



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



Self-Help Advice

Be Prepared, Not Scared

Emergency
preparedness
starts with you



Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Be prepared – plan for emergencies	1
What to do before a disaster	2
What to do during a disaster	6
What to do after a disaster	9
Watch for hazards	10
Be ready to evacuate	12
Expect emotional reactions	13
Checklists	15
Additional information	18

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was produced by the Government of Canada's **Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness** in cooperation with the Canadian Red Cross.



An electronic version of this brochure is available via www.ociepep.gc.ca on the Internet.

This publication can be obtained in alternative formats (audio-cassette, large print, computer diskette and Braille) through InfoTouch. Call 1-800-788-8282 on a touch-tone phone or through teletypewriter (TTY).

Cette publication est aussi offerte en français.

ISBN 0-662-30131-5
Catalogue No. D82-39/2001E

© Minister of Public Works and Government Services
Revised July 2003



Be prepared – plan for emergencies



IN YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVING, DISASTERS MAY SEEM A DISTANT POSSIBILITY. YET NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS FLOODS OR TORNADOES... TECHNOLOGICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENTS SUCH AS CHEMICAL SPILLS... OR SERVICE DISRUPTIONS SUCH AS POWER FAILURES DURING THE WINTER CAN STRIKE ANY COMMUNITY, INCLUDING YOURS, AT ANY TIME.

If you're unprepared for a disaster, it can shatter your life.

Expect the unexpected and plan for it. Knowing what to do when a disaster strikes will help you better control the situation and be in a better position to recover more quickly.

No community is equipped to handle all the demands of a catastrophe. Help your community by preparing yourself.

Make sure everyone in your family knows what to do before, during and after an emergency.

Set up a family meeting this week to discuss how you can best prepare for an emergency. Have your own plan.



Know what to do before a disaster strikes

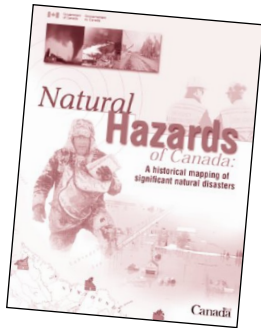
WILL YOUR WHOLE FAMILY THINK CLEARLY AND LOGICALLY IN A CRISIS? NOT MANY OF US CAN. SO DO YOUR CLEAR, LOGICAL THINKING NOW – WHEN YOU HAVE THE TIME TO BE THOROUGH.

PREPARE NOW

Your best protection in any emergency is knowing what to do. Read this brochure, and act on its suggestions

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Find out what natural and technological disasters could happen in your community. Know what to expect during each disaster.



LOOK AT YOUR OWN SITUATION

Hazard-proof your home

Anticipate what could go wrong in your home and take corrective action. If you live in an earthquake zone, move or secure objects that could fall and injure you: books, plants, mirrors, lamps, china. Secure objects that could tip and start a fire: water heater, gas appliances.

If you live in a tornado zone, secure anything that might be blown around or torn loose, both indoors and outdoors.

If you live in a flood-prone area, remove all chemical products from the basement. Move irreplaceable belongings to upper floors.

You can install a non-electric, standby heating unit that is not dependent on a motor, fan, or any other electrical device to function. Vent the stove or heater adequately with the type of chimney flue specified for it. Never connect two heating units to the same chimney flue at the same time.

Post emergency numbers

Keep a list of key telephone numbers and addresses near the phone. (If there's been a major disaster, use the phone only if it's absolutely necessary. Emergency crews will need all available lines.)

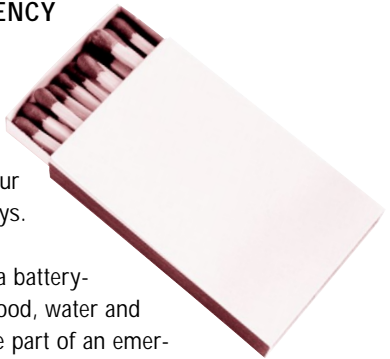


Check your insurance

Make sure you have adequate insurance coverage for the range of risks in your community.

PREPARE AN EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT

Aim to have an emergency survival kit that will keep you and your family self-sufficient in your home for at least three days.



