HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Tools to be ready in the event of loss of services
After Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico’s population lived without electricity for a long period of time, some homes went without it for over a year. According to FEMA’s After-Action Report, the response was the longest sustained air mission of food and water delivery in the agency’s history. For most people, it was impossible to live comfortably. Within two months of the storm, 179,000 people had left the island for mainland United States, with no certainty that they would be able to return.

No one could have imagined the scale of the hurricane’s destruction, or how it would change daily life. Now, with hurricanes and other extreme events becoming more common, everyone needs an emergency plan that addresses their household’s needs. All good plans have similar elements: they outline how to prepare beforehand, how to stay safe during an event, and the first steps to take to begin recovery.

The strategies in this section will help you build an emergency plan that suits your household and your home. Planning with your neighbors and community can also help prevent property damage and save lives. The following chapter focuses on how to build collective community plans. It will also help you determine what you and your household need to do before, during, and after a disaster.
STRATEGY

DEVELOP A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

Whether you have a household of one or many, establishing an emergency plan is vital to suit your household’s unique needs. This strategy focuses on helping you and your household manage essential information, stay connected, and have essential supplies during and immediately after a disaster.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

► While no one can anticipate all the consequences of a disaster, past events have taught us about the biggest and most likely challenges for most households and what can be done beforehand to help overcome them.

► Single-family homeowners can find tips on how to protect their buildings here; multi-family property owners and administrators have a different set of responsibilities, and more comprehensive resources on how to manage them can be found in Enterprise Community Partners Ready to Respond Tools for Resilience’s webpage section.

STRATEGY IN ACTION

1. Bring Your Family Together
2. Develop a Plan to Stay
   a. Establish a Communication Plan
   b. Make a ‘Sheltering Stash’ in Your Home
   c. Tips for Sheltering in Place
3. Develop a Plan to Leave
   a. Prepare a Go-Bag for Each Member of Your Household
   b. Tips for Evacuating by Car
   c. Close up Your Home

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

01 Reinforce Site
04 Assess the Priorities for Your Home or Building
08 Anchor, Seal and Protect Building Openings
23 Develop a Household Emergency Plan
25 Respond + Begin Household Recovery
26 Develop a Community Plan
27 Identify + Prepare Safe Community Shelter
28 Inspiring Post-Disaster Planning for Community
WHAT TO ASK
► Ask questions about what would happen if a disaster struck and what each person could do. The answers are the beginning of your plan.
► How will we find each other?
► What are our options for shelter?
► How would we travel?
► What would we need to have with us?
► What will happen to our animals?
► How will we get news?

► Many organizations, such as the American Red Cross, have detailed workbooks and planning apps that you can use to complement your planning process. For more information, visit: https://www.redcross.org/local/puerto-rico.html

WHAT TO ASK
► Expect local cellphone calls to fail. Keep calls brief and mostly use text messaging.
► Calls over land lines (such as public payphones) and long-distance calls are more likely to go through.
► Leverage existing networks on social-media apps like Twitter.
► Follow any local groups or people that might be active after disaster strikes.
► Structure group texts by cellphone or through WhatsApp or similar apps.
► The head of household should send one email cc’ing the primary network members so email addresses are shared and stored.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE TIPS
► Ensure the safe space at your home or where you have decided to weather the natural disaster is prepared as you:
► Remove any elements hanging on the walls such as shelves, mirrors, pictures, or artwork.
► Move heavy objects, like books, to lower shelves or plastic boxes on the floor.
► Repair fissures and seal openings to the exterior, such as windows, with wooden panels or storm shutters. See Strategy 08.

STEP 2 - MAKE A PLAN TO STAY OR GO
A. ESTABLISH A COMMUNICATION PLAN
Determine who your household members need to be in touch with, and how they will reach each other. Remember, downloading apps may be difficult.

Therefore, build connections now through several mediums to ensure smooth communication before, during, and after a disaster.
A. Establish a Communication Plan

**Physical Locations**
- Select two places to go if it is impossible to return home and communications are down. One should be nearby, such as a neighbor’s home, and one should be outside your neighborhood. Both should have a place to leave a note in case you can’t wait there.
- Plan how household members will alert the network when they arrive at or leave a place.

**Contact List**
- Collect the telephone numbers, emails, handles, etc., of people in your primary network and create a contact list. Check everyone in your network has a paper copy of the list in their go-bags, protected in plastic, and that it’s accessible online, perhaps via email or as a shared document. Everyone in the group should carry a printed copy during a disaster. See chart below.

**News and Information**
- Choose the news sources you will be monitoring during the event. Everyone should receive the same information at the same time. A suggested source is NOAA Weather Radio for weather updates and public messages.

