



# PREPARE YOURSELF

## A Guide to Emergency Preparedness in the Capital Region

Stay safe in a disaster

Be self-sufficient for at least seven days

Reunite with family

Reduce risks of property damage



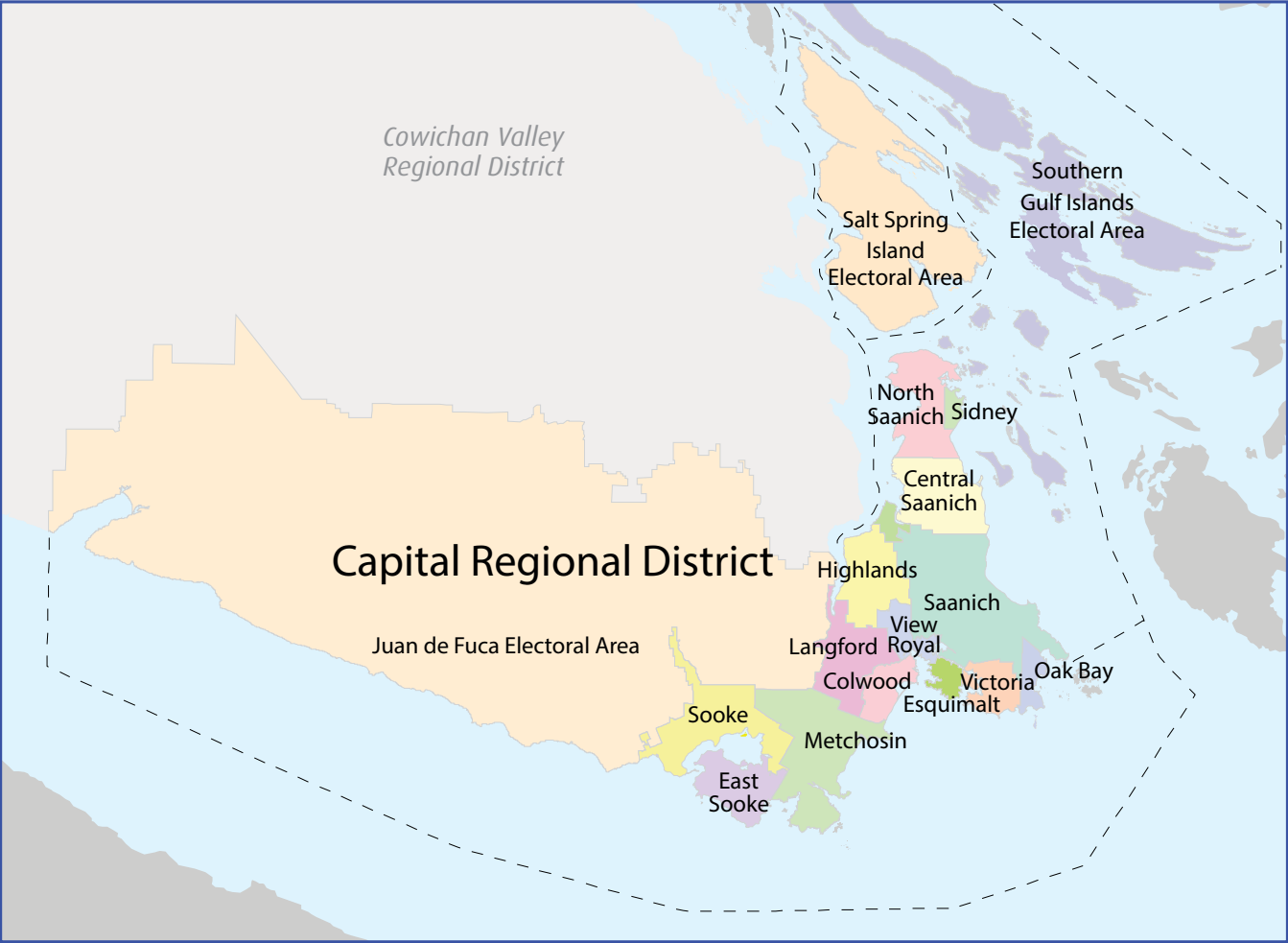
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*Fifth edition – 2024*

Prepare Yourself resources is a product of the Local Government Emergency Program Advisory Commission (LGEPAC) Public Education Working Group. LGEPAC is a Capital Regional District (CRD) commission representing the 13 municipal and three electoral area emergency programs. LGEPAC created the Public Education Working Group to develop emergency management public education materials for the Capital Region, ensuring common messaging from all local authority emergency programs. Prepare Yourself materials are maintained by Capital Regional District staff with direction from LGEPAC members.

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# Capital Regional District



# INTRODUCTION

## Emergency Preparedness: A Responsibility We All Share

This emergency preparedness guide will help you and your family get ready for any emergency. The guide contains information on what to do before, during and after an emergency, and includes handy checklists so you don't forget anything.

If you are well prepared, you will be in a better position to help your family, friends and neighbours during an emergency or disaster. Your first priority is always personal safety and reducing the risk of injury. Most people survive disasters. Following a disaster, your family's safety, health, comfort and general well-being may be entirely in your hands.

Major disasters may disrupt the day-to-day functions of a community and seriously affect infrastructure and public services:

- ▶ Stores may close or quickly run out of supplies.
- ▶ Businesses, schools and public offices may shut down.
- ▶ Hospitals may be overwhelmed.
- ▶ Transportation and communications may be limited.
- ▶ Utilities like water, electricity and gas may be unavailable or unreliable.

Emergency officials, first responders and community agencies can handle everyday emergencies, but will likely be overwhelmed with a widespread or major disaster. Immediate priorities will be:

- ▶ Life-saving (first aid, search and rescue, evacuations, medical care).
- ▶ Damage control (fighting fires, preventing the spread of disease, dealing with hazardous materials).
- ▶ Restoring or maintaining critical services needed for emergency response (e.g. transportation, hospitals, emergency shelters, communications and basic utilities).

On pages 4 and 5 you will find contact information for your local emergency programs. These programs help communities prepare and are a great source of information. Contact them if you have any questions.

This workbook outlines the key steps on how to prepare for emergencies in the Capital Region: **Make an Emergency Plan, Assemble Emergency Kits** and **Know the Risks Locally**.

**Worksheets** to help you and your family in all stages of an emergency are located in Section 5 at the back of this book. You can tear or print these out, fill in your information and refer to them at any time.

## LOCAL EMERGENCY PROGRAMS

The Capital Region is made up of 13 municipalities and three electoral areas. Each is responsible for its own local emergency program. These emergency programs help support and manage the planning, preparedness and response efforts in your community. You can contact your local program to:

- ▶ Obtain information on emergency preparedness and upcoming workshops and events
- ▶ Arrange an emergency preparedness workshop for your organization or community group
- ▶ Volunteer for your local Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP), Emergency Support Services (ESS), Search and Rescue (SAR) or Emergency Radio Communications (Comms)

### LOCAL EMERGENCY PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	WEB ADDRESS	PHONE	EMAIL
Central Saanich	<a href="http://www.centrialsaanich.ca">www.centrialsaanich.ca</a>	250.544.4231	<a href="mailto:emergencyprogram@csaanich.ca">emergencyprogram@csaanich.ca</a>
Colwood	<a href="http://www.colwood.ca">www.colwood.ca</a>	250.478.8321	<a href="mailto:emergencyprogram@colwood.ca">emergencyprogram@colwood.ca</a>
Esquimalt	<a href="http://www.esquimalt.ca">www.esquimalt.ca</a>	250.414.7120	<a href="mailto:emergency.program@esquimalt.ca">emergency.program@esquimalt.ca</a>
Highlands	<a href="http://www.highlands.ca">www.highlands.ca</a>	250.474.1773	<a href="mailto:lhilton@highlands.ca">lhilton@highlands.ca</a>
Juan de Fuca Electoral Area	<a href="http://www.crd.bc.ca">www.crd.bc.ca</a>	250.642.8105	<a href="mailto:jdfepc@crd.bc.ca">jdfepc@crd.bc.ca</a>
Langford	<a href="http://www.cityoflangford.ca">www.cityoflangford.ca</a>	250.478.9555	<a href="mailto:fire@langford.ca">fire@langford.ca</a>
Metchosin	<a href="http://www.metchosinemergencyprogram.ca">www.metchosinemergencyprogram.ca</a>	250.478.1307	<a href="mailto:firechief@metchosinfire.ca">firechief@metchosinfire.ca</a>
North Saanich	<a href="http://www.northsaanich.ca">www.northsaanich.ca</a>	250.656.1931	<a href="mailto:emergprogram@northsaanich.ca">emergprogram@northsaanich.ca</a>

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	WEB ADDRESS	PHONE	EMAIL
Oak Bay	www.oakbay.ca	250.592.9121	obep@oakbay.ca
Saanich	www.saanich.ca/prepare	250.475.7140	sep@saanich.ca
Salt Spring Island Electoral Area	www.crd.bc.ca	250.537.1220	ssiepc@crd.bc.ca
Sidney	www.sidney.ca	250.656.2121	firedept@sidney.ca
Sooke	www.sooke.ca	250.642.5422	firedept@sooke.ca
Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area	www.crd.bc.ca	250.629.6982	sgiepc@crd.bc.ca
Victoria	www.victoriaready.ca	250.920.3373	emvic@victoria.ca
View Royal	www.viewroyal.ca	250.479.7322	emergencyprogram@viewroyal.ca

**X**

- |                          |                |                     |                 |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| ▶ <b>PrepareCRD</b>      | @PrepareCRD    | ▶ <b>Oak Bay</b>    | @OakBayFireDept |
| ▶ <b>Central Saanich</b> | @CSaanichFire  | ▶ <b>Saanich</b>    | @SaanichEP      |
| ▶ <b>Colwood</b>         | @cityofcolwood | ▶ <b>SGI</b>        | @SGIEmergPrg    |
| ▶ <b>Esquimalt</b>       | @EsquimaltBC   | ▶ <b>Sidney</b>     | @SidneyFireDept |
| ▶ <b>Highlands</b>       | @HighlandsEP   | ▶ <b>Sooke</b>      | @Sookeca        |
| ▶ <b>Juan de Fuca</b>    | @JdFemerg      | ▶ <b>SSI</b>        | @SSIEmergency   |
| ▶ <b>Langford</b>        | @EPLangford    | ▶ <b>Victoria</b>   | @CityOfVictoria |
| ▶ <b>Metchosin</b>       | @MetchosinEOC  | ▶ <b>View Royal</b> | @VRFD           |
| ▶ <b>North Saanich</b>   | @dns_fire      |                     |                 |

See Section 2 for trusted sources of information.

# STAY INFORMED. SUBSCRIBE FOR ALERTS.



- ▶ In the case of a public safety incident, your local emergency program may use a public alert system to deliver critical and potentially life-saving alerts to residents who have registered.
- ▶ This information can help you and your family know what to do, where to go, and what to expect.
- ▶ The local emergency program public alert system is optional, and you will only receive notifications if you sign up for this service.
- ▶ However, information will also be available through local media coverage and your local emergency program.
- ▶ Please note: not all local emergency programs within the capital region have a public alert system.
- ▶ These notification systems will send alerts for public safety incidents such as earthquakes, wildfires, tsunami alerts or evacuation notices. On occasion you may receive a test notification to validate the system.





| Section 1 |

# BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

You and your family should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least seven (7) days after an emergency.

### Recommendations: EMERGENCY PLAN

- 1** Ask an out-of-area friend or relative to act as a contact for family members who may become separated during a disaster.
- 2** Decide in advance, as a family, where to meet and where to shelter in case you are separated and/or are unable to remain in your home in a disaster.
- 3** Make copies of important photos and documents and store them offsite, online or on a password-protected USB drive.
- 4** Connect with your neighbours and discuss how you can work together to help each other during emergencies.

## MAKE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

### Contact Information and Reunification Planning

One of the most important things you can do is to plan how you will connect with your family in case of an emergency.

### Planning for You and Your Family

An emergency plan will help guide you and your family in case of an emergency. The plan should include:

- ▶ How you will communicate in case you and your family members are separated.
- ▶ Contact people both in your local area and out-of-area. Places to stay in case you cannot access your home, like a friend or relative's house, RV, boat or hotel.
- ▶ Those who may rely on you for assistance: children, family members with special considerations, and pets.
- ▶ Arrangement for care and evacuation of pets and farm animals, especially if you are away when disaster strikes.
- ▶ Two routes that everyone knows to the reunification spot.
- ▶ Safe exit routes from your home and work.
- ▶ Risks in the region.
- ▶ Locations and proper use of important equipment such as fire extinguishers, gas and water valves, floor drain(s) and the electrical box.
- ▶ Health information, such as allergies, necessary medication, equipment, and contact details for doctor, pharmacy, and other important health providers.
- ▶ A list of important contacts, vital documents, and small valuables to take with you if you are evacuated.
- ▶ Insurance policies and photo or video documentation of home contents.

*See the Family Reunification and Sheltering Plan worksheets in Section 5.*

## Planning for Special Considerations

You may have special considerations during an emergency, such as vision, hearing, mobility, speech, language or understanding limitations. Your plan should include the things you may need to shelter in your home or away from your home.

- ▶ Develop a plan with family, friends and neighbours to check on each other after an emergency. Telephones may not be working, so arrange check-ins with people who live near you. You may want to provide a key to your home.
- ▶ Keep a list of medications, allergies and special equipment. With your list, include the name, address and telephone numbers of important contacts like your doctor, pharmacist, clergy, family members or friends. Keep a copy with your emergency supplies.
- ▶ If you require continued service from a service provider during an emergency, make a list of all the required contact and service information and put it with your important papers.
- ▶ Remove or properly secure hazards in the home that could fall or cause injury.
- ▶ Develop a backup plan for life-sustaining equipment so it works in the event of a power outage, which may include buying an emergency generator. Ensure you know how to properly operate and fuel your generator.
- ▶ If you use oxygen, ensure the tank is secure.
- ▶ If you use a wheelchair or walking aids, keep them near you at all times and have extra walking aids in other areas of the house.
- ▶ Place a battery-powered nightlight or flashlight in each room.
- ▶ If you use battery-powered equipment, ensure you have extra batteries properly stored and accessible.
- ▶ Keep a whistle or horn handy to signal for help.

*See the Special Considerations worksheet in Section 5.*



The most important thing you can do for your pet in an emergency is to make sure they have a collar and an up-to-date license and/or ID tag!

### Planning for Pets and Farm Animals

#### Pets

Plans for pets can save precious time and maybe even your pet's life. Make sure you designate someone to care for or evacuate your pet if you are not home when disaster strikes.

If you have to leave your home, you will have to decide whether to take your pet with you. Keep in mind if you are evacuated to a group lodging facility or reception centre, you may need to make alternative arrangements for your pets.

If you choose to leave your pet at home:

- ▶ Make sure they have dry food and water for at least seven days.
- ▶ Put them in a room where there is access to a high counter in case of flooding and that is free of hazards like windows, large mirrors or picture frames.
- ▶ Separate your dogs, cats and other smaller pets as they may behave differently under stress.
- ▶ Leave a sign on your door with the number of animals in the house along with their locations so emergency responders know where to look.

If you choose to take your pet with you:

- ▶ Put them in a sturdy portable carrier and make sure they are comfortable with it beforehand.
- ▶ Include items for your pet in your emergency kit, such as dry food, water and medications.

*See the [Emergency Kit for Pets worksheet](#) in Section 5.*

#### Farm Animals

Farm animals include alpacas, cattle, donkeys, fur-farmed animals, goats, horses, llamas, mules, poultry, rabbits, sheep and swine. Make sure you have an evacuation plan in place and that you designate someone to execute the plan in case you are away when an emergency happens.

### Planning for your Home Business

A continuity plan for your business or organization will help ensure that you can still provide service in the event of an emergency. This includes having an emergency preparedness plan, setting up procedures to help your business recover and having emergency supplies on hand. Consider business interruption insurance and arrange for off-site back-up services for critical records so that you're in a position to recover more quickly following a disaster.

