

Dos' and Don'ts' For Various Hazards/Disasters

COLD WAVE

Before & During

- Keep ready the emergency kit with basic and specific medicines, heaters, wood for fireplace and adequate warm clothings.
- Buy low-wattage electric heaters that you can leave on overnight to keep rooms above freezing.



- Listen to local Radio Station for critical information about the weather.
- Stay indoors; Minimize travel during peak extreme cold hours (very early in the morning and late evenings).
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent loss of body heat.
- Watch for signs of frostbite like loss of feeling and white/pale appearance in fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose.
- Maintain proper ventilation when kerosene heaters or coal oven to avoid build-up of toxic fumes.
- take regular hot drinks



After

- Go to a designated public shelter if your home loses power supply or heat during periods of extreme cold.
- Continue to protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, clothing in several layers.
- If you live in an avalanche area and an avalanche warning is issued, stay inside unless told to evacuate.



THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

Before & During

- If you hear thunder, you may be close to be struck by lightning.
- Keep monitoring local media for updates and warning instructions.
- Keep ready an Emergency/ Survival Kit with important medication.



- Postpone outdoor activities. Stay indoors. Ensure the same for children and animals as well.
- Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning.
- Unplug any electronic equipment well before the storm arrives. Use your battery-operated Radio for updates from local officials.
- Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords. Unplug appliances and other electrical items, metal fences, and turn off air conditioners. Keep away from utility lines. Do not go close to flag or TV mast, pipes or vertical metal fixtures.



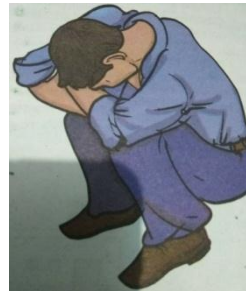
- Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls.
- If outdoors, get off bicycles, motorcycles or other vehicles. Look for a safe shelterⁱ
- Do not take shelter under trees, as they conduct electricity.
- Remove tree timber which may cause a flying accident.



- Livestocks may gather under trees during thunderstorms, which can affect them. Help move animals into a closed shelter.
- Avoid bathing and stay away from running water as lightning can travel along metal pipes.



- If outside, do not lie flat on ground, crouch down with feet together and head down to make yourself a smaller target.



- As far possible, find shelter in low lying area and make sure that the spot chosen does not get flooded. Be alert for flash floods.
- If boating or swimming, get to safe land/ shelter quickly.
- During a storm, remain in your vehicle until help arrives or the storm passes.
- If in a vehicle during a storm, remain inside, without touching metal from inside, keep windows up and park vehicle away from trees and power lines.



- Do not go near forest areas, If, in a forest, seek shelter in low area under a thick growth of small trees.



