

Emergency Preparedness

Communications

Planning

Home and School

Disasters

Coping

Guidebook
En!qepook

"Expect the Unexpected"

Guidebook Contents

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PROPER USE OF THE 9-1-1 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER AND NON EMERGENCY NUMBERS

The 9-1-1 emergency number provides instant access to emergency services and should be used only for immediate police, fire and ambulance response.

Please use the system correctly. If the service is flooded with non-emergency calls, then true emergency calls will have more difficulty getting through.

During an emergency, residents may become overwhelmed and may tie up the emergency service with non-emergency calls.

Do not call 9-1-1:

- to locate relatives during an emergency.
- to ask about the availability of gas at local pumps during an emergency.
- to find out the location or availability of shelters and other services during an emergency.

These calls, though important, could be handled through the non-emergency numbers listed on this page. Using the non-emergency numbers leaves the 9-1-1 service available to handle the calls it was designed to serve.

When a situation requires the immediate response of: police, firefighting and/or ambulance personnel, call 9-1-1. Some examples:

When should you call 9-1-1?

- to report a fire
- save a life
- stop a crime

Non-Emergency Numbers

York Region

1-877-464-9675

Public Health

Health Connection...800-361-5653

York Region Health Services...905-895-4511

Police

York Regional Police

Newmarket / Aurora / E. Gwillimbury / Mt. Albert /
Keswick ... 905-895-1221

Richmond Hill / Oak Ridges / King... 905-773-1221

Markham / Stouffville / Thornhill /

Vaughan...905-881-1221

Pefferlaw / Sutton ...705-437-1221

Fire

Aurora...905-727-1109

East Gwillimbury...905-895-9222

Georgina...905-476-5167

King City...905-883-6442

Markham...905-477-7000

Newmarket...905-895-9222

Nobleton...905-859-0522

Richmond Hill...905-883-5444

Schomberg...905-939-2283

Vaughan...905-832-8506

Whitchurch-Stouffville...905-640-3050

Hospitals

Markham / Stouffville (Markham)...905-472-7000

York Central (Richmond Hill)...905-883-1212

York County (Newmarket)...905-895-4521

DURING A DECLARED EMERGENCY IN YORK REGION,
CALL 1-877 YORK HLP, (1-877-967-5455),
FOR INFORMATION THAT IS NOT 9-1-1 RELATED

YOUR IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Out of province contact: Name _____
City _____ Province _____
Telephone (Day/Evening) _____

Local contact: Name: _____
Telephone (Day/Evening) _____

Nearest relative: Name _____
City _____
Telephone (Day/Evening) _____

Family work numbers:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Emergency Telephone Numbers **In a life-threatening emergency, dial 9-1-1.**

Police Department _____

Fire Department _____

Hospital _____

Family Physician _____

Poison Information 1-800-268-9017

Emergency Reunion Locations

1. Outside your home _____

2. Away from the neighbourhood, in case you cannot return home,
please meet at:

Address _____

Telephone _____

Route to try first _____

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Plan for emergencies

PLAN FOR IT

Disasters or emergencies can occur in many forms, anywhere and at anytime. Floods, tornadoes and chemical spills can strike any community, including ours.

If you're unprepared for a disaster, it can shatter your life. If you are prepared, you can be a survivor - not a victim.

Victims believe that major disasters occur in someone else's neighbourhood. Victims don't plan for emergencies. So when disaster strikes, victims are overwhelmed by stress, trauma and injury.

Survivors expect the unexpected and plan for it. They know what to do in a crisis. When disaster strikes, survivors are in better control and get back on their feet quickly.

Many communities are not equipped to handle all the demands of a disaster. Help your community by preparing yourself.

Be prepared: 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. Don't be partners with panic. Have a 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. 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 guidebook, and act on its suggestions. Take a first aid course, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

LEARN ABOUT DISASTERS.

Find out what type of disasters can happen in your community. Know what to expect during each disaster.

LOOK AT YOUR 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. Secure objects that could tip and start a fire: water heater, gas appliances. If you

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

POST THE 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 that might occur in your area.

PREPARE A FAMILY DISASTER SURVIVAL KIT.

Have a family disaster survival kit that will keep you and your family self-sufficient in your home for at least 3 days. Make sure everyone knows where to find the emergency survival kit. (Check the Family Disaster Survival Kit Section on page 8 in this guide.)

KEEP A SMALLER KIT IN YOUR CAR.

A blanket, extra clothing, a candle and matches can save your life. (Check the Car Survival Kit Section on page 10 in this guide.)

OTHER SUGGESTIONS.

Here are some other steps that can help in case of a disaster.

PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

Living in a community can require assistance in the event of a major disaster, due to mobility problems, or physical, psychological or sensory disabilities. Persons who are unable to respond independently to an emergency situation, which requires them to evacuate their homes, should register in advance for assistance with their municipal emergency measures organization.

ELECTRIC LIFE SUPPORT.

If a member of the household is bedridden and requires constant medical care or has electrical life support equipment at home, discuss this NOW with the family physician or the local emergency measures organization.

HOME HEALTH CARE PATIENTS.

Persons who receive home health care should discuss emergency plans with their caregiver or home care

agency. They should also check with their physician if prior arrangements would be necessary for evacuation to a hospital.

Persons receiving care and personal support in their homes from the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) of York Region should discuss emergency plans with their CCAC Case Manager and their home care agency.

CHOOSE AN OUT-OF-PROVINCE FAMILY CONTACT.

Choose someone in another province to be your family’s contact, if possible. After the disaster, call your family contact if you get separated from your family. Make sure everyone memorizes this person’s name and telephone number.

HAVE A SHOW AND TELL.

If you live in a house or mobile home, teach members of your family where and how to shut off the water, electricity and gas supply. Make easy-to-see signs to place near the breaker panel (or main circuit breaker), gas and main water supply.

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. The elevator may not work if the power goes out.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY’S EMERGENCY PLANS.

Your childrens’ 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 be reunited.

BEWARE OF POTENTIAL EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.

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

KNOW WHAT TO DO AFTER A DISASTER.

Immediately following the emergency, you may be confused or disoriented. Stay calm and remember the following procedures.

HELP THE INJURED.

Use your first-aid kit (See the Family Disaster Survival Kit section on Page 8 in this guide).

LISTEN TO THE RADIO OR TELEVISION.

Listen to your local radio or television station for instructions. A battery-powered radio will still work if the power is out.

DON’T USE THE TELEPHONE.

Don’t use the telephone (including cellular telephones) unless it is absolutely necessary. Emergency crews will need all available lines.

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; these are usually located in a school or community hall.

IF YOU HAVE TO EVACUATE:

- Listen to the radio or television and follow instructions from local emergency officials.
- If you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas and electricity.
- Leave immediately.
- Take your family disaster survival kit with you.
- 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.
- Make arrangements for pets. Do not take them to a shelter.
- 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.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT A CENTRE:

- Make sure to register yourself and your family members. If anyone needs to contact you, officials will know where you are.
- Remember that everyone is feeling stressed, and noise and confusion will add to the stress level.
- Respect others.
- Find out what arrangements are being made for news updates and information sharing. Try to keep yourself informed about changing conditions and know what to expect.

- Meals will likely be provided, although it may take time to get organized.
- Many shelters will be able to provide a place to sleep. If not, sleeping arrangements will be organized.
- Emergency clothing supplies will be arranged.
- Support and personal counselling will be provided to help people deal with their emotional reactions to the stress of an emergency.
- Lost children, or those who cannot easily be reconnected with parents, will be supervised and cared for.
- Do not bring pets unless otherwise indicated. Be prepared to make other arrangements (e.g., boarding kennels).

PRACTICE AND MAINTAIN YOUR PLAN.

Disasters can happen anytime and anywhere. When disaster strikes, you may not have much time to respond. A highway spill of hazardous material could mean instant evacuation, or a winter storm could confine you and your family at home for days.

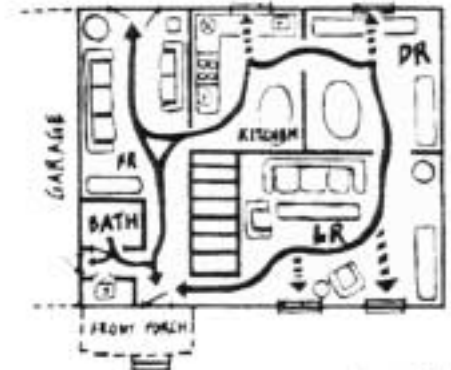
HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR HOME ESCAPE PLAN

In a fire or other emergency, you may need to evacuate your house, apartment or mobile home on a moment’s notice. You should be ready to get out fast.

Develop an escape plan by drawing a floor plan of your residence. Using a black or blue pen, show the location of doors, windows, stairways, and large furniture. Indicate the location of emergency supplies (Disaster Supplies Kit), fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, collapsible ladders, first aid kits and utility shut off points. Next, use a coloured pen to draw a broken line charting at least two escape routes from each room. Finally, mark a place outside of the home where household members should meet in case of fire.

