

# Disaster Preparedness

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## *Introduction*

In any type of disaster, lives can be saved if people are prepared for the emergency, and know what actions to take when it occurs. This site contains information and guidance on what can be done to enhance survival in the event of an emergency or disaster.

There are actions you can take that will help you get ready for, and cope with, almost any type of emergency or disaster.

Perhaps the most basic thing to remember is to keep calm. This may mean the difference between life and death. In disasters, people are often killed or injured needlessly because they acted thoughtlessly or did nothing. In a time of disaster, taking proper action may save your life.

Take the time to think, and then take the appropriate action. Usually, this will be an action you have planned in advance, or the action you are instructed to take by Schiller Park officials.

Whenever a major storm or other potential disaster threatens, keep your radio or television turned on to hear weather reports and forecasts, as well as other information and advise that may be broadcast by local authorities.

Use your telephone only to report important events, such as fires, flash floods, or tornado sightings, to the local police. If you tie up the telephone lines, you may prevent emergency calls from being completed.

A knowledge of first aid and emergency medical care can save lives and reduce suffering. Both adults and teenagers can acquire these valuable skills by taking general first aid courses, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) , which is offered by the Schiller Park Fire Department. Maintain your car in good operating condition with an ample supply of gasoline in case you have to leave your home.

Know how and where to shut off gas, water, and electricity to your household. Keep necessary tools or wrenches handy.

Keep important papers in a safety deposit box at a bank. House deed, insurance policies, birth certificates and lists and photos of your possessions for insurance purposes will be essential after the disaster.

## *Emergency Supplies*

A disaster of almost any kind may interfere with your normal supplies of food, water, heat, and other day-to-day necessities. Keep a stock of emergency supplies on hand sufficient to meet your needs for a week.

If you stay at home during the disaster, these supplies could help you live through the period of emergency without hardship. If you must evacuate your home and move temporarily to another location, your emergency supplies could be taken with you. Even if you only move to an emergency shelter station, these supplies might lessen the burden on the shelter and make your stay easier. It is also a good idea to prepare a survival kit. Some items that are easily obtainable may become difficult to find after a disaster. The kit should contain the following: | a battery-powered radio and a flashlight, with extra batteries for each. Don't store the batteries in the flashlight or radio for long periods of time, to avoid corrosion. | bottled drinking water - one gallon per day per person. With a seven day supply recommended. Also as much drinkable liquids (fruit, and vegetable juices, soft drinks, etc.) as can be carried. | canned or sealed package food that do not require refrigeration or cooking, and a can opener | a blanket or sleeping bag for each family member | writing materials to take notes or information from radio or television broadcasts | hammer | pocket knife | soap and towels | paper towels and toilet paper | household laundry bleach (unscented) | first-aid kit and manual | medications, including mild pain relievers and antiseptic | any special prescription medication or food needed by family members, such as insulin, heart

medications, dietetic food and baby food. These should not be stored in the kit for long periods but added at the last minute.

Ideally you should prepare two kits and store each in water tight containers. Keep one in the basement of your home or a place readily assessable. Keep the second kit in the truck of your car.

## Additional Supplies

Other items that may prove helpful include: plastic bags (small & large), a cooler and freezer-paks , salt, paper cups, baking soda, spoons, matches needles and thread, pre-moistened towelettes, splinting material, hand lotion cotton, sanitary napkins, bandages, extra eye glasses, medicine dropper contact lenses, and supplies.

## *After A Disaster*

Your first concern after a disaster is the safety of your family, friends and neighbors. If possible, obtain medical attention for serious injuries. Persons with a puncture wound or deep cut may need a tetanus shot if they have not had one in the past five years. If professional medical assistance is not immediately available, persons with a knowledge of first aid and emergency medical care can save lives and reduce suffering. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.

Turn to a local radio or television station for advise and instructions and the latest emergency information. If your area is declared a disaster area, local radio and television stations would carry information on where to go for disaster assistance.

Use extreme caution in entering a building that has been damaged or weakened by the disaster, they may collapse without warning. There also may be gas leaks or electrical short circuits. Put on heavy-duty work shoes to avoid injury from glass and other debris.

Use battery powered flashlights or lanterns if you do not have electricity. Do not use candles, oil or gas lanterns, or torches because gas lines may be broken and an explosion could occur.

Check for leaking gas pipes in your home. Do this by smell only - do not use matches or candles. If your smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve at the meter, open all windows and leave the house. Immediately notify the gas company, police or fire department. Do not turn lights on or off, light matches, or do anything that might cause a spark. Do not reenter the house until you are told it is safe to do so. If you are without heat, put on several layers of clothing. If you are certain there is no danger of leaking gas, a fireplace or

VENTED stove may be used for heat. The stove/fireplace, however, should be checked for cracks and damage to the chimney or flue.

