Imagine

Imagine that you are working and listening to your favorite radio station when the announcer interrupts with this message: “There is a severe thunderstorm warning. Heavy rains are approaching. Widespread flooding is expected.” You hurry to finish your work as the rains begin. By the time you get home, the bridge to town is flooded and the cell phone lines are not working. There is no way to reach your children who are still at school. What will you do?

Situations like this can be scary for children, parents and other family members. Where will you go if a hurricane forces you to evacuate your home? What will you do if a blackout leaves you with no lights, heat or refrigeration for days? Who will take care of your children if you can’t?

These are important questions for all migrant families. Emergency situations can be hard to predict, but there are easy steps you can take to be prepared.

**EASY STEPS:**

**How to Make a Family Plan**

Talk with your family about why it’s important to have an emergency plan. Think about different emergencies that could cause you to be separated. Then, follow these steps:

1. **Make an Emergency Contacts List.** Include people who migrate with you and people who do not migrate. Post a copy of the list in your house and remember to take it with you when you migrate. Make a card with this information for kids to carry in their bags. Include names, addresses and phone numbers for everyone on the list.

2. **Make an Evacuation Plan.** Choose a place for your family to meet if you are separated from each other. This can be a church, school or other public place, or it can be the house of a trusted friend or neighbor. Choose a place close to home, so that children and elders can walk there. It should be a place where children will be safe if they have to wait for you. Practice your evacuation plan every time you migrate.

3. **Make an Emergency Kit.** Include enough food, water and supplies to last at least 3 days. The next page has a basic list of items you should include in your kit.

4. **Choose Someone to Care for Your Children.** Write a letter listing the people who have permission to take your children to a clinic or hospital. Sign the letter and give copies to the people you name in the letter, the clinic and the school. Think about who will care for your children if you are arrested, or very sick. You can fill out Power of Attorney forms, which give someone else legal power over your children if you are away. The Power of Attorney form must be prepared by a lawyer.
You can locate your family member online using the Online Detainee Locator System. Call the center where your family member is being detained and ask for the person in charge of immigration detention. Ask for your family member’s inmate number and visitation hours. Only documented people should visit the detention center!

Contact an immigration attorney to find out what can be done to help your family member. Fill out this online form for a referral to an immigration lawyer:

American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA):
https://www.ailalawyer.com/

Emergency Help for Everyone
[Information from Farmworker Justice]

Everyone, including undocumented workers and their families has access to certain immediate, short-term benefits. They include:

- Soup kitchens & food pantries
- Emergency overnight shelters & battered women’s shelters
- Migrant and community health centers
- Crisis counseling
- Some private charities

Check with your nearest One-Stop Center, migrant clinic, or other migrant service provider to find out the local emergency services available. States may also provide food stamps for up to one month to disaster victims, regardless of immigration status. Generally, however, more extensive benefits are only for US citizens and persons who are lawfully present in the US.

Emergency Kit

- First aid kit
- Blankets
- Cash and credit cards
- Water for 3 days, about 1 gallon per person per day
- Canned foods
- Can opener
- Flashlight
- Small radio
- Extra batteries
- Waterproof matches
- Copies of important documents
- Baby items
- Items for pets
- Prescription medication
- List of allergies
- Insurance information
- Your Contacts List
- Remember to take your license, ID cards, work permit, passport and birth certificate with you if you evacuate.

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