**Drill**
- Practice your communications plan. At least once a year, have a drill with everyone in your primary contact network, including your out-of-area contact and your pet caretaker, to be sure things work the way they need to.

**Network**
- Establish several means of reaching each other. Designate a primary network of people who will keep track of each other. This will include, but not be limited to:
  - A designated head of household
  - Other members of your immediate household
  - An out-of-area contact who can receive calls and serve as a news hub for your household and others
  - A pet caretaker who can help your pet if you can’t get home
STEP 2 - MAKE A PLAN TO STAY OR GO

B. MAKE A ‘SHELTERING STASH’ IN YOUR HOME

Gather at least 5 days’ worth of supplies. If infrastructure around your area is weak, plan to stash 2 weeks’ worth of supplies. Ensure the stash is in an area where supplies won’t be damaged. Consider all the household members when considering supply quantities.

FOOD AND WATER

- Include 1 gallon per person per day and extra for pets.
- Water supplies should last for 5-14 days.
- Canned goods or non-perishable dry foods in sealed packages that are familiar to your household and require no refrigeration, water, special preparation, or cooking are the best options.
- Verify expiration dates on all foods!

- Non Perishable Food for Pets
- Bottles of Water

■ Disposable plates, cups, utensils and paper towels.
■ Cooking supplies for after the storm (do not cook with heat until you are sure there are no gas leaks): charcoal or other fuel, sealed in watertight container if you have a grill, warming pot with canned fuel, solar oven or camp stove and matches.
■ Unscented liquid bleach, eyedropper, and large plastic bottle or approved container for purifying water (see Strategy 25 for instructions).
B. Make a ‘Sheltering Stash’ in your Home

Devices

- Solar or battery-powered lanterns
- Flashlights
- Appliance thermometers to monitor fridge and freezer temperatures
- Fans
- Batteries

Ensure battery sizing works with your equipment.

Hand fans or battery-operated fans (especially for elderly or heat-sensitive people).

Appliance thermometers to monitor fridge and freezer temperatures.

Supplies that will help you clean up after the event: large strong garbage bags; eco-friendly cleaning agents; mops, buckets, rubber gloves; safety goggles; N-95 respirators for the household.

Moist towels

Cleaning and preparing food.

For pets

Litter box or padding for pets to relieve themselves.

Garbage bags

Garbage bags, or sealable bin for garbage (especially for diapers and food waste).

Moist towels

Supplies that will help you clean up after the event: large strong garbage bags; eco-friendly cleaning agents; mops, buckets, rubber gloves; safety goggles; N-95 respirators for the household.

Footwear

Outerwear and sturdy footwear for each household member in case you need to leave suddenly.

Bathroom bags

Small sealable bags for bathroom garbage if toilet can’t be flushed.

Hygiene

- Litter box or padding for pets to relieve themselves.
- Garbage bags, or sealable bin for garbage (especially for diapers and food waste).
- Cleaning and preparing food.
- Supplies that will help you clean up after the event: large strong garbage bags; eco-friendly cleaning agents; mops, buckets, rubber gloves; safety goggles; N-95 respirators for the household.
- Outerwear and sturdy footwear for each household member in case you need to leave suddenly.
- Small sealable bags for bathroom garbage if toilet can’t be flushed.
### DEVELOP A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

#### STEP 2 - MAKE A PLAN TO STAY OR GO

##### B. MAKE A ‘SHELTERING STASH’ IN YOUR HOME

**WELLNESS**

- **LARGE FIRST AID KIT**
- **BEDDING, CUSHIONS, PILLOWS AND BLANKETS**
- **TOYS, GAMES, BOOKS AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**
- **MOSQUITO NETS**
- **SUNSCREEN**
- **“GO BAG”**

### STEP 3 - MAKE A PLAN TO LEAVE

#### A. MAKE A ‘GO BAG’ FOR EACH MEMBER

Your bag should be durable and easy to carry, like a backpack or suitcase on wheels. Keep it where you can grab it quickly.

**SAFETY & WELLBEING**

- **DIAPERS** Include a 5 day supply of diapers for infants
- **FOOD** Non-perishable food like granola or protein bars, baby food and instant formula for infants.

**IMPORTANT MATERIALS & INFORMATION**

- **CONTACT LIST** Pinned contact list on the inside pocket
- **STUFFED TOYS** Include stuffed animals for entertainment and comfort.