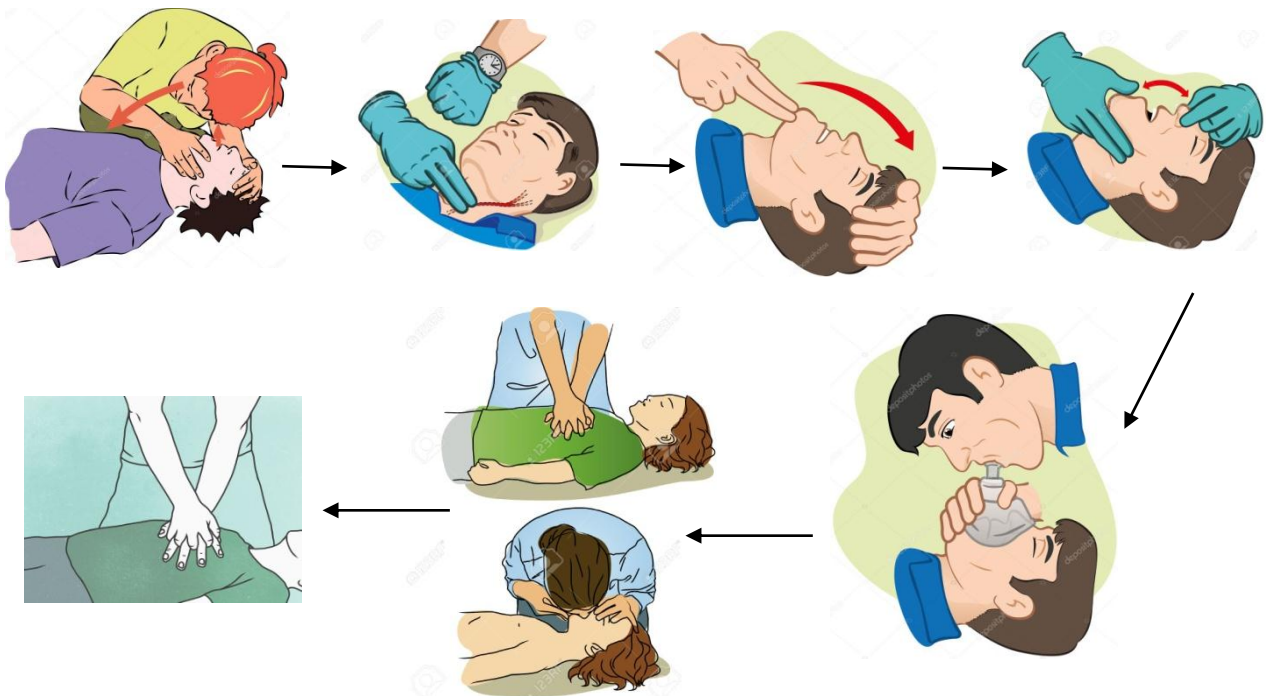
After

- Continue to listen to local radio and television stations for updated information or instructions, as access to roads or some parts of the community may be blocked.
- Help people who may require special assistance, such as infants, children and the elderly.
- Stay away from downed power lines and report them immediately.
- If possible, give First-aid to the person struck by lightning, take to nearest hospital.
- Remember, person struck with lightning carry NO electrical charge and can be handled safely.
- Victims of lightning strike may suffer varying degrees of burn, look for injury marks and treat accordingly.



If someone is struck by lightning

- A bolt of lightning can be fatal if it strikes someone on the head and then travels down to the ground. It can also cause severe burns, broken bones, cuts, and unconsciousness; and it can set clothing on fire.
- Do not touch someone who has been struck by lightning if he or she is very wet or in water: you could be electrocuted because the electrical discharge is still within his or her body.
- Dial Ambulance at 102 immediately, even if the person appears to be unharmed.
- If the person's clothing is on fire, follow the instructions on p 16.
- Treat the burns, give first aid.
- If the person is not breathing, start rescue breathing.
- If the person has no signs of circulation, start CPR, else call medical help immediately.



EPIDEMICS

Before & During

- Store drinking water and food to last for few days. Use boiled or filtered water to avoid contamination.



- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Keep a stock of non-prescribed basic medicines such as pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fever, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins, sanitary pads, baby food items etc.



- Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency response, If possible.
- Keep your surrounding clean and do not let the water be stagnant in neighborhood.



After

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If possible, stay at home when you are sick. Do not share usable items. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.



- When sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from catching infections.



- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.



- Washing your hands (with soaps if possible) often will help protect you from germs.



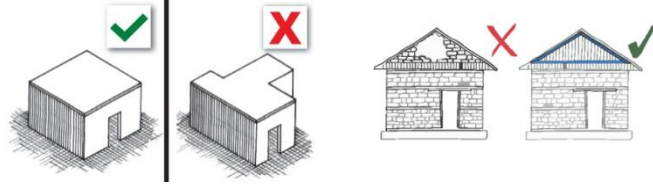
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to prevent spread of germs.



EARTHQUAKE

Before & During

- Make new constructions earthquake resistant in consultation of professional structural engineer, if possible.



