

Community Evacuation Information for Seniors

Natural disasters such as forest fires, floods, slides, earthquakes, and storms often challenge our ability to respond.

Preparing for, planning and managing in disasters requires special consideration of seniors' needs.

Seniors who are sick, disabled or live alone may need special assistance and a plan in an emergency. Some seniors may help with emergency preparations and response as volunteers or leaders.

What will happen if I have to evacuate my home in an emergency?

Local emergency authorities will tell you if and when you have to leave your home or your community.

You will be contacted with this information by telephone, in person (someone will come to your home), or by radio announcements.

If evacuation is expected, authorities will also provide information about transportation and accommodation.

When an evacuation order is given, follow instructions from emergency response personnel.

How can I prepare to evacuate my home?

As we age, we can feel isolated. A support network is a vital resource, especially in an emergency. It is important to create a network of friends and stay involved in your community. If you live alone, make sure that you know your neighbours. If you need

assistance with daily activities, you need to create a plan for an emergency. This can include people to contact. Consider how you can manage without some or all of the assistance you currently receive from family, friends or neighbours.

Basic items for an emergency and survival for 72 hours:

- Water – at least two litres of water per person per day, including small bottles that can be carried easily in case of an evacuation order.
- Food – items that will not spoil such as canned food, energy bars, and dried foods. Remember to replace the food and water once a year.
- First Aid kit.
- Special items such as prescription medications, dietary needs, equipment for people with disabilities and other items required for health conditions you may have.
- A small bag with extra keys for your car and house, clothing, some cash in smaller bills, such as \$10 bills (travelers cheques are also useful) and change for payphones.
- Flashlight and batteries, plus candles and matches or lighter. Remember to place candles in sturdy containers and to put them out before going to sleep.
- Battery-powered or wind-up radio, and extra batteries.
- Manual can opener.

- A copy of your emergency plan, and a contact list with important names and numbers (family members, friends, doctor, and others).

Additional supplies for an emergency:

- A change of clothing and footwear for each household member
- A sleeping bag or warm (foil) blanket for each household member
- Two additional litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning
- Toilet paper and other personal care supplies
- Garbage bags for personal sanitation
- A whistle, in case you need to attract attention
- Safety gloves
- Basic tools, such as hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, fasteners, work gloves
- A telephone that does not require electricity, such as a cell phone
- Small fuel-driven stove and fuel. Follow manufacturer's directions and store it properly.

As part of your emergency plan, create a travel bag with the following items:

- Personal papers and photo identification
- A medical history or summary of your health including any chronic conditions, recent surgery, etc.
- List of your medications and copies of prescriptions
- Extra medications and vitamin supplements
- Prescription eyewear and footwear
- Extra dentures and cleaner
- Hearing aid and extra batteries

- Mobility aids such as canes, walkers, and raised toilet seat. Consider whether you can take or use them during an emergency
- Special equipment for breathing
- Incontinence supplies

Provide your family and friends with a contact list of friends, neighbours, agencies, doctors, and caregivers.

For More Information

For more information on emergency preparedness, please visit:

- BC HealthGuide handbook, available at any pharmacy or government agent's office in BC
- Emergency Management BC, Provincial Emergency Program
www.pep.bc.ca/index.html
Toll-free in BC: 1-800-585-9559
- Public Safety Canada
www.ps-sp.gc.ca/chan/cit/index-en.asp
- Canadian Red Cross
www.redcross.ca

For more BC HealthFile topics visit www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm, or visit your local public health unit.

Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

Visit BC HealthGuide OnLine – a world of health information you can trust at www.bchealthguide.org