

During an emergency, your best protection is preparation. Knowing what to do will help you stay safe and better control of the situation.

The following information will help you prepare for specific emergencies, including:

Power Outage

Turn the thermostat(s) down to minimum and turn off all appliances, electronic equipment and tools to prevent injury, damage to equipment and fire. Power can be restored more easily when the system is not overloaded. Do not use barbecues or camping heating equipment or home generators indoors

Use a flashlight. If you must use candles, be sure to use proper candleholders. Never leave lit candles unattended.

Generators are an option for backup electricity, however:

- They should never be used indoors
- They require frequent maintenance (including frequent oil changes)
- They must be installed and connected to your main panel (not directly to your wiring system) by a qualified electrician. Get any such installation inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority.

Alert: Using Food When the Power Goes Off

- First, use perishable foods, including those in the refrigerator.
- Second, use frozen foods from the freezer. To minimize the number of times you open the fridge and freezer doors, post a list of contents on the outside of the door.
- If you have frozen water containers in the freezer, move them into the fridge to help keep the temperature cool.
- Third, use canned and dried foods.

Alert: Cooking Without Electricity

- Never use-cooking equipment designed for outdoor use indoors – this could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Before using a fireplace after an earthquake, have your chimney and flue inspected for cracks. Sparks may escape through a small crack and start a fire in the wall or attic.

Winter Power Failure:

If the power outage leaves you without heat for some time and there is a threat of pipes freezing or bursting, drain the pipes and shut off the main water supply. As you drain your pipes you may want to collect the water in clean containers for drinking and cleaning purposes. Open all faucets including your water heater. If your water heater is electric, drain the hot water heating system by turning it off and leaving the valves open. Add plumbing antifreeze to the toilet and other pipes with standing water. If you have a septic tank, antifreeze could damage it so make sure you pump the chemical from the plumbing fixtures and pipes before they are refilled with water.

Energy Conservation Recommendations

- To conserve power to help avoid a blackout, the power industry recommends:
- In heating season, set the furnace thermostat at 68 degrees or lower. In cooling season, set the thermostat at 78 degrees or higher. Consider installing a programmable thermostat that you can set to have the furnace or air conditioning run only when you are at home. Most power is used by heating and cooling, so adjusting the temperatures on your thermostat is the biggest energy conservation measure you can take.
- Turn off lights and computers when not in use. This is especially true about computer monitors - avoid using a "screen saver" and just simply turn the monitor off when you won't be using the computer for a while. Turn the computer off completely each evening. It is no longer true that computer equipment is damaged from turning it off and on.
- Close windows when the heating or cooling system is on.
- Clean or replace furnace and air-conditioner filters regularly.
- If you have to wash clothes, wash only full loads and clean the dryer's lint trap after each use.
- When using a dishwasher, wash full loads and use the "light" cycle. If possible, use the "rinse only" cycle and turn off the "high temperature" rinse option. When the regular wash cycle is done, just open the dishwasher door to allow the dishes to air dry.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lights.
- Use one large light bulb rather than several smaller ones.
- Severe Winter Storm

Severe winter storms can cause widespread damage and disruption. Heavy snow often results in paralyzed transportation systems, automobile accidents due to slippery roads and stranded vehicles. When accompanied by intense winds and extreme cold, snow can isolate entire communities. Bitter cold and severe winter storms kill more than 100 people in Canada every year. That is more than the number of Canadians killed by tornadoes, thunderstorms, lightning, floods, hurricanes and heat waves combined.

Ice storms are often winter's worst hazard. The severity of ice storms depends on the accumulation of ice, the duration of the event, the location and extent of the area affected. During a blizzard, piercing winds blow snow into drifts that can bury people, animals and possessions. The snow loads can also cause the collapse of structures. In the later stages of a blizzard whiteout conditions can be formed. During a whiteout the snowfall is so dense that it is

hard to tell the earth from the sky.

