangements of transportation for individuals without vehicles.
- Extra eyeglasses.
- Extra batteries for hearing aids, communication devices.

Pet Safety

Pets need to be included in your disaster plan since they are dependent on you for their safety. The following pet safety information has been compiled from sources including the National Humane Society in cooperation with the American Red Cross.

Have a safe place to take your pets

Emergency disaster shelters typically do not accept pets because of health and safety regulations and other considerations. It may be difficult to find shelter for your animals in times of a disaster, so plan ahead.

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets. Ask if “no pet” policies could be waived in an emergency.

Ask friends or family outside your community whether they could shelter your animals. Also prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency. Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets during a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have, so they should be your last resort.

Assemble a pet disaster supply kit

Keep items in an accessible place and in containers that that can be carried easily. Your pet disaster supply kit should include:

- Food and drinkable water for at least three days, bowls, can openers.
- Information on feeding schedule, medical conditions, behavior problems, and name and number of veterinarian.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and or carriers big enough for your pet to stand up and turn around.
- First aid kit for the pet.
- Registration records, vaccination records, microchip/tattoo information.
- Current photo of pets.
- Cat litter/pan and pet toys and beds if easy to handle.

Owners of **large animals**, such as horses or cattle, should prepare an Animal Safety Plan according to specific needs. Talk to your veterinarian or animal handler, and online resources for more information.

Evacuation

Evacuations are more common than many realize. Fires and floods are common reasons for evacuation. Transportation or industrial accidents have also occurred with release of harmful substances requiring people to leave their homes for extended periods.

When evacuations do become necessary, local officials will inform the public through the media or through special warning methods. Government agencies and many disaster relief organizations such as Red Cross and Salvation Army provides emergency shelters and supplies. The amount of time that you may have to evacuate may depend on the type of disaster. Some disasters give very little time to respond and that is why it is wise to plan ahead in case you have to evacuate.

- Monitor news media for instructions about evacuation. If told to evacuate do not hesitate, act immediately.
- Follow recommended evacuation route instructions, avoid shortcuts.
- Map out your route to shelters or to locations out of the area. Be familiar with alternate routes.
- Remember local meeting places and an out of town contact in case family members are separated. The contact can be a “check point” for members to call in to say that they are safe.
- Bring your disaster supply kit.
- Keep your vehicle filled with at least a half tank of gas at all times.
- If you don't have a vehicle, plan another way to leave.
- Lock your house. Leave a note in a sealed envelope marked “emergency information” in an obvious location, include when you leave, where you are going, and contact numbers.
- Call on friend or neighbors, or individuals that you have identified before for special assistance if required.
- Enact your pet safety plan.

If time allows:

- Call your out-of-area contact about your plans.
- Shut off water, gas and electricity at main switches or valves before leaving. Be familiar with the tools that you may need to do this and keep them in a handy location.
- Check with other neighbors who may need assistance or rides.

Family Plan for Disasters and Emergencies

Water & Food

Pack at least a three-day supply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| One gallon of water per person per day | Paper cups, plates and plastic utensils |
| Ready to eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables | Food for individuals with special needs |
| High-energy snacks such as peanut butter, granola bars, trail mix etc. | Pedialyte (to restore hydration if needed) |
| Powdered milk | Non-electric can opener, utility knife |
| Bottled or canned juices | |
| Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, etc.) | |

Tools and Emergency Supplies

Tools and Other Items:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Disaster preparedness manual | Cash or checks, credit or debit cards, coins |
| Battery operated radio and travel alarm clock, extra batteries | Candles |
| Map of the area with shelters located | Tape (duct, masking) and scissors |
| Flashlight, extra batteries | Matches in waterproof container |
| Signal flares | Compass |
| Fire extinguisher, small canister | Pliers, hammer |
| Plastic sheeting | Shut off wrench to turn off household water or gas |
| Plastic storage containers | Work gloves |
| Plastic bucket | Needles, thread |
| Whistle | Paper, pencil |

Kitchen Items:

