

City of Orillia
Guide to Emergency Preparedness



Guide to Family Emergency Preparedness

Preparing, surviving and recovering from a major disaster
Prepared by the
Community Emergency Management Coordinator

Emergency Planning

What is an emergency or disaster?

An emergency or disaster is a situation caused by forces of nature, accident or an intentional act that constitutes a danger of major proportions to life and property. It occurs with some degree of surprise and requires unusual and demanding response efforts. It isn't a matter of "whether" it will happen but "when" it will occur. The risk of a disaster is increasing due to:

- Increased population size and density
- Increased dependency on technology
- Increased amounts and transport of dangerous goods
- Increased world tension and terrorism
- Increasingly varied weather patterns

The Consequences of Disaster

Disasters affect individuals and families as well as organizations and communities:

- Breakdown in communication systems
- Injuries, medical concerns, or deaths
- Decreased ability/capacity of emergency services
- Loss of utility and other community services
- Limited supply of basic resources (e.g., food, water, fuel and shelter)
- Isolation or separation of family members (i.e., roads, highways and structures become impassable)
- Loss of control over ones house, business or community
- Evacuation of the family home
- Individuals may be needed to perform emergency work or community functions

Can you prepare for disasters? Yes!

Emergency Preparedness is making sure that resources are available, when needed, to effectively respond to disasters. This is a must at the community, organizational, business and family level because no community is ready to handle all the effects of a disaster as quickly and effectively as residents would desire. You and your family should, therefore, take the following steps:

- Consider your family's specific concerns. How much do you need community services and resources such as medical, utilities and transportation? What if these were not available?
- *Assess your home.* Walk through each room. Think about what could go wrong in a crisis. Consider loose objects, home hazards and poisons, prevention devices, escape routes, electronic equipment/appliances, utility shut off locations.
- Insurance: Make sure you speak with an insurance professional to insure that you have adequate coverage for all situations.
- Assess your community. What types of disasters are likely? What natural and technological disasters could happen in your area? Do you have a battery operated or crank radio which would enable you to receive warnings and instructions from your community on Jack FM 105.9 radio?

Introduction

Your best protection in a disaster, is knowing what to do.

Family Preparedness is the planning process a family takes to ensure they can survive a disaster. The Guide to Family Preparedness will help you and your family to prepare for and respond to disasters.

This information is intended as a guide and is not to replace training or local community preparedness guidelines.

Create Your Family Plan

- Identify the possible hazards
- Identify primary individual and family responsibilities for each major hazard.
- Involve all family members in the plan
- Prepare a survival kit and locate it in an obvious place. Be sure that all family members know when and how to get it
- Practice your plan. Have fire drills, practice evacuations, and make sure family members understand their roles

Children

Disasters have a big impact on children. Parents typically work or act more effectively when they know their children are secure. To make sure that children feel secure and useful, involve them in the family emergency planning process.

Essentially, children need the comfort of knowing that they will be cared for.

Preparation

Teach your children – according to their age:

- .How to identify hazards
- .How to evacuate and where to go. Children may hide or fear punishment in cases of disaster
- Basic survival skills in cases of fires, tornadoes or other disasters when adults may not be with them
- Where the survival kit is located
- How to reach an out-of area contact and about 9-1-1. Make sure children understand that during a disaster they may receive a busy signal or recording

Parents should:

- Know the emergency policies at your children's school, daycare, and activity groups
- Know where your children are or would be evacuated
- Know emergency numbers and how to find your children during a disaster
- Make sure caregivers are trained in emergency procedures and are aware of your family plan, key contacts, medical needs, and evacuation area
- Practice the plan with your children
- Add necessary items to your survival kit such as diapers, children's medications, toys, entertainment, special comfort items (e.g. blanket, stuffed animal, soother), extra milk or formula, bottles, special foods, etc.

During a Disaster

- You may need to go to evacuation shelters in order to meet your children's needs
- Know that evacuation procedures may take longer when children are involved
- Children may hide during disasters. Know the likely hiding spots
- During a disaster tell children what you know. Be honest but gentle
- Stay calm so that children stay calm
- Plan to keep children with you during a crisis. Discuss options with your employer
- Encourage children to talk about their experiences and feelings

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities represent a wide range of physical, intellectual and mental health issues – some easily identifiable, others not.