If you've got a flashlight, a battery-operated or crank radio, food, water and blankets, you already have part of an emergency survival kit. All you have to do is assemble the supplies in an easy-to-carry container (in case you have to evacuate).

Keep a smaller survival kit in your car

A blanket, extra clothing, a candle in a deep can, and matches can save your life.

OTHER PROCEDURES

Here are some other steps that can make your life more tolerable in the event of a disaster.

Choose an out-of-area or out-of-province family contact

Choose someone in another province to be your family's contact. After the disaster, it is often easier to call out of



the region, as the local phone lines might be tied up. Make sure all family members memorize this person's name and telephone number and know they should call your family contact if they get separated from the family.

Have a show and tell

If you live in a house

Teach members of your family where and how to shut off the water, electricity and gas supply. Make big, easy-to-see signs, saying Breaker Panel (or main circuit breaker), Gas and Main Water supply. Put these signs near the breaker panel, gas valve and main water valve.

If you live in an apartment

Show everyone in your family where the emergency exit is. Show them where the fire alarm is, and explain when and how to use it. In a fire or other emergency, don't use the elevators. You'll be trapped in the elevator if the power goes out.

Learn about other community emergency plans

Your kids' school and your workplace might have their own emergency plans. Find out what they are and how they apply to you. You may be separated from your family and need to know how to get reunited. You can assist in educating your children about school plans, etc.

Avoid potential emergency situations

Heed weather warnings, and avoid driving and other activities in hazardous weather conditions.



Know what to do during a disaster



HERE ARE
SOME BASIC
PROCEDURES
FOR SPECIFIC
DISASTERS.

(FOR MORE

INFORMATION ON THESE

AND OTHER DISASTERS, CONTACT THE OFFICE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, YOUR PROVINCIAL OR TERRITORIAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION OR YOUR LOCAL RED CROSS OFFICE.)

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

If you are in a building

Stay inside. Stay away from windows. Get under a heavy desk or table, and hang on. If you can't get under something strong, flatten yourself against an interior wall, protect your head and neck.

If you are outside

Go to an open area. Move away from buildings or any structure that could collapse. Stay away from power lines and downed electrical wires.

If you are in a car

Stop the car and stay in it. Avoid bridges, overpasses or underpasses, buildings or anything that could collapse on you and your car.

DURING A TORNADO

If you are in a building

Go to the basement immediately. If there isn't one, crouch or lie flat (under heavy furniture) in an inner hallway or small inner room or stairwell away from windows.

Stay away from large halls, arenas, shopping malls, etc. (their roofs could collapse).

If you are caught outside

If there is no shelter, lie down in a ditch or ravine, protecting your head.

If you are driving

Get out of and away from the car.

It could be blown through the air or roll over on you. Lie down as above.



DURING A SEVERE LIGHTNING STORM

If you are in a building

Stay inside. Stay away from windows, doors, fireplaces, radiators, stoves, metal pipes, sinks or other electrical-charge conductors. Unplug TVs, radios, toasters and other electrical appliances. Don't use the phone or other electrical equipment.

If you are outside

Seek shelter in a building, cave or depressed area. If you're caught in the open, crouch down with your feet close together and your head down (the "leap-frog" position). Don't lie flat – by minimizing your contact with the ground, you reduce the risk of being electrocuted by a ground charge. Keep away from telephone and power lines, fences, trees and hilltops. Get off bicycles, motorcycles, and tractors.

If you are in a car

Stop the car and stay in it. Don't stop near trees or power lines that could fall.

DURING A FLOOD

Turn off basement furnaces and the outside gas valve. Shut off the electricity. If the area around the fuse box or circuit breaker is wet, stand on a dry board and shut off the power with a dry wooden stick.

Never try to cross a flooded area on foot. The fast water could sweep you away.

If you are in a car

Try not to drive through flood waters. Fast water could sweep your car away. However, if you are caught in fast-rising waters and your car stalls, leave it, and save yourself and your passengers.

DURING A WINTER POWER FAILURE

Turn the thermostat(s) down to minimum and turn off all appliances, electronic equipment and tools to prevent injury, damage to equipment and fire. Power can also be restored more easily when the system is not overloaded.