**ENTERTAINMENT**

- **HEADSET** Include headset for entertainment devices

- **BLANKET** Include a blanket for unexpected weather

**DEVICES & ITEMS**

- **CRAYONS AND PUZZLES** Serve to entertain and distract children
### SAFETY & WELLBEING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Equipment</th>
<th>Medical Equipment List</th>
<th>Contact List</th>
<th>Batteries</th>
<th>Walking Aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-perishables like granola or energy bars.</td>
<td>Large text version of all contacts and reunification hotline</td>
<td>Extra Batteries for Hearing Aids or other devices</td>
<td>Foldable cane or walking aid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IMPORTANT MATERIALS & INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Records</th>
<th>Medical Supplies</th>
<th>Important Materials &amp; Information</th>
<th>Proof of Residency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Store it in a safe water-proof container.</td>
<td>Medications and first aid kit</td>
<td>Store it in a safe water-proof container.</td>
<td>Store it in a safe water-proof container.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DEVICES & ITEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Back-up Phone</th>
<th>Device Charger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With wall or USB charger.</td>
<td>A solar charger is preferred.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Medical Record</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MEDICAL RECORDS

Store it in a safe water-proof container.

### HEALTH CARE & INSURANCE

Store it in a safe water-proof container.

### CONTACT LIST

Large text version of all contacts and reunification hotline.

### LAPTOP OR TABLET

With wall charger.

### BATTERIES

Include an ample supply of AAA, AA, 9V, D batteries.

### NOTEPAD & PENS

Include pens and pencils that won’t spill if wet.

### FLASHLIGHT

Solar powered is preferred.

### SPARE KEYS

Extra set of house and car keys.

### CASH

Store it in a safe water-proof container.

### CLOTHES

Include at least two changes of clothing.

### REPELLENT & SUNSCREEN

Make sure it’s the strongest available.

### MEDICINE

Seven-day supply of vitamins and supplements.

### COMFORT ITEMS

A blanket, slippers or favorite small objects.

### HYGIENE

Washing cloth, hand sanitizer, toothbrush and toothpaste.

### MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Include make, model and style or serial number.
DEVELOP A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

STEP 3 - MAKE A PLAN TO LEAVE

A. MAKE A ‘GO BAG’ FOR EACH MEMBER

SAFETY & WELLBEING

MEDICINE & FIRST AID
- Seven-day supply, include animal first aid kit with flea treatment.

FOOD
- Three-day supply of food and water with foldable food and water dishes.

MEDICAL RECORD
- Vaccination, Microchip ID, Photo with pet and family members in case of separation

ID & CONTACT LIST
- Include veterinarian and person who can help your animals if you can’t get home.

CARRIER
- Include crate or carrier for your pets.

batteries
- Include an ample supply of AAA, AA, 9V, D batteries.

CLEAN-UP BAGS
- Include clean-up bags for unexpected situations.

SAFETY & WELLBEING

HYGIENE
- Washing cloth, hand sanitizer, toothbrush and toothpaste.

REPELLENT & SUNSCREEN
- Make sure its the strongest available.

MEDICAL RECORDS
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

MEDICAL SUPPLIES
- Medications and first aid kit

WATER FILTER
- Three days worth per person if possible

ID
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

ID & CONTACT LIST
- Include veterinarian and person who can help your animals if you can’t get home.

SAFETY & WELLBEING

BATHROOM HYGIENE
- Washing cloth and toilet paper

DIAPERS
- Include a 5 day supply of diapers for infants

BATTERIES
- Include an ample supply of AAA, AA, 9V, D batteries.

BAGS
- Include clean-up bags for unexpected situations.

PET

BAGS
- Include clean-up bags for unexpected situations.

MEDICAL RECORDS
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

HEALTH CARE & INSURANCE
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

PROOF OF RESIDENCY
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

ID
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

BATTERIES
- Include an ample supply of AAA, AA, 9V, D batteries.

CELL PHONE
- With car charger

RADIO
- Must be battery powered. Take out batteries when in storage.

CELL PHONE
- With car charger

RADIO
- Must be battery powered. Take out batteries when in storage.

FLASHLIGHT
- Solar powered is preferred

ENTERTAINMENT
- Games and puzzles serve to entertain and distract.

HAT
- Include a hat to protect yourself from prolonged exposure to sun.

UMBRELLA
- Protect yourself from prolonged exposure to sun.

COLLAR & LEASH
- Extra set of house and car keys

PROOF OF RESIDENCY
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

ID
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

MEDICAL RECORDS
- Store it in a safe waterproof container

BATTERIES
- Include an ample supply of AAA, AA, 9V, D batteries.