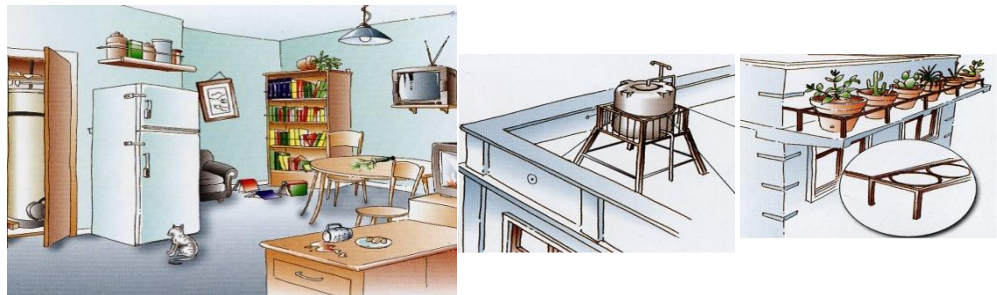
- Prepare a family disaster plan including
 - preparation of emergency kit which will make you self-sufficient for a minimum of three days with adequate supply of drinking water, dry food items, stock of basic medicines, sanitary pads, baby food items etc.
 - Identification of few safe family meeting places; pick easy to identify, open and accessible places that you can easily reach.



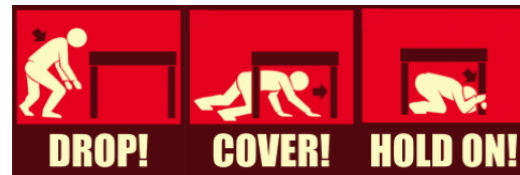
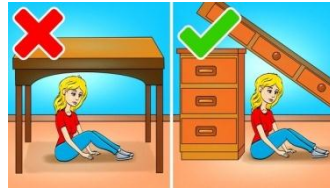
- Conduct regular Mock Drills for school children



- Falling objects must be given additional fixing so that they don't fall while shaking and cause harm.



- During an earthquake stay calm; if inside, Stay inside. “DROP, COVER and HOLD!” Drop under firm furniture. Cover as much of your head and upper body as you can. Hold onto any secure furniture. Move to an inside wall and sit with your back to the wall, bring your knees to your chest and cover your head. Stay away from mirror and windows. Do not exit the building during the shaking. Do not use lift.



- If outdoors, move to an open area away from all structure, especially building, bridges, trees and overhead power lines.

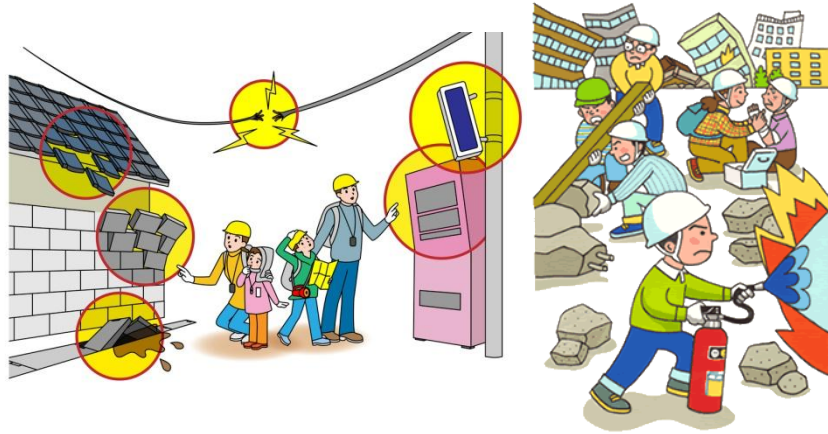


After

- Move cautiously, and check for unstable objects and other hazards above and around you.
- Check yourself for injuries. Help those in need.



- Check all power connections at home/ office before switching them ON.
- BEWARE: chances of Short circuits might happen.
- Stay out of damaged buildings.



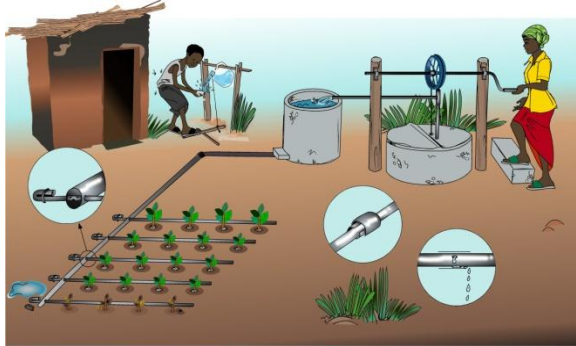
- Anticipate aftershocks, especially if the shaking lasted longer than two minutes.
- Listen to the radio or watch local TV for emergency information and additional safety instructions.