Use proper candle holders. Never leave lit candles unattended.

Don't use charcoal or gas barbecues, camping heating equipment, or home generators indoors.



Home generators are handy for backup electricity in case of an outage, but there are hazards to be aware of.

To operate a generator safely, follow the manufacturer's instructions, and always:

- ensure that the generator operates outdoors in well-ventilated conditions, well away from doors or windows;
- connect lights and appliances directly to the generator. If extension cords must be used, ensure they are properly rated cords approved by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

Direct installation of a generator to an existing electrical system should only be done by a qualified technician.

Know what to do after a disaster

RIGHT AFTER THE EMERGENCY, YOU MAY BE CONFUSED OR DISORIENTED. STAY CALM AND REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES.

HELP THE INJURED

Help anyone who is injured. Get your emergency survival kit (the first aid kit should be with it).

LISTEN TO THE RADIO

Listen to your local radio station on your battery-operated radio for instructions.

DON'T USE THE TELEPHONE

Don't use the telephone unless it is absolutely necessary. Emergency crews will need all available lines.



CHECK YOUR HOME

Check for damage to your home. Remember the following points:

- Use a flashlight – don't light matches or turn on the electrical switches if you suspect damage or smell gas.
- Check for fires, fire hazards or other household hazards.
- Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas, turn off the main gas valve, open windows and get everyone outside quickly.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately. Wear protective clothing. For major spills or leaks, call in professional help.
- Confine or secure your pets.
- Check on your neighbours, especially the elderly or people with disabilities.

IF YOU TURN OFF THE GAS, IT SHOULD ONLY BE TURNED BACK ON BY A PROFESSIONAL FROM THE GAS COMPANY.

Watch for hazards

POST-EARTHQUAKE HAZARD

Damaged buildings

Aftershocks

Water gets cut off

Power can go off

Tsunamis (huge ocean waves)

WHAT TO DO

Stay out of damaged buildings, even if they look okay.

Stay put.

Use emergency water from water heater, toilet tank, melted ice cubes.

If you live in an apartment, don't use the elevator. You'll get stuck in it.

If you live near the ocean, stay away from the waterfront.

POST-FLOOD HAZARDS

Contaminated drinking water

Contaminated dishes and utensils

Basement full of water

WHAT TO DO

Use bottled water or bring water to a rolling boil for ten minutes, or add one drop of non-perfumed chlorine bleach per litre of water, or three drops per litre of cloudy water, and allow it to stand for 30 minutes before consuming. (Water should still have a slight chlorine smell.)

Wash and sterilize dishes and utensils. Use boiling water or use a sterilizing solution of one part chlorine bleach to four parts water; then rinse dishes and utensils thoroughly.

Drain the water in stages, about a third of the volume of water per day. (Draining the water too quickly can structurally damage your home.)

OTHER HAZARDS

Food poisoning

Loose or dangling electrical wires

Broken sewer and water mains

Contaminated flood water in the basement

Watch for mould

WHAT TO DO

Check food supplies in refrigerator, freezers and cupboards for signs of spoilage. When frozen food begins to defrost, it should be cooked; otherwise it should be disposed of in accordance with the instructions from local health authorities.

Stay away. Advise the authorities if you can.

Advise the authorities if you can.

Disinfect every three days if the flood is severe and the house is occupied for an extended period. For the average home, mix two litres of liquid bleach into the flood water.

Mould is a health hazard. If mould is present, wear a face mask and disposable gloves. Anything that stays wet long enough will grow mould. Dry everything quickly to avoid future health problems.



Be ready to evacuate

IF THE EMERGENCY IS SERIOUS ENOUGH, YOU MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE YOUR HOME AND GO TO A NEARBY EVACUATION CENTRE (LIKE A SCHOOL GYM OR A COMMUNITY HALL).

