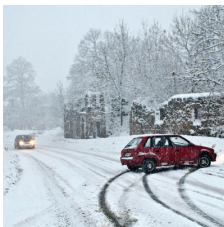
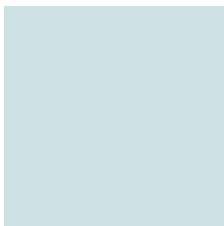
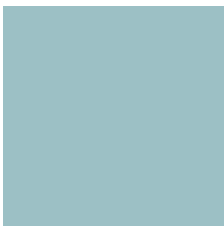


# *Family* Emergency Guide



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## Prior to an Emergency

Emergencies often occur without warning, leaving minimal time for you and your family to plan a response. If you effectively plan in advance, you and your family can successfully face a variety of emergencies with little disruption as possible. The following strategies and processes will increase overall family preparedness and assist you in handling emergency situations:

### 1. *Creating a Family Emergency Plan*

- Discuss the dangers of possible emergency events, to include: fire, severe weather, power outages, hazardous spills, and terrorism.
- Discuss each family member's responsibilities in responding to different types of emergencies.



- Discuss what to do in case of personal injury (administer first aid, call 9-1-1, and know how to get to your local hospital).
- Draw a floor plan of your home outlining escape routes for each room.
- Register family members for local public alert and warning systems like AlertDC and FEMA Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS).
- Be educated on how to turn off the gas and electricity at the main switch. If for any reason you turn off natural gas services in your home, call your gas company to restore services.

*Do not attempt to restore gas service yourself. If you smell gas, get out of the house and call the fire department.*



- Make sure you know your emergency plans for work, school, and child care facilities.
- Post emergency contact numbers, to include: work, cell phones, schools, sitters, family members, neighbors, utility companies, etc., near each phone. You should consider pre-programming emergency cell phone numbers as “ICE” (In-Case of Emergency) for easy dialing.
- Teach children how to dial 9-1-1 and their residence telephone number.
- Designate a relative or a neighbor that all family members will call if you become separated. Make sure this number stays with your children at all times.



- Stay tuned to your local emergency TV, radio stations, websites, and apps.
- Learn to use a fire extinguisher and discuss where it's located.
- Learn to use the “Flashlight” app on cell phones.
- Make sure a working smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector are in your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year when you set your clocks.
- Take a Basic First Aid and CPR class.
- Keep family records, keepsakes, and emergency cash in a water/fire proof safe.



## 2. *Preparing a Family Emergency Kit:*

Preparing a Family Emergency Kit ahead of time will save precious moments in the event you must evacuate your home. Each family should consider the following items as part of their Family Emergency Kit:

- At least a three day supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Store water in a sealed, unbreakable container. Replace every six months.
- Iodine tablets (for purifying water).
- A three to five day supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a manual can opener.
- A change of clothes, rain gear, and sturdy shoes for each occupant.
- Heavy gloves.
- Blankets, tents, sleeping bags, and moist towelettes.



- A First Aid Kit and regularly used prescription medications (make sure you check expiration dates).
- Identification, credit cards, cash, cell phone/calling card, and photo copies of important family documents, including home insurance information.
- A list of family physicians, important medical information, and the model and serial number of medical devices such as pacemakers.
- An extra set of car and house keys.
- Special items for infants, the elderly, or family members with disabilities.
- A battery operated radio, flashlights, extra batteries, cell phone charger, and whistle to signal for help.





- A fire extinguisher.
- Local map.
- A utility box, to include an assortment of tools, pocket knife, and duct tape. Include water proof matches, flares, plastic storage containers, needle and thread, rope, pen and paper, a compass, garbage bags, and regular household bleach.

### *Planning for Pets*

Plan ahead as to where your pet can be housed in case of a disaster. Due to health regulations, animals are not allowed in emergency shelters. You may want to include the following items in an emergency pouch for your pet:

- Identification collar and/or rabies tag.
- Carrier or case.
- Leash.
- Medications.
- Scooper, newspaper, and trash bags for handling waste.
- At least a two week supply of pet food and water.
- Veterinary records (most facilities do not allow pets without proof of vaccinations).

## *Emergency Food Supplies*

It is essential to ensure access to emergency food supplies during an emergency. Here are some helpful tips:

- Store canned foods, fry mixes, and other staples you use every day. Foods that require no refrigeration, preparations, or cooking are best.
- Have a manual can opener and disposable utensils.
- Individuals with special diets and allergies should be considered when determining which types of food to store.
- If you have pets, don't forget dry food and a bowl. You should store the following essential items in the trunk of your car:
  - Water.
  - Toiletries.
  - Non-perishable food.
  - Blankets.
  - Flashlights/Batteries.
  - Jumper cables.
  - Shovel.
  - Salt/Sand.
  - A change of clothes, rain gear, and sturdy shoes.
  - Flares.
  - An assortment of tools, pocket knife, and duct tape. Include water proof matches, flares, plastic storage containers, rope, a compass, garbage bags, and household bleach.