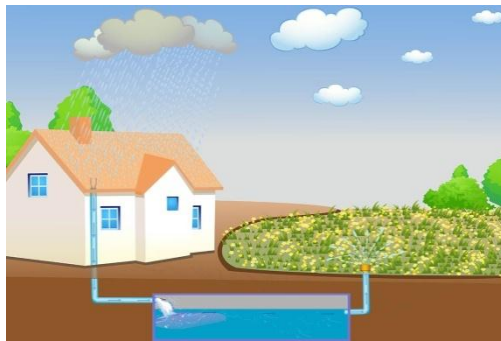
DROUGHT

- Never waste water, use it to water your indoor plants or garden especially in summers.

- Repair dripping taps by replacing washers.
- Check all plumbing for leaks and get them repaired.
- Choose appliances that are more energy and water efficient.
- Plant drought- tolerant grasses, shrubs and trees (plants that thrive on less water).
- Install irrigation devices that are most water efficient for each use, such as micro and drip irrigation.



- Consider rainwater harvesting wherever practical.



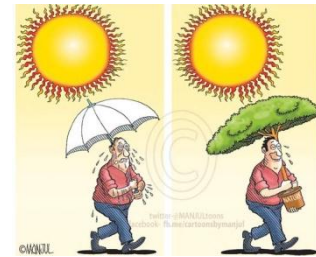
- Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily
- Avoid letting the water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving etc. Use buckets instead of showers while bathing.



HEAT WAVE

Before

- Install temporary window reflectors such as aluminum foil- covered cardboard so as to reflect heat back outside. This will help keep the rooms pleasant.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades.
- Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of temperature changes.
- Know those in your neighborhood who are elderly, young, sick or overweight. They are more likely to become victims of excessive heat and may need help.
- Get trained in first aid to learn how to treat heat- related emergencies.
- Plant trees for shades.



During

- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles or under direct sunlight for long.
- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit your exposure to the sun.
- Stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine if air conditioning is not available.
- Eat well-balanced, light and regular meals.
- Drink plenty of water; even if you do not feel thirsty. Keep yourself hydrated.
- Persons with epilepsy, heart, kidney, or liver disease; on fluid- restricted diets; or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake.
- Protect face and head by wearing a hat or cloth.



FLOODS

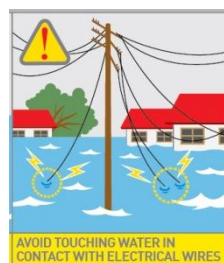
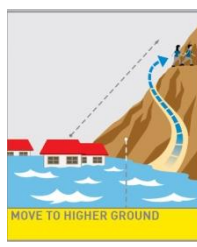
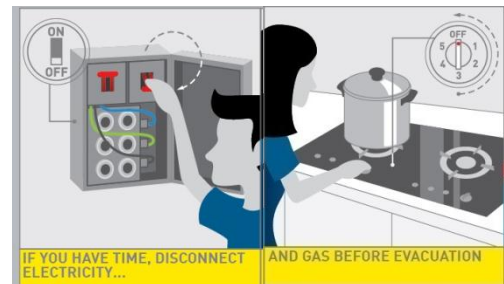
Before & During

- All your family members should know the safe route to nearest shelter/raised shelters.
- Tune to your local radio/TV for warnings and advice.
- Have an emergency kit ready with basic medicines and sanitary pads, baby food items, important documents etc.
- Keep dry food, drinking water and clothes ready.
- Drink preferably boiled water. Keep your food covered, don't take heavy meals.
- Use sandbags to seal entry points around doors and vents. Also seal windows if the water is likely to rise that high.
- Do not let children and pregnant woman remain empty stomach.
- Be careful of snake bites which are common in post floods.



After

- Pack warm clothing, essential medication, valuables, personal papers, etc. in waterproof bags, to be taken with your emergency kit.
- Move to high rise floor, raise furniture, clothing and valuables onto beds, tables etc from getting wet.
- Turn off the main power supply. Do not use electrical appliances, which have been in floodwater.
- Do not get into water of unknown depth and current.
- Do not allow children to play in, or near flood waters.



