

24. READY (OR NOT?)

Responding to emergency events outside your home

WHY ACT?

In addition to preparing your household for events such as an energy disruption, evacuation, or weather related emergency, with accurate information you can prepare for a range of situations both inside and outside your home. These include emergencies that happen while you are riding a subway, radiation exposure, and getting suspicious mail. The key to this level of preparedness is practicing in advance so that if and when you find yourself in such a situation, you know what to do.

PREPAREDNESS ACTION

Read each of these emergency scenarios. With your team, role play a scenario where one team member guides the team on how to respond to each situation.

Subway Preparedness

- *Learn* – If you are caught in a subway during any kind of emergency, follow these four guidelines.
 1. Stay calm and quiet so you can hear instructions.
 2. Do not leave the subway unless you are instructed to do so.
 3. Never exit a subway train onto the tracks unless directed to do so by the train crew or emergency response personnel. While being escorted out be careful to avoid the third rail, which carries a dangerous electrical current.
 4. Think before you pull the emergency cord while the train is in motion. Only pull the cord to prevent accident or injury. For example, if someone has been caught between subway car doors and is being dragged.
- *Practice* – Consider doing a simulation of this action with your team during your meeting. One person guides the others in how to respond.

Radiation Exposure

- *Learn* – In the event that New York City is exposed to unsafe levels of radiation, and you are not in your home, these four steps will reduce your exposure:

1. If you are outside, get inside.
 2. If you were exposed, remove and toss away your outer layer of clothing, and wash your skin thoroughly.
 3. If the event occurs indoors, try to get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area. If you cannot escape, move as far away from the event as possible.
 4. Put as much heavy, dense material between you and the source of the radiation as possible. Authorities may advise you to stay indoors or underground for this reason.
 5. Close and seal windows and turn off the ventilation system (see Action 23, pg. 51).
- *Practice* – Consider doing a simulation of this action with your team during your meeting. One person guides the others in how to respond.

Suspicious letter or parcel

- *Learn* – Know the warning signs of a suspicious parcel.
1. The address is handwritten.
 2. The package is not addressed to a specific person or is addressed to someone who no longer works or lives there.
 3. It has a strange return address.
 4. It is marked with restrictions such as personal or confidential.
 5. It has excessive postage.
 6. You see a powdery substance on the outside of the parcel.
 7. The package is an unusual weight, size or shape.
 8. There is an unusual amount of tape on it.
 9. You notice a strange odor.
 10. The package has discolorations or oily stains on it.
- If the parcel meets some or all of these criteria:
1. Put it down on a stable surface.
 2. Cover it with an airtight container like a trash can or plastic bag.
 3. Call 911 and alert your building's security officials.
 4. Evacuate the area.
 5. While waiting for help to arrive, wash your hands with soap and water if you handled the package.
 6. Do not leave the area if you believe you were exposed.
- *Practice* – Consider doing a simulation of this action with your team during your meeting. One person guides the others in how to respond.

MATERIALS

For more in-depth information, read New York City Office of Emergency Management's *Ready New York Household Preparedness Guide* or visit NYC.gov/oem.

TIME

Twenty minutes to practice with your household or teammates so you are ready to respond if necessary.

RESILIENCY GAIN

You will be prepared wherever you find yourself.