## Protective Actions

Protective actions are steps we take to protect our family members and ourselves from harm. It is important to know the type of emergency that is occurring and the severity in order to implement the proper plan. The two most common forms of protective actions are:

### 1. Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-Place for situations involving a civil disturbance outside your home, chemical/biological/radiological event, and natural or man-made emergency which creates an unsafe or unstable environment.

- Stay in your house or present location to avoid harm.
- Close all windows, doors, and shut off heat, ventilation, and all air conditioning units.
- Have your emergency kit.
- Stay tuned to your local emergency TV, radio stations, websites, and apps.

## 2. Evacuation

In situations where evacuation is your safest choice you should leave your home, work, or current location. In these situations you should:

- Be familiar with your emergency evacuation routes in your area.
- Select two meeting places: One near home and the other outside your neighborhood.
- Stay tuned to your local emergency TV, radio stations, websites and apps.



# After an Emergency Strikes

During and after an emergency, it is important to remain calm. Even after an initial crisis, there may be residual danger. Your response to an emergency may save not only your life, but the lives of others. Here are some helpful hints:

## *If Power Goes Out*

- Remain calm.
- Locate your flashlights, batteries, and “Flashlight” app. Try not to use candles except as a last resort.
- Assist family members or neighbors who need help.
- Check for damage to your home. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids.
- Turn off household equipment and appliances that were on when you lost power.



- Limit the opening of your refrigerator and freezer doors in order to minimize the loss of refrigeration and avoid food spoilage.
- **Do not** use the stove to heat your home.
- Turn on your battery operated radio to listen for emergency information updates.
- If you must drive, use extreme caution.
- Stay away from down power lines.

### *Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Emergencies*

In the event of a HAZMAT emergency such as a chemical, biological, or radiological emergency, fire or explosion, do not panic. The best defense against any of these emergencies is education and awareness. Knowing how to respond will greatly reduce panic and fear.

*If you need to get out of the surrounding area or are directed to evacuate, do so immediately and:*

- Take your Family Emergency Kit.
- Lock your home.
- Travel on routes specified by local authorities.

- Travel with car windows up and air vents, air conditioner, and heater turned-off.
- Stay up-hill and up-wind of the incident.

*If you are sure you have time:*

- Close and lock windows and doors and close all vents and fireplace dampers.
- Turn off all fans, heat or air conditioning.
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity before leaving.
- Post a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Make arrangements for your pets.

*If you are instructed to Shelter-In-Place:*

- Close and lock all windows and doors.
- Turn off ventilation systems, water, and gas.
- Seal gaps under doorways and windows with duct tape.
- If you suspect chemical or biological agents have entered your house, move to a safe room in the interior of the house on a higher floor if possible.
- If harmful vapors do enter the house, covering your nose and mouth with a cloth can provide minimal breathing protection.
- Stay inside until authorities say it is safe to go outside.

## *Environmental Emergencies*

Many areas are vulnerable to various types of severe weather including thunderstorms, hurricanes, flash floods, snow storms, earthquakes, and tornadoes. Because of this, it is important for you to understand the difference between a watch and warning for severe weather:

- A **Severe Weather Watch** means severe weather may develop.
- A **Severe Weather Warning** means a storm has developed and is on its way-take cover immediately.

***The safest place to ride out the storm is inside a secure building or a well-built home/apartment. You should:***

- Stay tuned to your local emergency TV and radio stations, websites, and apps.
- Be ready to evacuate, if necessary.
- Keep away from windows and doors.
- Have your Family Emergency Kit available.



**Thunderstorms** can sometimes be seen approaching. Recognizing the danger signs (dark, towering, or threatening clouds, distant lightning and thunder) will help you better prepare.

**Lightning** is produced in all thunderstorms. In general, if you are close enough to a storm to hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. Move inside as quickly as possible.

***If caught outside during a thunderstorm:***

- Try to get inside a building as quickly as possible.
- If a building is not available, move into a car with windows rolled up.
- In an open area or field, move to a low area such as a ravine or valley.
- If you are with a group of people, spread out, keeping several yards apart.



**Tornadoes** are dangerous because of their high winds and ability to lift and move heavy objects. If you receive a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately.

