

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

IT ALL STARTS WITH A PLAN

Reactive and proactive planning
that helps families think through
what to do before confusion takes over.



We have seen many disasters over the years on television, and as we watch from the safety of our living rooms, we assume that help will always come to our rescue with a simple call to "911". But when the nation is in a state of emergency, rescuers may not be able to get to us as quickly as we expect, if at all. In an emergency, preparation can make all the difference between:

- Staying together or getting separated
- Being confident and prepared or living in fear
- Even life and death.

2.1 A REACTIVE EMERGENCY PLAN

Imagine you have only reached to this point in the manual, but suddenly, the electricity goes off and you are left sitting in the dark. Then a colleague rushes into your office and informs you that the Koeberg power station has gone down.

Due to inadequate maintenance, a reactor at Koeberg power station was no longer functional which caused a total blackout. The damage is calculated to billions of Rand, and it is currently undetermined how long it will take to repair the reactor (if it can be repaired at all). There is an announcement on the radio and, as a safety precaution; the surrounding areas of Melkbosstrand, Table View, Parklands and Milnerton must be evacuated. Its chaos everywhere; mobile networks are overloaded; you cannot get hold of your wife. All around you people are panicking and many are frustrated, while others are looting shops and starting to burn tires.



If you casually browse through this manual, you may feel intimidated by the amount of information available. You will soon realise that it will take quite a while to prepare adequately for the various emergencies in which you may find yourself. The big question is, what steps can be made immediately if an incident like the "Koeberg Scenario" has taken you by surprise, right now?

Although there are differences of opinion as to exactly what reactive steps should be taken, the list below contains the steps I would follow if I was caught unprepared.

2.1.1 STEP 1 – TRUST GOD

You may say "Trust in God? Is this honestly your first step?" For me personally, prayer is the very first step I would take, so I can find my refuge in God. Since these types of emergencies are usually out of our control, it may cause us to become disoriented and the natural human default reaction is to panic. These are a few of the steps that I recommend you take:

- ✓ **Put On Your Spiritual Armour** - Ephesians 6: 11-18
- ✓ **Trust In God** - Fear is the opposite of faith. Your faith will keep you calm when you trust in God.
- ✓ **Hold God to His Word** - Your prayers become more powerful when you remind God of His promises.
- ✓ **Believe that God will come through for you** - God has promised that nothing can take you out of His Hand.

The purpose of this particular chapter is to be brief, but you can read more about this in an earlier chapter ("*Faith over fear in uncertain time*").

"You will never know that God is all you need until you land up in a situation where God is all that you've got".

ANGUS BUCHAN
Mighty Men's Conference,
2008.

2.1.2 STEP 2 - REMAIN CALM AND BE POSITIVE

When a person is confronted with an emergency situation, human survival instinct usually causes people to react emotionally and impulsively. Disasters tend to have negative consequences, so it is important to remain calm and positive to be able to make prudent decisions and take preventative action where possible.

2.1.3 STEP 3 - FUEL AND CASH

- ✓ **Fill your car with petrol** - Most petrol garages have generators so the chances are good that the pumps, as well as the card machines, will still work for a short period of time. While filling up, ensure your tyres and spare tyre are inflated.
- ✓ **Make sure to have enough cash** - ATMs usually have a backup battery that will hold for at least a half-hour or hour. If the garage has an ATM, withdraw as much cash as possible.
- ✓ **Have gas bottles** - If you have a gas stove, get at least two 9kg gas bottles that fit comfortably behind your car's rear seat.

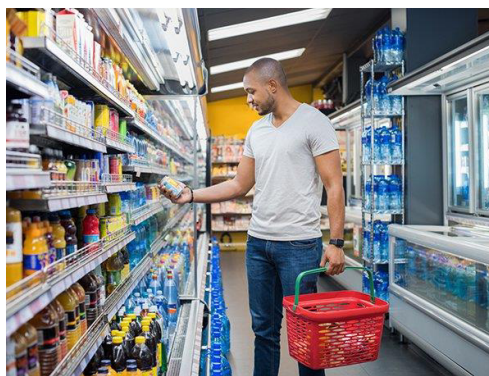


2.1.4 STEP 4 - VITAL SHOPPING

Take a trip to the supermarket and get the following non-perishable products. Because you have not done any preparation, get too much rather than too little. If card machines are not working, you can always pay in cash.