If you are indoors

- Stay indoors. Only travel when absolutely necessary.
- When going outside, ensure that you have proper clothing to protect you from the elements. A heavy coat, gloves, boots and a hat are a must.
- It is easier to keep a smaller space warm. During the Ice Storm, some families closed off most rooms but a few, and managed to keep quite warm.
- Listen for radio and television broadcasts of storm warnings.

If you are outdoors

- If you have to go outdoors, prepare yourself against the cold and find shelter as soon as possible.
- Several lightweight layers give more warmth than a single heavy coat. Try thermal underwear, a turtleneck, a medium sweater, and a jacket.
- Wear a hat to prevent heat loss. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs. Wear gloves and hiking or snow boots.
- Always tell someone where you are going, how you are getting there, and when you think you will arrive. This way, someone will know where you might be if you are stranded.

If you are in a vehicle

- Travel can be dangerous during a severe storm.
- If you hear news of a blizzard warning, find shelter as soon as possible.
- If you are stuck in your car, stay with the vehicle.
- Provide a signal to rescuers such as a bright cloth tied onto the vehicle.
- Keep the window open a crack for fresh air.
- Stay warm by moving your arms and legs, keeping the blood flowing.
- Start the car engine once every hour, and use the heater for ten minutes.
- When the engine is running, leave the dome light on.
- Keep the exhaust pipe clear so that fumes can escape.
- Always tell someone where you are going, how you are getting there, and when you think you will arrive.

Severe Lightning Storm

Thunderstorms bring a wide range of threats. These include hail, lightning, strong winds and

heavy rainfall. All of these hazards can result in property damage, injuries or fatalities. React immediately when you first see lightning, hear thunder or are given some other warning. There are a few simple precautions that you can take to protect yourself

If you are indoors

- If you are in a building, stay inside
- Large hailstones can shatter windows, so stay away from windows, skylights and doors.
- Unplug TVs, radios, toasters and other electrical appliances.
- Do not use the phone during the storm, and do not contact metal objects like radiators, stoves, metal pipes, sinks or other potential conductors of electricity.
- If the storm is safe distance away, close your drapes, blinds or window shades to prevent the wind from blowing broken glass inside, and consider unplugging televisions and other electrical appliances that do not have surge protectors.

If you are outdoors

- Move immediately to a place of shelter. Go to a building or vehicle. Large enclosed structures tend to be much safer than smaller open structures.
- Avoid water, high ground, isolated trees, picnic shelters and open spaces.
- If lightning strikes when you are outside, crouch down and put your feet together. Minimize your contact with the ground, and do not lie down.
- Keep away from telephone and power lines, fences, trees and hilltops.
- Get off bicycles, motorcycles, golf carts and tractors.

If you are in a vehicle

- Stop the car safely at the side of the road and stay there.
- Completely close all windows and do not touch any metal objects.
- Do not park near power line or trees which could fall

Flood or Flash Flood

WHAT IS A FLASH FLOOD?

Flash floods develop from intense thunderstorms dropping large amounts of water in a short time. Flash floods occur with little or no warning. During periods of urban flooding, streets can become swift moving rivers and basements can fill with water.

If you are indoors

- Turn off your basement furnace and outside gas valve.
- Make sure basement windows are closed.
- Turn power off to circuit breaker or fuse box.
- If the area is wet, stand on a dry board and shut off power with a dry wooden stick.
- Move furniture, electrical appliances and other belongings to higher levels.
- Remove toilet bowl water and plug basement sewer drains and toilet connection
- Turn on a battery-operated radio or television and listen for the latest emergency information.
- If told to leave, grab your preassembled disaster safety kit and go immediately to the designated shelter. Be sure to follow the recommended evacuation routes – never take shortcuts.

If you are outdoors

- In a flooding emergency always make sure you are on firm ground whether you are walking or driving.
- Quickly move towards an elevated area, but stay away from flood regions.
- Climb to high ground in a highly visible and safe area.
- Never cross floodwaters. Water even as shallow as 15 cm could sweep you off your feet.

If you are in a vehicle

- Travel carefully and only if absolutely necessary through flooded areas where roads may be washed away.
- If you come across a flooded road, take a different route as the fast moving water could sweep you away.
- If you become caught in fast rising floodwaters and your vehicle stalls, leave it and move yourself and your passengers to higher ground.
- Avoid remaining in your car. As little as 60 cm of water can carry a car away.