All purpose knife	Resealing plastic bags
Household chlorine bleach	Aluminum foil and plastic wrap

Sanitation and Hygiene Items:

Towels	Toilet paper, towelettes
Soap, liquid detergent	Tooth paste, toothbrushes
Shampoo, deodorants, comb and brush	Shaving cream, lip balm, insect repellent, sun screen
Plastic garbage bags and ties for sanitation	Hand mirror
Feminine supplies	Disinfectant

Clothing and bedding:

One complete change of clothing	Blankets or sleeping bags
Sturdy shoes, work boots, hats, gloves, etc.	Extra prescription glasses, sunglasses, contact lenses
Rain gear	

First Aid Kit

First Aid manual	Scissors
Sterile adhesive bandages in various sizes	Tweezers
2-inch and 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6 each type)	Needle
2-inch and 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls each)	Thermometer
Triangular bandages (3)	Tongue depressors (2)
Assorted sized safety pins	Sunscreen
Cotton balls	Mosquito repellent
Latex and plastic gloves (at least 2 pair)	Petroleum jelly or other lubricant
Cleansing agent (isopropyl alcohol, hydrogen peroxide), soap, antiseptic solutions and moistened towelettes	Non-prescription drugs Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever Anti-diarrhea medication Antacid Antibiotic ointment Activated charcoal
Prescription drugs	Extra pair of prescription glasses, contact lenses

Important family documents and items- Store in watertight and fireproof container or safety deposit box:

Credit card account numbers and company names and telephone numbers	Bank account numbers
Social security cards	Immunization records
Insurance policies	Wills
Contracts and deeds	Inventory of valuable household goods
Social security cards and Passports	Copies of birth, marriage, certificates, drivers licenses
Stocks and bonds	Current photographs of family members
Emergency contact list and phone numbers	Extra set of car and house keys

Family Emergency Information

Local Emergency Numbers

Police Emergency (911):

Police non-emergency:

Fire Department:

Ambulance:

County Health Department:

County emergency Management:

Local Red Cross:

Local senior centers:

Local shelters:

Community Mental Health Center:

Family Members

Name	Date of Birth	Blood type

Family Telephone Numbers

Name	Work	Home	Cell

Friends and Neighbors Numbers

Name	Work	Home	Cell

Out-of Town Contacts numbers

Name	Work	Home	Cell

Medical Information

Doctor	Number
Dentist	
Pharmacy	
Veterinarian	

Personal and Family Information

Name	Current Prescription Medications

Name	allergies

Insurance Records

Company Name	Coverage	Policy Number
Agent Name	Phone	

Company Name	Coverage	Policy Number
Agent Name	Phone	

Company Name	Coverage	Policy Number
Agent Name	Phone	

Company Name	Coverage	Policy Number
Agent Name	Phone	

Company Name	Coverage	Policy Number
Agent Name	Phone	

Dealing With Stress After A Disaster

If your community has been hit by a disaster you are probably trying to make sense of what happened and deal with the stress of the situation. These events create a tremendous amount of stress and anxiety for those directly and indirectly affected. In the days and weeks following the disaster, you may begin to have some common reactions as mentioned below (this section has been adapted from the National Mental Health Association).

Common Reactions

- Disbelief and shock
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Disorientation, difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Apathy and emotional numbing
- Nightmares and recurring thoughts about the event
- Irritability and anger
- Sadness and depression
- Feeling powerless
- Changes in eating patterns; loss of appetite or overeating
- Crying for “no apparent reason”
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Difficult sleeping or falling asleep
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs

Tips for Coping

It is normal to have difficulty managing your feelings after major traumatic events. However, if you don't deal with the stress, it can be harmful to your mental and physical health. Here are some tips for coping in these difficult times:

- **Talk about it.** By talking with others about the event, you can relieve stress and realize that others share your feelings and are concerned about you.
- **Maintain control over those things that you can control.** For example: If you walk for exercise, continue to walk. You might consider changing your walk to an inside location like the mall but, by all means, continue your daily routines.