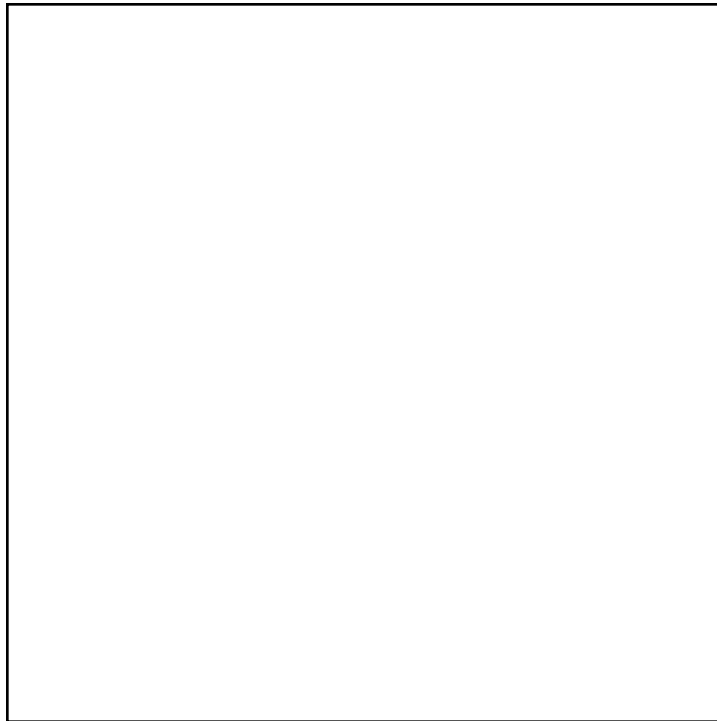
Be sure to include important points outside such as garages, patios, stairways, elevators, driveways and porches. If your home has more than two floors, use an additional sheet of paper. Practice emergency evacuation drills with all household members at least two times each year.

Example:

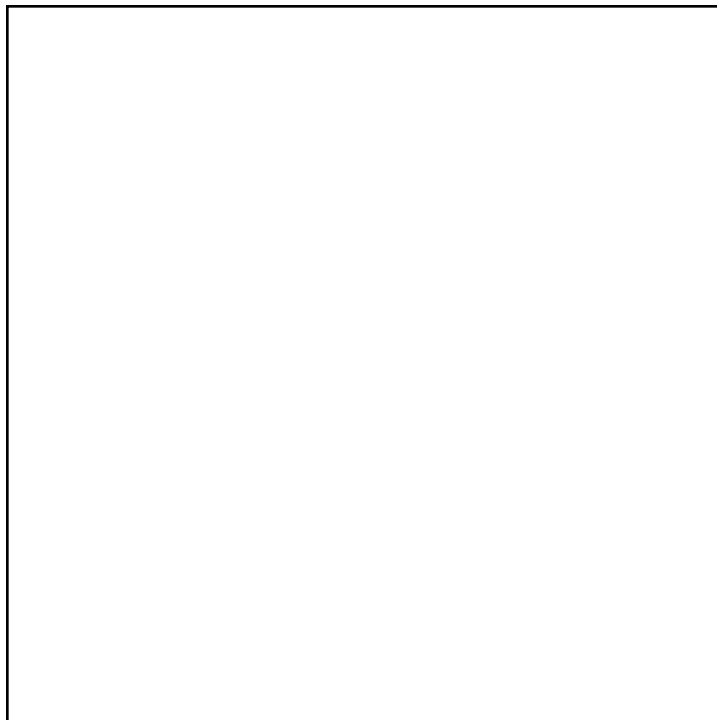


	Normal Exit Route
	Emergency Exit Routes
	Fire Extinguisher
	Smoke Detectors
	Disaster Supplies Kit
	Doors
	Collapsible Ladder
	Reunion Location (Outside)
	Stairways
	Utility Shut Off
	Windows
	First Aid Kit

**FLOOR PLAN:
Floor One (Main Floor)**



Floor Two



FAMILY DISASTER SURVIVAL KIT

In the event of:

FLASH FLOODS HAZARDOUS - MATERIALS SPILL WINTER STORM – FIRE – HURRICANE EARTHQUAKE – TORNADO

After a disaster, local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. Help could arrive in hours, or it may take days. Would your family be prepared to cope with the emergency until help arrives?

Prepare for disaster before it strikes. Assemble a **Family Disaster Survival Kit**. When disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. If you've gathered supplies in advance, your family can manage an evacuation or home confinement.

To prepare your kit:

- Review the checklist below.
- Gather and store the supplies that are listed in an easily accessible area.
- Assemble your disaster survival kit.

SUPPLIES

There are six basics you should stock in your home: water, food, first aid supplies, tools and supplies, clothing and bedding, and special items. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container-suggested items are marked with an asterisk (*). Possible containers include:

- A large, covered trash container
- A camping backpack
- A duffel bag

WATER (Also See Preparing an Emergency Water Supply)

Store water in plastic containers such as clean, soft drink bottles or purchase sealed bottled water in bulk. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two litres of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and people with illnesses will need more.

** place in easy to carry container*

Store four litres of water per person per day (two litres for drinking, two litres for food preparation/sanitation)*.

Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household.

Store purification tablets or chlorine bleach and an eyedropper to disinfect water.

FOOD (Also See Preparing an Emergency Food Supply)

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno or other heat source. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

*Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables.
- Canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water).
- Staples such as: sugar, salt, pepper, spices.
- High-energy foods (peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix).
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets.
- Comfort /stress foods - cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, instant coffee, tea bags, hot chocolate.

FIRST AID KIT * should include:

- First Aid Manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 5-centimetre (2-inch) sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 10-centimetre (4-inch) sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages (3)
- 5-centimetre (2-inch) sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 7.5 centimetre (3-inch) sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic or antiseptic towelettes
- Thermometer



- Tongue depressor (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)

NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- Pain relievers (i.e., acetaminophen)
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Laxative
- “Epipen” for allergic reactions

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Toothpaste and brushes
- Feminine napkins
- Cotton swabs
- Diapers and wipes
- Dental floss
- Soap and shampoo
- Deodorant

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

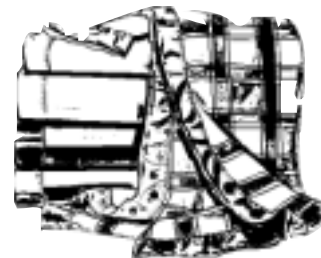
- Mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils*
- Emergency preparedness manual*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries*
- Flashlight and extra batteries*
- Cash or traveller’s cheques, credit cards, change*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
- Fire extinguisher (small canister, ABC type)
- Tube tent
- Duct tape
- Pliers
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminium foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of your community (for locating shelters)*
- Toilet paper, towelettes*
- Soap, liquid detergent*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation use)

* place in easy to carry container

- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Household chlorine bleach, unscented
- Hammer and nails/crowbar
- Lantern and fuel, candles
- Emergency blanket
- Mosquito repellent
- Rope
- Shovel

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.



- Sturdy shoes or work boots*
- Rain gear*
- Blankets or sleeping bags*
- Hat and gloves, scarves
- Thermal underwear
- Sweaters

SPECIAL ITEMS

Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

For baby*

- Formula with extra sterile water to mix (if powdered or concentrate)
- Bottles
- Disposable diapers
- Diaper wipes
- Petroleum jelly
- Extra clothing (as babies may soil more clothing than older children)
- Snowsuit if cold
- Medications
- Toys

For children and adults*

- Heart and high blood pressure medication-or any other relevant medications
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Denture needs
- Extra eye glasses
- Hearing aids and batteries
- An extra set of car & house keys
- Entertainment – games and books

For people with mobility problems*

- Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, medication, catheters, food for guide or service dogs, plus other special equipment you might need.
- A list of family physicians and the relative or friend who should be notified if you are injured.
- A list of the style and serial numbers of medical devices, such as pacemakers.
- Store back-up equipment, such as a manual wheelchair, at a neighbour's home, school or your workplace.
- Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near your bed or chair so you can get to it quickly if there is a fire.
- Important family documents. Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container or a bank safety deposit box. Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds.
- Passport, social insurance cards, health card, immunization records.
- Bank account numbers.
- Credit card account numbers and companies.
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers.
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates).
- Photos of family members in case you are separated in an emergency.

SUGGESTIONS AND REMINDERS

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members.
- Keep the Car Survival Kit in your car (See Car Survival Kit section on this page).
- Keep items in air-tight plastic bags.
- Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh.
- Rotate your stored food every six months.
- Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

CAR SURVIVAL KIT

Every driver should carry a survival kit in his or her vehicle. Here are some important items to consider:



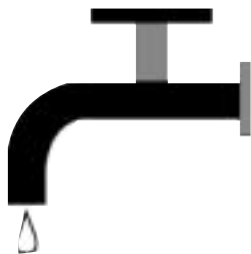
- Booster cables. The thicker the better. Look for four or six-gauge cables.
- Vehicle fluids. These include windshield washer fluid, gas-line antifreeze, motor oil, transmission oil, power steering fuel, brake fluid, anti-freeze, and rags for wiping dipsticks, so fluid levels can be checked properly.
- An approved container able to hold up to four litres of gasoline.
- Emergency flares. If you ever have to use them, remember to place them at least 15 metres away from your car to give other drivers adequate warning of the problem.
- Sand, salt or kitty litter during winter. This comes in handy when stuck and wheels are spinning on ice.
- Emergency food pack.
- Shovel and axe or hatchet.
- A mini air compressor to help inflate a flat tire and/or puncture seal gels.
- A tire gauge for measuring the air pressure in your tires.
- Spare fuses. Carry an assortment that includes at least one of 7.5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 amp fuses.
- A flashlight and spare batteries.
- Tool kit, including a good quality screwdriver set with a flat head, Philips head, Robertson head, and a Torx head, pliers, small hammer, utility knife, ratchet socket set, a four-way wrench, Vice-Grip pliers, rolls of electrical and duct tape.
- First aid kit.
- A blanket;(the special "survival " blankets are best).
- An emergency candle and camping matches.
- Road maps
- Ice scraper and brush
- Fire extinguisher (ABC type)

Always remember to keep your vehicle serviced regularly. Keep your gas tank at least half full. Drive carefully.