Did you know that some local governments in the CRD and the Ministry of Agriculture have mass carcass disposal plans in case of an emergency? Contact your local emergency program or visit [www.PrepareYourself.ca](http://www.PrepareYourself.ca) for more information.

## Know your Space, Make it Safe

Learning about your home before a disaster will make you and your family safer when one happens.

### Utilities

Everyone in your household should know where utilities are located and how to shut them off safely. Being proactive before disaster strikes will help to protect you and your property.

Aging infrastructure, technical failures and natural disasters can lead to complete utility service disruptions or cause unpredictable, intermittent service. In a disaster, you may need to shut off one or more of your utilities if they are obviously damaged, if you are evacuating, or if emergency officials or the utility companies instruct you to do so.

### Shutting off Electricity

- ▶ If power is disrupted during a disaster, turn off the main circuit breaker, as well as individual circuits or fuses, to lessen the risk of fire damage if no one is home when the power system is restored.
- ▶ When power is restored, turn on the main breaker first, then turn on individual circuits one by one.
 

**NOTE:** If you are ordered to evacuate, **do not** turn off power unless advised to do so.
- ▶ When turning off your circuits or master switch, if possible, use the back of your non-dominant hand, stand to one side and look away in case of an electric discharge.

For more information on Utilities, see Section 3.

### Recommendations: SECURE YOUR SPACE

- 1** Secure your hot water tank to wall studs with steel strapping.
- 2** Secure tall or heavy furniture and shelving to walls (preferably to studs).
- 3** Install cabinet latches to secure contents. Use Velcro strips or putty to secure art and mirrors.
- 4** Remove anything heavy over beds.
- 5** Store chemicals outside the home and on low shelves so the containers do not fall and break during a disaster. Make sure children cannot access the containers.

## Electrical Panel



Turn fuses to the left to unscrew.

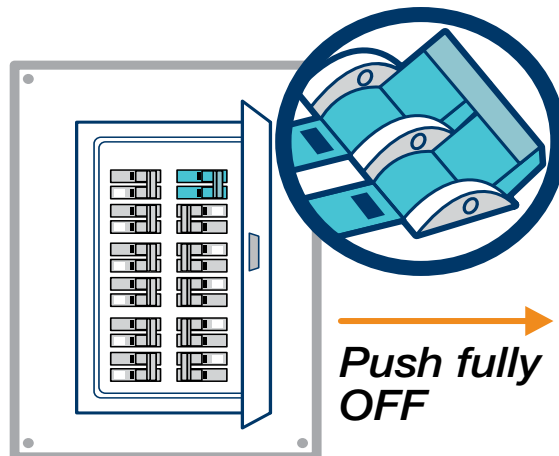


Image courtesy of PreparedBC  
www.gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC

### Water Line Shut-Off

Locate your water meter and main water supply shut-off valve, and the tool you need to close this valve.

Line ruptures can occur between the water meter and your household shut-off, resulting in flooding inside your home.

Make sure all household members know where the shut-off valve is located.

It is often hidden in a crawl space or in a closet.

Your main water shut-off valve may look like the drawing below.

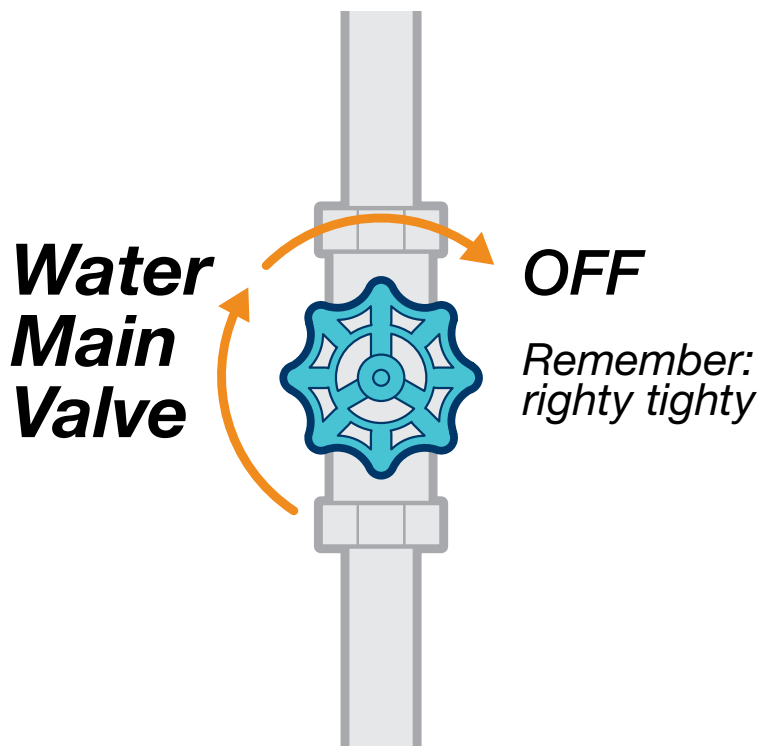


Image courtesy of PreparedBC  
[www.gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC](http://www.gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC)

### Recommendations: UTILITIES

- 1 Think about how to survive without utilities. Do you have a BBQ, camp stove, generator and fuel for each? DO NOT use generators and BBQs inside.
- 2 Prepare for service disruptions by purchasing basic, affordable emergency equipment and supplies to substitute for lost services.
- 3 Learn how to stay safe while using emergency equipment and how to minimize the impact of service disruptions.
- 4 Learn how and when to shut off utilities. Don't wait until disaster strikes to figure it out. Make sure you and your family know where utilities are located, when to turn them off and how to safely turn them off.
- 5 If you live in a multi-residential complex, find out who has 24/7 emergency access to, and responsibility for, centrally controlled utilities.
- 6 Follow instructions and advice from utility companies and consult them beforehand if you have questions.

### UTILITY TIPS

- ▶ *For water main or water line breaks on your property, contact a plumber who offers 24/7 emergency services. For water main breaks on the roadway or public property, contact your community's Public Works 24-hour emergency line.*
- ▶ *If you have an electric hot water tank: when you turn off your main water supply, turn off the electric circuit to the hot water tank so that the unit will not burn out if emergency water is drawn from the tank.*

**Fuel Oil Tanks**

Homeowners should check their tanks regularly for rust. Tanks rust from the inside out and a pinhole size on the exterior may indicate a large thinning area on the inside. If you see signs of rust or other deterioration, you may want to consider replacement with double-hulled tanks strapped to concrete pads.

**Propane Tank Shut-Off**

Learn how to shut off your propane tank at the outdoor valve. Check the manufacturer's instructions. You may turn the propane valve off and on again at any time without help from a technician. This is because your gas supply comes from a stand-alone tank, rather than from a pressurized community pipeline.

**NOTE:** Disconnecting the propane tank from household appliances is a major procedure. There are additional instructions under 'Floods and Storm Surge', outlining how to disconnect your tank from home appliances if flooding is imminent. You'll need a technician to safely reconnect the tank to home appliances after the emergency is over.

**Natural Gas**

If you smell natural gas leave the house immediately and call FortisBC Emergency 1.800.663.9911 or call 911. Do not turn off your natural gas during an emergency. FortisBC will turn off natural gas service as needed.

## Recommendations: INSURANCE

- 1** Understand your homeowner or tenant insurance policy in detail: what disasters and damages are covered, your responsibility after a disaster occurs, etc. Home insurance can mean the difference between eventual disaster recovery and financial loss.
- 2** Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms throughout your home to save lives.
- 3** Buy an ABC-type fire extinguisher for each floor of your home, plus kitchen and workshop. Learn to use them correctly.

## Home Insurance

Purchasing homeowner or tenant insurance is an important step toward emergency preparedness and disaster recovery. Insurance provides peace of mind and covers out-of-pocket expenses in the stressful days immediately following an event.

Longer term, it helps fund the cost of repairing or replacing your home and contents to reduce the impact on your family's financial security.

- ▶ Keep your insurance coverage up-to-date.
- ▶ Inform your insurance company of any changes that might alter your coverage or the value of your dwelling and possessions.
- ▶ Ensure your insurance policy includes replacement value and find out what out-of-pocket expenses are covered if you must evacuate your home.
- ▶ Find out what benefits and services your insurer will provide after an insured loss.
- ▶ Find out what emergencies are **not** covered.
- ▶ Understand the deductibles in your policy. For example, the deductible for fire damage may be much smaller than the deductible for earthquake damage.
- ▶ Find out how to reduce the cost of your insurance. For example, many insurers offer discounts if you have hazard mitigation measures in place, such as a monitored security system with fire detection and built-in alarms. Insurers may also offer a cost reduction if you replace cedar shakes with less flammable asphalt shingles or tiles.
- ▶ Document your belongings with receipts and digital images or photos and store these in a bank safe deposit box or digitally on a secure Internet site or a password-protected USB drive.



## Fire Extinguishers

Combustible materials are divided into four classes:

- CLASS A** Ordinary combustibles (wood, paper, cloth, etc.)
- CLASS B** Flammable liquids (fuel oil, gasoline, cooking grease, solvents, etc.)
- CLASS C** Electrical equipment (wiring, fuse box, motors, electronics, etc.)
- CLASS D** Combustible metals (magnesium, sodium, zirconium, etc.)

An ABC extinguisher will handle most types of home fires. Type D is usually appropriate if you work with combustible metals at home, such as magnesium and sodium. **Always buy extinguishers which have been UL or CSA approved.**

Place extinguishers where they are readily accessible. When used correctly, they can keep small fires from becoming large fires. It is better to have several small extinguishers located throughout the house and on each level, than to have one large one that may be difficult to find or move quickly and easily.

Regularly review operating instructions so you'll know what to do when a fire occurs.

National fire regulations require extinguishers to be serviced annually by a trained and certified person. Some manufacturers recommend shaking your dry chemical extinguishers **once a month** to prevent the powder from settling or caking.

Check the extinguisher's pressure gauge to ensure it is at the recommended level (in the green zone). Your fire extinguisher may need pressure testing, so consult the owner's manual, extinguisher label or the manufacturer directly, to see if this applies to yours.

Only fight a fire if:

- ▶ You are safe.
- ▶ You are safe from toxic smoke.
- ▶ You are comfortable and confident.
- ▶ You have a way to escape if the fire spreads.

### Recommendations: FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- 1** Know where to find it.
- 2** Make sure it is up to date.
- 3** Know how to use it.
- 4** Know when to use it (after help has been called and everyone is safe).

### Rules for using: FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

If the fire is confined, small and not spreading quickly, it is ok to attempt to extinguish the fire as long as you are comfortable doing so.

Remember:

- ▶ Aim at the base of the fire, not at the flames!
- ▶ Watch the fire area.
- ▶ If the fire re-ignites, repeat the process.
- ▶ Extinguishers will work for approximately 30 seconds.

If you have not put out the fire in that time, or if the smoke becomes hazardous, leave the area immediately and call 911 if not already done.

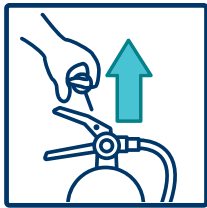
- ▶ Once you leave a burning room, do not re-enter.
- ▶ Close the door to a room with a fire.
- ▶ Evacuate your home.

**Rules for Using Fire Extinguishers:**

- 1 Make sure you know how to use the extinguisher before you need it.
- 2 If the fire is confined, small and not spreading quickly, it is okay to attempt to extinguish the fire.
- 3 Make sure everyone has left the building, is safe, and someone is calling 911 to report the fire. In a multi-unit residential building, activate the fire alarm, call 911 and evacuate the building. Notification and evacuation of people in the building should be done **before** attempting to extinguish the fire.

Place yourself between the exit and the fire so you can escape if the fire does not go out.

Fight the fire using the **PASS** method:



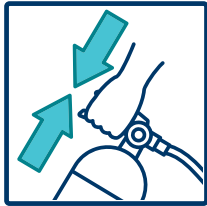
## Pull

Pull the pin at the top of the extinguisher. The pin releases a locking mechanism and will allow you to discharge the extinguisher.



## Aim

Aim at the base of the fire, not the flames. This is important – in order to put out the fire, you must extinguish the fuel.



## Squeeze

Squeeze the lever slowly. This will release the extinguishing agent. If the handle is released, the discharge will stop.



## Sweep

Sweep from side to side. Using a left to right motion, move the fire extinguisher back and forth until the fire is completely out. Operate the extinguisher from a safe distance, several feet away, and then move toward the fire once it starts to diminish.

Be sure to know your fire extinguisher – different fire extinguishers recommend operating them from different distances.

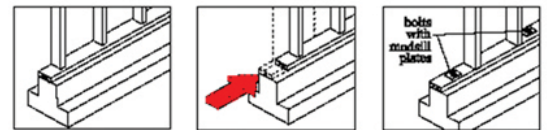
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Watch the fire area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat the process.

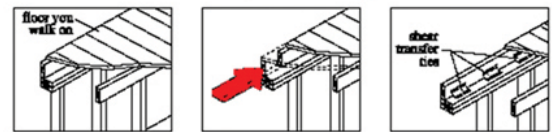
Extinguishers will work for approximately 30 seconds. If you have not put out the fire in that time, or if the smoke becomes hazardous, leave the area immediately. Once you leave a burning room, do not re-enter. Close the door to a room with a fire. Evacuate your home.

## Secure your Space

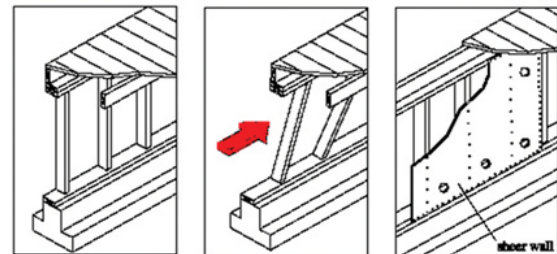
- ▶ Know the safe and dangerous places in your home in an earthquake:
  - ▶ **SAFE:** Under heavy tables or desks, interior hallways, corners of rooms, archways.
  - ▶ **DANGEROUS:** Near windows or mirrors; under any objects that can fall; the kitchen where the stove, refrigerator or contents of cupboards may move violently; doorways, because the shaking may slam the door on you; garages and workshops where tools and debris may fall.
- ▶ Ensure the home is properly bolted to its foundation.
- ▶ Inspect and, if necessary, reinforce cripple walls (pony walls). Strengthen the cripple walls by nailing 3/4" plywood sheeting to the studs on the inner side of the cripple walls.
- ▶ Consult an engineer on how to secure brick, stone and masonry.
- ▶ Reinforce windows. Consider adding a safety film to the inside of all windows greater than 60 centimetres (2 square feet) in size. This does not prevent cracking, but it does keep the glass from falling and causing injury.
- ▶ Protect interiors from falling chimney bricks. Check the chimney for loose tiles and bricks. Reinforce the ceiling surrounding the chimney with 3/4" plywood nailed to the beams in the attic floor. This will provide protection from falling bricks that might break through the roof.
- ▶ Secure and arrange objects in your home to prevent injuries:
  - ▶ Strap the hot water tank to wall studs.
  - ▶ Secure tall, free-standing furniture to wall studs.
  - ▶ Secure microwave ovens, TVs, computers and other electronics so they do not fly off the shelf.
  - ▶ Use earthquake hooks for heavy, framed, glass-covered pictures.
  - ▶ Ensure hanging lamps are securely affixed to the ceiling.
- ▶ Keep sturdy shoes and a flashlight under your bed.
- ▶ Install earthquake-proof, child-proof or safety latches on cupboards to stop contents from spilling out.
- ▶ Store flammable items and household chemicals properly and securely.
- ▶ Store heavy items down low.



