

# Emergency Preparedness For Your Home

Emergency situations are unpredictable. Are you prepared to deal with them? Do you know the hazards and risks to yourself and your community? You may remember some of these past emergencies:

- Naturally-caused events, such as the 1998 Ice Storm; 2003 SARS health emergency; 2006 tornadoes
- Technological failures, such as the 2003 power outage
- Human-caused situations, such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist event.

In Ontario, the responsibility for emergency management is shared among individuals and families, communities and municipalities and the governments of Ontario and Canada. We all have a role to play when disaster strikes. Additional resources may be requested by the community through Emergency Management Ontario (EMO). Visit [www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo) to learn more about the Provincial Emergency Response Plan.

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**EVACUATION INFORMATION CARDS** - Each person in your household should carry one of these with them at all times in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation.

Family Meeting Place Location	Family Contact Number/Address
<u>Outside Home</u>	Name:
	Relation:
Address:	Address:
City/Town:	City/Town:
Postal Code:	Postal Code:
Phone:	Phone:
<u>Outside Neighbourhood</u>	<u>Important Notes:</u>
Address:	Address:
City/Town:	City/Town:
Postal Code:	Postal Code:
Phone:	Phone:

# Step 1: Develop a Family Emergency Plan

Once you know what types of emergencies can happen in your community, develop a family emergency plan.

Arrange a meeting with your family to discuss why you need to prepare for an emergency. Talk about the types of emergencies that could happen and explain what to do in each case. For information about preparing for specific emergencies go to [www.emo.ca](http://www.emo.ca).

Everyone should know what to do in the event all family members are not together when an emergency happens. Discussing emergency situations ahead of time will help to reduce fear and anxiety and will help everyone know how to respond.

Pick two places to meet:

- Right outside of your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire. Outside of your neighbourhood in case you can't return home or are asked to leave your neighbourhood. Everyone must know the address and phone number of both of the meeting places.
- Develop an emergency communications plan. In case family members are separated from one another during an emergency, have a plan for getting back together. Separation is a possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school/daycare.
- Ask an out-of-town relative or friend to be your family contact. Your contact should live outside of your area. After an emergency it is often easier to make a long distance call than a local call. Family members should call the contact and tell him or her where they are. Everyone must know the contact's name, address and phone number.
- Discuss what to do if authorities ask you to evacuate. Before an emergency happens, make arrangements for a place to stay with a friend or relative who lives out of town.
- Make arrangements for the care of your pets in the event of an emergency. With the exception of service animals, pets are generally not permitted in emergency evacuation centres. Before an emergency happens, plan where you would take your pets if you could not take them with you to a public emergency evacuation centre.
- Teach all family members how to properly turn off the water, gas and electricity in your home. Keep any tools necessary to shut off these utilities near the shut-off valves. Do not turn off your utilities unless you suspect a leak or if you are instructed to do so by authorities. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.
- Take an emergency first aid course and a CPR class from a recognized provider, such as Canadian Red Cross or St. John Ambulance.

# Step 2: Learn How to Evacuate

Evacuation is a protective action that may be ordered by emergency officials when there is a significant threat posed to a specific area or community. Causes of an evacuation could include a natural, accidental or human-caused disaster such as a chemical release, nuclear incident or severe weather.

## **When you should evacuate:**

Evacuate only when instructed to do so by your local emergency officials. In some cases it may be safer to remain inside (shelter-in-place). If ordered to evacuate listen to media reports to learn about areas being evacuated and which routes are safest to take.

## **How will I know to evacuate?**

Evacuation orders are typically broadcast through the media or delivered directly to homes and businesses by emergency responders, such as the police. To learn more about notification in your community, please contact your local Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC), Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief (DES/FC), or Township of North Frontenac.

## **What should you do if ordered to evacuate?**

Offer to assist neighbours who may not be able to evacuate on their own. If possible, make these arrangements in advance. Take your family emergency survival kit, important documents (e.g., medical and vaccination records) and your personal valuables (e.g., cash, credit cards). Evacuate the area affected by the emergency exactly as directed. Remain calm, do not speed and obey official directions as some roads may be closed or rerouted.

Don't take shortcuts. Doing so might lead you to a blocked or dangerous area. If evacuating during a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incident, keep your car windows and vents closed and air-conditioner turned off. During some evacuations, you may be asked to report to a reception centre. These may be set up to check people and vehicles for contamination, record evacuee contact information or arrange for temporary housing. Avoid using the telephone unless you are reporting an emergency or it is absolutely necessary. Emergency responders and those who need immediate emergency assistance will need all available lines. Listen to media reports to stay informed about further announcements from your local emergency officials.

# Step 3: Prepare an Emergency Survival Kit

Emergencies and disasters can happen at any time. This could mean that utilities are out, roads are closed and we can't get the crucial supplies we need. Local, provincial and federal officials prepare for emergencies, and so can you.

Being prepared for an emergency includes the preparation of an emergency survival kit. An emergency survival kit contains all of the basic items you need to remain comfortable for at least **three days** immediately after or during an emergency.

