

Be Prepared for an Emergency in your Community

Be Alert, Be Informed

Emergencies and disasters can occur anytime, anywhere. Some are primarily seasonal and allow for some preparations; others occur swiftly and without warning. Your key to surviving an emergency is to be prepared. You can learn an emergency's impact by knowing what to do before, during and after one occurs. Begin by learning how to recognize an emergency warning.

- G** Find out which local radio and TV stations broadcast emergency instructions and monitor them regularly, particularly during uncertain weather conditions. Post the dial / channel numbers of these stations for easy access. Have an arrangement in place with neighbours to advise one another of an emergency notification. In the event of a major power interruption, have a battery powered radio and turn to channel FM 101.9.
- G** Be familiar with your workplace emergency plan and your children's school and/or daycare emergency plans. Have written backup care arrangements in place with the school or daycare in the event that you are detained in an emergency.
- G** Post all emergency plan phone numbers in a prominent place in the home and the office.
- G** Learn first aid. Professional medical assistance may not be immediately available.

Develop a family Emergency Plan

Emergency planning can help to ensure an effective response to emergencies and disasters. Have a family meeting to discuss potential emergency situations. Talk about what each family member should do in different situations.

- G** Develop your plan based on an assessment of the kinds of emergencies that can occur in your province, territory and community. Natural events can include winter storms, floods or tornadoes. Secondary events, such as water-induced landslides and toxic spills can exacerbate a weather-related event and prolong a state of emergency. While the emergency incident may vary, the elements of an effective response are often the same.
- G** Conduct a hazard audit of your home. Review fire safety features such as smoke detectors and how to monitor them. Check for frayed electrical cords or overloaded circuits. Do not keep flammable materials near electrical equipment or the furnace. Learn how to safely turn off main water and electrical switches in your home. Locate safe areas in your home in case of a tornado (i.e. interior bathrooms, closets, lowest floor level).
- G** Select a predetermined meeting place if a fire or other event forces your family out of your home. Ask someone outside your immediate area to act as a central contact for your family members, relatives and friends in an emergency.
- G** Prepare an emergency car kit:
 - Battery powered radio and extra batteries
 - blanket
 - booster cables
 - First Aid kit and manual
 - fire extinguisher (9A I OBC)

- flares or reflectors
- flashlight and extra batteries
- food: non-perishable high energy food such as granola bars, raisins, etc.
- maps
- shovel
- tire repair kit and pump
- water

- G** Decide ahead of time of a system of communication. Pick one out-of-province and one local friend or relative for family members to call if separated because of a disaster. It is often easier to call out of province than within an affected area.
- G** All members of your family should have a means of identification on them at all times: e.g clothing label, wallet card, bracelet with name and address.
- G** Maintain a list of the family's required medication, giving generic names and prescribed dosage. List the name and telephone numbers of family doctors. For those who use pacemakers or other medical equipment, keep the style, serial number and other pertinent information with you at all times.
- G** Keep family records, such as mortgage documents, medical records, insurance policies, birth certificates, marriage licenses, wills stocks and bond certificates in one central location so that they can be easily accessed in the event that you must leave the area quickly. Keep all papers in a waterproof container.
- G** Keep treasured items such as family photo albums in a place where they can be quickly accessed if you must leave your home in a hurry.
- G** Educate yourself with basic first aid or take a class.
- G** Take a CPR course.
- G** Involve all family members in planning for an emergency.
- G** Test your plan. Chances of survival are improved if you exercise your plan.

Maintain a supply of food and emergency items. An emergency could isolate you in your home for several days. Try to ensure you have a Five-Day supply of food and water for each member of your family. Rotate foods in your regular pantry supplies and replace stored water every few months. Other times you may want to keep stocked in your home for emergency use:

- G** Special medicines or foods required by members of your family, such as insulin, prescription medications, baby food or food required for special diets.
- G** Solar or battery-powered radio and flashlight (one per person) in working order and extra batteries for each, first aid kit and manual.
- G** All-purpose fire extinguisher (rated A-B-C).
- G** Waterproof matches or matches contained in a waterproof container.
- G** Candles and a tin can for a holder.
- G** A five-day supply of food items for each member of the family. Choose foods that require no refrigeration, cooking or preparation, are compact and lightweight, and familiar to users. If food must be cooked, include stove and fuel.