IF YOU HAVE TO EVACUATE

- Leave immediately.
- Take your emergency survival kit with you.
- Listen to the radio and follow instructions from local emergency officials.
- If you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas and electricity.
- Make arrangements for pets.
- Wear clothes and shoes appropriate to conditions.
- Lock the house.
- Follow the routes specified by the officials. Don't take shortcuts. A shortcut could take you to a blocked or dangerous area.
- If you have time, leave a note telling others when you left and where you went. If you have a mailbox, you could leave the note there.
- If you are evacuated, sign up with the registration centre so you can be contacted or reunited with your family and loved ones.
- If you have to evacuate your home for a prolonged period during a winter power failure, drain the water from the plumbing system. Starting at the top of the house, open all taps and flush toilets several times, and open the drain valve in the basement. Drain your hot water tank by attaching a hose to the tank drain valve and running it to the basement floor drain. (If you drain a gas-fired water tank, the pilot light should be turned off – the local gas supplier should be called to re-light it!) Unhook washing-machine hoses and drain.



Expect emotional reactions

You won't "act like yourself" for a while

Most people caught in a disaster usually feel confused. They may tremble, feel numb, vomit or faint. Immediately after the disaster, they often feel bewildered, shocked, and relieved to be alive. These feelings and reactions are perfectly normal.



Later, many survivors sleep poorly, have no appetite, are angry with those around them, or panic at the slightest hint of a storm. Children might start thumb-sucking or bed-wetting. These feelings and reactions are perfectly normal too.

How to get back on track

Here are some suggestions to help get yourself and your family back on track after the disaster.

Talk about your feelings. Talk about what's happened.

Encourage your children to express their feelings. They may want to do this by drawing or playing instead of talking. Understand that their feelings are real. Recognize that when you suffer a loss, you may grieve. (Yes, you can grieve the loss of a wedding photo or your grandfather's favourite ring.) You may feel apathetic or angry. You may not sleep or eat well. These are normal grief reactions. Do give yourself and your family permission to grieve and time to heal.

How to help your children

Children exposed to a disaster can experience a variety of intense emotional reactions, such as anxiety, fear, nervousness, stomach aches, loss of appetite and other reactions. These are normal and temporary reactions to danger. Parents can help relieve such reactions by taking their children's fears seriously, by reassuring them, giving them additional attention and hugging them.

A CHILD WHO FEELS AFRAID IS REALLY AFRAID

After a disaster, children are most afraid that:

- the event will happen again;
- someone will get hurt or injured;
- they will be separated from the family; or
- they will be left alone.

So comfort and reassure them. Tell them what you know about the situation. Be honest but gentle.

Encourage them to talk about the disaster. Encourage them to ask questions about the disaster.

Give them a real task to do, something that gets the family back on its feet.

Keep them with you, even if it seems easier to look for housing or help on your own. At a time like this, it's important for the whole family to stay together.



Checklists

THINK OF ANY SPECIAL NEEDS THAT SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY MIGHT HAVE. INCLUDE ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT YOUR FAMILY WOULD NEED. HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS.

Babies/toddlers

- diapers, bottled milk, toys, crayons and paper

Other family members

- prescription medication, and extra eyeglasses. (Keep at least one week's supply of medication in your emergency kit, and include copies of prescriptions for your medicine and glasses.)

Pets

- dog/cat food



CHECKLIST: EMERGENCY FOOD AND WATER KIT

Have at least a three-day supply of food and water on hand. Choose ready-to-eat foods that your family likes. And choose food that doesn't need refrigeration.

WATER

- At least four litres per person per day – two for drinking and two for food preparation, hygiene and dishwashing.

FOOD

- Canned food: soups, stews, baked beans, pasta, meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruits
- Crackers and biscuits
- Honey, peanut butter, syrup, jam, salt and pepper, sugar, instant coffee, tea



REPLACE CANNED FOOD AND DRY GOODS ONCE A YEAR.

