



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND SOUTH ASIANS

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Natural (such as earthquakes, hurricanes, infectious disease outbreaks, etc.) or man-made (such as acts of terror, accidents, etc.) emergencies can occur anytime and anywhere.
- Emergencies come in many forms and have short- and long-term consequences such as flooding, power outages, infrastructure and economic disruption, and emotional/mental health impacts.
- Given the impact emergencies can have, it is important to *"plan for the worst and hope for the best."* Those more prepared are likely to be less impacted when an emergency does strike.
- South Asian communities in particular have unique needs - whether linguistic, cultural or otherwise - that make advanced emergency preparation crucial.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### ➤ Build an emergency kit.

- Include items such as non-perishable food and water (if you have canned food, make sure you also have a can opener!), battery-operated or hand crank radio, flashlights, batteries, blankets, food for pets, medications, and a first aid kit.
- Your kit should have enough materials for you/your family to survive for up to 3 days if you have to shelter at home or evacuate.

### ➤ Be familiar with communication options.

- During an emergency, cell phone and land-line phones may not have service for hours or days. Websites may be overloaded due to increased traffic.

- Be ready to use a number of different communication options during emergencies.
- Make sure your family knows how to use texting functions on a cell phone, since this will likely still work even if you are unable to make or receive calls on your cell phone.
- If you become separated from family members, it's important that everyone knows how to contact each other and where to meet.



### ➤ Understand your & your family's needs.

- Knowing what you and your family need before an emergency is important. Some things to consider may include:
  - Will you need translation services if you have to evacuate?
  - Do you or a loved one have special medical needs, such as medications, equipment, or specialized care?
  - Do you have children or elderly parents that have additional needs?
  - Do you have dietary restrictions that should be taken into consideration?
- Remember needs may change during an emergency so do your best to plan ahead.
- Communicating such unique needs to emergency response agencies and other community partners is important and should be done in advance of an emergency as much as possible.

- Ask your local emergency management office or health department if they have a system that can allow you to voluntarily pre-register a special need and provide you updates via phone or email during an emergency – if they do, then **SIGN UP!!**

➤ **Remember you live in a larger community.**

- Be aware of the needs of those around you since others in your community may depend on you for help during the time of an emergency.
- Make sure you know the plans of your community including your employer and your child's school or daycare.

➤ **Understand your surroundings.**

- Learn the types of emergencies that may occur in the area where you live and work. Events can range from those affecting only you/your family (like a fire or medical emergency) to those affecting your entire community (like an earthquake or a flood).
- Knowing what kinds of emergencies might occur in your area can help you prepare more effectively.

➤ **Stay informed.**

- Pay attention to your local health and emergency management agencies as well as the media for specific instructions if an emergency does occur in your community.
- Remember, emergency information may be broadcast using a variety of means including television, radio, and internet.



## RESOURCES

Be sure to visit the following websites and those of your local/state health agencies and emergency management offices for specific resources for you and your community!

### National

American Red Cross

Website: [www.redcross.gov](http://www.redcross.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Website: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Website: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

Health Information Translations

Website: [www.healthinfotranslations.org](http://www.healthinfotranslations.org)

National Resource Center on Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities

Website: [www.diversitypreparedness.org](http://www.diversitypreparedness.org)

Ready.gov

Website: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

## AUTHORS

Nitasha Chaudhary, MPH

Audrey Mazurek, MS

Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH

Nadia Siddiqui, MPH

## EDITORS

SAPHA 2011 Board of Directors

*Fact Sheet Last Updated: October 2011*

While every effort has been made to verify information provided, the authors and SAPHA are not liable for errors or omissions. Readers are advised to consult a health care provider before diagnosing, managing, or treating any health problem. Readers should not use this information in place of the judgment of a treating health care provider.

For further information about SAPHA or to access other SAPHA Fact Sheets, please go to [www.SAPHA.org](http://www.SAPHA.org).