During a disaster persons with disabilities may experience:

- A need to deal with the event and its consequences as everyone else
- A fear of being trapped or unable to respond
- A need to overcome their “disability” in an unusual situation
- An inability to fully understand their situation or to communicate their needs
- A need to immediately educate responders and helpers who may be unfamiliar with persons with disabilities

Preparation

Consider the following in your planning process:

- Involve all persons in planning, ask for feedback, listen to suggestions
- Consider special evacuation needs and equipment such as ramps, ambulatory devices, etc.
- Practice evacuation procedures and other response drills to test your methods and give people confidence in their ability
- Register medical needs (e.g., continuous power, oxygen) with appropriate agencies
- Make sure emergency responders are aware of needs and abilities beforehand so that they can put these requirements into their planning
- Include necessary aids to daily living in the survival kit (e.g. batteries for special equipment, medications, personal hygiene items).

During a Disaster

- Ask the person what they need and how you can help
- Disabilities may hide injuries and medical conditions such as hypothermia and fractures
- Evacuation may be required sooner due to medical or daily needs
- Evacuation may take longer or require special equipment
- Take necessary aids and devices with you when you leave. Make sure the public shelter is ready to handle special requests before your arrive

Older Adults

Disaster planning must reflect the needs of older adults.

Preparation

- Involve senior family members in your plan. Their experience of living in a less complicated and technologically dependent world can be extremely valuable.

- If older adults are likely to be separated from you in times of disaster, have prearranged meeting places and share “out of province” contacts
- If members of your family live in senior housing or nursing homes, make sure you know their facility’s emergency policies and how to contact key individuals
- Think about hearing and sight impairments in your emergency planning (e.g., will smoke detectors be loud enough, would public address systems be heard, etc.)
- Practice evacuation plans to test how they work and make necessary changes
- Review your plans if health or living conditions change
- Add necessary items to your survival kit (medications, daily living aids such as hearing aids, glasses, denture care, and spare batteries for any devices)
- Register any health needs with appropriate agencies (e.g., continual power, oxygen)

During a Disaster

- Give seniors specific and realistic jobs. Use their strengths
- Injuries may be more common and cause more problems (fractured bones, lacerations, hypothermia, dehydration)
- Medical conditions may worsen due to stressful conditions (e.g. heart problems, asthma, arthritis, dementia).
- Evacuation may take longer and be required sooner due to health needs.
- Changes in routine and surroundings may be difficult and confusing.

Medical Needs

- Injuries and medical concerns are common during disasters. Easy access to advanced medical care may not be available.
- Ambulance services, clinics, and hospitals may be damaged.
- Medical staff may not be available or able to get to work.
- Medical supplies and resources may be depleted quickly.
- Response times and waiting periods for medical assistance will increase.
- Transportation links to medical aid may be destroyed (e.g. washed out bridges, impassable roads and impassable air evacuation due to weather).
- Medical facilities work on a triage basis during disasters. People with life-threatening but treatable injuries are treated first.

Pet Survival

Pets are a part of many families. Some preparation and planning for the care of pets should be considered.

Preparation

- Contact your veterinarian, Humane Society, or animal hospital for advice on pet boarding or arrangements in the case of disaster and evacuation
- Have an “out-of-area-contact” who could house your pet in an emergency
- Know which hotels and motels will allow pets

If pets are part of your family, add to your survival kit (depending on needs):

- Pet food and water
- Animal treats and toy
- Waste disposal system
- Bedding supplies
- Pet medications and first aid supplies
- Immunization records
- Travel cage, kennel
- Leash or tying device
- Ensure immunizations and pet records are up to date (pet shelters will not accept animals without immunizations)

At Work

The chances of a disaster occurring while you or members of your family are at work are high. Consider this in your emergency planning:

Preparation

- Participate in worksite drills and emergency exercises
- Know the warning systems in place at your worksite
- Educate yourself as to your roles/responsibilities during an emergency
- Know where you should go during an evacuation and who you should report to

Ask if your workplace has a phone number that family members can use for information on your welfare and location. Make sure the number is included in your family emergency plan.

Know where the work site first aid and emergency survival kits are as well as auxiliary power and emergency lighting.

- Identify hazards in your personal work space (heavy or loose objects, chemicals, etc.)
- Make sure your employer is aware of community volunteer duties which might require you to be unavailable for work during a disaster.