Movement prevented by bolts



Movement prevented by shear transfer ties



Movement prevented by plywood shear panels

*See the Home Safety Hunt worksheet in Section 5 to help you check your space.*

**Recommendations:  
EMERGENCY KITS**

- 1** Pack a small grab & go bag at home for each family member and pet, tailored to their needs.
- 2** Keep grab & go bags at work, school, in your car or anywhere else that you spend time.
- 3** Try to store an emergency kit outside (in a shed or garage), in case you can't access your home.
- 4** Frequent access will ensure familiarity. Check your kits twice a year to rotate supplies before they expire (e.g. batteries, medications, food, water). You can work this into a family drill and use your shelter-in-place kit to see what you may be missing – be sure to replace what you use!
- 5** Include items for family comfort like games, toys and books. Personalize your kit to meet your family's needs.

## Emergency Kits

### Having essential supplies handy in an emergency is a vital part of preparedness.

Prepare a home kit (also known as a shelter-in-place kit) that will support you and your family for at least seven days. Have smaller versions of your kit accessible outside of your home because you may be at work, school or in your vehicle when an emergency occurs.

All emergency kits should include basic survival items like food, water, blankets, first aid materials, flashlights, a radio and batteries.

You will need different types of kits depending on where you are at the time of an emergency. Your kit at home will have more supplies than your grab & go bags, work or school kits, and vehicle kits.

Kits will also differ depending on special considerations, for example, for the elderly, children, persons with disabilities, or pets.

### Shelter-in-Place Kits

After a disaster, it's best to remain where you are if you can do so safely. You will need supplies for cooking, making temporary repairs and providing comfort for your family. Emergency supplies should be kept separate from the things you normally use to ensure they are available and in working order.

Your shelter-in-place kit at home should enable you to be comfortable for at least seven days. Store at least 4 litres of water per person per day for drinking, cooking, hand washing and brushing your teeth, as well as some for pets. See Section 3 for more information on water.

You should also have a seven day supply of food for each person and pet that you know they like. Your kit should also contain extra car keys, cash in smaller bills or coins, prescription medications, copies of vital documents and basic maintenance supplies.

## Grab & Go Bags – Home, Work and School

A disaster could force you to spend an extended time away from home. Ahead of time, you should put together an easily accessible small grab & go backpack or carry-bag with food, water and personal supplies that will allow you to be as comfortable as possible for at least 6-12 hours. Every person and pet in your family should have a bag with basic survival supplies and other items that meet their personal needs. Consider keeping a grab & go bag at work and school.

## Car/Mobile Kit

If you spend a lot of time in your vehicle, boat or RV, you should have separate emergency kits there. Regularly maintain your vehicles and keep the battery charged and fuel tanks at least half full so you're ready to leave in a hurry. Even if you do not have to evacuate, your car can be a place for shelter, and to recharge your cell phone, warm up or listen to radio reports.

## Special Considerations

You may have special considerations for family members, including pets, when preparing your kits. If you have children, you should include items that will make them feel comfortable, like toys, games and other entertainment. Some family members may require medications or equipment. Your pets will need their own food, water and hygiene supplies.

*See Section 5 for detailed worksheets on assembling all of these kits, and go to [PrepareYourself.ca](http://PrepareYourself.ca) to see [Get Your Kit Together](#) videos.*

The chart below contains the essential items to include in your emergency kits.

### ▶ 7 WAYS TO 7 DAYS OF PREPAREDNESS

1. Water – 4 litres of water per person, per day (2 litres for drinking, 2 litres for hygiene and cooking). Remember to include water for your pets!
2. Food – Set aside food that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried fruits. Rotate frequently and don't forget a can opener!
3. Flashlight and Radio – Battery-powered, wind-up or solar-powered.
4. First Aid Kit – Make your own or buy one. Keep it with your other emergency supplies.
5. Special Items – Include prescription medications, infant formula, pet food and equipment for people with disabilities.
6. Other Essential Items – Cash in smaller bills, a multi-tool, toiletry items.
7. Family Emergency Plan – Prepare a plan including out-of-area contact information and a family reunification plan.

### TIP

▶ *If creating your own kit seems overwhelming, take the 26 Weeks to Emergency Preparedness Challenge in Section 5! If you complete the steps each week you will have the kits you need in no time. Most of what you need is already in your home and it is simply a matter of centralizing materials and planning. You can also purchase premade kits from local businesses.*

**Recommendations:  
PERSONAL SAFETY**

- 1** Practise safe responses before disaster strikes. Training your body to respond automatically will free your mind to think more clearly during an event.
- 2** In an earthquake, DROP, COVER and HOLD ON. When the shaking stops, COUNT to 60 and assess your escape route before moving.
- 3** Plan and review escape routes with your whole family. Practise escaping from each room in daylight and in the dark.
- 4** Before taking action at a disaster scene, always check for hazards around you and in your intended path. Don't leave a safe place for one that could be more dangerous.
- 5** Always have grab & go bags ready.

## Know the Risks

**Risks will vary throughout the region. Different safety measures will need to be taken for your home depending on the risks relevant to your area. Remember to think about all the different locations where you may be when considering risks. This could include home, work, school, driving or engaging in recreational activities.**

The best way to prepare for any emergency is to have an emergency plan and kit in place for any situation. Hazards in the Capital Region include earthquake, tsunami, severe weather, extreme heat, power outage, fire, disease outbreak, hazardous materials spills, flooding, marine, and wildlife risks. Tips on how to deal with specific hazards are described on the following pages.

### Earthquakes

Earthquakes are common in BC with around 4,000 reported annually. They are caused by continual movement of tectonic plates and can occur at any time. According to seismic experts, there is a one in three chance of a damaging earthquake in the next 50 years.

#### **BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE**

You can be prepared to avoid injury, minimize damage to your home and to be self-sufficient for at least seven days without help. Other things you can do:

- ▶ Make and practice a family emergency plan.
- ▶ Ensure each family member and pet has an emergency kit.
- ▶ Train members of your family to use fire extinguishers and ensure everyone knows where to locate utility shutoffs.
- ▶ Sign up now for a first-aid course, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- ▶ Make an appointment now with your insurance broker to talk about your earthquake insurance. Check your coverage... it will affect your loss and financial ability to recover after an earthquake.
- ▶ Talk to your children about what to do if they're at home, at school, if the quake separates your family. Become familiar with the school's earthquake plan.



The most important thing to remember during an earthquake:

- ▶ **DROP** to your hands and knees. This position prevents you from falling but allows you to move if necessary.
- ▶ **COVER** your head and neck with your arm and take shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture to protect yourself from falling objects. If there is no furniture nearby, crawl to the nearest interior corner or wall while continuing to protect your head and neck
- ▶ **HOLD ON** Hold On to your shelter, covering your head and neck until the shaking stops. Count to 60 before getting up. This gives loose objects time to settle.

**▶ IF YOU ARE NEAR THE OCEAN DURING AN EARTHQUAKE:**

- ▶ *DO* move to higher ground once the shaking stops.
- ▶ *DO* monitor local media.
- ▶ *DO* follow the instructions of authorities.
- ▶ *DO NOT* go near the water to watch.

## Protect Yourself During Earthquakes!

**IF POSSIBLE**



**USING CANE**



**USING WALKER**



**USING WHEELCHAIR**



[www.EarthquakeCountry.org/disability](http://www.EarthquakeCountry.org/disability)

### DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

#### Drop, Cover and Hold On!

- ▶ If you're inside your home, stay there. Leave the kitchen. Safer places are in hallways, in corners and in archways. Take cover under a heavy table, desk or any solid furniture that you can get under and hold on to.
- ▶ If you're in bed, stay there and protect your head and face with a pillow.
- ▶ If you're in a wheelchair, lock your wheels, cover yourself with a blanket and assume the airplane crash position until the shaking stops.
- ▶ If you're outside your home, stay outside and get clear of buildings and wires that could fall on you.
- ▶ Avoid outdoor areas where you may be hit by falling debris – sidewalks next to tall buildings are particularly dangerous.
- ▶ Avoid elevators. If you're in an elevator when an earthquake happens, hit all floor buttons and get out when you can. High-rise residents may hear fire alarms go off and electricity may fail.
- ▶ If you're in a vehicle, pull over to the side of the road, away from bridges, overpasses and buildings. Stay in your vehicle.
- ▶ If you're in a crowded public place, take cover and watch that you don't get trampled. In shopping centres, take cover in the nearest store and keep away from windows, skylights and display shelves of heavy objects.
- ▶ Remain in a protected place until the shaking stops. Anticipate aftershocks – they may occur soon after the first quake.
- ▶ Try to remain calm and help others.

### AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

- ▶ Stay in your safe location and count to 60 to give things time to settle.
- ▶ Before you move, check your immediate area for hazards: broken glass, spilled chemicals or items that have shifted and may easily fall in an aftershock.
- ▶ Check yourself and others nearby for injuries. Administer first aid to yourself before assisting others.
- ▶ If you are told to evacuate by authorities, leave and take your grab & go bag with you.
- ▶ Check utilities but do not shut them off unless damaged or instructed to do so by authorities.
- ▶ Leaking gas will smell. Leave immediately, don't light matches, turn on and/or off light switches, or use any electronic appliance or engine until you are sure it is safe to do so.
- ▶ Wear sturdy shoes, gloves and protective clothing if there is debris, particularly broken glass.
- ▶ Check on your neighbours after looking after your own family. The first help after an earthquake usually comes from family and neighbours.
- ▶ Place a "HELP" sign in windows if you need extra assistance, or the "OK" sign if you do not.



- ▶ Confine and comfort frightened pets.
- ▶ Do not flush toilets if you suspect sewer pipes or water lines have been broken.
- ▶ Secure your home against intruders. Lock doors and close windows.
- ▶ Listen to your radio (or car radio) for emergency instructions. Monitor trusted local social media feeds, particularly government and other authorities.
- ▶ Avoid beaches, marinas and low-lying areas as a precaution against large waves, including tsunamis.

## **Tsunamis**

The capital region is an at risk area to tsunami hazards from a number of potential sources including the Cascadia Subduction Zone, the Alaska-Aleutian Subduction Zone and local shallow crustal faults. A tsunami consists of a series of unusually large waves formed by a large-scale disturbance of water bodies. The main risk of a tsunami in the capital region is from a felt earthquake.

A local tsunami will be associated with a felt earthquake, and the shaking is your warning to move away from the tsunami hazard zone.

A distant tsunami may be associated with an earthquake far away that may not be felt, an undersea landslide or a volcanic eruption. It may take many hours for a distant tsunami to reach our coastline. Authorities will let you know if any action is necessary.

### **BEFORE A TSUNAMI**

#### **Know your Zone**

Check the Capital Region Tsunami Information Portal to understand your tsunami hazard risk. If you are not located in a tsunami hazard zone, be prepared to assist family and friends in need of shelter. Here's how to prepare for a potential tsunami:

- ▶ Know if you are in a tsunami hazard zone and how long it takes to evacuate.
- ▶ Practise your evacuation routes on foot or bike with your family members, friends or colleagues.
- ▶ Have grab & go bags ready for your family and pets. (See Section 1 for tips on what to include.)
- ▶ Have a family reunification plan that includes evacuation routes, emergency contacts, designated meeting places and arrangements to stay with family or friends who are not located in a tsunami hazard zone.
- ▶ Mobility impaired residents in an evacuation zone who will require assistance during an evacuation, should consider registering with your local Fire Department or Emergency Program.

### **DURING A TSUNAMI**

If you are near the ocean and feel an earthquake that makes it difficult to stand, move to higher ground or inland immediately. Do not wait for an official warning!

- ▶ Move to higher ground on foot or bike if possible, to keep roads clear for emergency responders.
- ▶ Move away from beaches, marinas and bodies of water and DO NOT go back to tsunami hazard zones until local government officials tell you it is safe to return.

**DROP!** **COVER!** **HOLD ON!**  
Protect yourself during earthquakes

**GO TO HIGH GROUND!**  
The shaking is your tsunami warning in the Capital Region

**STAY THERE!**  
Tsunami waves may arrive for hours

4m/13ft

Graphic Courtesy of PreparedBC

▶ A tsunami is a series of waves. The first wave to arrive is often not the largest, and each wave may be separated by up to an hour or more. Waves may continue for many hours – stay away from the shore until local government officials tell you it is safe to return.

- ▶ DO NOT call 911 unless you have a life-threatening emergency and stay off phone lines as they will be in use by emergency personnel.
- ▶ Stay tuned to local media for further instructions. (Have a battery-powered or wind-up radio in your grab & go bag and know your local radio, TV and trusted social media sources of information.)






In the event of a tsunami warning, local governments will communicate instructions using various methods. These may include telephone/email/text alert systems, sirens, social media channels, websites or door-to-door visits. Check [www.PrepareYourself.ca](http://www.PrepareYourself.ca) to find out which systems your local government uses, and if there is an alert system you can subscribe to.

It is important to remember that the waves will continue to arrive for many hours after the initial rise and fall of the ocean level. DO NOT go back to tsunami hazard areas until instructed by local government officials.



## TSUNAMI ALERTS

There are two types of tsunamis: local and distant. A local tsunami will be associated with a “felt” earthquake, while a distant tsunami will happen far away, like Japan or Alaska, and may not be felt. Authorities will let you know if any action is necessary from a distant tsunami by issuing one of the following alert levels:

ALERT LEVEL	THREAT	ACTION
 <b>WARNING</b>	<i>Flood wave possible</i>	<i>Full evacuation suggested</i>
 <b>ADVISORY</b>	<i>Strong currents likely</i>	<i>Stay away from the shore</i>
 <b>WATCH</b>	<i>Danger level not yet known</i>	<i>Stay alert for more information</i>
 <b>INFORMATION STATEMENT</b>	<i>Minor waves at most</i>	<i>No action suggested</i>
 <b>CANCELLATION</b>	<i>Tidal gauges show no wave activity</i>	<i>Confirm safety of local areas</i>

Local government officials will tell you when the danger has passed.

If a Tsunami Warning, Advisory or Watch is issued for your area, monitor local media and follow the instructions of local emergency officials. Local emergency programs may have pre-identified safe areas of which you should be aware.

### Local Tsunami: Arrival Times and Wave Height

Location	Max Water Level (m)/(ft)*	Tsunami Arrive Time (min)
Port Renfrew	3.5 / 11.5	35
Sooke Harbour	2.5 / 8.2	60
Esquimalt Harbour	2.7 / 8.9	76
Victoria Harbour	2.5 / 8.2	76
Cadboro Bay	2.0 / 6.6	90
Sidney	2.0 / 6.6	110

\*These estimated levels are based on a 9.0 CSZ earthquake. By contrast the 2011 Japanese tsunami caused by a 9.0 earthquake, had a maximum water level of 40 metres.

## Severe Weather

Severe weather can develop quickly and include events such as blizzards, hail, heavy rain, ice storms, thunderstorms, storm surges and high winds. Severe weather events are expected to increase in our region over the next 50 years due to a changing climate. These events potentially threaten life and property, so it makes sense to get prepared.

- ▶ This can create new complications, such as storms striking while trees still have their leaves, clogging sewers and cause flooding.
- ▶ Out-of-season storms may occur more often when people do not expect them.

### PREPARING FOR SEVERE WEATHER

Make sure you have an emergency plan and an emergency kit for everyone in your family. Stock up on extra fuel and food and stay tuned to radio and television stations for weather updates.

#### Preparedness Tips

If a severe storm is forecasted, secure everything that might be blown around or torn loose – indoors and outdoors. Flying objects such as garbage cans and lawn furniture can injure people and damage property.

- ▶ If you are indoors, stay away from windows, doors and fireplaces.
- ▶ You may want to go to the sheltered area that you and your family chose in your emergency plan.
- ▶ If you are advised by officials to evacuate, do so. Take your grab & go bag with you.
- ▶ Never go out in a boat during a storm. If you are on the water and you see bad weather approaching, head for shore immediately. Always check the marine forecast before leaving for a day of boating and listen to weather reports during your cruise.
- ▶ If you are in a car, stop the car away from trees or power lines that could fall on you. Stay there.

### WHAT TO DO BEFORE AND DURING AN EVENT

#### Heavy Rain

- ▶ Check the drainage around your house and street. Remove any debris to reduce the possibility of flooding after a heavy rain. See page 37 for more information on flooding.