- **Spend time with friends and family.** They can help you through tough times. If your family lives outside the area, stay in touch by phone.
- **Take care of yourself.** Get plenty of rest and exercise, and eat properly. If you smoke or drink coffee, try to limit your intake, since nicotine and caffeine can also add to your stress.
- **Limit exposure to images of the disaster.** Watching or reading news about the event over and over again will only increase your stress.
- **Find time for activities you enjoy.** Read a book, go for a walk, catch a movie or do something else you find enjoyable. These healthy activities can help you get your mind off the disaster and keep the stress in check.
- **Take one thing at a time.** For people under stress, an ordinary workload can sometimes seem unbearable. Pick one urgent task and work on it. Once you accomplish that task, choose the next one. “Checking off” tasks will give you a sense of accomplishment and make things feel less overwhelming.
- **Do something positive.** Give blood, prepare “care packages” for people who have lost relatives or their homes or jobs, or volunteer in a rebuilding effort. Helping other people can give you a sense of purpose in a situation that feels out of your control.
- **Volunteer.** Contact area schools, hospitals or volunteer groups to ask how you can help. Taking personal action to be part of the solution is a very constructive way to reduce your anxiety.
- **Avoid drugs and excessive drinking.** Drugs and alcohol may temporarily seem to remove stress, but in the long run they generally create additional problems that compound the stress you were already feeling.
- **Ask for help when you need it.** If your feelings do not go away or are so intense that they interfere with your ability to function in daily life, talk with a trusted relative, friend, doctor, or spiritual advisor about getting help. Make an appointment with a mental health professional to discuss how well you are coping with the recent events. You could join a support group. Don’t try to cope alone. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness.

Be optimistic about the challenges ahead. Try to maintain a positive outlook. Remember that our nation has survived other difficult times. Stay in touch with your spirituality, if you find it comforting.

Natural Threats

Floods

Are you in a flood plain? Do you have adequate insurance?

Floods Can Take Several Hours to Days to Develop

- A flood WATCH means a flood is possible in your area.
- A flood WARNING means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.

Flash Floods Can Take Only a Few Minutes to a Few Hours to Develop

- A flash flood WATCH means flash flooding is possible in your area.
- A flash flood WARNING means a flash flood is occurring or will occur **very** soon.

Flood facts and tips:

- Listen to the National Weather Service on your weather radio and monitor local media for flood watches and warnings.
- Do not wade through floodwaters.
- Do not attempt to drive on flooded roads or bridges.
- Do you have a safe room? Do you have a pre-identified safe shelter if you must evacuate?
- The home of a friend or family member outside the threatened area could be an ideal place to temporarily relocate.
- Know where local shelters are located.
- Leave with adequate time to get there - roadways likely will be crowded.
- Remember flood damage is not covered by a home-owner's insurance policy. It must be purchased separately and ahead of time to be applicable.

Winter Storms

Prepare a Winter Storm Plan

- Have extra blankets on hand.
- Ensure that each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves or mittens, hat and water-resistant boots.
- Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit at home.
- Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit for your car, too.
- Have your car winterized before the winter storm season.
 - Check your car battery, ignition system, thermostat, lights, flashers, exhaust system, heater, brakes, defroster and tires
 - Keep vehicles fueled and in good repair
 - Ensure your car has adequate antifreeze, windshield washer fluid and oil
 - Check the levels regularly throughout the winter season.

Stay Tuned for Storm Warnings

- Listen to your local radio and TV stations
- Know what winter storm WATCHES and WARNINGS mean:
 - A winter storm WATCH means a winter storm is possible in your area.
 - A winter storm WARNING means a winter storm is headed for your area.
 - A blizzard WARNING means strong winds, blinding wind-driven snow and dangerous wind chill are expected. Seek shelter immediately!

When a Winter Storm WATCH is Issued . . .

- Listen to local radio and TV stations or cable TV such as The Weather Channel for further updates.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- Avoid unnecessary travel.

When a Winter Storm WARNING is Issued . . .

- Stay indoors during the storm.