* place in easy to carry container

PREPARING AN EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY

In a disaster, you might be unable to get food; water and the electricity supply could be interrupted for days. By preparing emergency provisions, you can turn what could be a life-threatening situation into a manageable problem.



WATER: THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY

Stocking water reserves and learning how to purify contaminated water should be your top priority in preparing for an emergency. You should store at least a three-day supply of water for each member of your family. Everyone's needs will differ, depending upon age, physical condition, activity, diet and climate. A normally active person needs to drink at least two litres of water each day. Hot environments can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and people who are ill will need more. You will need additional water for food preparation and hygiene. Store at least four litres per person per day.

If supplies begin to run low, remember: never ration water. Drink the amount you need today, and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

How to Store Emergency Water Supplies

Store your water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fibreglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held toxic substances since tiny amounts may remain in the container's pores. Hard plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles, are best. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums.

Before storing your water, treat it with a preservative, such as chlorine bleach, to prevent the growth of micro-organisms. Use liquid bleach that contains 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented bleaches, colour-safe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners. Some bleach containers warn, "Not for Personal Use." You can disregard these warnings if the label states sodium hypochlorite is the only active ingredient and if you use only the small quantities in the instructions that follow.

Hidden Water Sources in Your Home

If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use water in your hot-water tank, in your plumbing and in ice cubes. As a last resort, you can use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl), but purify it first.

To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the highest faucet in your house and draining the water from the lowest one.

To use the water in your hot-water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off, and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve and turning on a hot-water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty.

Do you know the location of your incoming water valve? It is normally located in the basement. You'll need to shut it off to stop contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines.

Emergency Outdoor Water Sources

You can use these outdoor sources, but purify the water before drinking it. Avoid water with floating material, an odour or dark colour.

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

Four Easy Ways to Purify Water

In addition to having a bad odour and taste, contaminated water can contain micro-organisms that cause diseases such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid and hepatitis. You must purify all water of uncertain purity before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene.

There are many ways to purify water. None are perfect. Often the best solution is a combination of methods. Before purifying, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towel or clean cloth.

Purification methods

These measures will kill microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts, and most other chemicals.

1. Boiling is the safest method of purifying water.

Bring water to a rolling boil for five minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring it back and forth between two containers. This will also improve the taste of stored waters.

2. Chlorination uses liquid chlorine bleach to kill micro-organisms. Add two drops of bleach per litre of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not smell of chlorine at that point, add another dose and let stand another 15 minutes.

If you do not have a dropper, improvise one using a spoon and a square-ended strip of paper or thin cloth about 5 centimetres (1/4 inch by 2 inches). Put the strip in the spoon with an end hanging down about 1 centimetres (1/2 inch) below the scoop of the spoon. Place bleach in the spoon and carefully tip it. Drops of the size of those from a medicine dropper will drip off the end of the strip.

3. Purification tablets release chlorine or iodine.

They are inexpensive and available at most sporting goods stores and some drugstores. Follow the package directions. Usually one tablet is enough for one quart of water. Double the dose for cloudy water.

4. Water purification devices. Several water purification devices can be purchased that filter many impurities from water. Follow the instruction manual, it contains important information on the safe use and maintenance of these devices.

PREPARING AN EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLY



Short Term Food Supplies

Although it is unlikely that an emergency would cut off your food supply for three days, you should prepare a supply that will last that long.

The easiest way to develop a three-day stockpile is to increase the amount of basic foods you normally keep on your shelves.

Storage Tips

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot in the house, in a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans carefully so that you can close them in tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in airtight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or airtight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

Nutrition Tips

During and immediately after a disaster, it will be vital that you maintain your strength. So remember:

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two litres a day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.

When Food Supplies Are Low

- You don't need to go out and buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods, dry mixes and other staples on your cupboard shelves. In fact, familiar foods are important. They can lift morale and give a feeling of security in times of stress. In addition, most canned foods do not require cooking, water or special preparation.
- If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an extended period and without any food for many days. Food, unlike water may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women, diabetics and those with special needs.
- If your water supply is limited, try to avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods, since they will make you thirsty. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole-grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content.

Special Considerations

As you stock food, take into account your family's unique needs and taste. Try to include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition. Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking are best.

Individuals with special diets and allergies will need particular attention, as will babies, toddlers and the elderly. Nursing mothers may need liquid formula, in case they are unable to nurse. Canned foods, juices and soups may be helpful for the ill or elderly.

Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils, and don't forget non-perishable foods for your pets.

Shelf Life of Stored Food

Here are some general guidelines for rotating emergency foods:

Don't store longer than six months:

- Powdered milk (boxed)
- Dried fruit (in sealed container)
- Dry, crisp crackers (in sealed container)
- Potatoes

May be stored indefinitely (in proper containers and conditions):

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt | <input type="checkbox"/> White Rice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dried Corn | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-carbonated drinks | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable Oils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soybeans | <input type="checkbox"/> Bouillon products | <input type="checkbox"/> Powdered milk (in nitrogen-packed cans) |

Don't store longer than one year:

- Canned meat and condensed vegetable soups
- Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
- Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (in containers)
- Peanut butter & jams (if seal unbroken)
- Hard candy, chocolate bars and canned nuts

If there is a Power Failure...

1. First, use perishable food and foods from the refrigerator.
2. Then use foods from the freezer. To minimize the number of times you open the freezer door, post a list of freezer contents on it. In a well-filled, well-insulated freezer, foods will usually still have ice crystals in their centres (meaning the foods are safe to eat) for possibly up to three days.
3. Finally, begin to use non-perishable foods and staples.

How to Cook if the Power Goes Out

For emergency cooking outdoors only, you can use a barbecue, a charcoal grill or camp stove. You can also heat food indoors using candle warmers, chafing dishes and fondue pots. Caution! The cooking area should be safely vented to prevent Carbon Monoxide poisoning. Canned foods can be eaten right out of the can. If you heat it in the can, be sure to open the can and remove the label first.

PREVENTING FOOD POISONING

Food poisoning can be easily prevented by following some guidelines on the storage and preparation of food.

Foods that do not require refrigeration are: fresh vegetables, fruit, bread, dried pasta, flour & canned foods.

The following foods can be hazardous if not stored properly and must be kept at a temperature of 4 degrees Celsius or lower or must be kept frozen at -18 degrees Celsius or lower:



- All meat products including beef, poultry, fish and pork.
- All dairy products including cream, milk cheeses, and eggs.
- Frozen foods, if thawed and kept at room temperature higher than 4 degrees Celsius for longer than 4 hours must be thrown out and not cooked or eaten.

Washing hands properly before handling food is important in the prevention of food poisoning. Although it may seem basic, proper handwashing is not always practised. Washing hands should take 15-20 seconds.

Please follow these steps:

- Wet hands with running water.
- Apply soap in the middle of wet hands.
- Lather well.
- Use vigorous friction by rubbing the hands together.
- Pay attention to your nails and between fingers and thumbs.
- Rinse hands thoroughly with running water.
- Pat hands dry with a paper towel.
- Turn water tap off with paper towel.

If running water is not available, follow the above steps using a bucket or pail of potable water (see article on making potable water). If a water source of any kind is not available, any liquid hand sanitizer sold at drug stores is recommended.

STORING FOODS PROPERLY WITHOUT REFRIGERATION

The hazardous foods noted above must be stored at temperatures 4 degrees Celsius or lower (use thermometers to be sure of temperature). Bacteria grow at temperatures between 5 degrees Celsius and 60 degrees Celsius.

- Food can be stored in coolers if individually wrapped. To keep cooler at required temperature, fill with ice or ice packs and keep covered to help insulate.
- AVOID**-any food prepared with mayonnaise or any foods that have been cooked and kept without refrigeration.
- Keep raw foods separate from prepared foods.
- Prevent meats from dripping on other foods by placing them on the bottom of the cooler (drippings can cause contamination).
- If a power outage occurs, cover freezers with blankets for extra insulation.
- Do not refreeze thawed foods.
- Do not eat foods that have come in contact with flood water or sewage water.
- A good rule when dealing with food is **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.**

Without power, a full upright or chest freezer will keep food frozen for about two days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for one day. Keep the door shut as much as possible. Ice can keep the freezer cold.

The refrigerator will keep food cool for 4-6 hours, depending on the kitchen temperature. Ice can keep food on the refrigerator shelves cooler. Keep the door shut as much as possible. Check the temperature of the food to ensure that it is 4 degrees Celsius or lower.

PETS AND DISASTERS

BE PREPARED WITH A DISASTER PLAN

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan must also include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives.



Different disasters require different responses. Should the disaster be a tornado or a hazardous spill, you may have to evacuate your home.

In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost, or worse. So prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home.

Have a Safe Place to Take Your Pets

It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do research.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if “No Pet” policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of “pet friendly” places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.