FAMILY BAG

PET

FAMILY BAG

FAMILY BAG

FAMILY BAG
### DEVELOP A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

#### STEP 3 - MAKE A PLAN TO LEAVE

**B. EVACUATE BY CAR**

- Fill up the gas tank early to avoid waiting in long lines. Consider carrying extra gas in an approved container.
- Reduce traffic congestion by using one car per household. Offer a ride to neighbors if you have room.
- Anticipate heavy delays. In mass evacuation traffic, travel takes roughly four times as long as usual.
- Learn designated evacuation routes or bring a paper map with the routes marked. Travel only on these routes as others may be blocked.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. Just six inches of moving water can knock a person down, and one foot of moving water can sweep a vehicle away.
- Keep the radio on, follow traffic notifications, and watch for hazards such as downed power lines and washed-out bridges.
- Wear sturdy shoes and comfortable protective clothing, such as pants and a long-sleeve shirt.
- In a hurricane, expect bridges to be closed as wind speeds increase.
- Have emergency supplies for the car itself, including a spare tire or patch kit, a large flashlight, first aid kit and basic repair tools.

### C. CLOSING UP YOUR HOME

If you have time, protect your house and belongings.

**OUTSIDE**

- Tie down or move loose materials or equipment such as outdoor furniture, trash cans, grills, bicycles.
- Secure doors and cover windows with plywood or shutters.
- Anchor propane tanks and any containers of hazardous chemicals so they do not leak or float away.
- Clean gutters and drains, and move any objects that may block water from receding. Test the sump pump if you have one.
- If you have a generator for the house, it should have an approved transfer switch and be securely bolted down. Test it and fill it with fuel.
DEVELOP A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

STEP 3 - MAKE A PLAN TO LEAVE

C. CLOSING UP YOUR HOME

INSIDE

► Move valuables to the highest floor if flooding is likely
► Fill the bathtub(s) and other clean large containers with water. You can use this to drink if needed.
► Keep your pets safe. Put them in a carrier or room where you can get them quickly when you are ready to leave or shelter
► If you are leaving, unplug all appliances. If you are staying, consider a surge protector for the refrigerator and freezer if you want to keep them plugged in.
► If you are evacuating, empty your fridge and freezer so you do not return to decayed food. Mold and odor inside a refrigerator or freezer can damage the appliance, and you may have to throw it out.
► If you are staying, turn the fridge and freezer to the lowest settings so food stays colder longer.

UTILITY SYSTEMS

Shut off utility systems to minimize damage and danger. The hazards of utility outages usually come from when the systems go back on without being shut off properly. Have a professional show you how to shut these systems down before a disaster.

ELECTRICITY

► There are two places to turn off power: the circuit box inside and the main connection outside. Flip the switches you see in either of these places and power will go out.
► Unplug appliances to prevent them from being damaged by surges.
► If it is advisable to turn off your power, there will be a public alert message.

WATER

► The main shut-off valve works like the dial for a garden hose. Have a plumber identify it for you and label it with a plastic tag.
► If you are evacuating, shut off the main power and water.
► If you are sheltering in place, you should follow public messaging or turn off power and water preemptively.
► Whether you are evacuating or not, shut off gas to appliances. Use the valve next to the appliances, not the main valve.
When an anticipated disaster is approaching, the first question you need to answer is whether you and your household members should leave the area, stay home (“shelter in place”) or go to a designated shelter nearby. Hurricanes give several days’ warning before they strike, but many other natural disasters do not. This strategy will help you determine the best options in all conditions and to act accordingly.

**Strategy in Action**

1. Understand the Vulnerabilities of Your Household
   a. Consider the Difficulties Each Person may Face
   b. Understand the Risks at Your Building
   c. Understand the Risks in Your Region
2. Decide Whether to Stay or Go

**DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION**

► When you assess the challenges that may arise for each member of your household during a disaster, your plan can address them in ways that lessen the impact.

► If you have advanced warning, you will be able to consider the safest place to weather the storm: your own home (“sheltering in place”), a local shelter, or a remote location such as with family, friends or a hotel safely away from the disaster zone. As part of planning, find two friends out of the area that your household can go to. If you need to make these decisions after the event, the same considerations apply.

**SUPPORTING STRATEGIES**

01 Reinforce Site
04 Assess the Priorities for Your Home or

Fotos Patillas
An evacuation order is a notice given by government agencies, including the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency (PREMA), through media coverage. It is issued when the land where your home sits is vulnerable to natural hazards such as flooding, storm surge, landslides, or high winds.

The government may not always be aware about specific situations. Even if there is not an evacuation order in place, make sure that both your surroundings and your home are safe. See Strategy 01: Identify Risks at Your Location and Strategy 04: Assess Condition of a Residential Structure.

Strong and structurally sound foundations, walls, and roof (preferably concrete)

Small number of windows, skylights, or other openings

Plenty of provisions for people and pets

This safe space can be:
- An interior bathroom or closet located at the center of your home (not along an exterior wall)
- A space that is specifically built as a shelter during disasters.
STEP 2 - DECIDE WHETHER TO STAY OR GO

CHOOSE A SPACE TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE

Is there an evacuation order in your area?