- G** A five-day supply of water for each member of the family, sealed in unbreakable containers (replace stored tap water every few months). Plan on a minimum of one litre per person per day for drinking purposes.
- G** A catalytic heater (usually kerosene or propane). Follow instructions carefully and ensure there is adequate ventilation to avoid build-up of hazardous fumes when using any kind of fuel. Install a carbon monoxide sensor (battery powered).

People with Special Needs

People with special needs should register in advance. In case of evacuation, some people may require transportation assistance to Reception Centres or Group Lodging Facilities. People who require this help may have a physical, neurological or psychological disability or have mobility problems. Persons who are unable to respond independently to an emergency situation which requires them to evacuate their home should register in advance for assistance with a home care program, local seniors organization or emergency measures organization.

Persons who receive home health care should discuss emergency plans with their caregiver or home care agency. They should also check with their physician if prior arrangements should be necessary for evacuation to a hospital.

If a member of the household is bedridden and requires constant medical care or has electrical life support equipment at home, discuss this NOW with his/her physician or local emergency measures organization.

If an evacuation is imminent, consider adding these items to your emergency supplies:

- G** Warm and waterproof clothing
- G** Extra food, based on the specific requirements
- G** Money and credit cards (Money machines may not be working.)
- G** Toys to comfort and amuse children (Favourite toy, stuffed animals, cards.)
- G** Reading material for adults
- G** Pet food
- G** Sleeping bags, or blankets, in a waterproof bag

If you expect to be evacuated from your home or workplace:

Do not assume an evacuation will last only a few hours. Plan to evacuate with enough items to keep your family comfortable for at least five days.

If an emergency is imminent, keep phone lines open for use by emergency workers. Monitor local radio broadcasts for emergency instructions and current information.

Assemble food and supplies you plan to take with you. Refer to lists of family medications, records and irreplaceable items.

Keep your car fuelled.

Turn off main water and electrical switches before leaving home. If during winter, drain water pipes to prevent freezing.

Follow local government instructions. If you are asked to evacuate, do so promptly. Travel only on routes recommended by your local government.

An emergency reception centre may be set up to provide food and shelter to people affected by an emergency. If you are going to somewhere other than the reception area, advise the centre, a relative, local government or police of your whereabouts.

After the emergency or disaster

The dangers associated with a disaster are not over once the flood waters have receded or the tornado passed. Ensure that you and your family are safe by following the advice below:

- G** Do not visit the disaster area. You may hinder rescue efforts.
- G** Monitor local media reports for when it is safe to return to your home. They can also provide other post-incident advice and assistance.
- G** Drive carefully and watch for debris, dangling or broken wires and damaged bridges and roads. Report problems to police or fire departments.
- G** Use extreme caution. Wait until you are advised by authorities that it is safe to enter buildings that may have been structurally damaged.
- G** Use only battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to examine your home for damage, which may contain flammable items. Do not use candles or matches.
- G** Check for leaking gas pipes in your home. If you smell gas:
 - Immediately open windows and doors
 - Turn off the main gas valve (know where it is and have a wrench handy)
 - Leave the house
 - Go to another location and notify the gas company, police and fire departments
 - Do not re-enter the house unless you are advised by authorities that it is safe to do so
- G** If electrical appliances are wet (and you are NOT wet or standing in water) turn off the main power switch. Then, unplug the wet appliance and let them dry before checking for visible damage. If there is no visible damage, reconnect the appliance and turn on the main power switch. If fuses blow when the power is restored, turn off the main power switch again and look for short circuits in your home wiring, appliances and equipment. If a problem still exists, call your utility company.
- G** Follow your local health authority's instructions concerning the use of food and water supplies. Any food affected by lack of refrigeration, chemicals or flood waters should be discarded.
- G** Check to see that sewage lines are intact before flushing toilets.
- G** Report damaged water, sewage and gas lines to the proper authorities.
- G** Notify your insurance agent or broker immediately if your property was damaged.

The emotional impacts of disasters on those affected are well known. Pay attention to your feelings and those of your family members. Local mental health services are usually able to provide assistance in coping with trauma resulting from disasters.