- ❑ Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency: include 24-hour telephone numbers.
- ❑ Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.

Assemble a Portable Pet Disaster Supplies Kit

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you will need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffel bags, covered trash containers, etc.). Your pet disaster supplies kit should include:

- ❑ Medications and medical records (stored in waterproof container) and a first aid kit.
- ❑ Sturdy leashes, harnesses and /or carriers to transport pet safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- ❑ Current photos of your pets in case they get lost. Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, and can opener.
- ❑ Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behaviour problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- ❑ Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

Know What to Do as a Disaster Approaches

- ❑ Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.
- ❑ Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- ❑ Check to be sure that your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- ❑ Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- ❑ Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or that of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbour would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a pet sitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss this possibility well in advance.

Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, and try to escape or even bite or scratch. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines. Consult your veterinarian if any behaviour problems persist.

The law requires that cats and dogs have up to date rabies shots. Ensure that you have proper documentation of the shots for your pets. Should your animal bite someone, it is important that you report the bite to the local health department. Rabies is a concern in York Region and all animal bites are investigated.

DISASTER PLANNING FOR LIVESTOCK



Disaster planning is as necessary to your livestock's survival as food and water are to good health. Realize that the planning may not be the same for each type of disaster. Fire and earthquake situations do not allow for much or any advanced warning, while floods and hurricanes usually allow sufficient time for some preparation and evacuation.

Be aware of the hazards of barbed wire and replace it now before a frightened animal becomes entangled. If you are in a fire area, clear brush and debris, make evacuation arrangements, locate alternate evacuation routes/trails. In a tornado, flying debris and collapsing barns can pose major threats to the well being of animals. With ample warning, evacuation is the order of the day; without it you may need to consider letting animals run free and rely on their instincts to avoid the debris.

EVACUATION DECISIONS

In a disaster situation, you may be faced with the need to:

- Evacuate your horses/livestock, or maintain them under shelter at your facility, or to turn them loose to find their own way. Depending on the situation, the decision may be yours, or it may be mandated by the situation or emergency management personnel.

The health and safety of your animals may be dependent on how well prepared you are for these options in the event of an emergency.

IF THE ANIMALS ARE TO BE MAINTAINED UNDER SHELTER

IN YOUR FACILITY:

1. The facility should be capable of withstanding the situation. (tornadoes, high winds, heavy snows, earthquakes, etc.) If not, make necessary repairs to the facility or evacuate. Be sure that the window and doors are fully functional for good closure of the building.

2. You may be gone for an extended period, therefore, adequate water and hay must be available and accessible to animals at all times. In recent disasters one fact stood out, the lack of water presented the number one hazard to horses and livestock.

These animals, many that require 16 to 120 litres of water per day, dehydrate very easily. Water can be stored in 220 litre drums, keep enough on hand to a minimum of seven days. Keep it fresh by changing it every three to six months. If you are lucky enough to have a fresh water stream on your property you should be prepared to dam it up quickly to pool water for storage in an emergency.

3. Extra water may have to be stored in the event there is no water supply available due to contamination or lack of electricity upon your return.

4. All animals will need halters, collars, etc. with identification attached.

5. Hay and feed left behind will have to be stored so it will remain clean and dry.

6. Remember that animals will need to be checked daily.

IF YOU ARE EVACUATING, PREPARATIONS MUST BE MADE AS FAR IN ADVANCE AS POSSIBLE TO AVOID STRESS TO YOU AND THE ANIMALS.

These preparations include:

1. Know where you are going to relocate your animals.
2. If the decision is made to evacuate, you should call ahead to confirm availability of space and personnel to care for animals.
3. You will need to listen to the radio for possible road closings and alternate evacuation routes.

4. Complete the following checklist:

- Vehicle full of gas/oil
- Emergency kit packed
- Adequate hay/grain/water
- Trailer safe/workable
- First aid kit packed

RELOCATION SITES

1. Check your animals into the relocation site according to established rules for maximum comfort and safety.
2. Give adequate hay/grain/water and stay with them until they are calm, or as long as practical.
3. If you must leave the relocation site make sure the animals are safe and secure. Leave adequate hay/feed and water depending on the length of stay anticipated.
4. Check on your animals often or make arrangements for someone else to check on them.

RETURNING HOME

Before returning home with your animals you should use the following checklist to inspect your facility.

- Barn is structurally sound and debris free.
- Water supply is clean and not contaminated.
- Feed/hay supply is clean and dry.
- Fencing is in place and secure.
- Electricity is available and safe.
- When you are satisfied that the area is safe and secure it is important that you return your animals to familiar surroundings.

CARBON MONOXIDE - THE SILENT KILLER

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that you cannot see, smell, or taste. The incomplete burning of fossil fuels such as natural gas, propane, heating oil, kerosene, coal, charcoal, or wood produces CO. Examples of carbon monoxide producing devices commonly in use around the home include:

Automobiles
Fuel fired furnaces (non-electric)
Gas water heaters
Fireplaces and woodstoves
Gas stoves
Gas dryers
Charcoal grills
Gas BBQ
Lawn mowers, snowblowers and other yard equipment

Symptoms of CO poisoning

Exposure to CO can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, burning eyes, confusion, drowsiness, and even loss of consciousness. In very severe cases, CO poisoning can cause brain damage and death.

What can create a CO hazard?

- Fuel burning appliances, venting systems and chimneys that have not been serviced and maintained regularly by a qualified service technician or heating contractor.
- Improper venting of a furnace and /or cracked furnace heat exchanger.
- Exhaust fumes seeping into your home from a car running in an attached garage.
- Using fuel-burning appliances designed for outdoor use (e.g. barbecues, lanterns, and chainsaws) in a closed area such as a tent, garage, or home.

What should I do if I suspect CO in my home?

If you or anyone else in your home is experiencing the symptoms of CO poisoning, leave immediately and get medical help. Call 9-1-1 or your local fire department.

If a CO detector alarm sounds in your home, open all doors and windows to ventilate. If you can't find the problem and the alarm continues, leave the building and contact your local gas utility or a qualified heating contractor to check your fuel burning equipment.

About CO detectors

The Carbon Monoxide Awareness Committee recommends installing only CO detectors that bear the CSA CAN/CGA 6.19 standard or the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 2034 standard.

At least one CO detector should be installed at knee-height, adjacent to the sleeping area of your home. Please refer to the manufacturer's instructions for proper use and maintenance.

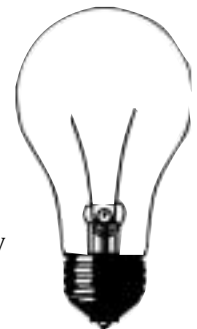
CO hazard prevention

CO detectors are not a substitute for the care and maintenance or the proper use of your fuel burning appliances. Regular maintenance by a qualified technician and safe use of this equipment are key activities to help prevent a CO hazard. Don't let your family be the next victims of the "SILENT KILLER".

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

POWER FAILURE:

- Unplug and turn off appliances.
- Turn off main switch, if directed
- Turn furnace to minimum,
- When power resumes plug in only the most essential appliances before reconnecting everything.



EMERGENCY AND RESCUE

- Treat all wires as live regardless of their location, stay clear, don't touch.
- If person or vehicle comes in contact with outdoor wires, don't touch either person or vehicle; call 9-1-1 and Ontario Power Generation Company or your local Hydro Company.
- Where dislodged wires are in contact with your vehicle, don't get out until wires are removed. In case of fire, jump free with both feet together and without touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
- If someone receives a shock from a faulty appliance and is still in contact with it, don't touch the appliance before unplugging it first.

ELECTRICAL FIRE

- Unplug equipment whenever possible.
- Never use water on electrical equipment or wires.
- Use baking soda or recommended dry chemical electrical fire extinguisher.

CHILDREN

- Teach to respect electricity.
- Warn of the danger of touching wires. The contact of a kite or model airplane with overhead lines can cause serious injury by simply touching string or control wire.
- Remember to avoid areas marked “Keep Out” or “Danger”.
- Climbing poles, towers, fences or trees surrounding electrical equipment or power lines, is extremely dangerous.
- Never poke or push things into electrical equipment or outlets.

MAIN SWITCH AND PANEL

- Always shut off main switch when changing fuses or doing work around the house.
- Never open door to main switch because there are live contacts inside.
- Electrical panel covers should always be intact.
- Breaker operation should be firm, not loose.
- Fuses should be screwed in tightly to prevent overheating.
- Install proper size fuses never install larger than required.
- Never replace a fuse with penny, dime or any metal object.
- Use time delay or dual element fuses “D” or “P”. “P” recommended for circuits with heat generating appliances which aren’t motorized (water heaters, ranges).
“D” recommended for motorized appliances (dryers, furnace, and refrigerators).

WARNING SIGNS OF TROUBLE THAT SHOULDN’T BE IGNORED

- Repeatedly tripped breakers or blown fuses
- Overheating or discoloration in panel
- Rust in panel
- Flickering lights

CORD CARE

The following cord conditions represent hazards, which can cause short circuits, shocks and fires:

- Worn or damaged cords
- Plugging a number of cords into single outlet
- Pulling plug by the cord
- Cords under carpets
- Cords sources of heat or water
- Breaking the third prong on plugs
- Extension cords used as permanent wiring

GENERATORS

- Wiring connections to an electrical panel must be done using approved equipment and installed by a qualified electrician.
- Fumes from these engines are lethal. Do not operate them inside a house or garage with the doors closed.
- Keep a fire extinguisher nearby for emergency use.
- Read the instruction manual thoroughly. It contains important information on the safe operation and maintenance of a generator.
- Do not refill the gas tank while the generator is running.

