

Right now, could you identify at least three ways to make an emergency exit from your town or city? If you were miles from home and had to evacuate, what route would you take and where would you go? What if you were at work and needed to get home to your family? Do you know several routes you could take in case you hit any roadblocks?

Here are eight steps to help insure a safe and speedy evacuation.

1. Get a detailed road map of your area and road maps for neighboring states.
2. Determine at least one destination, a place at least 100 miles from your home, as your safe place.
3. With your maps and a marker, identify various routes you could take from your home to your destination. Look for possible detours in case you hit a roadblock or standstill traffic. Events such as earthquakes and violent storms quickly result in roadblocks.
4. Using a city map, identify at least three different routes you could take from your place of work to your home.
5. Take time to actually travel each route you have plotted out. Watch for potential problem areas, such as water routes that may fill to overflowing in a flood.
6. Label each route you have planned. In an emergency, you can communicate to family members, "We'll be taking Route A," for example.
7. Make more than one copy of your planned Emergency Exits. Store copies in each vehicle, each workplace, at home, and at least one with an out-of-town friend or relative.
8. Make a plan to get additional fuel for your vehicle. In emergencies, gas stations quickly run out of gas. In the event of an electrical outage, gas pumps don't work!
9. Always keep cash on hand – enough to pay for a tankful of gas, a night at a hotel, and a few meals. When the power goes out, so do ATM machines as well as debit and credit card machines in retail locations.