2.1.4.1 FOOD AND WATER

- ✓ **WHITE OR BROWN RICE** - White rice has a longer lifespan than brown rice, but brown rice has more nutritional benefits, so it's your choice.
- ✓ **BEANS** (Dried beans)- There is a variety to choose from. Beans will keep almost indefinitely if stored in a cool, dry place.
- ✓ **SUGAR** - White or brown sugar
- ✓ **SALT** - Packets or containers of iodised salt
- ✓ **SPICES** - Pepper, curry etc.
- ✓ **OIL** - Olive oil and cooking oil
- ✓ **CEREALS** - Oats, Weet-Bix and maize porridge
- ✓ **BABY** - Baby Formula
- ✓ **ANIMALS** - Pet food
- ✓ **MILK** - Powdered and Long Life
- ✓ **FLOUR** - Wheat flour and maize meal
- ✓ **CANNED FOOD** - Cans of fruits and vegetables, canned meat, fish and pasta
- ✓ **PLANT FATS** - Peanut butter (Contains more than 6,000 calories - a good option for survival food).
- ✓ **REFRESHMENTS** - Juice concentrate, chips, and chocolate
- ✓ **WATER** (5-liter containers) - Buy water containers that you can fill with tap water when you get home.



2.1.4.2 HYGIENE

- ✓ **PERSONAL** - Toothpaste, shampoo, soap, sanitary towels and enough toilet paper
- ✓ **BABY** - Disposable nappies and face cloths (Baby Wipes)
- ✓ **ANIMALS** - Flea and worm tablets
- ✓ **CLEANING AGENTS** - paper towels, dishwashing liquid, hand sanitizer, cleaning agent, and garbage bags

2.1.4.3 LIGHTING AND LIGHTERS

- ✓ **LIGHTING** - Candles and the best LED flashlight you can afford, with extra batteries and bulbs
- ✓ **LIGHTERS AND WOOD** - Enough matches, cigarette lighters, Blitz, and wood

2.1.5 STEP 5 – MEDICATION

If you have finished shopping, make a stop at the pharmacy. Some chain stores have their own where you can purchase the necessary items.

- ✓ **CHRONIC MEDICATION** - If you are dependent on chronic medication, you will unfortunately have to go to the specific pharmacy where your prescription is already on their computer system, or where the pharmacist knows you
- ✓ **SUPPLEMENTS** - Multivitamin and mineral supplements
- ✓ **TABLETS** - Painkillers
- ✓ **FIRST-AID KIT** - A First-Aid Kit containing the necessary dressings, bandages, and scissors.
- ✓ **DISINFECTANTS** - Dettol or Savlon



2.1.6 STEP 6 – AT HOME

- ✓ **INFORM YOUR FAMILY** - Let your family know what the situation is and what is happening.
- ✓ **FRIDGE AND FREEZER** - Open the refrigerator and freezer door as little as possible. Use these foods first before you use your emergency supplies. If something smells slightly off, get rid of it immediately.
- ✓ **WATER** - Due to a shortage of electricity, municipal pump stations as well as sewage works will stop. If you still have tap water available, fill up your water containers and water storage tanks with already treated municipal water. If you don't have water tanks, you can fill your sinks and bathtubs with tap water. Although this water may not be suitable for drinking purposes, it will be sufficient to wash your hands, dishes and to flush toilets.

2.1.7 STEP 7 – IN CASE OF EVACUATION

If the situation develops and it's necessary to leave your home, the following emergency list will come in handy. There will be more information on this topic later on in the manual.

- ✓ **PACK GOODS IN CONTAINERS OR CRATES** - Pack your goods in containers or crates ahead of time. This way, they will be easy to stack or load into a car. If you do not have containers or plastic crates, you could use suitcases, sports bags, or even school bags instead.
 - Pack your crates in order of use
 - Keep enough 5 litre bottles ready
 - Pack a bag or backpack with enough clothes and an extra pair of comfortable shoes.
 - Warm jackets and blankets can be packed in garbage bags.
- ✓ **CAR EQUIPMENT** - Pack your car with the necessary equipment, such as a compressor, Socket Set, wrenches, tire pressure gauge, battery cables, and a tow rope if you have them.



- ✓ **SELF-DEFENSE** - If you have a firearm, carry it on your person. Remember to bring along ammunition as well as your firearm license.
- ✓ **CHOOSE A ROUTE** - If you know your immediate environment well, try to stay away from main roads. Back roads usually have less traffic, and although they may sometimes cover a longer distance, it could get you to your destination sooner.
- ✓ **DECIDE ON A DESTINATION** - Avoid problem areas and drive to where it is safe. Try to stay with family or friends who live outside the danger zone (more on evacuation later in the book).

2.1.8 IN CLOSING

If you have only come to this point in the manual, and you have already followed and executed all the necessary steps, then you are already better prepared than 85% of society to face an emergency situation. Unfortunately, a reactive plan is not sufficient as a long-term solution, but it will buy you some time.

If a major incident happens and you are suffering when things go tough, put your full trust in God and hang on to His promises. In Joshua 1: 5, Deuteronomy 31: 6, and Hebrews 13: 5, the Lord promises us that He will never leave those who believe in Him. I pray that God will be merciful to us as a nation, and I also pray for God's richest blessings on you and your family. Amen.