EQUIPMENT

- knives, forks, spoons
- disposable cups and plates
- manual can opener, bottle opener
- fuel stove and fuel (follow manufacturer's instructions and don't use a barbecue indoors)
- waterproof matches and plastic garbage bags

CHECKLIST: EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT

- flashlight and batteries (in case the lights go out)
- radio and batteries, or crank radio (so you can listen to news bulletins)
- spare batteries (for radio and flashlight)
- first aid kit
- candles and matches/lighter
- extra car keys and cash (including coins/cards for telephone)
- important papers (identification for everyone, personal documents)
- food and bottled water (see above)
- clothing and footwear (one change of clothes per person)
- blankets or sleeping bags (one blanket or sleeping bag per person)
- toilet paper and other personal supplies
- medication
- backpack/duffel bag (or something else for carrying the emergency survival kit in case you have to evacuate)
- whistle (in case you need to attract someone's attention)
- playing cards, games

Additional information

For more information on preparedness, please contact your local Red Cross Office at feedback@redcross.ca by email or visit www.redcross.ca on the Internet.

For general information or to order our self-help brochures, please contact:

The Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness

Public Affairs Division

122 Bank St., 2nd Floor, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0W6

Telephone: (613) 944-4875

Toll-free: 1-800-830-3118

Fax: (613) 998-9589

E-mail: communications@ocipep.gc.ca

Internet: www.ocipep.gc.ca

Please contact your provincial/territorial emergency management organization (EMO) for regional or local information on emergency preparedness.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Emergency Measures Organization

Telephone: (709) 729-3703

Fax: (709) 729-3857

Prince Edward Island

Emergency Measures Organization

Telephone: (902) 888-8050

Fax: (902) 888-8054

Nova Scotia

Emergency Measures Organization

Telephone: (902) 424-5620

Fax: (902) 424-5376

New Brunswick

Emergency Measures Organization

Telephone: (506) 453-2133

Toll-free: (800) 561-4034

Fax: (506) 453-5513

Québec

Direction générale de la sécurité civile et
de la sécurité incendie

Telephone: (418) 646-7950

Fax: (418) 646-5427

Toll-free Emergency Number: 1-866-776-8345

Emergency Number: (418) 643-3256

Or one of these regional offices:

- Bas-Saint-Laurent – Gaspésie –
Îles-de-la-Madeleine: (418) 727-3589
- Saguenay – Lac-St-Jean – Côte-Nord: (418) 695-7872
- Capitale Nationale – Chaudière –
Appalaches – Nunavik: (418) 643-3244
- Mauricie – Centre-du-Québec: (819) 371-6703
- Montréal – Laval – Laurentides –
Lanaudière: (514) 873-1300
- Montérégie – Estrie: (514) 873-1324
- Outaouais – Abitibi – Témiscamingue –
Nord-du-Québec: (819) 772-3737

Ontario

Emergency Management Ontario

Telephone: (416) 212-3468

Fax: (416) 212-3498

Manitoba

Emergency Measures Organization

Telephone: (204) 945-4772

Toll-free: 1-888-826-8298

Fax: (204) 945-4620

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Emergency Planning

Telephone: (306) 787-9563

Fax: (306) 787-1694

Alberta

Emergency Management Alberta

Telephone: (780) 422-9000

Toll-free in Alberta, dial 310-0000-780-422-9000

Fax: (780) 422-1549

British Columbia

Provincial Emergency Program (PEP)

Telephone: (250) 952-4913

Fax: (250) 952-4888

Northwest Territories

Emergency Measures Organization

Telephone: (867) 873-7785

Fax: (867) 873-8193

Yukon

Emergency Measures Organization

Telephone: (867) 667-5220

Fax: (867) 393-6266

Nunavut

Nunavut Emergency Management

Telephone: (867) 975-5300

Fax: (867) 979-4221

Towards a safer, more secure Canada

The Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness (OCIEPEP), an agency of the Department of National Defence, leads the Government of Canada's emergency and business continuity planning.

Through its programs and information products, OCIEPEP enhances the capacity of individuals, communities, businesses and governments to manage risks to their physical and cyber environments.

www.ocipep.gc.ca

SAFE GUARD

Safeguard is a national partnership that helps increase the public awareness of emergency preparedness in Canada.

Other titles in this self-help series include:

- Floods – What to do before and after
- Prepared for the Woods
- Prepare to Survive a Major Earthquake
- Preparing for the Unexpected
- Severe Storms
- Storm Surges
- Winter Power Failures
- Winter Driving – You, your car and winter storms