

ACS BRIEF



American Citizen Services Newsletter

July 2015

From the Consul General

I find it difficult to talk about “Emergency Preparedness,” because every time I do, everyone always looks at me, and I can HEAR them think to themselves, “Does she know something we don’t know? Why do we need to hear about this NOW? What crisis is looming around the corner, and why isn’t anyone admitting it to us?”

The truth is, I have no crystal ball and I cannot tell you when the next time you will need to use your Emergency Preparedness skills, but here is what I do know: We all need to know what to do in a crisis, and the more we know, the more we are at ease with our knowledge, the more confident we are, the better we, and our families, will come out of any crisis situation.

In every consular section, at every post in the world, ACS takes the lead in crisis management. We drill on a regular basis, we devise checklists and standard operating procedures for a variety of crises, and we train our teams and our colleagues in crisis response. Our headquarters in Washington, DC, the Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs, has an array of tools to help us deal with a crisis, including a special website to track people and events. If your cousin John is on his sailboat when a hurricane hits, anybody answering a phone in the Consular Section in the Embassy and anybody answering a phone in Washington can tell you the exact same information. This is how we were able to field over reports of over 20,000 of missing Americans in the December 26, 2004 Tsunami and have only 20 people unaccounted for by mid-March 2005.

In this newsletter, you will find invaluable tools that will help you. Amazingly, the recommended checklists for “supplies to keep on hand” are remarkably the same, whether it is for cyclones, earthquakes, civil unrest, or a host of other disasters. You don’t need to keep separate lists for everything! But if you see something in this issue you want to hang onto, print it in color, so that you’ll be able to find it in a hurry when you need it.



Consul General
Elizabeth P. Gourlay

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service for U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If you and your family are not already enrolled, please visit <https://step.state.gov/step/> to learn more.



For more information on
Disaster Preparedness, please
visit <http://www.ready.gov>

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are sudden rolling or shaking events caused by movement under the earth's surface. Earthquakes happen along cracks in the earth's surface, called fault lines, and can be felt over large areas, although they usually last less than one minute. Earthquakes cannot be predicted — although scientists are working on it!

BEFORE: PREPARE

- Look around places where you spend time. Identify safe places such as under a sturdy piece of furniture or against an interior wall in your home, office or school so that when the shaking starts, you Drop to the ground, Cover your head and neck with your arms, and if a safer place is nearby, crawl to it and Hold On.
- Practice how to “**Drop, Cover, and Hold On!**”
- Before an earthquake occurs, secure items that could fall and cause injuries (e.g., bookshelves, mirrors, light fixtures).
- Store critical supplies (e.g., water, medication) and documents.
- Plan how you will communicate with family members, including multiple methods by making a family emergency communication plan.

DURING: SURVIVE

If you are inside a building:

- Stay where you are until the shaking stops. Do not run outside. Do not get in a doorway as this does not provide protection from falling or flying objects, and you may not be able to remain standing.
- Drop down onto your hands and knees so the earthquake doesn't knock you down. Drop to the ground (before the earthquake drops you!)
- Cover your head and neck with your arms to protect yourself from falling debris.
- If you are in danger from falling objects, and you can move safely, crawl for additional cover under a sturdy desk or table.
- If there is low furniture or an interior wall or corner nearby, and the path is clear, these may also provide some additional cover.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.
- Hold on to any sturdy covering so you can move with it until the shaking stops. Stay where you are until the shaking stops.

AFTER: RECOVER

- When the shaking stops, look around. If there is a clear path to safety, leave the building and go to an open space away from damaged areas.
- If you are trapped, do not move about or kick up dust.
- If you have a cell phone with you, use it to call or text for help.

List of Air Ambulance providers in Bangladesh:

- Arirang Aviation

<http://>

www.arirangaviation.com/air-ambulance-2/

For Air Ambulance: +880 1970072537;

Tel: +880 2 - 8901848, 8901869

- Galaxy Healthcare Services

www.galaxybd.com

Hotline: +880 1714110044

- Homebound

<http://>

www.homeboundbd.com/index_main.html

Tel: +880 2 - 8811021 / 8811022 / 9895241 / 9894745 / 9594746 / 9894748

- MAF Air Support

<http://>

www.mafbangladesh.org

Tel: +880 1711533333, +880 2 - 8410164

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- R&R Aviation (Shikder Group)

<http://rnaviation.com>

Hotline: +880
1774086600,

Tel: +880 2 – 8901725

- Square Hospitals Ltd.

[http://
www.squarehospital.com/](http://www.squarehospital.com/)

24hr Emergency Tel:
+880 2 - 8144466, +880 2
- 8144477, +880 2 –
8144488;

Air Ambulance Tel: +880
1730011734

Other useful numbers:

DMP hotline: 100

Police Station (Gulshan):
9895826

Fire-Brigade (Baridhara):
8827397

Apollo Hospital:
028401661,
028401680 & 02-8401600

Apollo Ambulance Hotline:
10678

United Hospital Limited:
028836000 & 028836444

- Tap on a pipe or wall or use a whistle, if you have one, so that rescuers can locate you.
- Once safe, monitor local news reports via battery operated radio, TV, social media, and cell phone text alerts for emergency information and instructions.
- Be prepared to “Drop, Cover, and Hold on” in the likely event of aftershocks.

Flood

Floods are one of the most common hazard. However not all floods are alike. Some floods develop slowly, while others such as flash floods, can develop in just a few minutes and without visible signs of rain. Additionally, floods can be local, impacting a neighborhood or community, or very large, affecting entire river basins and multiple districts.

BEFORE A FLOOD

To prepare for a flood, you should:

- Build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan.
- Avoid building in a floodplain unless you elevate and reinforce your home.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
- Consider installing "check valves" to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.

DURING A FLOOD

If a flood is likely in your area, you should:

- Listen to the radio or television for information.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Be aware of stream, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without typical warnings such as rain clouds or heavy rain.

If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following:

- Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

If you have to leave your home, remember these evacuation tips:

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams, rivers or creeks, particularly during threatening conditions.

AFTER THE FLOOD

Your home has been flooded. Although floodwaters may be down in some areas, many dangers still exist. Here are some things to remember in the days ahead:

- Use local alerts and warning systems to get information and expert informed advice as soon as available.
- Avoid moving water.
- Stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested by police, fire, or relief organization.
- Emergency workers will be assisting people in flooded areas. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash floods can occur. Listen for local warnings and information. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Roads may still be closed because they have been damaged or are covered by water. Barricades have been placed for your protection. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, go another way.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.

Source: <http://www.ready.gov>

GO-BAG ITEMS FOR EMERGENCY

1. **Money:** ATM and credit cards, Checkbook, Multiple currency, Safe deposit keys
2. **Medical Items:** Medical and dental records, Immunization cards, Glasses and contacts, Prescriptions, Medications
3. **Personal belongings:** Clothing, Toys and games, Pet items, Cell phone, Chargers for all electronics
4. **Food and water:** Snacks, Water
5. **Documentation:** Passports and Visas, Marriage, birth, adoption and naturalization certificates, Driver's license, Auto insurance policies, registrations and title if applicable, Power of attorney and will, School records, Pet records, Household effects inventory



Recent warden messages are available on our website:
<http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/msg.html>