During a Disaster

- Follow instructions, emergency procedures and policies
- Make sure the right people know where you are and the extent of any injuries
- Wait for instructions and information before travelling. Trying to get home to check on family and house contents may put you and your family at increased risk.
- Know a contact number to phone to see if you are needed at work during a disaster

Food

Preparation & Preservation

Food supplies may be limited in a disaster due to:

- Damaged transportation links (you can't get to stores or stores can't get restocked)
- Store owners not able to open due to structural damage or inability to get staff in
- Contamination of food supplies
- Inability to store food appropriately (no power for refrigeration and heating)
- Limited money if banks and financial institutions become non-functional

Preparation

- Keep at least a three-day supply of food in your survival kit. In remote areas, keep more supplies
- Pick food that doesn't need refrigeration, cooking or a lot of preparation
- Choose lightweight, compact foods (e.g., dry noodles, granola)
- Keep foods your family likes to eat
- Prepare food on an "as needed" basis, considering the need to ration
- If you can get to your regular food supply, use it first. Frozen food will keep for 3 days in an unopened freezer. If perishable food has been at room temperature for more than 4 hours, throw it out. Don't risk food poisoning.
- Replace canned and dry goods once a year

Food Suggestions

- Canned or jarred foods and preserves (soups, stews, meats, fish, milk, fruits, vegetables)
- Dry goods (dried soups, juice crystals, dried fruit, powdered milk, smoked or dried meats, crackers, biscuits, rice, lentils, beans, pasta)
- High-energy foods (peanut butter, nuts, trail mixes, honey, raisins, dates, figs)
- Staples (sugar, salt, pepper, instant coffee, tea)
- Multi-vitamins
- Chocolate bars, cookies, candies

Water

You need to have enough non-contaminated water for your family.

Dehydration is a more common problem of disaster than starvation and can be avoided.

- Store two litres of water per person per day. In most areas a 3-day supply should be adequate
- Water should be stored in thoroughly washed sealed plastic containers
- Other sources of water include water heaters (for non-drinking water use), toilet tanks, ice cubes in freezers, liquid canned foods.

- You should also familiarize yourself with the location of your inside and outside water cut-off valves. In an emergency where water purity could be a concern, you can shut off your main water valve to protect the water in your hot water heater from contamination and use it as a source of clean water for bathing, toilet flushes, etc. Do not use as a drinking water source.

Water Purification

Contaminated water can cause disease. If the disaster response is long, you may need to purify water for use.

You should purify all potentially contaminated water before using it.

Boiling

A “Boil Order” may be issued in your community during a disaster. If such an order has been issued, do the following:

- Fill a large pot with water from the tap
- If there has been flooding, strain the water through cheesecloth, a sheet, a coffee filter, or other clean, porous material to remove as many solids as you can
- Bring the water to a rolling boil and keep it boiling for at least 1 minute

Disinfecting

As a last resort you can use household bleach to kill bacteria without the use of a heat source (always boil if possible). Bleach should be 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented, colour safe, or bleaches with added ingredients. Add 8 drops of liquid chlorine bleach for each gallon of water. Let the water stand for a half hour. If it gives off a slight chlorine odour and looks clear, it is safe to use.

If you do not smell chlorine, or if the water is still cloudy, add another 8 drops of liquid chlorine bleach and let it stand another half hour. If you have added bleach twice and the water still does not smell like chlorine, don't use water for drinking or cooking.

Keep bleach well away from food, children, and pets. Consider it a potential hazard. Water purification devices and tablets are a safe effective alternative to household bleach and can be bought at many camping and outdoor supply stores. Ensure they contain 5.25% sodium hypochlorite

Evacuation

In case of community disaster, you may need to leave your home and go to an evacuation centre or shelter due to unsafe conditions. If ordered to leave, do so immediately to ensure everyone's safety.

In some cases (power outage, storms, or floods) shelters may be set up for residents on a voluntary basis. The decision to leave should be made as a family with consideration for everyone's health and welfare needs. Families with young children, seniors or members with disabilities may need to evacuate sooner.

Listen to your local radio or television for evacuation instructions.

- Lock your house
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity prior to leaving if instructed to do so
- Make arrangement for pets
- If you have time, leave a note in a pre-determined spot telling other family members when you left and where you went
- Follow the routes specified by emergency officials. Short cuts or different roads could put you and your family at risk
- Sign in at the registration desk so you can be accounted for and easily located.