Tornado

Tornadoes result from hot, humid weather meeting a cold front. With these conditions, a tornado could be imminent. A funnel cloud hanging from a dark cloud may appear before the tornado actually occurs. A tornado may be accompanied by lightning, high winds and hail.

If you are indoors

- Go immediately to the basement, storm cellar or the lowest level of the home.
- If there is no basement, go to a closet, a bathroom or under a staircase.
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- Get under a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a workbench or a heavy table. Hold onto the furniture with one hand and use the other arm to protect your head and neck from falling or flying objects.
- If you are in an office or apartment building take shelter in an inner hallway or room, ideally in the basement or on the ground floor. Do not use the elevator and stay away from windows.
- Avoid being in the corners of the room because they attract debris.
- If in a mobile home, get out and seek shelter elsewhere.

If you are outdoors

- If possible, get inside a building.
- If there is no shelter, lie down in a ditch or ravine.
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck.
- Stay away from bridges and overpasses.
- If you are in a vehicle
- Never try to out drive a tornado. Tornadoes can change direction suddenly and could lift up the car and toss it through the air.
- Immediately stop the car and turn off the engine.
- Get out of the car and seek shelter in a building, ditch or ravine.

Infectious Disease Outbreak

In case of a respiratory (airborne) infectious disease outbreak, the most important thing to do is to listen to the radio and follow recommendations to prevent and contain the spread of the disease.

Respiratory infections are generally spread by small droplets in the air that can settle on surfaces. To prevent the spread:

- Cover your mouth when you cough/sneeze (with a tissue or into your elbow).
- Wash your hands frequently, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Limit your contact with others.
- When contact is necessary, keep at least a metre away from others.
- Clean surfaces and contact points (contact points include door knobs, counters, and other high traffic areas).

Hazardous Chemical Release

Responding to an emergency involving a spill or a fire resulting from a hazardous spill is the same as all other emergencies, except that you may be evacuated or be advised to "shelter in place".

Shelter in place means to remain indoors during the release of an airborne hazardous material. You should move out of the way of smoke or fumes and seek shelter indoors. DO NOT go through smoke or fumes. Remaining inside a building or vehicle can reduce your exposure to 1/10 of that of the outdoors. Close all doors and windows tightly. Shut off air conditioners, fans, and close all dampers, etc. which bring air in from the outside. Do not use kitchen fans, bathroom vents, clothes dryers, fireplaces, etc. Compartmentalize your house by closing all interior doors. Place wet towels under doors to prevent the entry of smoke and fumes into your home. If fumes threaten you, cover your mouth and nose with a wet handkerchief or towel. Monitor your radio or television for additional information or instructions.

Evacuate only if told to do so, do not approach the scene of the release. Back off as quickly as possible. Listen to the advice of local officials on the radio or television to determine what steps you will need to take to protect yourself.

Evacuation Procedures During an Emergency

During some emergencies, it may be necessary to protect our citizens by evacuating the area impacted by the emergency. An emergency evacuation centre may be set up to provide shelter and food to people affected by the emergency. If there were a need to be evacuated, you would be notified.

- Keep phone lines open for use by emergency workers.
- Listen to local radio, television or cable broadcasts for emergency instructions and current information.
- Listen to local radio, television or cable broadcasts for emergency instructions and current information.
- Assemble the food and supplies you plan to take with you. Refer to lists of family medications, records and irreplaceable items (see Develop a Family Emergency Plan).
- Follow the instructions of your local authority about whether to switch off utility services. In the case of some gas and propane appliances that are manually operated, it would be wise to shut off the gas supply if the appliance is going to be unattended.
- Follow the instructions and advice of your municipal government. If you are asked to evacuate, do so promptly.
- Travel only on routes that are specified or recommended by your local municipality.
- A reception centre may be set up to provide food, shelter and information to people affected by an emergency. If you are going somewhere other than the reception centre, advise the reception centre or municipal government of your location.