FOR ROAD SAFETY:

- While driving, exit the roads if flood water is above half tyre height. If this happens, start reversing or change the route, whichever possible.
- Drive in 1 gear and keep revving the engine to avoid water from entering exhaust pipe.
- Turn on headlights so that you can easily be spotted.
- Car electrical systems may shut down, if the car stalls and engine doesn't restart, leave the vehicle or you may get trapped.
- For cars which have single button to disengage all locks, open a window or sunroof to escape.
- Keep a hammer close to drivers' seat or use the headrests which have metallic tongs at bottom to break open any window during emergency.

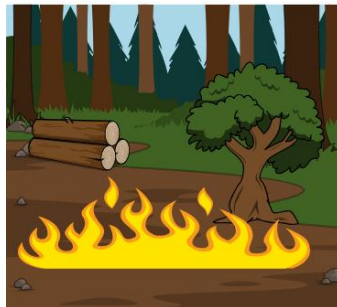


FOREST FIRE

- Do not smoke near thick vegetation, do not leave a lighted cigarette/ bidi in dry vegetation areas;
- Do not leave any open fire in forest area after use.
- Lightning in places of dry vegetation causes fires, create a buffer zone to manage such fires, if possible, else alert forest officials and seek help.
- Try to put the fire out by digging or circle around it by water, if not possible, call a Fire brigade.
- Move farm animals & movable goods to safer places.
- During fire, listen regularly to Radio for advance information & obey the instructions cum advice regarding moving to safe locations.
- Teach the causes and harm of fire to your family, friends and others. Make people aware about forest fire safety.
- Do not be scared when a sudden fire occurs in the forest, be calm & encourage others & community to deal patiently.
- After adventure activities, ensure no lighted bon-fire is left.
- One should not leave the burning wood sticks in or near the forest vegetation.
- Don't enter the forest during the fire.



- Discourage Community from using slash & burn method for cultivation. This also has severe health impacts as CO₂ levels rise.



LANDSLIDE

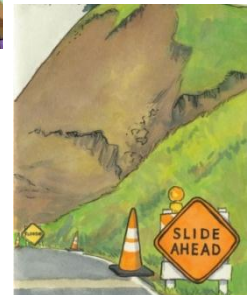
Before & During

- Avoid building houses near steep slopes, close to mountain edges, near drainage ways or along natural erosion valleys.
- Become familiar with land around you. Avoid areas with debris flow.
- In mudflow areas, build channels to direct the flow around buildings.
- Stay alert and awake. Stay Calm and do not panic. Stay together.
- Listen for unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together.
- Move away from the path of a landslide or debris flow as quickly as possible.
- Avoid river valleys and low-lying areas.
- If you are near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and notice whether the water changes from clear to muddy. It is a sign of mudslide/landslide nearby.
- Inform nearest tehsil/ district headquarters.
- Plant trees and mesh the hillocks to protect soil from eroding.



After

- Go to designated public shelter if you have been asked to evacuate.
- Stay away from the slide area as there may be danger of additional slides.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide, without entering the direct slide area. Direct rescuers to their locations.
- Do not move injured person without rendering first aid unless in acute danger state.
- Do not drink contaminated water from rivers, springs, wells etc



FIRE

Do's

- Get your premises fire audited; check for loose electric connections; don't store combustible material near loose electric wires.



- In case of fire, dial 101 (or the special number for FIRE SERVICE in your area/town).



- If trapped lay down/sit near the floor; curtail entry of smoke into the room; look for exit; breathe through wet cloth; learn at least two escape routes and ensure they are free from obstacles.
- Remain calm, unplug all electrical appliances. Meet at safe place after exit.
- Keep buckets of water and blankets ready. Keep fire extinguishers and regularly re-fill them.



- If clothes catch fire, STOP DROP and ROLL. Conduct regular drills.

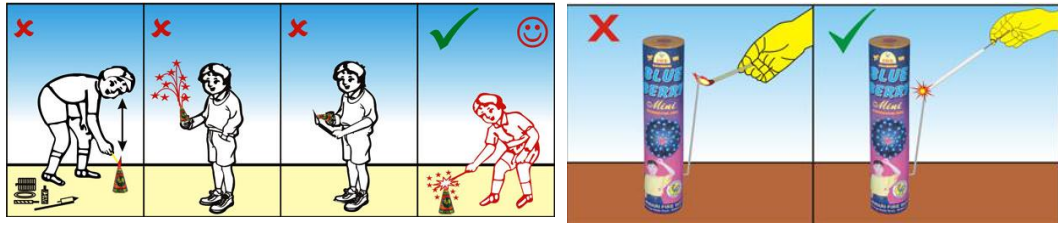


- In case of uncontrolled fire, wrap the victim in a blanket, till the fire ceases.



