

Emergency Planning: Be Prepared...

Every municipality, regardless of size and location, can be seriously disrupted by an emergency. This could take the form of a plane crash, severe storm, flood, fire, chemical spill or similar disaster.

*It is the personal responsibility of every capable adult to be prepared for emergencies. While no one can foresee every type of emergency, it is important to plan for as many scenarios as possible. Your personal plan can make all the difference to you and your family's well being. Emergencies can and do occur without warning. Think **now** about getting prepared. Here are some suggestions.*

PERSONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- √ Post emergency telephone numbers prominently in your home. Teach your children how and when to call for help. In Toronto, 9-1-1 is used to call for police, fire and ambulance. Remember to use 9-1-1 only in a true emergency. **When you call 9-1-1, be prepared to state the nature of the emergency, what emergency service is needed, where it is needed and who you are.** Stay on the line and follow the instructions of the emergency operator.
- √ Do not use the telephone during or after a disaster unless it is absolutely necessary. Emergency services will need all available telephone capacity. Non-emergency calls will only tie up the lines.
- √ In a fire or other emergency, you may need to leave your home on a moment's notice. Develop an emergency escape plan and practice it regularly with your family.
- √ In a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a potential hazard. Hazard-proof your home by securing shelves and placing large, heavy objects on lower shelves. Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds. Store flammable products away from heat sources. Strap the water heater to wall studs. Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors and gas vents.

- √ Learn first aid and CPR. Courses are available through the Red Cross, St. John Ambulance and other community agencies.
- √ Prepare an emergency survival kit for each member of your family and keep it in a convenient place near an exit. The kit should contain:
 - first-aid supplies and necessary medication including prescription medication
 - extra eye glasses
 - candles and matches or a lighter
 - non-perishable, ready to eat, nutritious foods that you like
 - drinking water – at least one litre per person, per day
 - a blanket or sleeping bag
 - a change of clothing and footwear suitable for the weather
 - rainwear
 - a flashlight and battery-powered radio and extra batteries for both
 - extra keys and cash
 - copies of important papers and phone numbers and recent photos of family members
 - toilet paper and other personal supplies
 - a manual can opener and bottle opener
 - equipment such as cutlery, disposable dishes, a utility knife and garbage bags
 - a whistle (in case you need to attract attention)
 - playing cards, small games
- √ The kit should sustain each person for at least three days. Keep the kit in a backpack or duffel bag that can be easily carried. Check the kit periodically and replace the products whose “best before” dates have expired.
- √ In a serious emergency, you may be asked to leave your home. Lock your house, leave immediately and take your emergency survival kit with you. Wear protective clothing and footwear. Listen to a radio or television for the location of emergency shelters and follow instructions including routes specified by local emergency officials.
- √ Have an established meeting place and message point for members of your family who may become separated during an emergency. Consider a family friend or relative in a nearby community. If you go to an evacuation centre, sign up there so you can be located.
- √ Keep your vehicle gas tanks at least half full at all times in case you have to evacuate and gas is not available.
- √ Have an emergency kit in each vehicle. This kit should contain:

- ice scraper and brush
- shovel
- sand or cat litter (the non-clumping kind)
- blanket
- candles and a deep can in which to burn them
- matches
- tow chain
- warning light or flares
- flashlight and batteries
- warm hat and footwear
- booster cables
- first aid kit
- road maps
- fuel line de-icer
- fire extinguisher

Communication during an emergency

During an emergency, warnings, updates, or other information may be broadcast on local radio and television stations. Instructions may also be delivered personally by emergency personnel or telephoned by automated dialing equipment. Having a battery-powered radio with a supply of fresh batteries is essential in the event of a power outage or evacuation.

Weather information can be obtained on the television Weather Channel or the Weatheradio network at 162.4 MHz (requires special VHF-FM radio).

For more information on planning for emergencies, contact the City of Toronto's Office of Emergency Management at (416) 392-4554 or email oem@toronto.ca

A series of Emergency Preparedness Canada brochures can be accessed on the Internet at www.safeguard.ca

The Canadian Red Cross has emergency preparedness information at www.redcross.ca

March 2003