Consider Taking the Following:

- Your emergency survival kit
- Appropriate clothes and shoes for the conditions (changes of clothes for each family member)
- Toys, entertainment options (cards, puzzles, books)
- Documentation (for each family member)
- Medical cards/records
- Passport
- Social insurance numbers
- Bank account numbers
- Insurance policies
- Credit card numbers
- Certificates (birth, marriage)
- Important phone numbers
- Cash, change for phone calls, credit cards
- Medications required over extended period

Shelters

What to Expect

- Schools, community halls, or recreation centres commonly become evacuation centres or shelters during a disaster
- Food (cafeteria style) and water will be made available
- Bedding (cots, blankets, or mats) will be made available
- Washroom facilities are provided
- Basic medical needs (first aid) are available
- Privacy and quiet are limited as families live, eat and sleep together (typically in one area)
- Pets are often not allowed. In some areas, arrangements for their care may be made.

- Families are generally expected to look after themselves (e.g., organized baby-sitting is not usually provided)
- Community members with similar experiences, concerns and situations have a chance to talk to each other
- Community briefings and information updates are provided by emergency officials
- Counselling services may be available

Dangerous Goods

Dangerous goods are commonly transported by rail, road, water and pipelines. Incidents involving spills and exposures may occur.

Preparation

- Listen to your local radio or television for emergency warning
- Identify how close you are to highways, railways, pipelines and factories where toxic materials are produced or transported
- Have materials available to seal off your residence from airborne contamination. (Orillia Fire Department can advise)
- Identify key contact numbers to call for more information
- Be prepared to evacuate quickly

During an Incident

- Listen to local radio or television stations and follow all instructions
- Report strange smells or other hazards
- Stay away from the incident site! (What you can't see or smell can still harm you!)
- If outside, stay upstream, uphill or upwind of the incident. If in a car, close all windows and shut off fans or heaters.
- Be prepared to evacuate
- Close windows, shut vents, turn off fans and furnace (make your home airtight) before evacuating.
- Do not eat or drink any food or water that may have been contaminated
- Seek medical help for unusual symptoms

Fire

Fires are a leading cause of emergencies in the home. Preparation is your best defence.

Preparation

- Have a smoke detector and make sure it always has fresh batteries
- Make sure each family member knows how to use a fire extinguisher for small fires
- Draw a floor plan of you home on the back cover of this booklet. For each room, mark a primary and an alternate escape route.

- Each family member should be assigned certain duties and know the total fire escape plan
- Have a family meeting place where each member will go after escaping the fire. This avoids dangerous trips back into a burning home.
- Discuss how to get out of a smoke filled room. Crawl on hands and knees as close to the wall as possible to escape the smoke. Follow the wall as per your escape route until you exit safely. Practice these drills using a blindfold.
- Hold family fire drills at least every six months so your family can discuss, act out and make necessary changes to the plan.

During a Fire

Smoke is the biggest killer in fires.

- Yell “FIRE”! Let everyone in the house know about it
- Feel the temperature of the closed door as high up as you can
- If the door is hot, do not open it. Use the alternate escape route
- If the door is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open just a crack with your face away from the door.
- If the air is not hot, use the regular escape route
- Drop to hands and knees and crawl below the level of smoke
- Hold breath as much as possible. Breathe shallowly through nose and use shirt as a filter.
- STOP, DROP & ROLL if your clothing catches fire
- Go to neighbours and call the fire department
- Go to your meeting place and wait
- Once outside – stay out – DO NOT RE-ENTER!
- Remember – always close the door between the fire and the escape window. Always close the door behind you when entering or escaping a room in a fire.

Tornado/Severe Wind

A tornado is nature’s most violent form of storm activity producing spiralling winds between 120-450 km/hr. (75-280 miles/hr.) The forward motion of the funnel may be quite erratic at a forward speed of 30-45 km/hr. (18-27 miles/hr.) A tornado is recognizable by a funnel cloud hanging from the base of a dark, ominous looking storm cloud.

Watches and warnings

- A severe thunder storm warning may include the phrase “severe thunderstorms can produce tornadoes.” This does not mean there will be a tornado, but a tornado could develop.
- A tornado watch means that the conditions are right for a tornado. This is a “watch” only. Stay alert and listen to your radio.
- A tornado warning means that a tornado has touched down. Take precautions immediately and listen to your radio for updates.