#### Hail

- ▶ If you are outside, take cover when hail begins to fall.
- ▶ If indoors, stay there and keep yourself and pets away from windows, glass doors and skylights, which can shatter if hit by hailstones.
- ▶ Protect your vehicle by putting it in the garage.

#### Extreme Cold

- ▶ Exposure to cold temperatures can lead to frost bite or hypothermia, and power outages can disrupt the heat in your home.
- ▶ Check weather forecasts, and dress in layers with a hat, gloves and warm dry shoes.

## Blizzards

- ▶ If a blizzard or heavy blowing snow is forecast, you may want to string a lifeline between your house and any outbuildings to which you may have to go to during the storm.
- ▶ If you must travel during a winter storm, do so during the day and let someone know your route and arrival time.
- ▶ If your car gets stuck in a blizzard or snowstorm, remain calm and stay in your car. Check the exhaust pipe periodically to make sure it is not blocked with snow. Remember, you can't smell potentially fatal carbon monoxide fumes.
- ▶ To keep your hands and feet warm, exercise them regularly. In general, keep moving to avoid falling asleep. Avoid overexertion.

## Ice Storms

- ▶ If you must go outside after an ice storm, pay attention to branches or wires that could fall on you due to the weight of the ice. Be aware of ice sheets from roofs as well.
- ▶ Assume all downed power lines are live and keep a distance of at least 10 metres or 33 feet. To move away from a downed power line, shuffle backwards keeping your feet touching each other, never lifting them from the ground.
- ▶ Avoid driving when freezing rain is forecast.

## Lightning and Thunderstorms

- ▶ To estimate how far away lightning is during a storm, count the seconds between the flash of lightning and the thunderclap. Each second is about 300 metres. If you count fewer than 30 seconds look for shelter. If you count fewer than 5 seconds take shelter immediately.
- ▶ Before a thunderstorm, unplug radios and TVs and listen for weather updates on your battery powered radio.
- ▶ During thunderstorms, you should stay away from items that conduct electricity, like telephones, appliances, sinks, bathtubs, radiators and metal pipes.
- ▶ Do not remove laundry from the clothesline during a storm because the line may conduct electricity.
- ▶ Always take shelter during lightning. If you are outside and can't find a building, get in a depressed area such as a ditch, culvert or cave. Never go under a tree.
- ▶ If you are caught in the open, do not lie flat. Get in the leap-frog position to reduce your contact with the ground and your chance of being electrocuted by a ground charge.
- ▶ Do not ride bicycles, motorcycles, tractors, golf carts or use metal shovels or golf clubs because they may conduct electricity.



## Extreme Heat

Extreme heat can put your health at risk, causing illnesses such as heat stroke or even death. Protecting yourself, your family and other potentially vulnerable people in your life is essential.

There are two types of heat level alerts in BC.

- ▶ Heat Warning: Daytime and overnight temperatures are higher than seasonal norms and holding steady. Take usual steps to stay cool.
- ▶ Extreme Heat Emergency: Daytime and overnight temperatures are higher than seasonal norms and getting hotter every day. Activate your heat emergency plan.

Make sure you have an emergency plan and an emergency kit for everyone in your family. Be prepared by stocking up on extra fuel and food, and during an event stay tuned to radio and television stations for weather updates.

Island Health, supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada, will distribute alerts when heat events are a moderate or high risk to the public's health.

Alerts typically happen three to four days before the hottest temperatures are expected to take place.

- ▶ Island Health
- ▶ Emergency Info BC
- ▶ Province of BC: Extreme Heat

### Make A Plan

Evaluate your home's cool zones

- ▶ Specific areas in your home may stay cooler than others.
- ▶ During an Extreme Heat Emergency, stay in the coolest part of the residence and focus on keeping that one location cool.
- ▶ Start by identifying a room that's typically the coolest and consider how you can modify the layout to support sleeping and day-to-day living for the duration of the heat event.

Evaluate if you can stay home

- ▶ If it is not safe for you to stay at home, consider staying with friends or family that have air conditioning or cooler spaces.
- ▶ Alternatively, find places in your community you can visit.



**Identify an Extreme Heat Buddy**

- ▶ If you live alone, find an extreme heat buddy to check in on you when it gets hot, and you can also reach out for help. Your buddy should be someone who can take you to cooling centres or help with cooling measures in your residence.

**Prepare your home**

- ▶ Making changes to your home ahead of time can help keep your home cooler.
- ▶ Install a heat pump. Heat pumps work in reverse in the summer to provide cooling or air conditioning, while also reducing your household carbon pollution. Rebates and support are available. Install a window air conditioner.
- ▶ Install interior window coverings and/or exterior covers or reflective films that block the sun.
- ▶ Have fans ready to move hot air out and cooler air in when temperatures drop at night.
- ▶ As the temperature rises.

If an Extreme Heat Emergency alert has been issued, it's time to put your plan into action.

- ▶ Relocate to a cooler spot if you have planned to do so.
- ▶ Reconfigure the coolest location in your home so you can sleep there at night.
- ▶ Check in with your pre-identified heat buddy. If you don't have one, try to reach out to someone you trust as soon as possible.
- ▶ Put up external window covers to block the sun if you can safely do so.
- ▶ Close your curtains and blinds.
- ▶ Ensure digital thermometers have batteries.
- ▶ Make ice and prepare jugs of cool water.
- ▶ Keep doors and windows closed between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. to trap more cool air inside. Open them at 8 p.m. to allow cooler air in, and use fans (including kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans) to move cooler air through the house.

**People At Risk**

- ▶ *Seniors aged 65 years or older.*
- ▶ *People who live alone.*
- ▶ *People with preexisting health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or respiratory disease.*
- ▶ *People with mental illness such as schizophrenia, depression, or anxiety.*
- ▶ *People with substance use disorders.*
- ▶ *People who are marginally housed.*
- ▶ *People who work in hot environments.*
- ▶ *People who are pregnant.*
- ▶ *Infants and young children.*
- ▶ *People with limited mobility.*





▶ *Safety first! Never go near or touch a fallen power line. Always assume that a line or anything it is in contact with, is energized. Stay at least 10 metres (33 feet) away at all times and do not attempt to remove debris surrounding the line. If you see a fallen power line, report the exact location to 1.888.POWERON (1.888.769.3766).*

## Power Outages

### PREPARING FOR AN OUTAGE

- ▶ Have an emergency plan, your grab & go bag and your shelter-in-place kit ready.
- ▶ Choose manual equipment like basic can openers, non-electric phones, battery, wind-up or solar-powered radios, and a handsaw for your emergency kit.
- ▶ Have safe, stable sources of light, such as flashlights, in your emergency kits.
- ▶ People who rely on life-sustaining equipment should contact their local health provider and consider purchasing or arranging to rent a small generator on a priority basis.
- ▶ Stock up on fuel for barbecues and camp stoves. Store appliances and fuel safely and use outdoors only.
- ▶ Run portable generators every other month for 10 minutes to ensure they operate correctly. Maintain a fresh supply of fuel as fuel can go bad after a period of time and will affect the reliability of the generator operation.
- ▶ If you have an electric garage door opener, learn how to open the garage door manually. Follow the instructions supplied by the manufacturer.

### DURING AN OUTAGE

- ▶ Check whether the power failure is limited to your home. If your neighbour's power is still on, check your circuit breaker panel or fuse box.
- ▶ Call BC Hydro at **1.888.POWERON (1.888.769.3766)** or **\*HYDRO (\*49376)** on your cell phone. Tell them about the outage so they can send the right crews and equipment to the correct location.
- ▶ Tune in to your local radio station for storm and power outage updates.
- ▶ Turn off all appliances, including home computers and peripherals, especially those that generate heat. This helps prevent hazards or damage when service is restored. Use surge protectors to protect sensitive electrical equipment such as computers, DVD players and TVs.
- ▶ Turn off all lights except for one inside your home and one outside. The inside light lets you know, and the outside light lets BC Hydro crews know, when the power is back on.

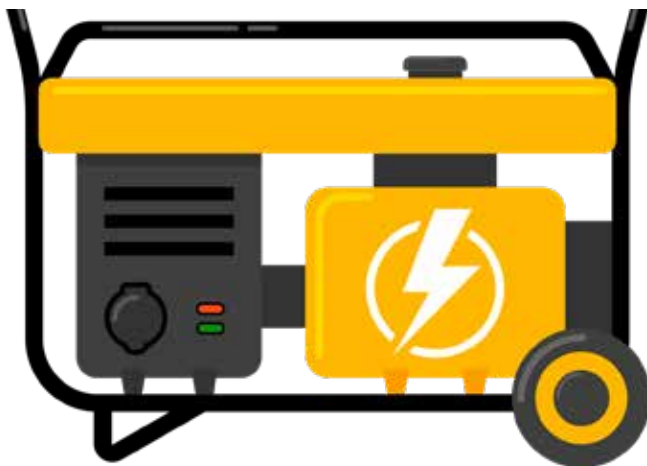


**Portable Generator Safety Precautions**

- ▶ Never use a portable generator indoors, including inside a garage or other enclosed or partially enclosed area, to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.
- ▶ Only operate portable generators outdoors and at a location where the exhaust cannot enter your home or other buildings through doors or windows.
- ▶ If you start to feel dizzy, nauseous, get a headache or feel tired while using a generator, get to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention.
- ▶ Install a CO alarm in your home.
- ▶ Never plug a portable generator into a regular household electrical outlet as it can cause fire and back-feeding to the BC Hydro electrical grid and cause electrocution to utility workers, your neighbours and your household.
- ▶ Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated, CSA-approved 3-pronged extension cord in good condition.
- ▶ Use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) portable extension cord if using the portable generator to power electrical tools for outdoor use.
- ▶ Keep the generator dry and protected with a tarp when using in rain and snow.
- ▶ Learn how to use your generator before you need it. Follow the manufacturer's recommended usage.

**Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning**

- ▶ *Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless gas in the engine exhaust of a generator and BBQs. You may not smell the exhaust but could still be exposed to CO, so never use them indoors.*



## Fires

### WILDFIRES

Each year there are more than 2,000 wildfires in British Columbia. Many occur far away from communities but, as people build more homes in forested urban areas, more fires are impacting residential areas. Every year, wildfires threaten or burn homes, cabins and other high-value resources. Be aware of the fire danger ratings in your area as they will change throughout the year.

#### Preparing for Wildfires

Ensure that you have a family emergency plan, grab & go bags and are prepared to evacuate your home on short notice. It is a good idea to obtain a **FireSmart Manual** from your local fire department or go to the BC Wildfire Service website at [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status) as a reference.

Extended warm, dry weather conditions increase the possibility of wildfire activity. Everyone should be extra cautious and mindful enjoying outdoor summer activities.

If you are planning to hike, camp or participate in other backcountry activities, be sure to check the latest information on any travel restrictions and fire bans.

- ▶ Know the fire danger rating before heading out.
- ▶ Make sure your campfire is completely extinguished and the pit is cool to the touch before leaving your campsite.
- ▶ Always ensure cigarette butts are put out properly in an ashtray and not tossed away carelessly.
- ▶ If you live in or near a forested area or in an interface zone, make sure your home is protected by removing debris from the roof and maintaining a safety zone around your house clear of flammable debris, shrubs or trees.
- ▶ Move flammable materials like woodpiles or propane tanks well away from your house and outbuildings.
- ▶ Check your home insurance policy to make sure that you have the appropriate coverage.



▶ *If you spot a wildfire, report it as soon as possible by calling 1.800.663.5555 or \*5555 on your cell phone.*

## STRUCTURE FIRES

Did you know that fire doubles in size every 30 seconds, and can fill an average-sized room with deadly fumes within 20-45 seconds and consume an average-sized room within three minutes?

### How to Prepare

Statistics show families that practise fire drills at home have a much higher chance of surviving a dwelling fire. With your family, make a step-by-step plan for escaping a fire.

- ▶ Draw a floor plan of your home, marking two ways out of every room, especially sleeping areas. Discuss the escape routes with every member of your household.
- ▶ Make sure everyone in the household can unlock all doors and windows quickly, even in the dark. Windows or doors with security bars should be equipped with quick-release devices. Everyone in the household should know how to use them.
- ▶ Make sure everyone in the house recognizes the sound of smoke alarms and knows how to react.
- ▶ If you live in a multistory building and you must escape from an upper story window, be sure there is a safe way to reach the ground, such as a fire-resistant escape ladder. Some high-rise buildings may have evacuation plans that require you to stay where you are and wait for the fire department. Know what to do in your building.
- ▶ Make special arrangements for children, older adults and people with disabilities. People with mobility challenges should have a phone and, if possible, sleep on the ground floor.
- ▶ Agree on an assembly point outside of your home where every member of the household will gather after escaping a fire. Inform the fire department if anyone is missing.
- ▶ Practise your escape plan at least twice a year. Have a fire drill in your home. Appoint a monitor and have everyone participate. Get out quickly, but carefully. Make your exit drill realistic. Pretend that some exits are blocked by fire and practise alternative escape routes. Pretend that the lights are out and that some escape routes are filling with smoke.

- ▶ *Smoke alarms should be installed according to manufacturers' instructions on every level of your home.*
- ▶ *There should be a smoke alarm outside every sleeping area, and if you sleep with your bedroom door closed, it is also recommended to have an additional alarm inside your room.*
- ▶ *On floors without sleeping areas, alarms should be installed near living areas but not in or in close proximity to bathrooms or kitchens. Once installed, maintain your smoke alarms by testing monthly and changing the batteries twice a year.*

[See Section 5 for the Home Fire Safety Worksheet.](#)

### How to Respond to a Dwelling Fire

Get out fast. Do not try to rescue pets or possessions. Go directly to your assembly point. Call 911 from a neighbour's telephone or a cell phone. If you live in a multistory building, pull the fire alarm on your way out if possible.

Everyone in your family should know how to call 911 and inform the dispatcher of the fire.

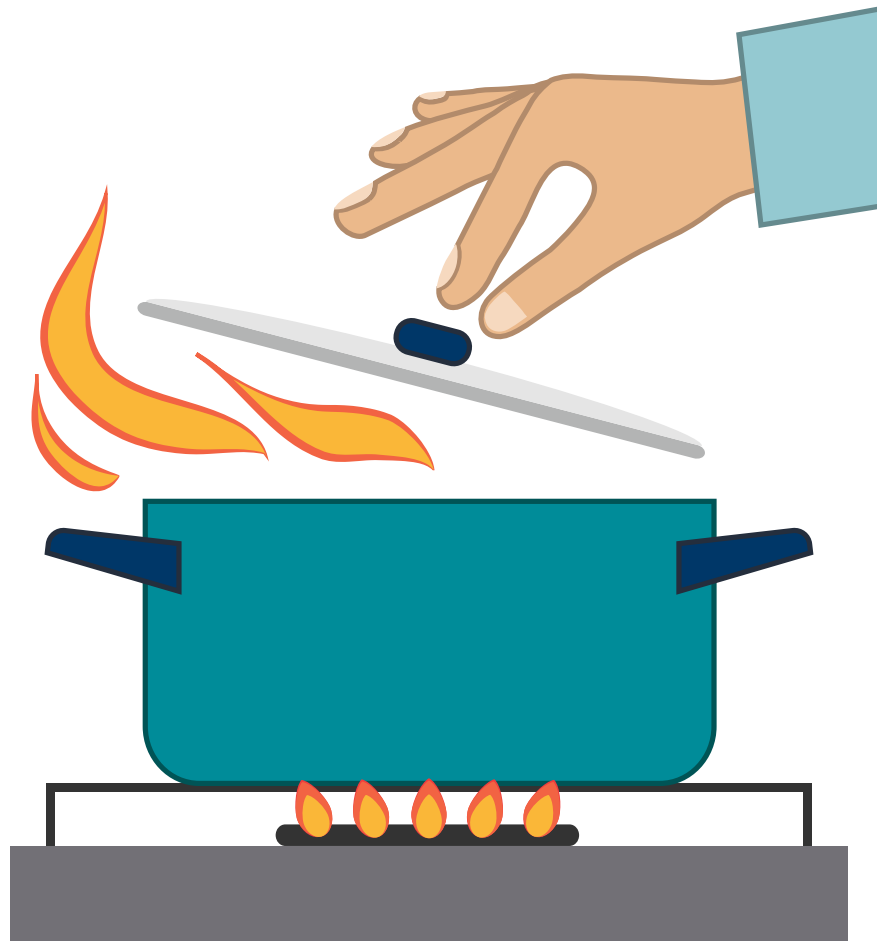
Check closed doors for heat with the back of your hand before you open them. If you see smoke, stay low and go.