- If you must go outside, several layers of lightweight clothing will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Gloves (or mittens) and a hat will prevent loss of body heat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs.
- Understand the hazards of wind chill, which combines the cooling effect of wind and cold temperatures on exposed skin. As the wind increases, heat is carried away from a person's body at an accelerated rate, driving down the body temperature rapidly.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks. After the storm, if you shovel snow, be extremely careful. It is physically strenuous work, so take frequent breaks. Avoid overexertion.

Avoid Traveling by Car in a Storm, but if you must . . .

- Carry a Disaster Supplies Kit in the trunk.
- Keep your car's gas tank full for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing.
- Let someone know your destination, your route and when you expect to arrive. If your car gets stuck along the way, help can be sent along your predetermined route.

If You do get Stuck . . .

- Stay with your car. Do not try to walk to safety.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see.
- Start the car and use the heater for about 10 minutes every hour.
- Keep the exhaust pipe clear so fumes won't back up in the car.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen.
- As you sit, keep moving your arms and legs to keep blood circulating and to stay warm.

Keep one window, which is away from the blowing wind, slightly open to let in air.

Specific Man-Made Threats

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family communications plan, are the same for either natural or man-made emergencies. However, there are important differences among potential terrorist threats that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take.

Biological Agents

Bacteria, viruses and toxins are biological agents that can cause deadly disease in people, livestock and crops. Deliberate release of germs or other biological substances can make you sick. Many agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin or be ingested to make you sick. Some biological agents, such as anthrax, do not cause contagious diseases. Others, like the smallpox virus, can result in diseases you can catch from other people.

Unlike an explosion, a biological attack may or may not be immediately obvious. While it is possible that you will see signs of a biological attack, as was the case with the anthrax mailings after 9-11, it is perhaps more likely that local health care workers will report a pattern of unusual illness or there will be a wave of sick people seeking emergency medical attention. You will probably learn of the danger through an emergency radio or TV broadcast, newspaper or some other means used in your community.

In the event of a biological attack, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide information on what you should do. It will take time to determine exactly what the illness is, how it should be treated, and who is in danger. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news including the following:

- Are you in the group or area authorities consider to be in immediate danger?
- What are the signs and symptoms of the disease?
- Are medications or vaccines being distributed?
- Where? Who should get them? How much would it cost?
- Where should you seek emergency medical care if you do become sick?

During a declared biological emergency authorities will provide specific information concerning the nature of the outbreak, symptoms, people or

groups who are vulnerable, and steps that you should take concerning medical treatment and precautions to keep you safe.

You should heed the following guidance:

1. **Do not assume** that you should go to a hospital emergency room or that any illness is the **result of a biological attack**. Hospitals may become overwhelmed with people who assume that they have been exposed even though they are not experiencing any symptoms.
2. If your symptoms match those defined by the authorities and you are in the group considered **at-risk**, immediately seek **emergency medical attention**.
3. Use common sense, practice good hygiene and cleanliness to **avoid spreading germs**, and **seek medical advice**.

Chemical Agents

A **chemical attack** is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment. A **chemical accidental spill or release** may occur from a chemical plant or on a transportation network such as train or highways.

Possible Signs of Chemical Threat

- Many people suffering from watery eyes, twitching, choking, having trouble breathing or losing coordination.
- Many sick or dead birds, fish or small animals are also cause for suspicion.

If You See Signs of Chemical Attack: Find Clean Air Quickly

- Quickly try to **define the affected area** or where the chemical is coming from, if possible.
- Take immediate action to **leave the area**.
- If the chemical is inside a building where you are, get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area, if possible.
- If you can't get out of the building or find clean air without passing through the area where you see signs of a chemical attack, it may be better to move as far away as possible and "shelter-in-place."
- If you are outside, quickly decide what is the fastest way to find clean air. Consider if you can get out of the area or if you should go inside the closest building and "shelter-in-place."

If You Think You Have Been Exposed to a Chemical

If your eyes are watering, your skin is stinging, and you are having trouble breathing, you may have been exposed to a chemical.