Preparation

- Have a shelter area picked out. Store your survival kit here.
- Shelter should be easily accessible and offer protection from flying glass, debris and furniture.
- Shelters should be located near the basement wall in the most sheltered and deepest part of the basement. If no basement is available take cover in the smallest room or under heavy furniture. Avoid large halls, auditoriums, cafeterias, arenas or any building with large roof spans. Seek an inner hallway, washroom or closet.
- Abandon trailers or mobile homes in favour of a pre-selected shelter

During Storm Activity

- Use a battery/solar powered radio as a source of information
- Before the storm gets too severe, secure anything that might be torn loose or blown away.
- Turn off main electrical panels, gas and water valves if directed
- Stay away from windows and glass doors
- Avoid using the telephone
- Avoid travel
- If driving, get out of your vehicle and seek shelter under an overpass, in a ditch or ravine, away from your car.

Electrical Storms

Preparation

- Listen to local radio and television for updates, warnings or instructions
- Stay inside and if possible avoid travel
- Close windows and doors. Secure objects outside your home (e.g., patio furniture, garbage cans).
- Get children and animals inside
- Turn off unnecessary electrical appliances

During a Storm

- Stay inside and keep away from windows, doors, fireplaces, stoves, sinks, bathtubs or other electrical charge conductors.
- Turn off electrical appliances.
- Avoid using the telephone or any electrical equipment.
- If caught outside – find shelter in a low-lying area. Crouch down with your feet close together and head down. Don't lie flat on the ground.
- Keep away from utility lines, metal fences, trees and hilltops. Get off bicycles, motorcycles, or tractors.
- Do not go under trees.
- If in a car – stop the car away from trees or power lines and stay in the car until the storm is over.

Power Failure

In many emergencies, power may be lost.

Power failures may last for a few minutes, several hours or days.

Preparation

- If you have a fireplace – keep a good supply of fuel on hand.
- Consider installing an extra heater that does not require electricity.
- Keep antifreeze on hand to protect plumbing fixtures from freezing.
- Store boiled water if you have an electric water system.
- Ensure you have extra supplies of warm clothing and blankets.

During a Power Failure

- Remain calm and in place.
- Turn off any appliances and home entertainment equipment.
- Know the location of your Survival Kit, flashlight and batteries. Avoid using candles they can create a fire hazard.
- Turn on a battery/solar powered radio to find out what is happening in your area.
- Follow the directions of emergency authorities.
- Determine whether the phone system is operational (unless in an electrical storm).
- Report power failures to your local power company.

Power Outage and Traffic Signals

What should drivers do at a traffic signal in the event of a power failure?

If you approach an intersection where the traffic signals are inoperative (i.e. no signal is displayed), you are obligated by law to bring your vehicle to a complete stop before entering the intersection. Proceed with caution only when it is safe to do so.

If two or more vehicles approach an intersection from different streets at approximately the same time, the driver of each vehicle is expected to bring the vehicle to a complete stop before entering the intersection. As outlined in Section 135 of the Highway Traffic Act, the driver on the left must yield the right-of-way to the driver of the vehicle on the right. Proceed cautiously and use the intersection with all-way stop signs.

What should pedestrians do at a traffic signal in the event of a power failure?

A pedestrian who wishes to cross at an intersection with inoperative signals is expected to cross the intersection as if it were an intersection with all-way stop signs. If a pedestrian is in the intersection, drivers must yield the right-of-way to the pedestrian (Section 144 of The Highway Traffic Act). Although pedestrians in an intersection have the right-of-way, they must be very careful while crossing the road, particularly at night when visibility is reduced.

Floods

Preparation

Do you live in a flood-prone area (i.e., near streams, drainage channels, areas known to flood suddenly, or down stream from a dam)?

Have you flood-proofed your home? Keep valuables above ground level. Contact local officials regarding the use of sandbagging and prevention.