If you cannot make a safe exit, close all doors between yourself and the fire. Place cloths at the bottom of the door to keep out smoke and fumes. Call 911 and tell the dispatcher your location within the building. Stay by a window, alerting fire fighters to your presence. If there is no phone, use a whistle or wave a flashlight to draw attention to your location.

▶ *If your clothing is on fire, do NOT run: STOP, DROP and ROLL to smother the flames.*

### Kitchen Fires (Oil and Grease)

- ▶ Smother first, then turn off stove or remove heat source.
- ▶ Smother a pan fire by putting a lid on the fire. If that doesn't work, immediately use an ABC type fire extinguisher (which contains dry chemical, not water). See page 16 for instructions on fire extinguisher use.
- ▶ Never use water to extinguish oil or grease fires. When oil mixes with water, the mixture superheats, vaporizing into a ball of flaming steam. Use baking soda to smother grease fires.
- ▶ Never carry a flaming pan outside as the draft will fan the flames.
- ▶ If you feel unsafe or overwhelmed, leave the house immediately and then call 911.



**FOR HEALTHLINK BC**

- ▶ *Call HealthLink BC at 811 for province wide, 24/7, health advice you can trust. This confidential service is provided by registered nurses and other healthcare practitioners.*
- ▶ *Call 711 if you are hearing impaired.*

## Pandemic and Infectious Diseases

We have strong global surveillance systems that detect when new viruses appear. These viruses can cause pandemics. If a pandemic is developing, the World Health Organization (WHO) provides information and advice on how to respond. Public information will also come from federal, provincial and regional health authorities. Another resource for trusted information is the Public Health Agency of Canada.

### Infectious Disease

Infectious disease is a part of everyday life. Pathogenic microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi cause infectious diseases. The diseases can be spread directly or indirectly from one person to another.

The rate of infectious disease can increase significantly during a disaster due to the disruption of normal prevention practices. Officials may declare an infectious disease outbreak, like influenza, to be a distinct emergency or pandemic.

Preventing and controlling infectious disease is a responsibility shared by government, the health community and the general public.

Being informed of best practices to prevent infections before they happen and controlling their spread helps keep each other safe.

### **How can you stay safe from infectious disease both in your day-to-day life and during an emergency or disaster?**

- ▶ Make your health and safety your first priorities.
- ▶ Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- ▶ Practise safe food storage and handling.
- ▶ Stay informed. Knowledge helps prevent the spread of infection. The emergence of new infectious diseases and the re-emergence of community-acquired communicable diseases puts us all at risk.
- ▶ Keep your vaccinations current. Talk with your doctor about an annual flu shot.
- ▶ Know whom to call when you need help. It could be your clinic, pharmacist and/or HealthLink BC (811).
- ▶ If you have an infectious disease stay home. Tell family and friends not to visit. Friends or family may drop off groceries or medication outside your door.

### During an infectious disease outbreak

- ▶ **Wash your hands often with soap and water.** Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.
- ▶ If you are sick, stay at home. Observe any quarantine or isolation periods identified by health officials.
- ▶ Keep your distance from people who may be contagious and avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- ▶ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Discard tissues into the garbage after each use. Cough into your sleeve if you don't have a tissue. Wash your hands.
- ▶ Maintain good environmental hygiene. Surfaces that you touch or use often, like door knobs, telephones, cell phones, TV remotes, hand rails and counter tops should be cleaned and disinfected often.

### Take extra precautions during an emergency or disaster

- ▶ Listen to and read trusted sources for current health conditions and updates, including Public Health Officers and local Health Authority representatives.
- ▶ Follow the directions of health officials regarding any infectious disease outbreaks.
- ▶ Be prepared to purify your water supply. Listen for boil water announcements.
- ▶ Discard any food that may have become contaminated or has not been stored safely.
- ▶ Have a supply of disposable gloves, face masks, protective clothing, including sturdy closed-toe shoes, hand soap, alcohol-based hand rub and disinfectant in your emergency kits.



▶ **TO REPORT A HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILL CALL 911.**

## Hazardous Material (Hazmat) Spills

Hazardous material (hazmat) spills may include chemical, radiation, biohazard, propane, oil and gas, flammable materials, industrial products and mixed waste.

### PREPARING FOR HAZMAT SPILLS

Spills of chemicals and other contaminants may occur in transportation, industry, businesses, medical centres and even our homes. After an earthquake or flood, hazardous spills can create a secondary disaster. Be prepared to shelter-in-place or evacuate as instructed by authorities. Follow your emergency plan and take your grab & go bag.

After a large spill, evacuation is common but in some cases, officials may judge that evacuation would pose a greater risk than having people remain indoors. Be prepared for either scenario.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS A SPILL?

The local fire department will send a crew to identify and assess the situation and secure the area. The Ministry of Environment and the local fire department will have the ability to draw on the regional resources (equipment and technicians) to mitigate the situation. They will also work with the Ministry of Environment and responsible parties to contain the spill and minimize the impact to safety and the environment.

- ▶ Call 911 to report a hazardous spill.
- ▶ If known, provide the 911 dispatcher with a description of product spilled. Do not approach the spill to investigate. Stay away from the site to minimize the risk of contamination.
- ▶ Follow directions given by emergency responders at the scene.
- ▶ Listen to the radio for instructions and information about a possible evacuation.



## Section 1: BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

- ▶ If outside during an incident, try to stay upstream, uphill and upwind. Hazardous materials can quickly be transported by water and wind. Never move through a gas cloud.
- ▶ If in a vehicle, close windows and shut off ventilation.
- ▶ If evacuation is necessary, follow instructions and follow the recommended route. Take your grab & go bag.
- ▶ If you are ordered to remain inside (shelter-in-place), comply with instructions, even if you can smell fumes inside the building. The fumes may be even stronger outside.
- ▶ Do not risk your safety to look for pets. If they are not inside, shelter-in-place without them.
- ▶ While inside, stay tuned to local media for information updates and use telephones only to call 911 for emergencies.
- ▶ If evacuated, do not return home until local authorities say it is safe. Upon returning home, open windows, doors and vents and turn on fans to provide ventilation. Find out from local authorities how to clean up your land and property.

*See Section 2 for shelter-in-place instructions.*





## Floods and Storm Surges

Winter storms in our region can bring high water and waves. When combined with high tides (especially King Tides) these conditions can create storm surges that can cause flooding and coastal erosion. As sea level is expected to rise dramatically over the next century, it is expected that storm surges will be able to flood areas not previously impacted, affecting near-shore development. Some areas in our coastal communities may be susceptible and must prepare for potential flooding and marine impacts.

### **BEFORE A FLOOD**

- ▶ Know if you live in a flood risk area.
- ▶ Keep important papers including a record of your valuables in watertight containers and have a record of your valuables in a safe place, such as a bank safety deposit box or a password-protected USB drive.
- ▶ If flooding is likely in your area, pay attention to local media for information.
- ▶ Watch for warning signs: increase in height and intensity of water flows, mudslides, debris in creeks, colour changes in water or leaning trees.
- ▶ Find out what kinds of flooding are covered by your home insurance policy.
- ▶ Learn the safest route from your home or business to high, safe ground. Be aware that rising waters can cut off your evacuation route.
- ▶ Review your family reunification and sheltering plan.

### **PROTECTING YOUR HOME WHEN FLOODING IS IMMINENT**

- ▶ Wrap the exterior lower levels of your home with polyethylene sheeting to provide extra protection to your home's structure. Use sandbags to secure the base of the sheeting – officials will announce where sandbags and sand can be obtained.
- ▶ Shut off the main power breaker to your house and outbuildings.
- ▶ Shut off the supply valve to all gas appliances. These valves are usually in the gas line near the bottom of the appliance.
- ▶ Turn off the propane valve at the tank. Disconnect tubing to tank and securely plug the tube. Fasten a cable, heavy rope or chain around the tank and secure the other end to a pole, building or substantial structure to prevent the tank from floating away.
- ▶ Move chemicals such as weed killer, insecticides and corrosives to a dry area to reduce the possibility of contamination, fire, explosion and personal injury.
- ▶ If time allows, move valuables to upper floors.

### IF YOU MUST EVACUATE

- ▶ Ensure gas and other heating fuel sources are turned off.
- ▶ Turn off the main electrical breaker.
- ▶ Ensure the water is shut off at the main valve leading to the house.
- ▶ Lock all doors and windows.
- ▶ Ensure all personal documents and family papers are sealed in plastic and in your grab & go bag. In addition to your grab & go bag, take a blanket, warm clothing and waterproof outerwear and footwear for each person.
- ▶ Ensure each family member has identification, especially young children. Name tags on the inside of clothing, wallet cards or wristbands are all useful.

### STAYING SAFE DURING A FLOOD

- ▶ Avoid flood waters as they may be contaminated.
- ▶ Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can cause you to fall.
- ▶ If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving and use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- ▶ Banks of rivers and streams may become unstable and dangerous.

### RETURNING HOME

- ▶ Do not return home until local officials announce that it is safe to do so in your area.
- ▶ You may not be permitted to return to your neighbourhood until officials have made arrangements for:
  - ▶ a safe water supply,
  - ▶ utilities inspections and service restoration, and
  - ▶ sewerage.
- ▶ Your house may need to be inspected for health and safety hazards before it is declared safe for occupancy.
- ▶ Use extreme caution when entering buildings as there may be hidden damage. Wear protective clothing, rubber boots and gloves to avoid contamination.
- ▶ Allow the building to air out to prevent mould.

## Landslides

Landslides are masses of rock, earth or debris that move down a slope. These flows can develop rapidly, striking with little or no warning and travelling at avalanche speeds. They can travel several miles from their source, growing in size as they pick up trees, boulders and debris. The longer and higher the slope, the greater the risk.

Storms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, fires, erosion and human modification to slopes can trigger landslides. Another cause is mudflows that develop when heavy rain or rapidly melting snow saturates and destabilizes the ground.



Flooding and landslides can happen in areas that do not have vegetation or have recently had trees and vegetation removed (low vegetation on slopes). Construction can also disrupt the flow of water and may hide underground streams. Walk around your neighbourhood after a big rain and notice the ground saturation levels.

### BE AWARE

Consult a qualified expert on corrective measures if you notice:

- ▶ changes in your landscape such as patterns of storm water drainage on slopes (especially where water runoff converges), land movement, small slides, flows or progressively leaning trees,
- ▶ new cracks appearing in plaster, tile, brick or foundations,
- ▶ outside walls, walks or stairs pulling away from the building,
- ▶ cracks developing over time on the ground or on paved areas, or
- ▶ tilting or movement in fences, retaining walls, utility poles or trees.

### HOW TO RESPOND

- ▶ Move away from the path of a landslide as quickly as possible.

### AFTER A LANDSLIDE

- ▶ Stay away from the slide area. There may be a danger of additional slides.
- ▶ Watch for hazards, like broken utility lines, damaged roadways, bridges and railways.





| Section 2 |

# DURING AN EMERGENCY

## Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-place means that you should stay indoors in a safe location whether you are at work, home, shopping or school. It is NOT the same as going to a shelter. When conditions outside are unsafe and a higher degree of protection is offered inside, you may be instructed to shelter-in-place by authorities. If there is an Order to Shelter-in-Place, you will hear an official announcement through the local media or first responders.

If you must shelter-in-place, be prepared to:

- ▶ go inside the closest safe building, as quickly as possible,
- ▶ if not a risk to yourself, take pets inside, but do not risk your life for the safety of your pets,
- ▶ use stairwells where possible and avoid elevators, depending on the emergency,
- ▶ monitor local media for information updates,
- ▶ use telephones only if you require immediate emergency service,
- ▶ evacuate if directed to do so, and
- ▶ use your grab & go bags to keep you and your family safe.

Do not try to pick up family members, including children in school, from other locations, until you are advised that it is safe to do so. They will be safer sheltering in place than they would be travelling through potentially hazardous areas.

Do not leave your place of shelter until you receive notification that the danger has passed.

Some situations where sheltering-in-place may be the best and safest action include the following.

### Severe Weather

Extreme cold or heat, snowstorms or windstorms may make it unsafe for you to go outside. While sheltering from severe weather it is best to stay away from windows, doors and fireplaces, and to secure anything that might be blown around or torn loose.

### Police Incidents and Public Disturbance

When sheltering in place for police incidents, you should close and lock all exterior windows and doors, move away from outside doors and windows, and close window shades and turn off lights.

## Hazardous Material Spills and Explosions

These types of emergencies may require you to stop outside air from coming into your location. If you are asked to “seal the room”:

- ▶ Close all fireplaces, vents and other openings.
- ▶ Use duct tape, foil or plastic wrap to seal any potential leaks.
- ▶ Turn off fans, air conditioning and heating systems.
- ▶ Move to an interior room above ground level.

*For more information on preparing for HAZMAT spills, see Section 1.*

## Earthquake

In the case of an earthquake your home may be the safest place to be. When it is safe to do so, do a quick assessment of your house to determine if it is appropriate to shelter-in-place. If you determine it is not safe to stay, then you should be prepared to evacuate to a safer location, such as with friends or family or at a reception centre. You may be without power, gas or sewage after an earthquake which is why it's particularly important to prepare in advance for these situations. Be prepared for aftershocks and be ready to drop, cover and hold on.

*For more information on preparing for an earthquake, see Section 1.*

## Evacuation

When events such as fire or floods endanger communities, residents may need to evacuate the area until it is safe to return. Evacuation is the process of removing people from an area of danger to an area of safety. Evacuation may be either local, affecting a single building or group of buildings, or widespread, affecting a whole community.

During an evacuation, emergency personnel will contact you and give specific instructions. Fire fighters and other emergency personnel cannot work on the fire or other problems until life and safety issues are under control. Resisting evacuation orders wastes rescuers' precious time and puts others' lives at risk.

You can help by monitoring local media, remaining aware of the situation and getting organized to leave. If you hear a media bulletin about an evacuation, be sure to note whether it is an Alert or an Order (defined on the next page). The response is different for each stage. Do not evacuate unnecessarily. Following these guidelines helps first responders protect you, and avoids unnecessary congestion on the roads.

## Evacuation Stages

Evacuations have a provincial standard of a three-staged process.

### STAGE 1 – EVACUATION ALERT

An Evacuation Alert allows for the population at risk to begin preparing to voluntarily leave the affected area when it is necessary.

If an Evacuation Alert is issued:

- ▶ Make sure your grab & go bag is assembled and ready.
- ▶ Arrange transportation or be prepared to walk if necessary.
- ▶ Make sure you know the planned meeting place for your family.
- ▶ Prepare to evacuate children, the disabled and elderly, and relocate pets, if possible.
- ▶ Arrange accommodation for your family, if possible.
- ▶ Follow the directions of authorities.

### STAGE 2 – EVACUATION ORDER

Sometimes an Evacuation Order is immediate and no Evacuation Alert is given. In other cases, an Evacuation Order may be preceded by an Evacuation Alert.

To order an evacuation, the head of a local government authority must declare a State of Local Emergency as enabled under the *Emergency Program Act*. These orders are issued in the interest of life safety and will be enforced and carried out by the RCMP, local police, fire, and search and rescue through door-to-door contact, radio and television broadcasts, and telephoning.