*If you are in your car:*

- **STOP!** Get out and lie flat, face down in a low area.
- Cover your head and wait for the tornado to pass.

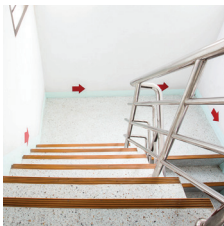
*If you are at home:*

- Go to the basement, storm shelter, or room near the center of the house.



***In a high-rise or other public building:***

- Move to the interior, preferably a stairwell or hallway.
- Know the terms used by weather forecasters so that you clearly understand the risks:
  - ***Severe Thunderstorm Watch*** - Issued by the National Weather Service when the weather conditions are such that a severe thunderstorm (damaging winds of 58 miles per hour or more, or hail that is a quarter of an inch or greater in diameter) is likely to develop.
  - ***Severe Thunderstorm Warning*** - Issued when a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or is seen by weather radar.



**Flash Flooding** can be very dangerous because of the strong swift currents. If you find yourself in a flash flood:

- Move immediately and quickly to higher ground.
- If flood waters rise around your car, get out and move to higher ground immediately.
- Flooding can cause contamination of water supplies. Purifying water is recommended if you think it has been contaminated. This includes water used for drinking, cooking, cleaning dishes, and bathing. The best way to purify water is to boil it. Bring water to a boil for three to five minutes, allowing it to cool before drinking. Pouring water back and forth between two containers will improve the taste by putting oxygen back into the water.



**Winter Weather** emergencies encompass such things as snow storms, ice storms, blizzards, and the resulting damage/hazards associated with them. Some preparations you can make in advance are:

- Store sufficient heating fuel (i.e. kerosene, wood) to allow you to stay in your home for several days in the event there is a power outage.
- Keep your vehicle fueled and in good repair. Check the battery, ignition system, thermostat, lights, flashers, exhaust, heater, brakes, and tires regularly, and make sure you have adequate levels of antifreeze, windshield washer fluid and oil.
- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic, insulate walls and attics, and attach weather-stripping to doors and windows.
- Winterize your home, barn, shed, or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock, or equipment.
- Clean rain gutters, repair roof leaks and trim tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.

### Winter forecasts terms:

- **Winter Weather Advisory** - Winter weather conditions are expected to cause inconveniences and may be hazardous.
- **Winter Storm Watch** - Be alert, a storm is possible.
- **Winter Storm Warning** - Take action, the storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.
- **Blizzard Warning** - Snow and strong winds combined will produce blinding snow, zero visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill. Seek refuge immediately.
- **Frost/freeze Warning** - Below freezing temperatures are expected.



### *During a winter weather emergency:*

- Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters to avoid a buildup of toxic fumes. Refuel outside. Keep all heaters away from flammable objects.
- Dress in several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven and water-repellent. Wear a hat, scarf, gloves/ mittens, and waterproof boots.
- If traveling by car, do so in daylight hours, don't travel alone; keep others informed of your schedule and route and stay on main roads. Be cautious when crossing bridges due to possible ice on the road.



## Recovering from an Emergency

Recovering from an emergency can be challenging. You and your family may face emotional and psychological effects from the event. Reactions vary from person to person, so it is important you and your family continue to communicate during and after an emergency. Reactions may include:

- Insomnia or nightmares.
- Anger.
- Apathy or lack of emotion.
- Needing to keep active or restlessness.
- Wanting to talk about your experience.
- Revenge.
- Loss of appetite.
- Weight loss or gain.
- Headaches.
- Mood swings.

These are all normal reactions to stressful events and it is important to let people react in their own way. If you find that you or a family member is having a difficult time working through a crisis, you may feel the need to talk to someone outside of your family. Friends, local crisis hotlines, emergency assistance counselors, and spiritual advisors can be helpful during these times.



## **Websites to Keep Handy**

*United States Secret Service*  
[www.secretservice.gov](http://www.secretservice.gov)

*Disaster Assistance.gov*  
[www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov)

*American Red Cross*  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

*Federal Emergency Management Agency*  
*/Ready.gov*  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

*General Service Administration*  
[www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)

**Government Executive Magazine**  
[www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com)

**Institute for Business and Home Safety**  
[www.ibhs.org](http://www.ibhs.org)

**National Weather Service**  
[www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)

**American Association for the Prevention  
of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)**  
[www.aspca.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/  
disaster preparedness](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/disaster-preparedness)

**AlertDC**  
<http://hsema.dc.gov/page/alertdc>

**FEMA IPAWS**  
[https://www.fema.gov/integrated-  
public-alert-warning-system](https://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system)