During Heavy Rains

- Listen to local radio or television stations for information
- Stay away from flood waters
- If told – turn off power and gas
- Get ready to evacuate
- Avoid the danger of crossing, on foot or by vehicle, any stream that is being flooded
- If your car stalls in a flooded area, abandon it immediately
- Stay away from and report broken or downed utility lines
- Store drinking water in a clean bathtub and containers
- Check with local authorities on drinking water purity
- Test drinking water before use
- Wash hands often when in contact with floodwater. Oil, gasoline, or bacteria may contaminate it.
- Do not use food that has come into contact with flood water

Snow/Ice Storms

Preparation

- Understand the storm warning system and terms used
- Learn signs of hypothermia and frost bite
- Stock sufficient heating fuel (e.g., wood, coal, oil, propane)
- Have a working alternative heat source with enough fuel
- Make sure fireplaces and flues are clean and safe to use
- Insulate walls, attics, doors, and windows
- Remove trees or branches that could damage your home or nearby utility lines if broken.
- Move vehicles to covered areas if time permits. Avoid parking under trees or power lines.
- Prepare for loss of power and utilities

During a Storm

- Listen to local radio and television for updates and instructions
- Conserve heating fuel by turning heat down and wearing extra clothing
- Watch for signs of hypothermia and frost bite
- Avoid unnecessary exposure to the elements
- Be cautious about frozen walkways and slippery footing when going out
- Consider public transportation or car pools if you must travel

Severe Weather Travel

Travelling in severe weather conditions can be very hazardous.

Survival Kits

An emergency survival kit should always be taken when travelling long distances or if there is the possibility of inclement weather. The kit should include:

- Matches
- Tin can
- Ground sheet
- Change of clothes
- Food rations
- Warm hat & mitts
- Candles
- Tissue
- Blankets
- Fire starter
- Maps
- Warm socks
- List of medications regularly needed
- Flashlight and batteries
- First-aid Kit
- Extra car keys and cash
- Bottled water
- Toilet paper and other personal items
- Medication
- Backpack/duffel bag (to hold all of the emergency survival kit items)
- Whistle (to attract attention, if needed)
- Playing cards, games

Before Leaving

Always let a family member or friend know you are leaving and give them the following information:

- Where you are going
- What route you are taking
- Any difficulties you expect
- How long you expect to be away
- When you expect to return.
- If travel is absolutely necessary in threatening weather and poor road conditions, be prepared. Listen to and heed road reports and warnings.

When Travelling

- Start with a full tank of gas
- Have a current road map
- Drive defensively and with caution
- Adjust your speed to road conditions
- If the going gets rough – don't press on – turn back or seek refuge.
- Keep on the main roads
- Keep your radio tuned to a local station for weather warnings

When you arrive at your destination after a long trip, notify your friend or family member to let them know that you've arrived.

If you are Stuck or Stalled

It is very important that you stay in the car, keeping dry, warm and protected from the weather.

- Stay calm and relaxed
- Avoid exposure or over exertion
- Keep fresh air in the car by opening a window approximately ½" on the side away from the wind.
- Ensure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow
- Run your engine sparingly
- Light a candle to provide warmth
- Set out warning lights or flares
- Keep watch for traffic or searchers

If you become aware of a family member's failure to return on time, immediately:

- Tell the police of the circumstances, departure time, and anticipated route. Request that they follow up.
- Give them any information regarding the reason for travel and destination.

Home Survival Kit

Survival Kits should be personalized according to individual/family needs or preferences. Once compiled the kit should be stored in an easily accessed and secure place that is known to all family members. Consider packaging portions separately so different sections of the kit can be easily accessed. Soft duffel bags or backpacks make transportation of kits easier.

Suggested Contents

- Water, 1 quart (litre)/adult/per day
- Food (see food section) a three-day supply is recommended. Water and food should be replaced once/year)
- Eating utensils
- Disposable cups and plates
- Can opener
- Utility knife
- A copy of this information
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Radio and spare batteries
- Extra car keys
- Cash (including change for pay phones) and credit cards or travellers cheques. You may not be able to access a bank or ATM.
- Documentation required for family members (stored in watertight and fireproof containers)
- Medical cards/records
- Passports
- Social insurance numbers
- Bank account numbers/investment statements
- Insurance policies
- Credit card numbers
- Certificates (birth, marriage)
- Bill receipts
- Hard copy back up of important computer records
- Seasonal change of clothing for each family member
- Rain gear, hat and mittens, work gloves
- Extra socks (consider wool or cotton fabrics)
- Footwear (sturdy boots or runners)
- One sleeping bag per person
- One blanket per person
- One whistle per person (distribute in case members are lost or need to attract attention of rescuers)
- Soap/liquid detergent
- Plastic bucket with lid (for latrine)
- Toilet paper and personal supplies
- Garbage bags

- First-aid kit
- Medications (all prescribed medications required over 72 hour period) and/or include a list of meds needed
- Over the counter medications
- Pain killers
- Fever control
- Anti-diarrhea
- Antacid
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full at all times, especially in the winter
- Consider family dispositions and likely needs
- Entertainment
- Games, playing cards, books, puzzles (avoid power or battery required items)

Optional

- Camp stove and stove fuel, waterproof matches in sealed container stored away from your residence.