If an evacuation order is issued:

- ▶ Comply and leave the area immediately.
- ▶ Gather your family, pets and grab & go bags.
- ▶ Time permitting, turn off appliances, close doors and windows, turn off utilities (when instructed) and lock your house.
- ▶ Report to the nearest reception centre if you require support.
- ▶ Keep a flashlight and portable radio with you.
- ▶ Follow the instructions of authorities.
- ▶ Take everything that you will need as you may not be able to return.

### STAGE 3 – RESCIND

Once the emergency area is declared safe, a termination of the State of Local Emergency (SOLE) or Evacuation Order is issued and residents will be allowed to return to their homes.



## Reception Centres

In times of emergency reception centres may be set up to help evacuees. Public facilities such as recreation centres, schools, places of worship and shopping malls may be converted for this purpose. Reception centres are staffed by trained volunteers, on a call-out basis.

Officials will decide when and where reception centres will open and provide residents with the details through local media. Reception centres are a last resort for those who need it. Don't go to a reception centre unless you need it.

When you meet with an Emergency Support Services (ESS) volunteer, you will be given as much time as you need.

- ▶ You will register all your family members living at your address and whom you know to be safe. Tenants will register separately. Registrations are confidential.
- ▶ If insurance does not provide it, you may receive vouchers for food, lodging (hotel room, billeting or group lodging) and basic necessities for up to 72 hours after the disaster occurs.

Accessible washrooms, children's play area (but not childcare), light refreshments, basic first aid and basic emotional care will usually be available. Service dogs are allowed inside reception centres. Pets are often accommodated in a separate room. To protect evacuees' privacy, media are not allowed inside the reception centre and no one may use any kind of camera inside.

## Communicating During a Disaster

It is hard to predict how a disaster will affect communications. Communication lines may be overwhelmed by the increased volume of users. The infrastructure may be damaged and work only part of the time. Some systems may not work at all, while others may be fine. Calls within the disaster zone may be difficult while out-of-area calling may be normal. **Expect all communication systems to behave erratically.**

- ▶ Call 911 for life-threatening emergencies ONLY. Do not call 911 for information. Monitor local media to learn more about the event.
- ▶ Have more than one option available for contacting family and friends: landline, email and cell phones. Know how to use these options to their best advantage.
- ▶ Keep communications brief to reduce strain on the system. Write down your message first and keep a flashlight by the phone.
- ▶ Ask an out-of-province friend or family member to be the emergency contact in case your family members are separated during a disaster. Ideally, the contact should have voicemail, email and a cell phone. This person will share messages among the family members until they are reunited. This person can update family and friends living outside the disaster area on your situation.

**TIP**

- ▶ *Pay telephones (where still available) are emergency telephones. When you pick up the phone it may seem dead. Hold it and wait for the dial tone.*

**TIP**

- ▶ *In your cell phone directory, list your emergency contact under I.C.E. (In Case of Emergency).*
- ▶ *Add your emergency contact information to the background of your cell phone's log-in screen. First responders will check for it.*

**TIP**

- ▶ *Most cell phones emit a GPS signal. Cell phone companies can “ping” or contact your cell phone to discover the nearest tower the signal is coming from at the time of the “ping”. Police use this method to find missing persons so, if you are lost, stay in one place.*

## 911 Emergency Services

Contact a 911 dispatcher when you need immediate emergency assistance from Police, Ambulance or Fire Departments. Never call 911 unless it is a life-threatening emergency.

Don't allow children to play with old cell phones. If they dial 911, they can tie up operators and emergency responders for quite some time, putting lives at risk.

For 911 calls, landlines display the building address so 911 operators can dispatch emergency responders even if the caller cannot speak. Cell phone locations do not display an address, even if the call comes from within the subscriber's home. Technology may eventually overcome these limitations. Meanwhile, if using a cell phone for 911 calls, provide an exact location.

### CALLING 911

Emergency Service departments are dispatched separately, so the first question you need to answer is: “Police, Ambulance or Fire?”

Once connected to the right dispatch centre:

- ▶ give the address or location and phone number from which you are calling,
- ▶ speak clearly and describe the problem (e.g. there has been a hazardous spill, or someone is injured, or a power line is down),
- ▶ follow instructions from dispatch or emergency personnel,
- ▶ stay with the injured person and give comfort if you can do so without risking your own safety, and
- ▶ ask bystanders to stay back and clear the way for responders.

## Emergency Radio Operators

Emergency radio operators can provide disaster officials with communications through the use of ham radios and other standalone systems when communication utilities fail.

## Phones and Internet

### LANDLINE PHONES

You have landline service if your telephone is activated by phone jacks in the wall. If landlines are working, there is enough power to operate a simple phone even during a power failure. Cordless phones will not work during power failures. Buy an inexpensive corded landline phone for your emergency kit.

- ▶ After an earthquake, there will be aftershocks. Choose one landline phone and make sure the receiver stays on the hook, or unplug it when the phone is not in use.
- ▶ When you place a call, wait on the line for up to two minutes until you hear a dial tone, then dial quickly and state your message. If there is no dial tone, hang up and try again later. If you are able to dial but hear no ring at the other end, wait on the line for a minute or two. Your call may be in a queue because of heavy volume.
- ▶ After a major disaster, home phone services might be the last lines restored. Landlines for emergency officials, public services and businesses will have higher priority.

### INTERNET DEVICES (computers, smart phones, VoIP phones and tablets)

- ▶ When the Internet is operating, use social networking sites to keep people up to date on your situation.
- ▶ Send brief email messages to people, but avoid attachments. Compose and save your message in a word processing program first, then copy to email and send. If the send fails, you don't have to re-enter the message as it will be held in queue until it can be delivered.
- ▶ Follow trusted news media and local authority sources on social media platforms.

### CELL PHONES

If infrastructure is damaged, cell phone towers can often be restored to service more quickly than telephone and cable lines.

- ▶ Keep your cell phone charged and keep a charger in each vehicle. Even if you have no pre-paid minutes or service plan for your cell phone, it can be used for 911 calls if the battery is charged.
- ▶ Even if you are an infrequent cell phone user, be sure your cellular service plan includes texting, and learn how to use this feature. Texting uses far less data than a voice call and can be sent in an instant. If you leave your phone on, the text message will be held in queue until it can be delivered. You won't have to re-dial and re-text, and you can send the same message to several destinations.

## How to Stay Informed

- ▶ Do **not** call 911 unless life-threatening emergency.
- ▶ Emergency officials will rely partly on local media and the Internet to get information to the public. Cable TV, radio and the Internet are some of the tools that officials will use to help communicate evacuation alerts and bulletins about impending dangers such as severe storms, wildfires and tsunamis.
- ▶ After a disaster officials will provide updates via the media as facts and information are confirmed. Check [www.PrepareYourself.ca](http://www.PrepareYourself.ca) or your local authorities websites for updates.
- ▶ Most local media (TV and radio) do not have staff on duty 24/7; therefore, if a disaster occurs during the night, only the stations with staff on duty will be able to broadcast during the first few hours of the disaster. Other stations might bring in staff to provide 24/7 news during the disaster, but that could take hours or days.
- ▶ Become familiar with your local broadcasters, and **check periodically which stations have 24/7 live broadcasts**. In Greater Victoria, local media include:
  - The Q – 100.3 FM @TheQdotFM
  - CFOX – 1070 AM @CFAX1010
  - CBC Radio One – 90.5 FM @CBCV-FM
  - KISS FM – 103.1 FM @Kiss1031
  - Kool FM – 107.3 F @1073KOOLFM
  - The Ocean – 98.5 FM @Ocean985
  - The Zone – 91.3 FM @TheZone913
  - CFUV – 101.9 FM @CFUV
  - Local TV Stations
- ▶ During a disaster, follow local media for news updates and EMCR's emergency feed @ **EmergencyInfoBC** for provincial information.
- ▶ There will be lots of rumour, opinion and speculation, especially on the Internet. When making decisions for yourself and your family, rely on news that clearly comes from trusted official sources such as local government officials, first responders, utilities and Environment Canada.

*See page 5 for a list of local emergency program accounts.*

## How to Help

After an emergency or disaster occurs, people naturally want to assist those in need. While this is appreciated, donations of goods and materials can be a major problem to manage. Cash donations allow organizations to purchase items they may need.

Check your local government's website for information on how to help.



| Section 3 |

# AFTER AN EMERGENCY

## Utilities

After any disaster, you can expect to have a disruption or lose utility services altogether.

### Electrical Utilities

After any disaster or emergency, you will want to keep your power on, unless directed by emergency officials to turn it off.

- ▶ Make sure everyone in your household knows where your electrical panel is and how to turn it off.
- ▶ It is a good idea to tag your electrical panel for quick identification in the event of an emergency.
- ▶ Consider turning off individual breakers so when power is restored, you can control the turning on of your appliances and lights, reducing the load on the system. Label your breakers accurately.

### Natural Gas Utilities

Natural gas heats our homes, our water, sometimes our stoves, and other appliances. Like most fuels, natural gas is safe when properly used. However, accidents and emergencies can happen and it's important for everyone to know about natural gas safety. If you smell gas or hear the flow of escaping gas, follow these steps immediately:

- ▶ Get out and call the FortisBC 24-hour Emergency Line: **1.800.663.9911** or **911**.
- ▶ Get out fast! Leave the building; leave the door open and any windows that may already be open.
- ▶ Don't start your car. Leave on foot and call 911 from a safe distance.
- ▶ Don't use your cell phone or landline, don't smoke, light matches, operate electrical switches, or create any other source of ignition.

Natural gas and piped propane smell like rotten eggs or sulphur. Natural gas is actually odourless, but trace amounts of a chemical called mercaptan are added, which has a distinctive rotten egg or sulphur-like odour so you can detect and identify it.

In an emergency, unless you smell a gas leak, leave the gas meter on (see page 13 if you need to shut off). After an emergency, you may need the gas for heat, hot water or cooking. Check the chimney and connections at each gas appliance to be sure they have not been dislodged or blocked. If you have turned off your gas, you must call a licensed gas contractor to turn it back on.

If you are in doubt about the safety of your natural gas system, contact FortisBC immediately.

## Water Utilities

You may also need to shut off your interior **water shut-off valve** if:

- ▶ There is a major earthquake.
- ▶ There is an inside water leak or burst pipe.
- ▶ You are evacuating for the long-term.
- ▶ You are advised to do so by emergency officials.

The water shut-off valve controls the water inside your home or building. Make sure that everyone in your household knows where it is and how to turn it off.

## Health and Hygiene

### Handwashing

After any disaster, stress will be high and immunity low. Children, the elderly and people with chronic health problems or weakened immune systems will be more vulnerable to, and seriously affected by, communicable diseases.

Health officials stress that handwashing is the single most important practice that can protect you and your family members from getting a communicable disease.

There must always be some method of handwashing available to people after they use whatever toilet system is in place and before handling, preparing or eating food, especially in a situation where water is limited.

You need as little as 1 cup of water to effectively wash your hands:

- ▶ Pour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water on your hands to wet them.
- ▶ Apply plain liquid soap.
- ▶ Rub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds.
- ▶ Pour the remaining  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water over your hands to rinse.
- ▶ Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel.

### Sewage Interruptions

After a major disaster like an earthquake, water and sewer lines may be broken. Health officials advise separating solid waste from liquid waste.

Urine is not considered a serious health problem. If you use one bucket for urine, you can dispose of it in your back yard or other green space. Feces, on the other hand, are a source of many disease-causing bacteria, including *cryptosporidia* and *cholera*.

Feces must be disposed of more carefully to prevent outbreak of disease. You can use your existing toilet as a container to collect solid waste:

- ▶ Lift the toilet seat and scoop out the water in the bowl but leave water in the trap to avoid sewer gases. Duct tape the handle so you don't accidentally flush.
- ▶ Line the toilet bowl with two garbage bags (to protect against leakage).
- ▶ Put the seat back down.
- ▶ After you use the toilet, cover the waste in the bag with a liberal dose of hydrated lime (use caution since it is caustic), baking soda, powdered cleaner or kitty litter.
- ▶ Remove the inner bag from the toilet and store in a bin or bucket with a lid, or in a covered trench.
- ▶ Listen to Public Health bulletins for instructions on how to ultimately dispose of the bags.

## Water

### POTABLE (DRINKABLE) WATER

Only potable water is safe for drinking, cooking, brushing teeth, hand washing, first aid and washing cooking equipment and surfaces. After an emergency or disaster, drinkable water may be a scarce resource. Be prepared to provide your family with at least 4 litres of drinking water per person per day for at least 7 days, as well as some water for pets.

To provide your family with potable water after an interruption in service, prepare to:

- ▶ Store drinkable water as part of your shelter-in-place/home kit. Consider stockpiling bottled water or large containers of water, which you check and replace regularly to ensure its drinkability.
- ▶ Collect and transport drinkable water from distribution centres. If water service is interrupted, authorities may be able to deliver drinking water to a central location where residents can pick it up. This may require residents to supply their own containers and transportation. Remember water is heavy.

It is possible to disinfect water to make it potable or drinkable. You may have access to water that is not properly treated or has become contaminated with water-borne infections. There are a number of methods you can use to purify water:

- ▶ Boil (Boil Water Advisory) – boil tap water for 1 minute. Let water cool in covered container.
- ▶ Filter – there are a number of commercially available water purification filtering systems (Life Straw) and UV purification devices.
- ▶ Water purification tablets – effective, but check the expiry date.
- ▶ Bleach – strain water through two coffee filters or several layers of paper towels. Add 2 drops of unscented bleach to 1 litre of water.

**Research in Advance.** Find out here: [http://www.viha.ca/mho/water/boil\\_water/](http://www.viha.ca/mho/water/boil_water/) or call 250-370-8699.



# Recovery

## Recovery Goals and Resources

Emergencies and disasters have a finite beginning and end, but recovery continues long after the emergency response and immediate danger have passed.

The goals are to restore infrastructure and public services, help meet short- and long-term housing needs, restart the local economy and rebuild the capacity of the community to help its own members.

Local government officials can call upon the following agencies:

- ▶ Volunteers with **Emergency Support Services (ESS)** are trained to operate reception centres which support evacuees after the disaster. They can also operate group lodging when other shelter options are not available.
- ▶ **BC Housing** provides cots and blankets for group lodging, and facilitates the provision of short- and long-term housing for evacuees.
- ▶ **Canadian Red Cross** provides family reunification services and collects donations for disaster relief.
- ▶ **Salvation Army** provides disaster relief and emotional support services.

British Columbia property and business owners may qualify for recovery assistance:

- ▶ **Province of BC Disaster Financial Assistance** may be offered to qualifying home owners, tenants, small businesses, farm operations and not-for-profit charitable organizations. The program helps with the cost of repairs and recovery from disaster-related property damage if losses could not have been insured or where other programs are not available.

### Recommendations: RECOVERY

- 1** Remember that unfamiliar emotional responses are normal reactions to disasters.
- 2** Recovery can take a long time (even years) so be kind to yourself and others as you work your way through this process.
- 3** Help your children and pets learn to cope with their fears.
- 4** Follow health and safety guidelines throughout the recovery process.
- 5** Attend community meetings or information sessions to find out what resources are available and how community members can help each other.

**TIP**

- ▶ *Scan and save your most important documents (e.g. PDF files) and photos (e.g. jpeg files).*

*Forward the scanned files via email to a web-based email account, upload them to a secure cloud (an Internet electronic filing cabinet) such as Dropbox or Canada Post's E-Post Vault, copy them on a password-protected USB drive or place your valuable documents in a bank safe deposit box.*

*These documents help establish proof of identity, insurance coverage, etc. if your originals and paper copies are destroyed.*

**GETTING BACK ON TRACK**

- 1 Take care of yourself and your family first.
  - ▶ Determine recovery resources. A recovery centre may be set up to help with this.
  - ▶ Promote physical health. Eat healthy meals, get lots of sleep, drink plenty of water and exercise.
  - ▶ Return to familiar routines. This is especially helpful for children and pets.
  - ▶ Promote emotional health. Learn to recognize symptoms of post-disaster stress in yourself and others. Talk about your experiences with understanding family and friends, or with a professional if you are struggling in any way.
  - ▶ Attend debriefing sessions in your community. They provide opportunities to share experiences and get answers to questions. When support services are in great demand, insurance companies and support agencies may participate in these sessions so that many more people can be helped in one place.
  - ▶ Take breaks, look out for others and ask for help if you need it.
- 2 Stay with family and friends for a few days if possible, as their support can be invaluable. Determine where you will live for the longer term during recovery.
- 3 Assess losses.
  - ▶ Find out if special precautions must be taken before entering your home.
  - ▶ Contact your insurance company to start a claim.
  - ▶ List items and property you have lost. This may take considerable time and effort.
- 4 Determine what needs to be done.
  - ▶ Have your home inspected to determine what the next steps are.

