EVACUATION SUGGESTIONS:

Gassed Up and Ready to Go

Regardless of the type of disaster, you need to be ready to leave at a moment’s notice. Because disasters can strike at any time, you need to be ready all the time. This doesn’t mean that you need to sit by the door all day, but you should have your Go-Paks by the door or with you in the car and your gas tanks more than half-full. You need to be able to evacuate in your own vehicle or some other way, such as patient transport if you have special needs or just a bus arriving at a shelter.

Map Your Evacuation Routes

As part of your evacuation planning, you have to plan for how you get from Point A to Point B. This means that you need maps and written routes to get where you’re going. There may be traffic, roads may be damaged or closed, or there may be alterations to the services or the traffic flow.

Shut Down, Lock Up, Get Out

As part of your evacuation process, shut off all the utilities. Many houses aren’t damaged by the disasters themselves but by damage caused by broken or leaking utilities that flood or burn the houses afterward.

Turning off the power to the house is a matter of flipping the main breaker (or pulling the main fuse block) at the electrical panel. Be very careful when you do this: electricity can kill you even in dry weather. When you shut off the power …

- Wear insulated gloves if you have them.
- Wear heavy shoes and stand on something dry and nonconductive such as a small wooded stool or phone book.
- Make sure that you’re not touching the ground or any object.
- Use your right hand (even if you’re left-handed). If an electrical shock travels through your left hand and down your body to the ground, it will shock your heart, possibly fatally. Keep your left hand in your pocket so you don’t get a shock running across your chest for the same reason.
- If there’s any danger of shock, such as water on the floor, leave the power on. It’s not worth risking your life.

Shutting off the water and gas doesn’t require nearly the same level of caution as shutting off the electricity. Both may require the use of a special tool that fits the shut-off valve. (If you need one of these, but don’t have one, they’re usually available for a few dollars from the utility company.)

When you leave the house, you need to lock the doors and windows just as you do whenever you’re going away for a few days. Make sure that all the latches are shut and that any cheater bars or slide locks are on for windows and sliding glass doors. In addition, lock inside doors that lead to the garage or a sun deck.
Locking up isn’t just about securing the doors and windows. Lock up safes or storage units in the house. You also need to lock up your valuables. This can be part of your preplanning: go to the safe-deposit box to droop off jewelry and the originals of documents that you have copies of in your Go-Pak. Some situations require an original document, and you want them to be safe.

Tell People Where You’re Going

Whenever you go somewhere, tell people where. (And you need to let them know when you get there.) But you should also have someone outside the region who will act as a message board who can accept a collect call and pass messages. This is even more important if you have a large family or a group of people who are evacuating from an area.

Set up designated call times and contact points with friends or relatives outside the disaster area. This way, anyone who needs to know can get information from someone who isn’t directly affected by the disaster. This also lets someone outside the region know that if you haven’t called by such a time, you may be having a problem and they should alert the authorities.

Follow Directions: No Shortcuts!

When you’re evacuating, don’t take any shortcuts. Follow the directions that you’ve already established unless specifically directed to take an alternate route by authorities. Now is not the time to wing it. There is no telling what the road conditions may be like elsewhere. You could end up stuck in a retrograde traffic flow, miles away from your intended destination.

Know Where You’re Going

*Know where you’re going!* Have maps of everything: not just your primary routes but of the surrounding areas as well. It’s a good idea to have alternate shelters and even alternate destinations, too. For example, if you’d originally intended to go to a shelter northeast of you but the roads are impassable due to traffic, you might want to consider heading due west to a shelter in another state entirely.

(Taken from idiotsguides.com)