



Being Prepared For An Emergency

While major incidents are rare in Canada, emergencies do happen, often with little warning. Don't panic. Simply spend a little time and effort now to prepare for an emergency. Examples of the types of emergencies you could possibly encounter in Canada include:

- **Severe weather:** heavy snow, ice storms, damaging winds, tornado, hurricane
- **Floods:** swollen rivers, reservoirs, lakes or infrastructure failure
- **Major electrical interruptions:** blackouts, especially in winter months
- **Medical:** pandemic, quarantine restrictions
- **Transportation:** bridge, road collapse, train derailment or truck toxic spills
- **Forest fires**
- **Nuclear incidents**
- **Terrorism:** threat or major incident

In the case of an emergency, through media announcements, public alerts or door-to-door canvassing, you may be asked or required to leave your home, place of business or your community. If you have time, it's a good idea to shut off your utilities; gas, water, and electricity. If you must leave immediately, you may not even have time to gather belongings, so prepare your emergency kit now!

Basic Contents For Your Emergency 72 Hour Kit:

- Sturdy duffle bag or back pack
- Bottled water
- Candles and matches
- Flashlight and batteries
- Towel, face cloth
- Rolled blanket
- Spare car keys
- Canned/non-perishable food; it should be easy to prepare and/or eat cold if necessary
- Utensils, can opener, drinking cup, paper plates, etc.



- First aid kit (medications and medical supplies)
- Toilet paper, soap, toothpaste and brushes, and assorted personal hygiene items
- Reading material, playing cards, etc.
- Small child's toy if appropriate
- Cash (banks will likely be closed, and ATM's down)
- Important...** a portable crank radio with charging port; you can charge your hand-held device or cell phone to stay informed and connected.

It may be tempting to include more items, but your emergency kit must remain portable. Customize your kit, but be sure it can still be stored and carried easily. For about \$100 you'll have the essential survival supplies that allow you to look after yourself until responders arrive, and make evacuation or sheltering-in-place quick and comfortable.

Sheltering-in-place: In certain emergencies, such as an accident that causes a hazardous material to enter the air, you may be required to remain in your current location and avoid travel. This is known as sheltering-in-place:

- Go indoors immediately and stay there
- Turn off the furnace, air conditioners and exhaust systems
- Close all windows and doors
- Listen to your radio or TV for more information

What's most likely to occur in your community: Are you located beside a busy railway corridor, a multi-lane highway or waterway? Could a road or bridge interruption leave you stranded? Does your community have a fuel processing facility or nuclear plant? Do you live in a flood or hurricane-prone area? Are there recent or historical events that could indicate likely, local scenarios?



Your Family Emergency Plan

- **Identify two emergency meeting locations.**
 - #1: A spot directly outside your home, such as in front of a neighbour's house. If you're escaping a fire, all occupants would meet at this spot to regroup and help avoid confusion and/or returning into a building to search.
 - #2: A friend or relatives' home outside your community. This location will be critical if family members are separated by a major incident, and communications or transportation is disrupted.
- **Identify your emergency communications contact person.** Establish a friend or relative living outside your community as your emergency contact person for all family members. Be sure to let the contact person know, stay informed of their current contact information and share it with all family members. In the event of an emergency they will be an important contact if communication between emergency plan members breaks down.
- **Review your municipal/regional government's emergency plan.** All communities are mandated to have a plan. Learn about your evacuation routes, emergency shelter locations and warning / alert systems etc. before you need them. Include some basic details in your family plan such as the location of the nearest emergency shelter and directions from the school, home and workplace.
- **Ask about the emergency plans at your children's school.** This will help minimize future anxiety.
- **Find out about evacuation plans for seniors' residences.** If your loved one is in a seniors' residence, is there an emergency plan in place? How will caregivers react? In many emergency situations routes may be impassable or you could be directed to remain stationary. Do you have confidence in institutional plans effecting loved ones?
- **Emergency plans for those with disabilities and/or pets.** Can you move people without elevators during a power outage? Do you have required medications and spare eye glasses in your emergency kit? How about a spare oxygen cylinder? And what will you do if the emergency shelter does not allow pets?

Learn additional emergency tips and techniques on these websites:

- www.publicsafety.gc.ca
 - www.redcross.ca
 - www.gov.nl.ca
 - www.gov.nl.ca
 - www.salvationarmy.ca
 - www.emergencymanagementontario.ca
- Details on Ontario Warnings & Red Alert subscriptions

By planning now, you can learn how to make everyone more comfortable during an emergency. And remember, the only people who should be worried about emergency preparedness are those who don't prepare.

"Don't gamble with your safety.
The stakes are too high."

Retired Police Sergeant Bob Paterson works with The McLennan Group Insurance Inc. to develop practical safety tips for Canadians 50-plus.