SAFEGUARDING YOUR HOME

It is important to protect your home against unwanted entry.

Many believe that it is necessary to buy a high tech security system in order to feel safe these days, but what happens when power failure occurs? The security system is no longer functional. Here are a few tips that you can follow to safeguard your home.



FENCING, SHRUBS AND TREES

Any type of fencing or hedge can be a deterrent to illegal entry. A thief needs to think that he can easily get away with whatever it is that he plans to take from your home.

However, some types of fencing can be appealing to a thief. They can sometimes provide cover while the thief cleans your home of all your possessions. A chain link fence may be the best alternative. It allows neighbours to detect break-ins and slows down entry or exit. High hedges and shrubs should be cut back

especially near windows, so thieves cannot hide behind them. Locate big trees away from your house preventing access to second storey windows.

DOORS AND WINDOWS

The best protection is provided by windowless doors with mailslots or other openings placed away from the latch. Dead bolt locks, when used in addition to a key-in-knob lock provide added security from illegal entry. If you leave your home, lock your doors and windows properly. Always double check and never leave keys in obvious hiding places like under doormats or mailboxes. Interior doors were designed for privacy rather than security. There are usually no locking devices on these doors. You might want to consider installing key-in-knob locks to replace the other doorknobs. By locking these doors you are creating another obstacle for the thief.

DO NOT ADVERTISE YOUR ABSENCE

When you have to leave, you should only tell the people you trust to look after your home. Avoid telling casual friends and delivery people.

HAVE A FRIEND WATCH WHILE YOU ARE GONE

Have them cut your grass or shovel your driveway, adjust curtains and collect your mail/newspaper while you are away. This gives your home the lived-in look. Mail or newspapers that pile up at your door or driveway can be a sure sign that nobody is home and becomes an open invitation to any thief.

KEEP EXPENSIVE ITEMS OUT OF SIGHT

Expensive equipment such as stereo systems and televisions should be kept away from windows. If you must leave your home, store them in a closet. A thief will not break into your house if he believes that it is not worthwhile. It is also a good idea to keep expensive jewellery in a safe deposit box. Avoid keeping large amounts of money in your home.

KEEP A HOUSEHOLD INVENTORY LIST

Keep an inventory of all your possessions. List the item, approximate costs, serial numbers, and a short description. Photographs are an excellent way of recording objects of extraordinary value. It is also a good idea to add a personal identification code on your valuables. This allows you to identify your belongings in the event of a break-in. Once you have completed your list, discuss it with your insurance agent.

SAFES AND VAULTS

If your budget permits it, buy a large safe or a vault. By putting all your valuables in the safe you are making it more difficult for a thief to get access to your belongings. It is also a good idea to have a safe or vault built directly into a wall or a closet. This prevents the thief from stealing the entire safe.

GET A DOG

“Beware of dog” signs might deter the thief away from your home. He will not want to take the chance of being attacked or apprehended.

Where you live and the physical layout of your residence will have a bearing on the extent to which you can implement security in and around your home. It is impossible to make your home 100 percent safe against crime. However, if you follow these guidelines you have taken the first steps towards safeguarding your home.

KNOW YOUR INSURANCE

Damage from most storms, including hurricanes, tornadoes, wind and hail, is generally covered by insurance. Also, water damage caused by water coming through storm-damaged roof and windows, broken pipes or overflowing appliances is usually covered. Other water damage such as sewer backup may, or may not, be covered.

Insurance covers more than damage to your home and contents. Additional living expenses are an example. It pays for the increase in living expenses, including moving expenses, if your home is unfit to live in or you have to move out while repairs are being made.

If a generator is hardwired into your electrical panel, notify your insurance representative and ensure the work was done by a qualified professional.

Be prepared. Protect your financial assets. Discuss your insurance needs with an agent, broker or insurance representative.

What should you do if damage occurs?

Take steps immediately to protect your property from further damage. Board up holes or shut off water supplies to ensure your belongings are not damaged more than they already have been. If possible, get your car under cover. Save receipts for materials you use. Your insurance company may cover any reasonable costs incurred to protect your property. You should confirm this with your insurance agent as part of your planning process.

For free information on car and home insurance, call Insurance Bureau of Canada's consumer information centre at 1-800-387-2880 or visit their website at HYPERLINK <http://www.abc.ca> www.abc.ca.

York Region District School Board

The Education Centre
60 Wellington St. W.
Box 40, Aurora, ON L4G 3H2
905-727-3141, 905-895-7216
Fax: 905-727-1931



Are school staff trained to deal with emergencies that may arise in schools?

The York Region District School Board wants parents, students and community members to be aware that staff in all public elementary and secondary schools and Education Centre offices are trained to deal with emergencies that may arise.

Plans are in place to deal with emergencies such as:

Fire
Bomb threats
Armed intruders
Gang activities
Severe weather conditions
Regional chemical spills

Each school administrator has a **CRISIS MANAGEMENT BINDER** and a **FIRE PLAN** in his/her location which outlines actions to be taken in such emergencies. Administrators have made staff aware of the emergency plans and procedures are in place to deal with emergencies that may arise.

These plans have been developed in co-operation with the York Regional Police and local fire departments.

What do schools do if an emergency arises that involves evacuating the school?

Should it be necessary to evacuate the school, a plan is in place to bus students and staff to alternate locations.

Parents or guardians would be called once the children are safe in the alternate location.

If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact would be called. This is the person who is designated by the parent (on the school's emergency form) to be called in an emergency when parents are unable to be contacted.

Should the school be unable to reach the parent or the emergency contact, the child(ren) would be supervised at the "alternate location" until the parents or guardians can be reached.

For more information on the school's emergency plan, parents are asked to talk to their school's administrator.

York Catholic District School Board

Catholic Education Centre
320 Bloomington Road West
Aurora, ON L4G 3G8
905-713-2711, 1-800-363-2711
Fax: 905-713-1272



No matter how we may plan, many things in our world can and do go wrong. While we may not be able to avoid the unexpected, at least we can be prepared for them.

Every school and location in the York Catholic School Board has an Emergency Response Manual on site, which details actions to be taken in the event of emergencies like:

Student accidents
Fire
Bomb threats
Trespassers or intruders
Hostage-taking
Severe weather conditions
Protocol for dealing with child abuse

The Board's Emergency Response Manual was developed with the assistance of representatives from the fire department, police, and Children's Aid Society.

School principals have plans and procedures in place to deal with emergencies which may affect the students and/or schools. Principals also ensure that all staff and students are familiar with their plans and procedures and hold regular drills to practice the procedures and evaluate their plan.

In case of a school evacuation, depending on the emergency, parents or guardians would be called to

pick up their children, or parents or guardians would be called once their children are safe in an alternate location.

If parents or guardians cannot be reached, the emergency contact (noted on the form filled out by parents at the start of the school year) would be called. If the school were unable to reach the parent or emergency contact, then students would be supervised at the alternate location until parents can be reached.

For further information, contact the York Catholic District School Board at (905) 713-2711, (416) 221-5050, or e-mail us at ycdsb.edu.on.ca.

YORK REGION HOSPITALS

The three York Region hospitals, York Central, York County and Markham Stouffville, have been working together since September 1998 to update their internal emergency plans. This collaborative efforts of the tri-hospital group and the York Region will help ensure the continuation of health care services during emergency situations. The three hospitals continue to work together to develop plans to assist one another in isolated emergency situations.

If you have further questions about emergency preparedness at your community hospital, please do not hesitate to contact:

York Central Hospital	(905) 883-1212
York County Hospital	(905) 895-4521
Markham Stouffville Hospital	(905) 472-7000

FLOODS

Flood damage costs Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars annually, to say nothing of the cost in terms of human lives and suffering. In 1997, of the 11 declared emergency situations in Ontario, seven were related to flooding. All governments work to reduce the chance of floods, but the first line of defence is the individual. Each of us has a responsibility to protect our homes and families to the greatest extent possible. By planning ahead and taking sensible precautions, you can do your part to minimize flood damage.



AT WORK FOR YOU

Through radio and TV, local governments do their best to keep residents of areas likely to be affected well informed. When flooding is imminent, or has occurred, detailed instructions by municipal or provincial authorities will be given as the need arises.

BE PREPARED FOR FLOODING

Homeowners, renters and businesses can take the following precautions to help prevent or lessen the effects of flooding.

- If necessary, have a professional inspect your roof for excessive snow loads.
- Check your sump pump to see if it's working.
- Check to see if your eavestroughs, culverts and drainage ditches are clear.
- Review your insurance policy to ensure you are adequately covered. Make sure you have sewer back-up insurance.
- Assemble a family disaster survival kit.

IF YOU ARE AT RISK

When authorities have advised you that flooding is imminent, take precautions to ensure that you, your family and property are protected.

- Make sure your radio battery is in working order and listen to local instructions.
- Have emergency food, water and medical supplies on hand (i.e., family disaster kit).
- Move furniture, electrical appliances, livestock, equipment and other belongings to higher levels.
- Remove or seal hazardous products like weed killers or insecticides.

- Remove toilet bowl water and plug basement sewer drains and toilet connection.
- Have sandbags ready to use.