Are you vulnerable after assessment of part one of this strategy?

YES

NO

Is there a Safe Space at your home?

YES

Shelter in place

[Go to part 2 of STRATEGY 25]

NO

Shelter at your neighborhood

[Go to part 2 of strategy 28]

Is there a Safe Space near your area?

YES

Shelter outside your neighborhood

[Go to part 2 of strategy 28]

NO

REMEMBER

ATENTION! STAY HERE ONLY IF:

■ Everyone is healthy enough to live with utility outages for an extended period. Anyone that needs medical care beyond basic first aid should ask their regular care provider for the best place to go.
■ You have a way to communicate and get news.
■ You feel emotionally prepared to ride out the emergency disaster situation.
■ You’re not alone.

ATTENTION! STAY HERE ONLY IF:

■ Everyone is healthy enough to live with utility outages for an extended period. Anyone that needs medical care beyond basic first aid should ask their regular care provider for the best place to go.
■ You have a way to communicate and get news.
■ You feel emotionally prepared to ride out the emergency disaster situation.
■ You’re not alone.
Dealing with the immediate and prolonged aftermath of a natural disaster can be one of the most difficult phases of household recovery. The landscape after a hurricane or earthquake can include power outages, water supply interruption and destruction of buildings. This strategy focuses on what to do during the emergency and how to manage early response for your home and members of your household so that your process of long-term recovery will be a foundation for future resilience.

**DESCRIPTION AND FUNCTION**

Breaking down the work of recovery into manageable pieces will help you move forward.

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**SUPPORTING STRATEGIES**

- 01  Reinforce Site
- 04  Assess the Priorities for Your Home or Building Structural Condition Prior to Event
- 08  Anchor, Seal and Protect Building Openings
- 23  Develop a Household Emergency Plan
- 25  Respond + Begin Household Recovery
- 26  Develop a Community Plan
- 27  Identify + Prepare Safe Community Shelter
- 28  Inspiring Post-Disaster Planning for Community

**Strategy in Action**

1. During the Emergency
2. After the Emergency: Safely Evaluate Your Home
3. Respond to Emergency Conditions
4. Understand the Recovery Process: Register for Assistance
5. Rebuild

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Jake Price Houston Texas Hurricane Harvey
RESPOND + BEGIN
HOUSEHOLD RECOVERY-

STEP 1 - DURING THE EMERGENCY

- Keep one phone or radio on at all times.
- Stay calm, help others and follow official advisories.
- Have board games or cards to pass the time in a confined space.
- Protect valuables, unplug and elevate electronics, and store valuables in plastic.
- Run down batteries with unessential uses.
- Take big risks or separate yourself from other people.
- Risk your life to save any possessions.
- Go out of a safe space unless the authorities announce danger has passed.

GOING OUT AFTER SHELTERING IN PLACE

- Signal to emergency crews and neighbors.
- Post a notice on the front door with big dark letters that says OK if you do not need emergency help, or HELP if you do.
- If you leave, post a message that says where you went, who you are with, and numbers where you may be reached (this can be your cell phone and your out-of-area contact).

STEP 2 - AFTER THE EMERGENCY | SAFELY EVALUATE YOUR HOME

Storms and other disasters create new hazards in their wake. If you evacuated your home, return only when qualified officials deem it safe to do so. If you sheltered at home, don’t go outside until you get an official alert that it is safe.

RETURNING HOME

- Go inside cautiously, with a flashlight rather than a lantern or any source of flame. There may be gas or other flammable vapors that can cause fires.
- Watch out for broken glass and sharp debris. If you see, or smell mold (musky smell) leave the space.
- Water and electricity are dangerous together. NEVER turn on power if there is water inside.
- Document all damages to facilitate insurance, emergency and municipal response.
- Take photos or videos and document all damages in writing.
- Calculate total estimated losses in $.
- Keep track of all damages to show insurance company history of home.

MANAGING A FLOODED HOME

- Ventilate the space by opening windows and doors as soon as weather allows.
- Determine if there is mold. See Strategy 13.
- If there is no sign of mold, remove any wet material as soon as you can (drywall, fabrics, rugs and furniture, etc) to prevent mold from developing.
- If you think there might be mold, wear protective eyewear, gloves and a respirator mask. Spend only 15 minutes in the site at a time. Carefully document damage with photographs for your insurance company.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Avoid walking or driving through flood waters, which can be electrically charged from damaged power lines or contaminated by sewage.
- Look out for landslides, especially after a lot of rain. Be aware of changes in the landscape such as new patterns of stormwater drainage on slopes (especially the places where runoff water converges), land movement, tilting trees and any cracks or shifting in parts of your building.
- Go to Strategy 29: Respond and Begin Community Recovery for more info.
Disaster affects physical and mental health. Staying well helps you have a smooth recovery.

