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Emergency Plans...Are You Ready?



In the wake of last month's earthquakes here in Southern California, it is important to re-visit – or visit for the first time – your family's emergency plan.

Homeland Security has put together a comprehensive checklist of things to consider in planning for an emergency situation. Below are some highlights. For more information, visit www.ready.gov.

Family Emergency Plan

- Identify an out-of-town contact. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has a cell phone, coins, or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. If you have a cell phone, program that person(s) as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Make sure to tell your family and friends that you have listed them as emergency contacts.
- Teach family members how to use text messaging (also known as SMS or Short Message Service). Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.

- Subscribe to alert services. Many communities now have systems that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather, road closings, local emergencies, etc.
- Create a comprehensive family emergency plan or use the template created by Homeland Security, at www.ready.gov/america/downloads/familyemergencyplan.pdf

Finally, regardless of whether you are planning for the possibility of a community-wide emergency or a personal emergency, it is important that you notify the people whom you have designated as executors and trustees – as well as your estate planning attorney – of the location of your original estate planning documents. It is equally important to inform your babysitter, nanny, day care center, and children’s schools of the names and phone numbers of your designated Guardians and temporary guardians. Your estate plan will work best for you and your children if you make sure that the contact information of these key individuals is known and is readily accessible.

Tali Z. Klapach
Klapach & Klapach
8200 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 300
Beverly Hills, California 90211
Tel. (310) 424-3144
Fax (310) 728-1779
Tali@KlapachLaw.com
www.KlapachEstatePlans.com

About Tali Klapach

Tali Klapach is a partner at Klapach & Klapach. She graduated from Princeton University and Yale Law School, and clerked for the Chief Judge of the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals. After practicing law for seven years at two prestigious law firms in San Francisco and Los Angeles, Tali started her own practice in trusts and estates. The goal of Klapach & Klapach is to combine the high quality service of a big law firm with the personal attention and affordability of a family lawyer. Tali is committed to building long-term relationships with clients and to serving as a source of ongoing assistance and advice. To schedule a free estate planning consultation or to subscribe to this free monthly e-Newsletter, please visit www.KlapachEstatePlans.com or call (310) 424-3144. Estate Planning for a Lifetime.

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Newsletter Designed by Neala Steury, justneala@yahoo.com