- If you think you may have been exposed to a chemical, **disrobe**.
- Look for a hose or any source of **water**, and **wash** with **soap** if possible, being sure not to scrub the chemical into your skin.
- Seek emergency **medical attention** immediately.

Nuclear Blast

A **nuclear blast** is an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave, and widespread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water and ground surfaces for miles around. **During a nuclear incident, it is important to avoid radioactive material, if possible.** While experts may predict at this time that a nuclear attack is less likely than other types, terrorism by its nature is unpredictable.

If there is advanced warning of a nuclear incident:

Take immediate cover, as far below ground as possible, though any shield or shelter will help protect you from the immediate effects of the blast and the pressure wave.

If there is no warning:

1. Quickly assess the situation.
2. Consider if you can get out of the area or if it would be better to go inside a building to limit the amount of radioactive material you are exposed to.
3. If you take shelter, go as far below ground as possible, close windows and doors, turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems. Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.
4. To limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time.
 - **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the radiation will be absorbed, and you will be exposed to less.
 - **Distance:** The farther away you are from the blast and the fallout the lower your exposure.
 - **Time:** Minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.

Use **available information** to **assess the situation**. If there is a significant radiation threat, health care authorities may or may not advise you to take **potassium iodide**. Potassium iodide is the same substance added to your table salt to make it iodized. It may or may not protect your thyroid gland, which is particularly vulnerable, from radioactive iodine exposure. Consider keeping

potassium iodide in your emergency kit, and learn what the appropriate doses are for each of your family members. Plan to **speak with your health care provider in advance** about what makes sense for your family.

Radiation Threat

A **radiation threat**, commonly referred to as a "dirty bomb" is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials over a targeted area. It is not a nuclear blast. The force of the explosion and radioactive contamination will be more localized. While the blast will be immediately obvious, the presence of radiation will not be clearly defined until trained personnel with specialized equipment are on the scene. Other forms of radiation threats may include radiation releases from nuclear power plants or releases from transportation accidents. As with any radiation, you want to try to **limit exposure**. It is important to avoid breathing radiological dust that may be released in the air.

If there is a Radiation Threat or "Dirty Bomb"

1. If you are outside and there is an explosion or authorities warn of a radiation release nearby, cover your nose and mouth and quickly go inside a building that has not been damaged. If you are already inside check to see if your building has been damaged. If your building is stable, stay where you are. Close windows and doors and turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems.
2. If you are inside and there is an explosion nearby or you are warned of a radiation release inside, cover your nose and mouth and go outside immediately. Look for a building or other shelter that has not been damaged and quickly get inside. Once you are inside, close windows and doors; turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems.
3. If you think you have been exposed to radiation, **disrobe** and wash as soon as possible.
4. Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.
5. Remember: To limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time.
 - **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the radiation will be absorbed, and you will be exposed to less.
 - **Distance:** The farther away you are away from the blast and the fallout the lower your exposure.
 - **Time:** Minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.

As with any emergency, local authorities may not be able to immediately provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet often for official news and information as it becomes available.

Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities on the scene. Above all, stay calm, be patient and think before you act. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

This manual was prepared by The Center for Rural Emergency Medicine, Center on Aging, Mountain State Geriatric Education Consortium and Rural Health Education Partnerships at West Virginia University. This Preparedness Guide has been compiled from various sources, such as Federal Emergency Management Agency, Red Cross, and the West Virginia Office of Emergency Services, National Mental Health Association; particularly for seniors as a reference and educational tool.

For assistance and additional information please note the agencies and contact numbers listed below:

For more information

Federal Emergency Management

www.fema.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

USDA Food Safety and Consumer Information

www.fsis.usda.gov

Food Safety.gov (part of the National Food Safety Information Network)

www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/fsgadvic.html

National Flood Insurance Program

1-800-427-4661

National Mental Health Association

www.nmha.org

1-800-969-NMHA (6642)

WVSeniors statewide resource for information concerning senior citizens

www.WVSeniors.org