## Emotional Responses to Disasters

### TYPICAL FIRST REACTIONS

- ▶ Disbelief and shock.
- ▶ Disorientation and numbness.
- ▶ Fear.
- ▶ Reluctance to abandon property.
- ▶ Problems with concentration or memory.
- ▶ Difficulty in making decisions.
- ▶ Need for help and information.
- ▶ Helpfulness to others.

### SOME LATER RESPONSES

- ▶ Frustration and anxiety.
- ▶ Anger and suspicion.
- ▶ Moodiness and irritability.
- ▶ Apathy and depression.
- ▶ Unexplained crying.
- ▶ Fatigue, low energy.
- ▶ Change in appetite.
- ▶ Digestive problems.
- ▶ Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much.
- ▶ Headaches, body pain.
- ▶ Feelings of powerlessness.
- ▶ Feeling overwhelmed.
- ▶ Guilt for survival or for not preventing disaster.
- ▶ Isolation from family and friends.

### TIPS

- ▶ *Emergency officials, first responders, agency staff and community volunteers commonly experience many of the same stress reactions as those they are trying to help. Physical and emotional care are important for everyone involved.*
- ▶ *When donating to disaster relief, the best donation is money. Donations of food, clothing, furniture, toys, etc. become a secondary disaster for officials, who must receive, sort and store truckloads of such items. For safety reasons, homemade food donations are not accepted.*
- ▶ *After a small disaster (e.g. a house fire, or flooding on one street), it is easier to get help with insurance claims, housing, counselling, etc. After a large disaster, services could be overwhelmed for weeks. This is why planning and preparing is important.*

### RESPONSES BY CHILDREN

- ▶ Return to past behaviour such as thumb-sucking or bed-wetting.
- ▶ Clinging to parents, crying or screaming.
- ▶ Reluctance to go to bed.
- ▶ Nightmares.
- ▶ Fantasies that the disaster didn't happen.
- ▶ Refusal to attend school.
- ▶ Inability to concentrate.
- ▶ Withdrawal, immobility.

### RESPONSES BY PETS

- ▶ Unusually nervous or fearful.
- ▶ Sensitivity to noise or storms.
- ▶ Excessive protectiveness.
- ▶ Increased aggression.

### HEALING EMOTIONALLY

- ▶ Discuss what happened; however, you may want to limit your family's exposure to media coverage of the event.
- ▶ Recognize the losses you have suffered. Give yourself and your family permission to grieve and time to heal.
- ▶ Take time to appreciate what you still have.

### HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH THEIR FEARS

Don't ignore the emotional needs of your children once you have determined that everyone is physically okay.

- ▶ Give lots of hugs to your children and reassure them.
- ▶ Encourage your children to express their feelings, especially through play and physical activities. Listen to them carefully when they share these things with you.
- ▶ Include children in safe clean-up activities. It is comforting to the child to watch the household begin to resume its normal functions. It also gives them a job to do.
- ▶ Children may revert to immature behaviour for a few days. Do not focus on this behaviour; rather, praise them for their help in cleaning up, etc.



- ▶ Maintain or restore routines but reduce performance expectations. If fears, sleep or unusual behaviours get worse for more than two weeks, seek professional help.
- ▶ After a disaster, pets may be too upset or unpredictable to offer comfort to children. Explain this to your children and teach them not to pat, hold or bother a pet until it is back to normal.
- ▶ Anxious children may feel more secure if they can play and sleep under a table draped with a blanket, or in a small pup tent. Lightweight emergency pup tents/tube tents are ideal as they fold very small for storage.

### HELPING PETS COPE WITH FEAR

Pets may show fear, be in physical pain or display unfriendly behaviours.

- ▶ Approach pets slowly and calmly, watching for injuries or unfriendly behaviours. Avoid direct eye contact. Speak to them in soft, reassuring voices.
- ▶ Familiar routine is comforting to animals. Provide food and fresh water on a regular schedule for caged or fostered animals.
- ▶ Isolate pets from children if pets display aggression or extreme fear.
- ▶ Time and patience are often the best medicines, but some pets will require the professional care of a certified veterinary behaviourist. Intense fear and anxiety should be considered forms of pain that deserve immediate treatment.



### TIPS: General Health and Safety During Disaster Clean-up

- 1** Avoid exhaustion. Don't try to do too much at once. Set priorities, make a plan and pace yourself. Take lots of breaks to rest, eat and rehydrate.
- 2** Be aware of safety hazards created by the disaster; e.g. contaminated buildings, contaminated water or air, gas leaks, broken glass, damaged wiring, slippery floors.
- 3** Inform local authorities of chemical spills, downed power lines, washed-out roads, smoldering buildings, dead animals and other hazards. If the hazard presents an immediate danger to life call 911; otherwise use non-emergency contact numbers.
- 4** Wear sturdy shoes and gloves. Depending on the hazards created by the disaster, you may need other protective gear.
- 5** When working in debris wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and clean water.

## Returning Home and Cleaning Up After a Disaster

Returning home and cleaning up after a disaster can be physically, emotionally and mentally challenging. Following a plan and safety guidelines will help.

### RETURNING TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- ▶ Keep a battery-powered radio with you to monitor local media.
- ▶ Watch out for animals in and around your home.
  - ▶ Wildlife can be aggressive and unpredictable. Never approach, corner or attempt to help or rescue it.
  - ▶ Be cautious with animals that are obviously lost or abandoned pets. They too can be unpredictable if hungry or frightened. Provide food and water if possible.
  - ▶ Do not move or touch a dead animal. Carcasses can present serious health risks. Contact your local government or health department for help and instructions.
- ▶ Stay alert. Watch for fallen objects, downed electrical wires and weakened walls, bridges, roads and sidewalks.

### BEFORE YOU ENTER YOUR HOME

- ▶ Walk around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks or structural damage. Look down as well as up. Watch for sink holes, fissures and trip hazards on the ground.
- ▶ Do not enter the house if:
  - ▶ you smell gas,
  - ▶ floodwaters remain around the building,
  - ▶ your home has moved even partially off its foundation, or
  - ▶ your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.
- ▶ If you have any doubts about its safety or structural integrity, have your home inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

Returning home and cleaning up after a disaster can be physically, emotionally and mentally challenging. Having a plan will help.

*Review the [Entering Your Home After an Earthquake or Other Major Disaster: Inspection Checklist worksheet](#) in Section 5 before entering your home.*



| Section 4 |

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## General Information

- ▶ BC Emergency Health Services (formerly BC Ambulance) – [www.bcehs.ca](http://www.bcehs.ca)
- ▶ BC Centre for Disease Control – [www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca)
- ▶ BC Hydro Outages – [www.bchydro.com/outages](http://www.bchydro.com/outages)
- ▶ BC Ministry of Health – [www.gov.bc.ca/health](http://www.gov.bc.ca/health)
- ▶ BC RCMP – [www.bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca](http://www.bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca)
- ▶ BC Wildfire Service – [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)
- ▶ Disability Alliance BC – [disabilityalliancebc.org](http://disabilityalliancebc.org)
- ▶ Drive BC – [www.drivebc.ca](http://www.drivebc.ca)
- ▶ Emergency Info BC – [www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca)
- ▶ Emergency Management BC – <http://www.gov.bc.ca/PrepareBC>
- ▶ Emergency Preparedness in the Capital Region – [PrepareYourself.ca](http://PrepareYourself.ca)
- ▶ Emergency Support Services - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-management/local-emergency-programs/ess>
- ▶ Environment Canada weather – <https://weather.gc.ca>
- ▶ Fortis BC – [www.fortisbc.com](http://www.fortisbc.com)
- ▶ Island Health – [www.viha.ca](http://www.viha.ca)
- ▶ Mental Health Support - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/virtual-mental-health-supports>
- ▶ Ministry of Environment – [www.gov.bc.ca/env](http://www.gov.bc.ca/env)
- ▶ National Tsunami Warning Centre – <https://tsunami.gov>
- ▶ Natural Resources Canada – [www.nrcan.gc.ca](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca)
- ▶ Public Safety Canada – [www.getprepared.gc.ca](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca)
- ▶ ShakeOutBC – [www.ShakeOutBC.ca](http://www.ShakeOutBC.ca)
- ▶ University of Victoria Weather Network – [www.victoriaweather.ca](http://www.victoriaweather.ca)





| **Section 5** |

# WORKSHEETS

# Grab & Go Bags

## Basic Survival

- two small bottles of water, two energy bars, chewing gum
- one week's worth of prescription medication and copy of prescriptions
- extra pair of eye glasses, batteries for hearing aids, etc.
- emergency blanket (Mylar "space blanket")
- emergency rain poncho or large plastic garbage bag
- whistle and dust mask (earthquakes can stir up thick clouds of dust)
- emergency radio/flashlight with extra batteries
- multi-tool/Swiss Army knife
- mini first aid kit – items such as pain tablets, eye drops, ointment, nitrile gloves, foil pack of water, etc.

## Security, Peace of Mind

- photocopies or password-protected USB drive of important wallet contents and insurance policies, or cloud based storage of the same
- key contacts list, cell phone and phone card
- notebook and pen or retractable pencil
- supply of cash in small bills and coins
- spare keys for home, car, other
- recent photos of family and pets
- book, cards, puzzles
- chargers and adaptors for cell phones and other electronics included in your grab & go bags

## Warmth

- hand and foot warmers (chemical packets, two of each)
- pair of socks (wool is warmest even when wet)
- toque/knitted hat
- gloves/mitts
- neck scarf (silk is lightweight and effective)
- sweat pants and zipper hoody (for warmth and can be worn over clothes)

## Comfort & Sanitation

- basic toiletries (e.g. toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, hand towel)
- alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- change of underwear
- toilet paper, packet of baby wipes, Ziploc bags
- flip flops (for use in public showers)
- small, rapid-dry camping towel

## For Young Children, Include:

- Ziploc bag of important documents
  - ▶ full name, address, date of birth and recent photo of child
  - ▶ names and current photo ID of adults authorized to accompany child (including family members and legal guardians)
  - ▶ name and address of school, family doctor and dentist
  - ▶ immunization history, allergies, current medications and instructions
- small stuffed toy or other favourite item

## Car/Mobile Kit

If you spend a lot of time in your car, boat or RV, you should have an emergency kit to supplement your grab & go bag. Regularly maintain your vehicles and keep the fuel tanks at least half full so you're ready to leave in a hurry. Even if you do not have to evacuate, your car can be a place to shelter, recharge your cell phone, warm up or listen to radio reports.

For your car/mobile kit collect the following:

### Basic items in a backpack:

- 2 bottles of water
- simple food (e.g. unsalted nuts, granola bars)
- small first aid kit
- walking shoes
- road map and compass
- shovel, traction aids (kitty litter or sand)
- flashlight (extra batteries)
- sweat pants and zipper hoody
- light sleeping bag

**If space permits**, you may wish to include the following:

- toilet tissue and Ziploc bags
- deck of cards, book
- duct tape and garbage bags
- work gloves
- axe, crowbar and fire extinguisher
- flares, reflective vest(s)
- hardhat, eye goggles and coveralls
- ice scraper and brush
- jump starter and power bank (Eliminator®)

### ▶ TIPS

- ▶ *Plastic water bottles will absorb vehicle fuel vapours, so foil packs are a good option for mobile kits, or place plastic water bottles in a sealed plastic container.*
- ▶ *A plastic storage bucket for car/mobile supplies can be converted to a toilet if needed. Small, portable toilet seats can be purchased for some types of buckets.*

## Home and Shelter-in-Place Kit

After a disaster, it's best to remain in your own home if you can do so safely. You will need supplies for cooking, making temporary repairs and providing comfort for your family. The emergency supplies should be kept separate from the things you normally use, to ensure they are available and in working order.

### Basic

- Potable (drinkable) water:** 4 litres per person per day for at least 7 days, plus water for pets.
- Food, emergency stove and cooking equipment:** a variety of long-storing healthy foods that do not need refrigeration and are easy to prepare and eat under difficult conditions, such as nutritious canned food.
- Health and safety:** home first aid kit and first aid manual; power failure lights for halls/stairwells; fire extinguishers.
- Communications:** a landline phone that operates on a phone jack and does not require electrical power (corded phone) or an emergency radio (battery- or solar-powered, or wind-up).
- Heat, light and warmth:** sleeping bags (much warmer than regular bedding, Mylar blankets, ground sheets or air mattresses, newspaper (for insulation); camping tent or tarpaulin and ropes (in case house is unsafe and there are no other alternatives); flashlights with lots of batteries, light sticks, battery-powered or solar lanterns.
- Sanitation and hand-washing:** duct tape, lots of plastic garbage bags, emergency toilet kit, disposable gloves, outside garbage can for disposal of waste bags, toilet paper, baby wipes, liquid soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, potable water and paper towels.
- Rescue, repair and clean up:** tarpaulins, nylon ropes, duct tape, plastic sheeting and/or large garbage bags; axe, crowbar, hacksaw; aluminum shut-off wrench for gas meter; head lamp, work gloves, dust masks, coveralls, sturdy shoes, goggles, rags, non-permeable disposable gloves, clean utility water (non drinkable), detergents, and large, clear plastic garbage bags for taping over broken windows.
- Household generator and fuel:** especially for needs such as refrigerated medication, medical appliances and equipment, etc. Generators must never be operated in the house or other enclosed space. Generators may be a target for theft if left unattended.

## Storage Tips

Finding extra space to store emergency supplies can be a challenge. It is important to keep them in working order and accessible.

- ▶ If you have a camper or trailer, you may already have all the emergency supplies you need. Remember to restock so that your grab & go bag and shelter-in-place kits are always ready for emergencies.
- ▶ Place supplies in a large, covered container – preferably plastic or rubber and on wheels. Put the contents inside a tightly closed plastic bag before placing them in the container. Place desiccant sachets in your containers to keep things dry.
- ▶ Keep supplies off concrete floors (condensation will rust cans and concrete will leach into plastics). Store food and water away from gasoline and other chemicals.
- ▶ Food, water and supply containers can be stored on a non-concrete floor, preferably close to an exit.
- ▶ Make room in an accessible area for a first aid kit, radio and flashlights or light sticks. Store additional batteries separately nearby.

## Emergency Kit for Pets

Don't expect pet rescue centres to have supplies for pets during an emergency. This is your responsibility.

- food/water (seven day supply)
- manual can opener
- ID tag and collar
- recent photos of you and your pet to assist with reunification
- sturdy crate/carrier
- copy of pets' current vaccination history
- pet first-aid kit
- medications and instructions
- dog leash/harness and muzzle
- phone numbers and addresses (pet friendly hotels, emergency vet clinic, local animal shelter, boarding kennels, etc.)
- non-spill bowls
- litter and box for cats and other small critters

## First Aid

- ▶ Consider taking a first aid course. Some are available for children.
- ▶ Store one week's supply of prescribed medications and copies of critical medical information in your grab & go bag. Rotate medications after every purchase.
- ▶ Buy a first aid kit and supplement it with other supplies, or assemble your own using suggestions from the list below. Storing supplies in a case with a handle (e.g. fishing tackle box or tool box) makes them easier to carry. Tape a list of contents inside the lid. When the clocks change in Spring and Fall, replace expired items.