Don'ts

- Don't burn crackers in crowded, congested places, narrow lanes or inside the house.
- Don't cover crackers with tin containers or glass bottles for extra sound effect.



- Avoid long loose clothes, as they are fast in catching fire.
- Don't dispose lighted cigarette ends carelessly.
- Don't remove burnt clothing (unless it comes off easily).
- Don't apply adhesive dressing on the burnt area.



TSUNAMI

Before & During

- Find out if your home is in a danger area.
- Know the height of your street/ house above sea level and the distance from the coast.
- Coastal areas within 1 mile (1.6 km) of the sea and less than 25 ft (7.5 m) above sea level are most at risk; make an early assessment of the best route to higher ground.
- People living along the coast should consider an earthquake or a strong ground rumbling as a warning signal.
- If a “tsunami watch” turns into a “tsunami warning,” prepare to evacuate your home.
- As the tsunami nears the coast, the waves slow down and increase in height.
- Before the first wave reaches the shore, the sea may be dramatically “moved back” away from the shoreline.
- Remember, Successive waves appear at intervals of 5 to 90 minutes and the first wave is usually not the largest; the following ones cause the most damage.



- Try and climb a raised platform or climb the highest floor of any house or building which you might see.

- Make evacuation plans and a safe route for



- evacuation. Stay away from the beach.
- Never go down to the beach to watch an approaching storm surge.
- Listen to a radio or television to get the latest information and be ready to evacuate if asked to do so.
- Familiarize yourself with warning signs, such as a sudden change in the level of coastal waters.
- If you hear an official warning, evacuate at once. Return home only after authorities advice it is safe to do so.
- Stay away from any structures that may have been weakened by the earthquake.
- Tsunamis often cause severe floods; make sure that you are prepared to cope.
- Keep your car filled with fuel so that you can drive to safety quickly.
- Help those who need assistance to move to safety.



Notice any strange behavior in animals



After

- Stay tuned to battery- operated radio for the latest emergency information.



- Help injured and trapped persons. Provide for first aid.



- Stay away from flooded and damaged areas until officials say it is safe to return.
- Enter your home with caution.
- Use flashlight when entering damaged houses. Check for electrical short circuit and live wires.
- Check food supplies and test drinking water.



CYCLONE

Before & During

- Listen to radio or TV weather reports and alert everyone through a loud speaker or by going home to home.



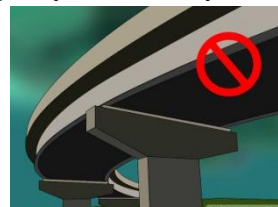
- Identify safe shelter in your area. These should be cyclone resistant and also find the closest route to reach them. Move domestic animals to safety as well.



- Keep your emergency kit and basic food supply, medicines, torch and batteries etc.
- Doors, windows, roof and walls should be strengthened before the cyclone season through retrofitting and repairing. Store adequate food grains and water in safe places. Check that doors to garden sheds and garages are also secure.



- Keep flashlights, candles, and matches in case of power outages.
- Do not venture into the sea. Stay Indoors and stand below the strongest part of the house if you have not moved to the cyclone shelter.
- Remain indoors until advised that the cyclone has passed away.
- Do not take shelter close to trees because branches may break off or trees may even be uprooted, and fall on top of you or heavy constructions such as bridges etc.



- During the eye of the storm, move to the other side of your shelter, since the wind will now come from the opposite direction.
- Write each child's name, address, and contact number on a piece of paper and place it in the child's pocket.
- If you are outside, be aware of the dangers of flying objects, falling trees, buildings that may collapse, and damaged power lines.
- If you are in a car, do not try to outdrive a cyclone or heavy winds: if it changes course you will be in danger of being picked up in your vehicle. Remain in the car preferable halting at a safe place.
- Conduct Mock Drills for yourself and the community for evacuation.