2.2 A PROACTIVE EMERGENCY PLAN

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO STOP ZIMBABWE'S VIOLENT MELTDOWN?

News24 – 22/01/2019

“Zimbabwe is sliding into a violent meltdown and it’s expected to worsen, unless there are some serious interventions.

Days of mass protests have been characterised by violence, looting and heavy-handedness by the police and army. It has led to the deaths and injury of many people, largely in Harare and Bulawayo’s high-density areas. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, at least 12 people have been killed and thousands injured.

In addition to placing many urban areas under military siege, the government has also shut down social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook. These are viewed as the avenue through which the opposition and other civil society bodies have been communicating messages of “anarchy”. The internet has been shut down twice on separate occasions.

The deadly violence was triggered by President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s announcement of steep fuel price hikes on Saturday 9 January. Made in the dead of night, the announcement proved to be the straw that broke the camel’s back for a largely peaceful, if not somewhat passive, populace that has borne the brunt of two decades of economic meltdown. Mnangagwa’s regime increased the prices of fuel by a staggering 150%, making Zimbabwe’s fuel the most expensive in the world.

The sharp fuel hike prompted the country’s largest trade union body, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, and other civil society bodies such as the Crisis Coalition, to call for a three-day mass stay away from work.

The reaction was hardly surprising. Conditions have become fertile for a massive militant mass revolt. Shortages of a lot of goods have become the order of the day. Long fuel queues, and incessant electricity and water cuts have not helped the situation for poverty-weary Zimbabweans.

Mnangagwa, and those he can rally behind him in the ruling Zanu-PF, need urgently to take steps towards forming a government of national unity, as has been done before in the country. This will require the opposition Movement for Democratic Change Alliance (MDC-Alliance) to get its act together by behaving maturely. Another urgent step that’s needed is that the country’s chaotic currency situation needs immediate resolution.”



Total chaos and confusion can be just as much of an enemy as the disaster that you experience. Together as a family you should decide beforehand what you will do in each of the different situations. Openly discuss the various possible threats that may affect the world as you know it. For instance, what if:

- Our country's economy collapses, and our currency loses value, as it was the case in Venezuela and Zimbabwe?
- Your safety is threatened by political violence?
- Fuel shortages continue for weeks, and the necessary food supplies cannot reach the towns or cities?
- People start looting shops and residential areas in search of food?
- Eskom's network fails and all refrigerated food spoils?
- Municipal services such as water purification, sewage, and garbage collection stops?
- Water restrictions become so bad and the area is declared a disaster area, as it almost happened in Cape Town where people have to stand in long lines to get clean drinking water?
- Fires destroy your property, as in the case of Knysna, Betty's Bay and Cape St. Francis?

By the time this happens, it is already too late to plan. The situation in which you find yourself might force you and your family to respond reactively instead of carrying out a proactive plan. Preparing for a crisis or emergency situation ALWAYS begins with a plan. The following chapters of this manual are designed to help you to prepare and put your own proactive contingency plan together and give you and your family the guidance you need to prepare for disaster situations.

2.2.1 TALK ABOUT IT

Prepare your children by allowing them to help come up with a plan. They will be much more comfortable in an emergency if they know what to do and what to expect. The creation of various exercises is a good way to get family members involved and make them think interactively, which helps them stay focused and calm during an emergency situation.