Remember that you are part of a community and you can support each other. See Strategy 29 for more on community collaboration. See Strategies for Energy Generation + Backup and Water Management + Storage

## STEP 3 - RESPOND TO EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

### DISASTER AFFECTS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

- **Staying Well**: Helps you have a smooth recovery.
- **Community Support**: You are part of a community, and you can support each other.
- **Energy Generation + Backup**: Consider strategies for energy generation and backup.
- **Water Management + Storage**: Plan for water management and storage.

### USE GENERATOR POWER

- **Never use a generator indoors**, as it produces deadly carbon monoxide. Place it outside, at least 20 feet away. Monitor inside air with a carbon monoxide detector that has new batteries.
- **Portable Generator**: Store it in a covered space with ventilation, especially if you are worried that it might get stolen. Use an approved container and secure it in a protected location far from people.
- **Never plug a generator into a wall outlet**.
- **NEVER** use a generator in a garage or other closed space.

### ACCESS SAFE FOOD AND WATER

- **If you can’t cook on your stove**, grill outside, use a camp stove or a solar oven.
- **If you don’t have access to the outdoors**, use a propane stove near a window.
- **Do not cook food over wood that has been painted or treated with chemicals**—they are toxic.
- **Canned and sealed foods** are the most sanitary options.

### LIVE WITHOUT POWER

- **Use minimal electricity until power is fully restored**. Power supply may be reduced, lighter load on the grid means more power for more people.
- **Identify household fire hazards** (and develop appropriate risk mitigation measures).
- **Use safe cooking, lighting and heating practices** (e.g., do not leave appliances unattended, keep clothing/furniture away from appliances, etc.).
- **Teach children about fire safety** and promote safe behavior.
- **Share knowledge and ideas with neighbors**.

### STAY COOL IN THE HEAT

- **Avoid things that make you sweat**, such as salty food, physical activity, sitting in the direct sun.
- **Working hard while wearing clothing that cover the body** can cause:
  - **Heat Exhaustion** - Symptoms include heavy sweating, weakness, nausea, vomiting, headache, lightheadedness, and muscle cramps. Rest in a cool place, remove excess clothing and hydrate immediately.
  - **Heat Stroke** - If heat exhaustion persists, seek urgent medical attention. Symptoms include high body temperature, altered mental state or behavior, headaches, confusion, agitation, slurred speech, irritability, delirium, seizures, rapid breathing, fast pulse, and sweating that alternates with dry skin. Cool the person with any means available and call a health professional.

### PREPARE FOOD

- **NEVER eat food** that has touched storm water. If cans or food containers get wet, remove paper labels (they can have bacteria), wipe with diluted bleach (1 tablespoon of unscented liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water) and let dry for an hour. If cans are bulging or damaged, they are likely contaminated and you should not eat the contents.
- **When in doubt, throw it out**! Food poisoning can be dangerous during an emergency. In fires, food is exposed to toxic chemicals, even inside the fridge, and should not be eaten.
- **Without power**, food should stay cold four hours in the refrigerator and up to 48 hours in the freezer.

### PROTECT MENTAL HEALTH

- **Living through a disaster** is stressful. Long periods of stress can lead to depression, anger, and substance abuse.
- **Eat healthfully**, exercise often, sleep soundly, and avoid alcohol and other drugs.
- **Share your feelings** with friends or family and maintain relationships with friends.
- **Take breaks** from dealing with the disaster and try to return to activities you enjoy if possible.
- **Stay informed** but avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of the event.
- **Ask for help** from a clergy member, counselor, non-profit (such as the Red Cross), or doctor.

**REMEMBER**: Disasters are particularly hard for children. Help them by:
- Getting them back into a familiar routine as quickly as possible.
- Reassure them, and answer their questions
- Limit exposure to media coverage of the event.
## STRATEGY 25