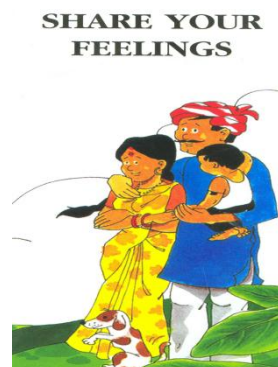


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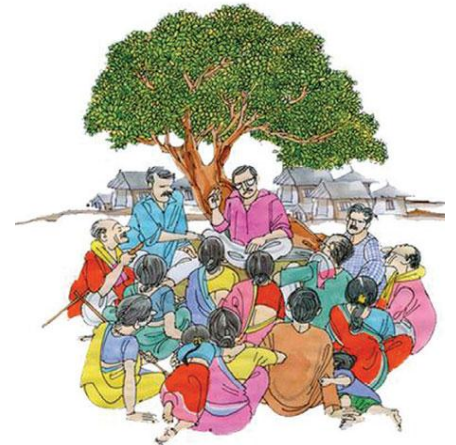
- After the winds die down, wait for at least 11/2 hours before leaving your shelter.
- Do not go out till officially advised that it is safe. If evacuated, wait till advised to go back.
- Do not use power points until they have been checked.
- Use the recommended route to return to your home. Do not rush.
- Be careful of fallen powers lines, damaged roads and houses, fallen trees.



- **PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST-AID IN ALL DISASTERS**



- **SHARE AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION WITH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
USE LOCAL MEDIUM AND FOLK ART TO COMMUNICATE**



PURIFYING WATER

If water supplies run low and main water is contaminated, you will have to purify water.

- If you can see particles floating in water, strain it through some paper towels then boil it, add purifying tablets, or disinfect it.
- Boil some water for 10 minutes to purify it, and then allow it to cool before drinking.
- Use chlorine-based tablets to purify water.
- To disinfect water, use regular household bleach containing 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite only. A stronger percentage is dangerous.
- Add two drops of bleach to 1 pt (500 ml) of water stir and leave it to stand for 30 minutes. The water should smell slightly of bleach. If it does not, repeat the process and leave the water to stand for 15 minutes more.

DEALING WITH STRANDED FAMILY MEMBERS AND LOOKING AFTER YOUR FAMILY

- If the disaster has caused local damage, such as roads blocked by fallen trees or flooding, school children may not be able to return home that evening. Ask any trustworthy relative or friend to collect them and keep them until you reach them.
- If the situation is severe, you may need to make arrangements for your children for a few days until travel is possible.
- If you cannot make contact with your stranded children for any reason, call disaster management helpline No. 1077 or contact local administration for help.

- Family members working outside the immediate affected area may also be stranded and unable to return home. They will need to make alternative accommodation arrangements until the situation improves.
- Any post-disaster area will be full of potential hazards, so stay alert and move around carefully.
- If you had to evacuate your home but did not manage to reach either your chosen place of evacuation or a local emergency shelter, you will need to find some form of shelter for your family.
- If you are unable to reach safety or help fails to arrive within 2 days, think about conserving your supplies of food and water.
- Restrict adult rations but give children, the elderly and pregnant women normal supplies, if possible.
- If your home has been shaken by the disaster, causing breaks and spills, clean up dangerous debris as quickly as possible. Shattered glass and spilled flammable liquids and bleaches are potentially dangerous.
- Call your insurance company's emergency helpline as soon as possible. You will be given advice on what to do.
- If immediate repairs are necessary, arrange for them to be carried out straight away. Keep the receipts to give to your insurers later.
- Take photographs or videos of the damage to corroborate insurance claims. Keep copies of all your correspondence with insurers.
- Help your family remain positive and keeps them focused on the issue of survival. Keep busy and try to work together as a team, making sure that you discuss all plans.



* Content has been customized from FEMA, Home Emergency Guide (DK publishing 2002)

* **Photo Courtesy:** Google Images

* **Disclaimer:** The information contained in this note is for general information purposes only. NIDM does not claim any liability for the use of this information.

ⁱ Safe shelters can be a home, school or office buildings and shopping centres etc. As safe vehicle can be a SUV, minivan, bus, tractor can also be used as shelters.