It is important the contents of your emergency survival kit are kept all together in an easy to carry container or bag in the event you have to leave your home as a result of an emergency. This will ensure you have all of your basic supplies with you. Your emergency survival kit should be kept in an easy-to-reach location and everyone in your family should know where it is stored.

If you are ever in an emergency situation, **stay calm**. People have survived three days without water and three weeks without food. Your home can retain heat for up to three hours in winter.

The **Emergency Survival Checklist** below outlines the basic items every individual should have:

- Flashlight and batteries
- Radio and batteries or crank radio (so you can listen to news bulletins)
- Spare batteries (for radio and flashlight)
- First-aid kit
- Telephone that can work during a power disruption
- Candles and matches/lighter
- Extra car keys and cash - Banks and ATMs will not be operating if there is a power outage
- Important papers (identification)
- Non-perishable food (ready-to-eat items that do not require refrigeration)
- Manual can opener
- Bottled water - At least four litres per person per day should be allocated - two for drinking and two for food preparation, hygiene and dishwashing. Keep a supply of water purification tablets on hand as well.
- Clothing and footwear
- Blankets or sleeping bag
- Toilet paper and other personal supplies such as shampoo, hairbrush, toothbrush and toothpaste, soap and a towel and face cloth (one for each person)
- Medication and extra eye glasses; spare batteries for medical appliances and an extra oxygen cylinder if needed. (Keep at least one week's supply of medication in your emergency kit, and include copies of prescriptions for your medicine and glasses)
- Backpack/duffle bag
- Whistle (to attract attention, if needed)
- Playing cards, games
- Disposable plates, cups and cutlery
- Fuel stove and fuel (follow manufacturer's instructions and do not use a barbecue indoors)
- Plastic garbage bags
- Pocket knife or multi tool
- **Pets** - Include a three-day supply of pet food and water

Remember that families with babies and toddlers will have additional needs. Remember to include things like diapers, baby food and formula, bottles/sippy cups, toys, crayons and paper etc.

**Note: Consume and replace canned food and dry goods once a year.**

# Step 4: Car Emergency Kit Checklist

Items you should pack in your car emergency kit include:

- Shovel
- Sand, salt or kitty litter
- Traction mats
- Tow chain
- Compass
- Cloth or roll of paper towels
- Warning light or road flares
- Extra clothing and footwear
- Emergency food pack
- Axe or hatchet
- Booster cables
- Ice scraper and brush
- Road maps
- Matches and a "survival" candle in a deep can (to warm hands, heat a drink or use as an emergency light)
- Fire extinguisher
- Methyl hydrate (for fuel line and windshield de-icing)
- Flashlight
- First-aid kit with seatbelt cutter
- Blanket (special "survival" blankets are best)

# Pets and Emergencies

Pets are part of our families. During an emergency situation, it is important to know how to keep our animal companions safe. Emergencies can happen at any time, so prepare today. Assemble a pet emergency kit and make arrangements for your pet in the event that you must evacuate.

## Pet Emergency Kits

- Prepare an emergency kit for your pet. Be sure you have:
- Food, potable water, bowls, paper towel and a can opener
- Blanket and a small toy
- Sturdy leash/harness
- Cat litter/pan (if required) and plastic bags
- Carrier for transporting your pet
- Medications and medical records (including vaccinations)
- Current photo of your pet in case your pet gets lost
- Information on feeding schedules, medical or behavioral problems in case you must board your pet
- Up-to-date ID tag with your phone number and the name/phone number of your veterinarian
- Copy of licence (if required)
- Muzzle (if required)

## Pets And Evacuations

If safety permits, take your pet with you! Pets should not be left behind during an evacuation, as they may be injured, lost or even killed as a result of the emergency. Remember to take your pet emergency kit with you when you evacuate.

It is important to note that some evacuation centres may not accept pets, with the exception of service animals (e.g., guide-eye dogs). Please do research ahead of time to ensure that you are not separated from your animal:

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area and check their policy on accepting pets during an emergency.

- Ask friends and relatives outside your immediate area if they could shelter your pets in an emergency.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency (include a 24-hour phone number).
- Record this information on a sheet and keep it in your pet emergency kit. Review it regularly to ensure the information is accurate.

You may not be at home when an evacuation order is issued. In advance of an emergency, ask a trusted neighbour to evacuate your pet if need be, and meet you in a prearranged location. This individual should have a key to your home, know where the pet emergency kit is located, be comfortable with your pet and, more importantly, know where your pet is likely to be.

### **Returning Home**

In the days following an evacuation, don't let your pet go outside unattended. Familiar scents and landmarks may have changed and your pet may get easily confused or lost. If there has been damage to your property, be aware that there could be sharp materials, electrical wires or other hazards in and around your home. Inspect your property carefully before allowing your pet to enter.

Remember, the behaviour of your pet may be different after an emergency. Monitor your pet and contact your veterinarian if you are concerned.