### RESCUE + BEGIN

### HOUSEHOLD RECOVERY

#### STEP 3 - RESPOND TO EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIVE WITHOUT RUNNING WATER</th>
<th>MINIMIZE PESTS</th>
<th>ENSURE SANITATION AND DEAL WITH YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM</th>
<th>CLEAN UP AND MANAGE DEBRIS</th>
<th>TREAT WATER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Stay hydrated. If you have a low supply of water, use it only for drinking.</td>
<td>- If there is debris nearby – including food scraps – that attracts pests, watch out for open windows and doors that can allow rodents, insects and reptiles to come in and spread diseases.</td>
<td>- Eliminate all non-essential water use and flush toilets as little as possible. Use hand sanitizer to keep hands clean.</td>
<td>- Use clothing and equipment that protect you during clean-up. You may be exposed to lead paint, asbestos and other toxins.</td>
<td>- The most common ways to treat water are by boiling and chlorinating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If bottled water is not available, treat your own. Dirty water leads to illnesses such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid and hepatitis. Follow guidance from the health department on how to treat water. Do not drink, bathe in, wash dishes, brush your teeth, or make ice with water that you are not sure is safe. Babies should breastfeed or drink formula, never water.</td>
<td>- Protect yourself from Zika and Dengue viruses by using mosquito repellent and sleeping with mosquito nets. Pregnant women, or women that plan to have children should be aware the viruses are linked to complications with pregnancy.</td>
<td>- If pipes in your system carry sewage away, you can flush the toilet by pouring water down the bowl.</td>
<td>- Use clothing and equipment that protect you during clean-up. You may be exposed to lead paint, asbestos and other toxins.</td>
<td>- Boil water for at least one minute then let it cool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use rainwater caught in clean buckets for flushing toilets. Never use flood water.</td>
<td>- Use battery fans to keep air flow. Keeping your surroundings dry and cool dissuades mosquitoes.</td>
<td>- If your pipes are backed up, keep them shut off. You will need to improvise a toilet.</td>
<td>- Protect human health, comply with regulations, reduce injuries, and minimize or prevent environmental impacts by cleaning up debris. Work with neighbors, See Strategy 27 for how to organize community collaborations.</td>
<td>- Chlorinate water using regular, unscented bleach only. Household bleach has concentrations from 5.25% to 8.25%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- See Strategy 16 Reduce Your Water Consumption</td>
<td>- Use rainwater caught in clean buckets for flushing toilets. Never use flood water.</td>
<td>- If you have a septic system: If the drain field becomes covered with water, do not use the system and avoid contact with any standing water that may contain sewage.</td>
<td>- Clean up debris</td>
<td>- For 5.25%, add 8 drops per gallon (approx. ⅛ teaspoon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eliminate all non-essential water use and flush toilets as little as possible. Use hand sanitizer to keep hands clean.</td>
<td>- There can be debris nearby – including food scraps – that attracts pests. Watch out for open windows and doors that can allow rodents, insects and reptiles to come in and spread diseases.</td>
<td>- If pipes in your system carry sewage away, you can flush the toilet by pouring water down the bowl.</td>
<td>- Protect human health, comply with regulations, reduce injuries, and minimize or prevent environmental impacts by cleaning up debris. Work with neighbors, See Strategy 27 for how to organize community collaborations.</td>
<td>- For 8.25%, add 6 drops per gallon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use battery fans to keep air flow. Keeping your surroundings dry and cool dissuades mosquitoes.</td>
<td>- See Strategy 15: Manage Pests.</td>
<td>- If your pipes are backed up, keep them shut off. You will need to improvise a toilet.</td>
<td>- Protect human health, comply with regulations, reduce injuries, and minimize or prevent environmental impacts by cleaning up debris. Work with neighbors, See Strategy 27 for how to organize community collaborations.</td>
<td>- Stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If it does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let it stand another 15 minutes. If it still does not smell of chlorine, discard it and find another source of water. Before drinking, let it sit for several hours and the bleach smell will dissipate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first thing to do is file an insurance claim. Funds for rebuilding (such as those from FEMA and other government agencies) are not usually calculated until your insurance claims are adjusted.

If a Presidential disaster declaration is issued, you will be able to apply for funding via FEMA. Register for FEMA assistance, either online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov, or at a Disaster Recovery Center. Registering directly with FEMA will help you understand the aid you qualify for.

If you cannot afford construction services, there may be volunteer groups or non-profit organizations that can do repairs and remove mold.

If you need additional aid, such as food benefits, medical devices, mental health care, or small business assistance, ask FEMA if they can refer you to organizations like the American Red Cross, or follow word-of-mouth in your area.

Establish your priorities:

- Stay safe and healthy throughout the recovery process. This may mean you and your family stay at a safe shelter, a neighbor’s or family’s house or hotel.

Establish your budget:

- Get information from your insurance company, FEMA and other aid sources about available funds, and the specific filing requirements for authorizing them.

Determine your project scope:

- Make a list of the services you need (carpentry, mold remediation, electrical) to present to contractors for a bid.

Know the law:

- Work with local businesses that have proper licensing and insurance. You may be liable for any construction-related accidents on your premises if the builder does not have adequate workers compensation and liability insurance.

Find a good contractor:

- Be careful selecting a contractor: There are many scams.

- Request bids from several contractors. The cheapest bid is not always the best.

- Establish a written contract. Include: full price, materials and timeline. The more detail, the better.

- Ask your insurance company for a recommendation.

- Communicate well and constantly with your contractor.