EVACUATION

If you are advised by the authorities to evacuate your home, then do so. Ignoring the warning could jeopardize the safety of your family or those that might have to rescue you.

Before you leave, turn off power, water, and gas. Make arrangements for pets. Should time allow, leave a note informing others when you left and where you went. If you have a mailbox, leave the note there.

If you are evacuated, register with the reception centre so that you can be contacted and reunited with your family and loved ones.

ON THE ROAD...

- Follow the routes specified by officials. Don't take short cuts. They could lead you to a blocked or dangerous area.
- Travel very carefully, and only if absolutely necessary through flooded areas. Roads may be washed away or covered with water. If you come across a barricade or a flooded road, take a different route.
- Keep listening to the radio for information.
- Emergency workers will be busy assisting people in flooded areas. Help them by staying out of the way.
- If you must walk or drive in a flooded area, make sure you are on firm ground.
- Watch out for power lines that are down.
- If you are caught in fast rising waters and your car stalls, leave it and save yourself and your passengers.

RETURNING HOME

Care should be taken when re-entering your home. Floodwater is heavily contaminated with sewage and other pollutants that can pose a serious health hazard.

- Before entering a flood building, check for foundation damage and make sure all porch roofs and overhangs are supported.
- Use a flashlight to inspect for damage inside your house. Do not strike a match or use an open flame unless you know the gas has been turned off.

- If your basement is full of water, drain in stages, about a third of the volume of water per day (draining too quickly can structurally damage your home).
- Using a dry piece of wood, turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box.
- Wear rubber gloves, rubber boots and protective eyewear when cleaning up.
- Do not use wet appliances or motors unless they have been serviced by a qualified electrician.
- Contact your local heating repair company to inspect your furnace and chimney.
- Do not use your regular water supply or septic system until it has been inspected and declared safe to use.
- Dispose of all contaminated food.
- If children are present during the clean-up operations, supervise them closely.
- For instructions on how to disinfect wells and cisterns, contact the Health Services Department.
- Check your newspaper or listen to your radio or television for information about help that may be provided.

EMERGENCY CLEAN-UP TIPS FOR WATER DAMAGE

DO...

- Ventilate wet areas. Turn on air conditioning for accelerated drying in the summer; in winter alternate cycles of opened windows and heating.
- Remove standing water from flat surfaces by sponging and blotting.
- Take up saturated rugs and carpets when hardwood floors are at risk.
- Stay out of rooms where ceilings are sagging from retained water.
- Transport computers to a dry environment; remove cases and blow dry with low-pressure air. Remove lamps, telephones and decorative items from wet furniture tops.
- Open drawers and cabinet doors for interior drying, but do not force open stuck drawers or doors.
- Freeze valuable books and documents to retard mildew growth until drying can be performed.
- Place aluminium foil squares, china saucers or wood blocks under furniture legs to avoid carpet staining.

DO NOT...

- Operate televisions, vacuums or other appliances while standing on wet carpets or floors, especially not on wet concrete floors. Serious injury may result.
- Use heat to dry closed building interiors: mildew and expanded moisture damage may result.
- Leave wet fabrics in place; space them apart and dry as soon as possible.

DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

Wells that have been flooded should be tested for bacteria and found to be safe before water from the well is consumed.

It is recommended that wells used for drinking water, which have been flooded, be disinfected after floodwaters recede.

Water sample bottles and instructions for disinfecting your well are available at local Health Unit offices.

General Clean Up After the Flood

- Any materials left on your yard or property from the floodwater should be removed as soon as possible.
- Any surfaces such as walls and floors or articles such as tables or chairs should be cleaned and disinfected. (Use a disinfectant household cleaner or a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water after all visible soiling is removed).
- Soiled carpeting or upholstery should be thoroughly cleaned or thrown away.

How to Prevent, Identify and Treat MOLD!

Prevention:

- Try to keep things dry as much as possible.
- Keep air circulating in your home.
- Find and correct obvious sources of moisture and cold surfaces when moisture condenses.
- Regularly clean off all surfaces where moisture collects.

Identification:

- Molds often cause allergies, asthma or other health problems.
- They often look like a smudge, stain or

discoloration; have an earthy or musty smell or smell faintly like alcohol.

- ❑ Dab a suspected mold spot with a drop of chlorine bleach. If the colour of the spot changes or the spot disappears, the stain was likely organic and probably a mold.

Treatment:

- ❑ Chlorine bleach is the only product that kills mold on contact.
- ❑ Keep in mind that bleach is a strong chemical.
- ❑ Handle it carefully.
- ❑ Wear gloves and a facemask.
- ❑ Keep air circulating in the area you are working in.
- ❑ Kill mold patches first, then wash down the entire area with one part chlorine, 4 parts water and a few drops of non-ammonia dishwashing detergent, rinse thoroughly and dry quickly.

TORNADOES

Tornadoes occur in many parts of Canada between the months of May and September. They can cause tremendous destruction with wind speeds of up to 500 km/hour or more. In an average year in Canada, 80 tornadoes cause two deaths, 20 injuries, and tens of millions of dollars in property damage. Although we can't do anything to prevent a tornado, we can certainly be prepared!



IT'S UP TO YOU!

Despite advance warning, some people are unprepared for a tornado. Some may not hear the warning while others received the warning but did not believe a tornado would actually affect them. You can prepare by having a plan in place long before a tornado hits. You must make the decision to seek shelter before the storm arrives. It could be the most important decision you will ever make.

WARNING SIGNALS THAT A TORNADO MAY BE NEAR

A severe thunderstorm is the driving force behind a tornado. Hot, humid weather combined with a cold front could be a sign that a tornado is brewing, and a funnel cloud hanging from a dark cloud may be visible before the tornado actually occurs. A tornado may be accompanied by lightning, high winds and

hail. Stay tuned to your local television and radio stations for updated storm information especially when weather conditions are right for generating a tornado. As well, it is important to know the difference between a tornado watch and a warning.

- ❑ **Tornado Watch:** a tornado is possible in your area and you should be on alert.
- ❑ **Tornado Warning:** a tornado has been sighted and you should take cover immediately.
- ❑ If you are at home, go to the basement or take shelter in a small interior ground floor room such as a bathroom, closet or hallway. Failing that, protect yourself by taking shelter under a heavy table or desk. In all cases, stay away from windows and outside walls and doors.
- ❑ If you are at the office or in an apartment building, take shelter in an inner hallway or room, ideally in the basement or the ground floor. Do not use the elevator and stay away from windows. Avoid buildings such as gymnasiums, churches and auditoriums with freespan roofs. These roofs do not have supports in the middle and may collapse if a tornado hits them. If you are in one of these buildings take cover under a sturdy structure.
- ❑ Do not get caught in a car or mobile home. More than 50 per cent of all deaths from tornadoes happen in mobile homes. Take shelter elsewhere—such as a well constructed building with a strong foundation. If no shelter is available, then lie down in a ditch, away from the automobile or mobile home.
- ❑ If you are driving and spot a tornado in the distance, remain calm and assess the situation. It should be possible to determine the tornado's direction. Driving at right angles to the tornado (if possible) will get you out of harm's way. If this is not possible, abandon your vehicle and seek shelter inside a well constructed building. As a final, absolutely last resort, seek shelter in a ditch or highway overpass. Crawl right up the bank to just under the road of the overpass. If a tornado seems to be standing still then it is either travelling away from you or heading right for you.

In all cases, get as close to the ground as possible, protect your head and watch out for flying debris. Small objects such as sticks and straws can become lethal weapons when driven by a tornado's winds.

AFTER THE TORNADO...

If your home or family is affected by the tornado, you should:

- Monitor local media reports for advice and to find out where assistance is available.
- Check for gas leaks in your home. If you smell gas, immediately open windows and doors; turn off the main gas valve
- Leave the house (post a note stating your whereabouts).
- Go to another location and notify the gas company, police or fire department.
- Check for blown fuses and look for short-circuits in your home wiring and equipment - if a problem exists, call your utility company.
- Drive carefully and watch for debris, damaged bridges/roads and dangling wires.
- Report any emergency situations to the local police or fire department.
- Notify your insurance agent or broker if your property is damaged.
- Check with your local government if you need counselling to help cope with the emotional trauma associated with disasters.

TORNADO MYTHS

Contrary to popular belief:

- Areas near rivers, lakes and mountains are **NOT** safe from tornadoes.
- The low pressure with a tornado does **NOT** cause buildings to “explode” as the tornado passes overhead.
- Open windows do **NOT** equalize pressure and minimize damage
- You are **NOT** safe if you are downtown.

EARTHQUAKES

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN EARTHQUAKE?

If you are near the source of an earthquake, expect a loud bang followed by shaking. If you are farther away, the first warning may be a sudden noise, roar or swaying of the building you are in. Next, you will feel shaking, quickly followed by a rolling motion that rotates up,



down and sideways. It is bound to be a frightening experience. A moderate earthquake may last only a few seconds. A large earthquake could last several minutes.

EARTHQUAKE MYTHS

An earthquake does not cause the earth to split open and swallow up people and neighbourhoods. Buildings do not automatically collapse, either. However, you could be hurt by shattered glass, falling objects and heavy objects thrown around by the shaking. Broken gas mains and fallen chimneys can cause fires. Downed power lines and broken water mains can also wreak havoc.