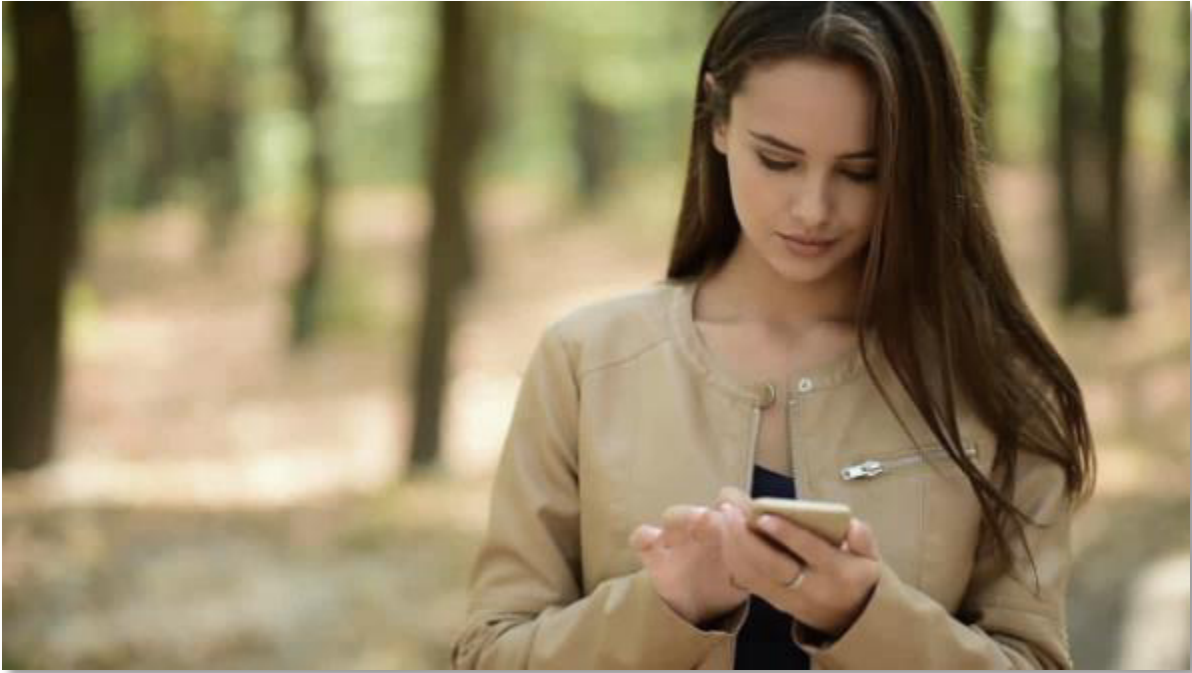
As a family, discuss your emergency meeting places, contacts, and plans. Give your children the opportunity to express their feelings and allow them to ask questions so that they can fully understand the disaster plan. Ask yourselves the following questions:

2.2.1.1 HOW WILL YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER?

Everyone in the family should make sure they understand the emergency procedures. Typical examples of questions about emergency procedures will be:

- ✓ If the mobile phone networks are down and the children cannot contact you, the first plan is that the children wait at their school. If the school has to be urgently evacuated it can be agreed in advance that the children go to a friend's house.
- ✓ Dad picks up the youngest daughter from Primary School while mom picks up the two teenagers from their High School.
- ✓ Plan at least two alternative routes in case roads are blocked.





2.2.2 ABOUT CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

The education department requires that all schools have an emergency preparation plan in place regarding evacuation, storms, or other emergencies. The school's emergency plan should be taken into account when preparing your family plan. It is advisable to visit your children's teacher to understand the specific details of the school's emergency plan. The more information you have about what to expect, the more assurance you'll have when your family finds themselves in a disaster situation.

2.2.3 IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO MEMORISE

Since we conveniently started storing phone numbers on our cell phones, we have lost the habit of memorising phone numbers and addresses. In the chaos of a disaster, it's possible that both your wallet and cell phone might get lost and there might be chance that you can't get in touch with your loved ones. So, it is very important that the whole family at least memorise the following information:

- ✓ **CONTACT DETAILS** - Ensure that each member of the family knows each other's phone numbers, as well as an outside contact's details. Besides phone numbers, it is important that children know their parents' full names, as well as their home and e-mail addresses.
- ✓ **EMERGENCY NUMBERS** - Make sure your family knows the necessary emergency numbers (See the module on Communication for a list of emergency numbers).
- ✓ **PASSWORDS** - There may be several reasons why people decide to learn passwords and pass phrases. If you send messages through a stranger, it might be necessary that this person uses a pre-decided password to assure the family that you did indeed send the message.
- ✓ **SECRET PHRASE** - If circumstances prevent you from communicating directly with your family to let them know where you are, you can use pre-decided secret phrases. A typical example of



this is detention or abduction (kidnapping). In war conditions, secret phrases are often used to indicate where troops are, or where to meet.

- ✓ **LEAVE A MESSAGE** - If you are separated, and there no means of communication, it is a good idea to leave a written note to a family member in case you had to evacuate and the person arrives at dead man's door. Place the note in a waterproof container or bottle and decide beforehand where it can be found.

2.2.4 SUMMARY

- ✓ **TALK ABOUT IT** - It is important that you, as the head of your household, realize that you and your family are not immune to potential disasters. It is important that you first talk about it with your family, and prepare yourself emotionally to respond proactively in a possible emergency situation.
- ✓ **PLAN TOGETHER AS A FAMILY** - Involve your children in terms of your preparation. Discuss with them the different types of disasters that may occur in your area and make your family a part of your disaster planning. There are several websites that offer further information on relevant topics, as well as fun methods and games to teach your children about what to do in case of an emergency.
- ✓ **DISCUSS IT WITH THEIR SCHOOL** - Ask your children's schools and/or day-care about their disaster plans. Examples of such questions:
 - How will the school communicate with the parents during a crisis?
 - Is there enough food, water, and emergency supplies for if a disaster were to hit the area?
 - Is the school prepared to serve as a shelter?
 - If you must evacuate, where will you take my child?