- Say no to cash-only deals, door-to-door solicitations that require you to commit right away; high upfront payments; handshake deals without a contract, free on-site inspections, or discount materials. Be cautious of a contractor that contacts you first.

- Get references from past customers, both old references, to check endurance of the work, and more recent ones to ensure it is still good.
Description: Casa Pueblo is a community-based non-profit organization located in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. Casa Pueblo was the result of what started as a hard-fought struggle for land conservation in the central mountainous region of the island. Now, as a respected and admired institution, Casa Pueblo continues pursuing its goal: to educate the public on sustainable development issues and community activism. Located in Adjuntas, its headquarters serve as a cultural center where visitors can learn all about the history of the renowned Art and Culture Workshop. A guided tour through the center covers all of Casa Pueblo’s achievements, from its initial efforts to stop the strip mining of the surrounding areas to the subsequent enactment of legislation in favor of land conservation in other municipalities. Other tourist attractions include a butterfly garden, a plant nursery, and an artisan shop.
Interviewee: Tania Rosario, Taller Salud, Loiza

For more information, visit https://www.tallersalud.com/

Description: Taller Salud is a feminist, community-based organization whose goal is to improve women’s access to healthcare, reduce violence in community settings, and promote economic development through education and activism. After Hurricane Maria, Taller Salud coordinated medical and psychological assistance brigades for over 2,000 people and distributed food to about 14,000 women and their families during the first three months after the event. Between January and March of 2018, an additional 3,000 people received supplies and primary healthcare based on their needs at the time, while an additional 1,000 people received medical and/or psychological assistance. Over the next six months after the hurricanes hit, our organization and our strategic partners helped an estimated total of 20,000 people in 15 municipalities as part of our emergency response.

INTERVIEW

The fact is that it was really tough for our communities in Loiza, where our offices are located. We were barely starting to handle the damages left in Loiza by hurricane Irma’s passage, which destroyed 300 homes and brought down the water and power systems in the area. Our response to Maria was, in reality, a direct result of the emergency response to Irma. When it came to donations, this helped us identify the additional needs that we tend to forget during an emergency, such as reproductive and women’s health care. Our day-by-day interactions involved daily meetings to determine aid categories and cover basic needs based on established priorities, including water, food, medications, medical assistance, clothes, necessities, pest control, materials, and household goods.

After Maria, we also established four lunchrooms in the community, where the women cooked and served about 1,000 meals per day for 8 weeks. Currently, we are working with the Recuperación Justa project, which has two goals: delivering aid supplies and community planning. Fundamentally, this project strives for the community to develop and perform organizational and political training work in the face of a real threat to the recovery discourse. For example, our Loiza community lives near a channel that needs dredging, and we are always told there is no money for it. Meanwhile, financing is readily available when it comes to proposals for housing developments or apartment projects. So we are working for the community and its residents to assume their responsibility and take on a political discourse and identity to tackle the recovery process and everything it entails. That is why we call it Recuperación Justa [fair recovery], not Disaster Recovery.
The first need we noticed was the lack of space for the community, so we bought the land (Loma de la Niña Mariana) 37 years ago and dedicated it to community projects. It is because of this land that we can now hold activities that have improved the economy and created opportunities for the community. Some examples of these activities are the Festival de la Pana, which has been celebrated for 36 years, summer camps that have been operating for 16-17 years, the common kitchen, and other similar community-focused activities.

After Maria, it took us a couple of days to be able to leave our homes. Then, people started arriving at La Loma. The ARECMA team cleaned the surrounding areas because everything was destroyed due to the site elevation. The same happened with the community kitchen; one of our members saw what it was and suggested we do it here. We started cooking for ourselves, but then we noticed people needed food, so we decided to cook one meal per day to feed the community members. Occasionally, with what little signal we had, we posted what we needed on social media, and the help came. Little by little, the word spread and people came from neighboring towns, such as Yabucoa, Naguabo, and Juncos; this continued until recently. We used to gather as an organization to decide whether we accepted aid or not, because not everyone came to us with the best of intentions. Other challenges were the lack of communication services (like for most people) and not having a census before the hurricane to account for infrastructure and resident needs. One of our accomplishments was to have a group of dedicated leaders among us, a human network formed by those who stepped up when the community needed them most: the emergence of voluntary service. We did not exactly have a group of volunteers as part of our organization. However, volunteers joined because of what ARECMA represented for the community. These volunteers were young and they enthusiastically led most of the projects. By owning a space and proper facilities, we managed to store supplies; by having a kitchen, we were able to feed a lot of people. Media coverage, social media, and the aid received from the diaspora were all extremely important; thanks to them, we received supplies, food, and medicine. Moreover, we have a water cistern and solar panels because of donations received from American companies.