TIPS ON WHAT TO DO BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

- Prepare an emergency plan for your family and household.
- If you live alone, develop a plan for yourself with links to neighbours and friends.
- Take a first aid course, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Know the safe places to be—and where not to be—in your home during an earthquake. Practice taking cover in the safe places.

Safe places: under heavy tables or desks; inside hallways; corners of rooms or strong archways.

Dangerous places: near windows or mirrors; under any heavy objects that can fall; the kitchen where the stove, refrigerator or contents of cupboards may fall on you; doorways where the shaking may slam the door on you.

PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR EARTHQUAKES

Go through your home imagining what could happen to each part of it, if shaken by a violent earthquake.

- Teach everybody in the family how to turn off the water and electricity.
- Clearly label the on-off position for the water, electricity and gas.
- If your home is equipped with natural gas: tie or tape the appropriate wrench on or near the pipe, to turn off the gas, if necessary (don't shut off the gas unless there is a leak or a fire. If the gas is turned off, don't turn it on again. This must be done by a qualified technician.)

If you live in an apartment block or a multi-storey building, you may experience more swaying and less shaking than in a smaller, single-storey building.

Work with your building manager or condominium board to decide how best to “quake-safe” your unit. Seek advice from professionals (building engineers, architects, emergency preparedness authorities) if you are unsure about what to do.

CHECK FOR HOME HAZARDS

Previous earthquakes show that you have a better chance of surviving and minimizing damage to your home if you take the following preventive measures now:

- Make sure the house is bolted to its foundation.
- Make sure the walls are braced.
- Repair loose roof shingles.
- Make sure chimneys are strong and well braced.
- Tie down the water heater and other heavy appliances (stove, washer, dryer) that could break gas or water lines if they topple.
- Secure top-heavy furniture and shelving units to prevent tipping. Keep heavy items on lower shelves.
- Affix mirrors, paintings and other hanging objects securely, so they won't fall off hooks.
- Locate beds and chairs away from chimneys and windows. Don't hang heavy pictures and other items over beds. Closed curtains and blinds will help stop broken window glass from falling on beds.
- Put anti-skid pads under TVs, VCRs, computers and small appliances or secure them with Velcro or other such products.
- Use childproof or safety latches on cupboards to stop contents from spilling out.
- Keep flammable items and household chemicals away from heat and where they are less likely to spill.
- Put plywood up in the attic on joists around each chimney to help prevent bricks and mortar from coming through the ceiling. (Check clearances with your local fire department.)

Discuss earthquake insurance with your insurance broker. Check your coverage-it could affect your financial ability to recover losses after an earthquake.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

Practising and reading about what you should do during an earthquake will help you remain calm and be better prepared to protect yourself and help others. Identify safe spots in each room in your home. Reinforce this knowledge by physically placing yourself in the safe location. This is an especially important step for children.

Wherever you are when the earthquake starts, take cover immediately and stay there until the shaking stops.

If indoors:

- Stay there. Don't run outside.
- Take cover under a heavy table, desk or any solid furniture and hold on.
- In a hallway, crouch down against an inside wall. Avoid doorways. Doors may slam shut and cause injuries.
- Protect your head and face.
- Move away from windows, glass partitions, mirrors, fireplaces, bookcases, tall furniture, light fixtures.
- If in a wheelchair, lock the wheels and protect the back of neck and head.
- If in a hotel, keep shoes under the bed; clothes close by; consider travelling with a battery-powered radio and flashlight and extra batteries; identify the safest place in your hotel room to take shelter (such as under a table); read all material on safety provided in your room and note the emergency exits on your floor.
- Do not use elevators. If you are in an elevator during an earthquake, hit the button for every floor and get out as soon as you can.

If outdoors:

Stay there. Try to move to a safe spot away from windows, buildings, overhead wires or telephone poles.

If you are in a vehicle:

Try to pull over to a safe place. Try not to block the road. Park away from bridges, overpasses and buildings, if possible. Stay in the vehicle.

If you are in a crowded place:

Try to take cover where you won't get trampled. If you are inside, don't run outside where you may be hit by falling debris. Sidewalks next to tall buildings are particularly dangerous. In shopping centres, try to take

cover in the nearest store. Keep away from windows, skylights and display shelves laden with heavy objects.

If at school:

Get under a desk or table and hold on. Face away from windows.

If on a bus:

Stay in your seat until the bus stops.

Wherever you are, expect the ground or floor to move violently. Take cover. If you can't take cover, sit down in a crouched position and protect your head and face from falling debris and splintering glass. Remain in a protected place until the shaking stops. Expect aftershocks—they may occur for some time after the initial quake.

SEVERE STORMS

A thunderstorm develops in an unstable atmosphere when warm moist air near the earth's surface rises quickly and cools. The moisture condenses to form rain droplets and dark thunderclouds called cumulonimbus clouds. These storms are often accompanied by hail, lightning, high winds, heavy rain and tornadoes. Thunderstorms are usually over in an hour, although a series of thunderstorms can last for several hours.



LIGHTNING

To estimate how far away the lightning is, count the seconds between the flash of lightning and the thunderclap. Each second is about 300 metres. If you count fewer than five seconds, take shelter immediately. Lightning is near and you do not want to be the tallest object in the area

At the office or house

- If indoors, stay there but away from windows, doors, fireplaces, radiators, stoves, sinks, bathtubs, appliances, metal pipes, telephones and other materials which conduct electricity. (You can use a cellular telephone.)
- Unplug radios and televisions.
- Do not go out to rescue the laundry on the clothesline as it conducts electricity.

Outside

- If caught in the open, do not lie flat but crouch in the leap frog position and lower your head.
- Take shelter in a building or depressed area such as a ditch or a culvert but never under a tree.
- Do not ride bicycles, motorcycles or golf carts or use metal shovels or golf clubs as they conduct electricity.
- If swimming or in boat, get back to shore immediately.
- If you are in a car, stay there but pull away from trees which might fall on you.

WINTER STORMS

Winter storms kill more than 100 people every year. That is more than the total number of people killed by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, lightning and extreme heat.



At home

If you live in a rural community where winter storms are frequent, you may want to consider stocking up on heating fuel, ready-to-eat foods, and a battery powered flashlight and radio and extra batteries.

- When a winter storm is forecast, leave your radio on. If you are on a farm with livestock, bring the animals into the barn. Make sure they have plenty of water and food. You may also want to string a lifeline between your house and any outbuildings that you may have to go to during the storm.
- When a winter storm hits, stay indoors. If you must go to the outbuildings, dress for the weather. Outer clothing should be tightly woven and water-repellent. The jacket should have a hood. Wear mittens.

In your car

Restock your car survival kit. Keep your gas tank almost full during the winter and have extra windshield washer fluid and gas line anti-freeze on hand.

If you do not already have a cellular telephone, you may want to consider having one in your car for emergencies. If you must travel during a snowstorm, do so during the day and let someone know your route and arrival time.

If your car is stuck in a winter storm, remain calm and stay in your car. Keep fresh air in your car by

opening the window slightly on the sheltered side, away from the wind. You can run the car engine about 10 minutes every half-hour if the exhaust system is working well. Beware of exhaust fumes and check the exhaust pipe periodically to make sure it is not blocked with snow. (Remember, you cannot smell potentially fatal carbon monoxide fumes.) In order to keep your hands and feet warm exercise them periodically. In general, it is a good idea to keep moving to avoid falling asleep. If you do try to shovel the snow from around your car avoid over-exerting yourself as shovelling and bitter cold can kill. Keep watch for traffic or searcher.

Drivers are often confused and frustrated when approaching and waiting at non-functioning traffic light intersections. Many people have no idea what to do at a traffic light intersection when it is not working.

A TRAFFIC LIGHT INTERSECTION BECOMES A FOUR-WAY STOP WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE NOT WORKING.

Here are the rules of a four-way stop for those who are unsure of what to do in this case. The first vehicle to arrive and stop has the right of way. If two or more vehicles stop at the same time then the vehicle on the right has the right of way. Shortly after a power outage, stop signs may be temporarily placed at many designated traffic light intersections. The stop signs override the four-way stop rule and create a two-way stop instead. Let's all obey the intersection rules for safety during a power outage.

Hypothermia is defined as a condition where a person's body temperature falls below 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit).

Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms of hypothermia may be more dangerous than seems evident

- Falling core body temperature can lead to fatigue, lethargy/apathy, clumsiness, mental confusion, slurred speech, shivering, slowed breathing, slowed heartbeat, low blood pressure and eventually death
- Cold hands, feet and abdomen
- Blueness or puffiness of skin

Treatment

Anyone with suspected hypothermia must be transported to the emergency room of the nearest

hospital as soon as possible. Prevent further heat loss with dry, warm clothes and blankets. Warm fluids by mouth may also be given (avoid alcohol and caffeine).

Prevention

Wear many layers of clothing (three or more). Wearing a hat will help you conserve as much as 40% of your body heat. Eat lots of energy food. Drink plenty of fluids and hot drinks (not alcohol). Avoid getting wet. Keep moving the arms and legs to generate heat.

Highway Help Program

Being stranded on the side of the road can be very traumatic and dangerous, even after you have pulled out of traffic, and have parked on the side of the road. With this in mind, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) introduced the Highway Help Program. This program is designed to provide help for stranded motorists on highways and other areas where they do not feel safe. It creates quick and safe emergency communications between stranded motorists, other drivers and the police.