Do not use gas-fuelled devices, like an oven, as an alternative heat source. Similarly, wood burning or liquid fuelled heating devices that are not designed to be used indoors. Do not use an outdoor barbecue in an enclosed area or inside your home. Although not recommended, if you do purchase a generator for stand-by electricity, please contact a qualified electrical contractor for proper installation and/or the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) for an inspection.

Recovery

For individuals and families who are adequately prepared for a disaster, recovery can begin almost as soon as disaster strikes.

Depending on the nature and severity of the disaster, recovery will need to occur on individual, family, community, provincial or national level(s).

Preparation

- Practice the emergency plans you have developed as you worked through this information.
- Know the risk and have adequate insurance policies. Know what your insurance will and will not cover.
- Keep copies of all your important documentation in a safe area outside your home (e.g., safety deposit box or with out-of-area relative).
- Have photos or a videotape of your home and belongings. Have a copy stored outside your home.

Clean-up Phase

Do not go back into the disaster area or your home until emergency authorities have deemed the area safe.

- Use a flashlight to assess the damage to your home. If you smell gas or an unusual odour, exit immediately and call authorities.
- Assess the damage systematically and thoroughly (see checklist).
- Call your insurance agency.
- Get information from emergency planning office on how to access government aid and relief.
- Keep records of all clean up and repair costs including hotels, meals, travel.
- Don't throw out damaged goods until an official inventory can be made by your insurance company or emergency services departments.
- Destroy or discard contaminated foodstuff.
- Get direction from authorities on how to decontaminate and clean, especially in flood and dangerous goods incidents.
- Determine what community services are available (e.g., transportation, schools, daycare, work place, stores, community resources).

Individual and family

- Seek medical attention for any lingering complaints, unattended wounds, etc.
- Expect to feel different for a while (e.g. confusion, numbness, shock, anger, relief at being alive, grief, are all normal reactions)
- Talk about your feelings
- Encourage children and family members to talk about their feelings
- Take advantage of available counselling
- Make sure all family members (including children) have a specific task to do. Do something that helps get back to normal.
- Make every effort to stay together as a family as much as possible. Make rebuilding a group effort.

Damage Checklist

Item

Damage

None

Repairable

Destroyed

Estimated Value

Appliances

Televisions

Stereo

Fridge

Stove

Freezer

Dishwasher

Microwave

Furnace

Water Heater

Computer

Video Camera

Other

Furniture

Beds

Dressers

Shelving

Couches

Chairs

Tables

Antiques

Paintings
Window coverings
Other
Personal
Clothing
Pictures
Documents
Equipment
Computer
Fax
Phone
Tools
Sports Equipment

Toys
Books
Collections
Other
Home office/hobbies
Furniture
Stock/inventory
Other

Building structure

Roof
Siding
Walls
Foundation
Windows
Doors

Garage/car port
Shed/out buildings
Barn
Fence
Plumbing
Heating system
Fireplace
Pool/hot tub
Outdoor furniture
Other

Vehicles

Car(s)
Motorcycle(s)
Tractor(s)
Bicycle(s)
Lawnmower(s)
Snow blower(s)
Snowmobile(s)
Other

Emergency Numbers

Emergency Services Out-Of-Area Contact*

Fire: _____ Name: _____

Police: _____ Address: _____

Ambulance: _____ Telephone (day): _____

Hospital: _____ (night): _____

Pharmacy: _____

Nearest Relative*

Family Physician: _____ Name: _____

Pediatrician: _____ Address: _____
Vet or Clinic: _____ Telephone (day) _____
(night) _____
Father (at work): _____
Mother (at work): _____ Meeting Location
Schools: _____ Outside house: _____
Care Provider: _____ Outside Community: _____
Other: _____

*Establish an out-of-area friend or relative as your "family contact". It is often easier to call long distance than locally during a disaster. This person can help inform and link family members. Make sure that your out-of-area contact and nearest relative knows that they are listed as the contact person.

Notes/Floor Plan