Most disasters are natural disasters, the result of some force of nature, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods. Some natural disasters can be predicted, such as hurricanes and severe winter storms, while others, such as tornadoes and earthquakes, happen with little or no warning. Some disasters are the cause of human actions, intentional or unintentional. A disaster plan will help with safety, security, and comfort.

SAFETY TIPS

Regardless of the type disaster, there are things you can do to prepare. Contact your local Red Cross chapter or visit the FEMA Web site to make sure you are aware of the potential for natural disasters in your community. After you have identified the types of disasters that could strike where you live, create a family disaster plan. Remember to make it simple so everyone can remember the details.

• Discuss what to do in an evacuation. When told by officials, go immediately to a shelter as instructed or to the home of a family friend or relative who lives out of the area. Find out about your local shelters beforehand.

• Know evacuation routes. Pre-establish several different routes in case certain roads are blocked or closed.

• Family members can become separated during an emergency. Be prepared by creating a plan for how to reach one another. Establish an out-of-area contact (such as a relative or family friend) who can coordinate family members’ locations and information should you become separated. Make sure children learn the phone numbers and addresses, and know the emergency plans.

• Quiz children every six months so they remember what to do, where to go, and whom to call in an emergency.

• Decide how to take care of pets. Pets are not allowed in places where food is served - so you will need to have a place to take your pets if you have go to a shelter.

• Post emergency phone numbers (fire, police, ambulance, etc.) by the phone.

• Assemble a family disaster supplies kit, and keep a smaller one in the trunk of your vehicle.