### Bandages

- bandaids
- pressure bandages
- butterfly bandages
- 3-6 triangular bandages
- rolled gauze ( 1", 2", 3" widths)
- bandage, sterile rolls (2", 4" widths)
- splinting materials
- adhesive tape
- tensor bandages
- cotton-tipped swabs

### Medications & Remedies

**(include remedies appropriate for your children)**

- pain relievers, anti-itch powder/lotion
- antibiotic ointment
- sunscreen, insect repellent
- lip balm, cold-sore cream
- diarrhea control, anti-nausea
- antacid, laxative
- eye drops, ear drops
- antihistamines

### Additional supplies

- first aid manual
- pen and notebook
- scissors, safety pins
- tweezers and magnifying glass
- individually wrapped alcohol swabs
- plastic bags
- needle and thread
- thermometer
- tissue
- pre-moistened towelettes
- hot water bottle and small towel
- instant cold packs
- Mylar/space blankets
- disposable gloves





## Cooking Equipment

- manual can opener (invest in a good one that always works)
- utility knife
- bottle opener
- stove and fuel supply
- waterproof matches
- pot and pan (with lids)
- ladle, spatula, serving spoon, BBQ tongs
- oven mitts or pot holders
- paper towels (lots)
- heavy-duty aluminum foil
- a variety of large and small heavy duty plastic garbage bags
- disposable cutlery, dishes and cups (to reduce potable water consumption)
- dish detergent, pot scrubber and unscented chlorine bleach
- duct tape

## Tips

- ▶ Pressure cookers reduce cooking time and fuel consumption during a simple power outage. In more complex and disruptive disasters such as floods and earthquakes, prepare food that can be quickly heated or eaten cold.
- ▶ Have at least one alternative to your kitchen stove (e.g. kerosene camp stove; sterno stove; compact stove with fuel pellets; buffet burner with butane cartridges (a.k.a. “storm buster”); or charcoal/propane/natural gas barbecue, hibachi).
- ▶ Barbecues, camp stoves and most other types of stoves and fuels emit deadly amounts of carbon monoxide and are not safe for indoor use. Store extra propane, charcoal, lighter fluid and matches outside. Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
- ▶ Know how and where to operate the stove safely. In all situations, ensure that the stove is on a stable, non-flammable surface and away from combustibles. Do not cook over a live flame if aftershocks are occurring frequently.
- ▶ Fireplaces – inspect chimney and flue for cracks before using.
- ▶ Small portable stoves and compact fuels are easy to carry if you are evacuated and must provide your own cooking equipment.
- ▶ Heavy-duty aluminum foil saves having to clean a pan, thus saving potable water. Covering a plate with plastic wrap does the same.

# Important Family Documents and Small Valuables

## (For evacuations – items not already in your grab & go bags)

At the top of the list, place items that can be carried on foot along with (or inside) the grab & go bag. Be realistic about how much you can gather in the time available, and how much weight and bulk you can carry. Consider that you might need hands free to accompany pets, small children or people with disabilities. Also, consider where you can store the valuables when you reach your destination.

Think about evacuation plans, what to take if you have 30 minutes, 2 hours or 6 hours notice before you need to leave your home.

List by priority, and note location:

	Time
<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b>	
<b>4</b>	
<b>5</b>	
<b>6</b>	
<b>7</b>	
<b>8</b>	
<b>9</b>	
<b>10</b>	
<b>11</b>	
<b>12</b>	

# Special Considerations Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Support Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 ALLERGIES

Allergy	Severity	Usual Treatment & Medications

## 2 MEDICATIONS - PROFILE OF MEDICAL NEEDS

Diagnosis	Medication Name	Dosage	Directions	Special Care	Extra Items (e.g. syringes)

**3 ASSISTIVE EQUIPMENT AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES**

Type	Where Located	Alternative Equipment	Extra Items (i.e. batteries)	Special Instructions

**4 NAMES AND NUMBERS OF IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

Contact	Name	Telephone #
Family physician		
Specialists		
Pharmacist		
Building manager		
Church leader, counsellor		
Home care/personal attendant		
Local family/emergency contact(s)		
Out-of-area emergency contact		
Transportation provider		
Other important service provider		

**5 DOCUMENTS AND IMPORTANT PEOPLE TO CONTACT**

I have made copies of the following:

- ID (Passport, Driver’s Licence, Care Card, etc.)
- Legal and other documents (Will, Advance Directive, Home Insurance, etc.)

# Family Reunification and Sheltering Plan

- 1 Collect the information you will need to fill out the forms.
- 2 Develop your rough draft separately and then write the final details onto the pages in this workbook as a handy reference tool.
- 3 Give each family member a photocopy of the sheets in a waterproof/Ziploc bag for the grab & go bag.
- 4 Update the information as needed.
- 5 Keep this workbook easily accessible (e.g. by the main phone).

## Reunification Plan (Rendezvous Sites)

Enter this information on the wallet cards (see page 75).

- 1 **MEET AT HOME**
- 2 **MEET AT FRIEND'S/NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE** (name, address, phone)

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- 3 **LOCATION OUTSIDE OUR IMMEDIATE AREA** (details)

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### SHELTERING OPTIONS

- 1 Home

- 2 

---

- 3 

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**FAMILY MEMBERS' INFORMATION**

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**1**      Name \_\_\_\_\_  
            Work/School Address \_\_\_\_\_  
            Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
            MSP Medical # \_\_\_\_\_  
            Medications/Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

**2**      Name \_\_\_\_\_  
            Work/School Address \_\_\_\_\_  
            Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
            MSP Medical # \_\_\_\_\_  
            Medications/Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

**3**      Name \_\_\_\_\_  
            Work/School Address \_\_\_\_\_  
            Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
            MSP Medical # \_\_\_\_\_  
            Medications/Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

**4**      Name \_\_\_\_\_  
            Work/School Address \_\_\_\_\_  
            Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
            MSP Medical # \_\_\_\_\_  
            Medications/Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

Below are four wallet cards to clip and fold. Photocopy this page, complete the information and make enough completed copies so that each family member has a card to carry in a wallet or grab & go bag.

<p><b>OUT-OF-AREA EMERGENCY CONTACT</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p><b>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</b></p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p><b>OUT-OF-AREA EMERGENCY CONTACT</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p><b>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</b></p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p><b>OUT-OF-AREA EMERGENCY CONTACT</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p><b>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</b></p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p><b>OUT-OF-AREA EMERGENCY CONTACT</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p><b>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</b></p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>

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**PETS AND FARM ANIMALS – EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

Animal Control \_\_\_\_\_

Boarding Kennel \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

Poison Centre \_\_\_\_\_

Humane Society \_\_\_\_\_

Micro Chip Registry \_\_\_\_\_

Missing Pet Registry \_\_\_\_\_

Out-of-Town Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Pet Sitter \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Pet Sitter \_\_\_\_\_

**PRIMARY VETERINARIAN**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Directions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hours \_\_\_\_\_

**ALTERNATIVE VETERINARIAN**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Directions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hours \_\_\_\_\_

# Home Safety Hunt

Involve your whole family in the home safety hunt. Identify what needs to be done and then make a plan to do it one step at a time. Every change you make helps a little, and some changes help a lot.

Yes	No		Fixed
		Cooking areas are clean and clear of combustibles.	
		Electrical outlets near water are Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) equipped.	
		Hot water heater is secured to wall studs.	
		Tall furniture is secured to wall studs.	
		Heavy objects are on lower shelves or lower cupboards.	
		Electronic equipment and small appliances are secured to shelves.	
		Mirrors and framed pictures are secured with earthquake hangers and not placed above beds.	
		Hanging plants and lights are securely attached to ceilings and will not hit windows if they swing.	
		Cupboards and storage cabinet doors have earthquake-resistant latches.	
		Chemicals are stored safely.	
		House is bolted to its foundation.	
		Cripple walls have been strengthened.	
		Chimneys are stable and plywood sheathing is nailed or screwed to the attic floor at the base of chimneys.	
		There are smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in good working order on each floor of the house and near bedrooms.	
		A licensed contractor has installed flexible pipe fittings to minimize line ruptures, natural gas leaks and water leaks.	
		ABC fire extinguishers are easily accessible on each floor of the house, especially in kitchen, garage and workshop.	

# Entering Your Home After an Earthquake or Other Major Disaster: Inspection Checklist

If you are using a flashlight, turn it on before entering your home or building to avoid a spark that could ignite gas that may be leaking inside. Enter carefully, watching for loose boards and slippery floors.

## 1. Critical Safety Checks

- Natural gas and flammable materials** – Do not smoke, use open flames, turn on cell phones, appliances, engines, or turn light switches on or off until you are sure there is no risk of fire or explosion. Gas smells; if you detect natural gas, open a window and leave immediately. Call the gas company from another location.
- Sparks, broken or frayed wires** – Check the electrical system. If you are wet, standing in water or unsure of your safety, do not enter. If possible, turn off the electricity at the circuit box. If unsafe, leave the building and call for help. Do not turn lights on until you are sure they are safe to use. Have an electrician inspect your wiring.
- Roof, foundation and chimney cracks** – If it looks as if the building may collapse, leave immediately and stay back twice the distance of the height of the house. If only the chimney is unstable, stay well back and rope off areas that may be hit by falling bricks or masonry.
- Animals** – If an animal is trapped in your house, open a door or window and stay back so it can escape. Call animal control or wildlife officials if the animal will not leave.

## 2. Damage Assessment and Clean-up

- For insurance purposes, take pictures of damages.** Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs, including the hours your family and friends spend cleaning, etc.
- Basement** – Basement walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged. If your basement is flooded, pump it out gradually (about 1/3 of the water per day) to avoid damage.
- Household chemical spills** – Clean up spills and safely dispose of used rags or paper towels to avoid spontaneous combustion. Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria or chemicals. Also clean salvageable items.
- Appliances** – If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the circuit box. Then unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have a professional check them before using them again.
- Water and sewage systems** – If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with local authorities before using water as it could be contaminated. Pump out wells and have the water tested before drinking. Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are intact.
- Cabinets** – Open cabinets carefully and watch for falling objects.
- Food and other supplies** – Throw out all food and other supplies that may be contaminated or that may have come into contact with floodwater.

# Home Fire Safety Worksheet

## Simple steps that can save your life. Check off completed items:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Place them on the ceiling outside bedrooms, in stairways and near (but not in) the kitchen.
- Install high quality carbon monoxide (CO) alarms if your home heating or cooking is supplied by natural gas, propane or home heating oil, or if you have a wood-burning fireplace or stove. Place the CO alarms near bedrooms, away from gas appliances.
- Test and vacuum the smoke and CO alarms once a month and replace any batteries every six months when the clocks change. Replace alarms immediately if they fail to test properly; otherwise, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maximum operating life before replacement is needed (even if the alarms appear to be operating properly). If you can't find the life span recommendation, replace your smoke alarms after 10 years and your CO alarms after 5 years.
- Purchase ABC class fire extinguishers for each floor of your home, plus extras for the kitchen and hobby room/workshop.
- If you work with flammable metals, oils or solvents in your hobby room/workshop, you should consider purchasing a D class extinguisher as well as a proper oily-waste container (these are metal receptacles with lids and ventilated bottoms) for rags that are oil or solvent-soaked. Do not clean oily or solvent soaked rags in your washer or clothes dryer.
- Clean out storage areas. Do not let trash and recycling materials stack up.
- Plan and review escape routes with your family. Practise escaping from each room in the daytime and in the dark. Teach family members to avoid elevators and to stay low to the floor to avoid deadly fumes when escaping from a fire.
- Designate a safe meeting place outside the home where family can assemble, count heads and wait for the fire department.
- Make sure all windows can open and are not nailed or painted shut. Make sure security gratings on windows have a safety feature allowing the window to be easily opened from the inside.
- Consider escape ladders on the upper floors if your home has more than one level.

## 26 Weeks to Family Emergency Preparedness

### A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO GET YOU AND YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY PREPARED IN 26 WEEKS!

- WEEK 1.** Get a large **portable container** with a lid to use as a shelter-in-place kit, preferably with wheels. Choose an accessible location for the container near an exit and label the container. Make sure all family members know what it will be used for and where it is.
- WEEK 2.** Stock your kit with *at least* a **seven day supply of water** for every family member and your pets. It is best to plan for four litres of water per person, per day – two for drinking and two for food preparation and hygiene. You might also consider the addition of **water purification tablets**.
- WEEK 3.** Stock your kit with several varieties of **packaged foods, canned meats, dried fruit and a manual can opener**. If needed, include **infant supplies** like disposable diapers, disposable bottles and formula. Plan for *at least* a seven day supply of food for each family member.
- WEEK 4.** Arrange an **out-of-area phone contact person** in case you are separated from your family so they can relay messages until you are reunited. Keep this and other emergency phone numbers near each telephone. Teach family members these numbers.
- WEEK 5.** Add **food items and supplies for pets** to your kit.
- WEEK 6.** Get a **portable radio and extra batteries** for your emergency kit.
- WEEK 7.** **Learn about hazards.** Know the hazards in your community. Find out if the area where you live is vulnerable to landslides, flooding or fires. Do a home hazard hunt to make your home safer. Secure appliances and heavy furniture and move beds away from overhead objects.
- WEEK 8.** **Prepare a first aid kit** that includes prescription medications, eyeglasses, bandages, sterile gauze pads, tape, scissors, tweezers, antibiotic ointment, hydrogen peroxide and other items such as over-the-counter pain pills.
- WEEK 9.** Give every family member **specific safety tasks** to do in an emergency. For example, designate one person to be in charge of turning off electricity, one to collect the emergency container, one to track down family members and make sure people with disabilities or special health needs are provided for. Make sure someone is assigned to look after any pets.
- WEEK 10.** **Identify safe places** in your home and on your property. Plan and practise earthquake **“drop, cover, hold”** or evacuation drills using different escape routes. Know where your community may set up a **reception centre** for evacuees during an emergency.
- WEEK 11.** Identify a **family meeting place** away from home but close to your regular spots (between home and work or school).
- WEEK 12.** Add a **flashlight and extra batteries**.
- WEEK 13.** Add some **dried soups and other food items** such as peanut butter to your emergency kit.

- WEEK 14.** Check your **insurance policies** and make records of your possessions (in case you need to make a claim) and add the list to your emergency kit.
- WEEK 15.** Stock your kit with both large and medium-sized **plastic garbage bags** (orange or yellow make good visible signals, clear can be used for temporary window replacement). Large bags can also be used as ponchos, ground covers or blankets. Add **plastic or paper dishes and cups** as well.
- WEEK 16.** Add a **change of clothing** for each family member to your kit. Be sure to include warm clothing, heavy work gloves and sturdy shoes.
- WEEK 17.** Add additional **canned or freeze-dried food** like stews, tuna fish, baked beans and vegetables to your kit.
- WEEK 18.** Enroll a family member in a **first aid course**. Pack **HELP/OK signs** in your kit.
- WEEK 19.** **Assemble important documents** like wills, insurance papers, medical records, credit card numbers, inventory of possessions, identification, etc. Make copies and store originals in a fireproof/waterproof container that will be accessible if your home is damaged.
- WEEK 20.** Add **personal items** such as toilet paper, handi-wipes, soap, detergent, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, sanitary supplies, etc. to your emergency kit.
- WEEK 21.** Add **evaporated, canned or powdered milk** to your kit.
- WEEK 22.** **Get a large bucket** with a tight-fitting lid to use as a toilet, and put it with your emergency kit. Use the bucket to store other **emergency tools** like an axe, a folding shovel and rope.
- WEEK 23.** Add **sleeping bags or blankets** (foil blankets take up less space) and consider adding **plastic emergency ponchos** to your kit.
- WEEK 24.** Add more **canned, freeze-dried or dehydrated food products** to your kit until you have *at least* a seven day supply for each family member.
- WEEK 25.** Add a **pocket knife, cutlery, a whistle** and **spare set of house and car keys** as well as items such as **books, toys, cards and a family photo album** to your kit.
- WEEK 26.** **Meet with neighbours to discuss emergency preparations** and the possibility of sharing items such as generators.





**PrepareYourself.ca**