Drivers may purchase a "**CALL POLICE**" highway sign at local stores, such as Shoppers Drug Mart, Zellers, participating Canadian Tire Stores, CAA, and other retail outlets. This sign is durable and reflective. It can be seen in both directions at night and in any kind of weather. The sign allows you to ask for assistance without leaving your vehicle.

Police recommend using the sign when you have become stranded and that you follow this procedure: Pull the vehicle completely off the road.

1. Turn your emergency flashers on.
2. Roll the driver's window down halfway.
3. Hook the sign on the window.
4. Roll the window back up.
5. Lock all doors and remain in the vehicle.
6. Open the window 1 centimetre or half-an-inch, for ventilation.
7. If someone other than police approaches your vehicle **DO NOT** open the windows further or unlock the doors.

If you see a “**CALL POLICE**” highway help sign, the OACP asks motorists to help police by following three easy steps.

1. Please **DO NOT** stop.
2. Note the location of the vehicle.
3. With your cellular telephone, call OPP (STAR 6-7-7) or the York Regional Police (CANTEL STAR YORK) on one of their non-emergency lines. If you do not have a cellular phone, stop at the nearest gas station or store to use a pay phone.

When you are stranded on the side of the road, you may be seen by some as a vulnerable target. By using the sign, you may deter criminals and make yourself much less vulnerable.

The Highway Help Program is a non-profit, province-wide police program, recognized and supported by Ontario Police Services. It is sponsored by CAA, ALLSTATE, CANTEL, THE ONTARIO TRUCKING ASSOCIATION and many more organizations. It is with their support that we will keep Ontario’s motorists safe. If you would like more information on the program, you can call 1-888-hook-it-on.

HAZARDOUS SPILLS

Your response to an emergency involving a hazardous spill or fire resulting from the spill should be the same as in all other emergencies except for the following:

If The Emergency Involves Smoke And Fumes

- Check the wind direction. Observe the path of the smoke or fumes and whether they are rising or following the ground.
- Move out of the path of smoke or fumes to seek shelter indoors. **DO NOT** attempt to go through smoke or fumes.
- If caught in smoke or fumes, **REMEMBER A CROSSWIND PATH** (at a right angle to the wind) **IS THE SHORTEST, FASTEST PATH TO ESCAPE.**
- Seek shelter in a house or automobile. This can reduce your exposure to 1/10 of that outdoors.
- Turn on and monitor your radio or television.
- Remain indoors. Close all doors and windows. Shut down air conditioners, fans etc., which bring

in outside air. Close all interior doors so that you “compartmentalize” your house. These simple measures plus that of placing wet towels under the doors would do much to prevent the entry of smoke and/or fumes into the relatively airtight homes of today.

If Fumes Threaten You Personally

Cover your mouth and nose with a wet handkerchief or towel.

And Remember...

Evacuate only if told to do so. In the short term, staying indoors with the house closed up is the most effective action you can take.

COPING WITH A DISASTER: WHAT YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE

It is not unusual to have physical and emotional reactions to a traumatic event.

Physical

- Rapid heart beat
- Difficulty breathing
- Chills or sweating
- Nausea or vomiting
- Wakeness or fatigue
- Change in appetite
- Increased sensory perception, hyper vigilance
- Difficulty in sleeping
- Headaches

Emotional

- Fear or panic, confusion or poor concentration.
- Denial, disbelief.
- Withdrawn from family and/or friends.
- Anger, guilt, suspicion.
- Reoccurring thoughts, flashbacks, nightmares.
- Difficulty making decisions.
- Need for information.
- Reluctance to abandon property.
- Rejection of outside help.

How do Families Cope with Disasters

- Recognize the way you react to the event is not unusual.
- Try not to make big life changes.
- Talk to family members and friends.
- Listen to one another; help each other with daily tasks.
- Try to achieve a balance between rest and activity.

Emotional Problems: After a disaster

Emotional problems following a disaster are a result of problems in daily life and not from personal reactions or poor coping skills.

Problems can include:

- Dealing with the emotional reactions of family members.

- Family and marital problems including domestic violence.
- Uncertainty about insurance coverage or the need to borrow money because of insurance shortfall.
- Reconstruction strains and delays.
- The discomfort and lack of privacy of having to live in shelters, damaged homes, motels or with relatives.

CHILDREN AND DISASTERS



Childrens disaster-related fears and anxieties are very real to them.

Young children do not express their fears verbally but through their behaviour.

Changes in behaviour may include:

- Nail biting
- Bed wetting
- Thumb sucking
- Rocking or holding onto a blanket or toy
- Clinging behaviours, nightmares, refusing to sleep
- Screaming, shaking, crying

How parents can help:

- Take their fears seriously.
- Comfort young children with physical care, holding and hugging.
- Encourage children to express themselves through play or drawing.
- Keep the family together as much as possible.
- Include children in recovery activities.
- Give children information that they can understand.
- Relax rules but maintain family structure and responsibilities.

Adolescents and disaster

In disasters, adolescents can sometimes be involved in rescue and this may compound their level of trauma. They are survivors and also rescuers, until more organized help arrives. Frequently, they are exposed as witnesses to injury and death, as well as the physical devastation of their community.

Reactions may include:

- Withdrawal, isolation, or depression
- Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness
- Academic failures
- Sleep disturbances, headaches, loss of appetite

Ways to help:

- Involving teens in cleanup activities.
- Assisting the elderly with errands.
- Babysitting for families busy with rebuilding activities.
- Organizing play activities for younger children.
- Peer counselling, teen call-in phone line.
- Social activities such as dances, athletics, etc.

There are a number of social and recreational programs available to children and teens living in York Region. For further information on agencies that might be of assistance, call York Region Health Services, Health Connection Line 1-800-367-5653.

ELDERLY AND DISASTERS

The first task in planning emergency services for the elderly is to understand that most seniors are not frail, sick, or dependent. Many are independent and resourceful and want to participate in the planning of their activities. Disaster literature indicates that the elderly tend to recover more successfully and more readily within a one-year period than other age groups. However, because some elderly do experience emotional reactions and stress, intervenors in disaster areas must be prepared to identify and assist individuals in need.

Some factors influencing seniors when evacuation is necessary include:

- Physical or mental disabilities.
- Lack of transportation.
- Resistance to leaving their homes because of pets or fear of robbery.

How to help:

- Encourage them to mourn their losses.
- Involve them in planning services to meet their needs.

- Allow them to talk about their experiences.
- Regular meals, supervision for medication.

York Region has many senior citizen groups or organizations that could assist in providing services to seniors. They can be reached by calling York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.

HELPING THE HELPERS IN A DISASTER

Heavy workloads, long hours and the pressure to accomplish difficult tasks quickly are inherent in emergency and disaster work. Occupational stresses can arise from:

- Time pressures - especially in rescue and emergency medical situations in which a time limit exists in the victim's chance for survival;
- Responsibility over-load - especially for those with supervisory or command responsibility, a multitude of tasks, all with high priority, may need to be done simultaneously with no one to whom they can be delegated;
- Physical demands - rescue work requires physical exertion, strength, stamina and endurance where hours are long and work conditions adverse;
- Mental demands - the work requires good judgement, clarity of thinking, and the ability to make accurate calculations, set priorities and make decisions in chaotic situations;
- Emotional demands - workers are exposed to traumatic stimuli and victims under stress. They must keep their emotions under control in order to function.
- They must make painful, life-or-death decisions and work in the presence of anger or fear;
- Work area - this can range from low-pressure, such as a staging area, to high-pressure, such as a triage area or morgue;
- Limited resources - lack of personnel, equipment, funding;
- High expectations - from the public and from rescue response personnel themselves.
- Environmental stress: extreme weather conditions, environmental hazards (e.g., toxic fumes)

MINIMIZING STRESS EFFECTS DURING A DISASTER

The following guidelines are suggested for minimizing stress effects among emergency response workers and maximizing performance during a disaster operation.

- ❑ Staff rotation - Limit worker's time in high-stress assignments such as body removal or morgue work to two hours at a time. Workers involved in providing grief support to loved ones at a morgue or hospital or who are assigned to telephone help lines should be limited to four hours of work at a time.
- ❑ Rest Periods - Provide 15 to 30 minute rest periods every two hours. Breaks from the action will help decrease the possibility of injury, fatigue and emotional strain.
- ❑ Comfort and Care- On breaks, try to provide workers with the following: A place to sit or lie down away from the scene; warm food, high protein snacks and beverages, preferably fruit juice; shelter from weather, dry clothes; an opportunity to talk about their feelings with co-workers or a chaplain.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

Critical Incident Stress is defined as "Any situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability at the scene or later".

A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) is a structured meeting of emergency response personnel involved in a critical incident and facilitated by a trained (CISD) team. The purpose of the debriefing is to:

- ❑ Lessen the impact of major events on emergency service personnel.
- ❑ Accelerate normal recovery in normal people who are experiencing normal stress after experiencing highly abnormal events or incidents.

The format for the meetings, in general, deals with what happened to the individuals during the event, how they felt at the scene, and what their reactions were afterwards. In addition to providing a supportive environment that allows emergency workers to deal with stress reactions, the debriefing provides education about acute stress and its normal effects; the

participants learn specific stress management techniques for coping with their responses.

CISD meetings should optimally occur within 72 hours of the incident but can be done any time after the event. However, the greater the delay between the incident and the debriefing, the greater the likelihood of delayed or prolonged stress reactions.