Un-noticed damage could lead to a fire. If damage to the electrical system is suspected (frayed wires, sparks or the smell of hot insulation) turn off the electrical system at the main breaker in the electrical panel. If any of your electrical appliances are wet first turn off the main power switch, then unplug the appliance, dry it out, reconnect it and finally turn on the main power switch. If fuses blow or breakers trip when the electric power is restored, turn off the main power switch again and then inspect for short circuits in your home wiring, appliances and equipment. (Caution: DO NOT do any of these things if you are wet or standing in water. You may need to have these items inspected by a qualified and competent person) Do not touch downed power lines or objects touched by downed power lines. Never approach these power lines, even if they appear harmless, they can roar to life in an instant with fatal results.

If water leaks are found or suspected, shut off the water at the main valve.

Emergency water may be obtained from such sources as the hot water tank, toilet tanks (IF they do not have deodorizers) and melted ice cubes.

Check your food supplies before using them. Foods that require refrigeration may spoil if electric power has been off for an extended period of time. Do not eat food that has come in contact with flood waters. A disaster may damage public water supply systems resulting in contaminated water. After a flood, consider all water unsafe. Listen for public announcements on the safety of the municipal water supply. If you have to use water from the faucet boil it at a rolling boil for at least five minutes. If you cannot boil, add five drops of household bleach to each gallon of water. Mix thoroughly and allow to stand for 30 minutes. Only water that is clean in appearance and free of odor should be treated this way. To be safe, drink bottled water, juices or ice water previously stored in the refrigerator. Be sure to follow the instructions of local authorities concerning the use of food and water. If necessary, seek food, clothing, medical care and shelter from Red Cross emergency shelter sites or from local government authorities.

Open closets and cupboards carefully. Check emergency supplies.

Stay away from disaster areas. Sight-seeing could interfere with first aid or rescue work and may be dangerous as well.

Do not drive unless necessary, and if you drive, do so with caution. Watch for hazards to yourself and others, and report them to local authorities.

Do not pass on rumors or exaggerated reports of damage.

If the presence of radioactive material is suspected, the area should be roped off and guards stationed around the area.

Follow the advice and instructions of your local government on ways to help yourself and your community recover from the emergency. Be prepared to evacuate if necessary.

Notify your relatives after the emergency is over so they will know you are safe. Local authorities may waste time locating members of your family - or if you have evacuated to a safer location, they may not be able to find you. However, do not tie up the phone lines, they may be needed for official emergency calls.

## *Personal Hygiene and General Cleanliness*

Following a disaster, it can be difficult to maintain good hygiene and cleanliness. These steps will help you serve safe foods and beverages.

- In order to prevent the spread of infection, always wash your hands with plenty of soap and water before handling or preparing food or eating. Make sure children do the same. Use plastic or rubber gloves if you have any kind of skin cut, burn or infection on your hands.
- Wash hands, work surfaces and utensils in hot soapy water after each step in food preparation. Do not put cooked meat, poultry or fish in the same container that held the raw product. The cooked food may become contaminated with bacteria from the raw juices.
- Keep cloths washed and dish towels clean. Bacteria can linger or remain in towels and cloths, so wash kitchen linen often.
- Use sanitary disposable eating utensils when there is a shortage of safe drinking water.
- Wash dishes and utensils only in water that is safe to drink. Boil unsafe water for five minutes or add five drops of laundry bleach to each gallon of water, mix thoroughly and allow to stand 30 minutes before using it.

## *Illness*

Disease outbreaks may occur after disasters. In the event illness occurs, report symptoms to a physician or nurse. Persons with diarrhea or vomiting, and those living in temporary group housing who develop fever, sore throat, cough or other symptoms (except for the common cold) should notify a physician or health nurse. Persons who are sick should not help prepare meals.

Because children sometimes have intestinal infections without showing symptoms, and then often have inadequate hygiene practices, adults should check that children (especially young children) thoroughly wash hands after using the toilet. This reduces the risk of disease transmission.

Dispose of used diapers in a plastic bag or other container that can be closed tightly to prevent contact by others.

## *Food Spoilage Versus Food Poisoning*

It is important to know the organisms that cause food to spoil are different from the organisms that cause food poisoning and make you sick. When spoilage organisms - some bacteria, molds and yeasts - affect the look, smell or taste of the food, throw the food away.

Unfortunately, the bacteria that commonly cause food-borne illness -- mild-to-severe symptoms of vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea and sometimes fever-- are not so obvious. These organisms rarely affect smell, taste and appearance of food to indicate that it is unsafe to eat. Following these simple rules will help prevent food-borne illness:

- Cook foods thoroughly, especially meats, poultry and pork. Use a meat-roasting thermometer in the thickest portion of the meat. Cook chicken to 165 degrees F, pork to 160 degrees F and beef to 160 degrees F.
- Refrigerate leftovers immediately after the meal. If there are large volumes of food to cool (more than one or two pounds, or 1/2 gallon of liquid) divide the food into several shallow containers or smaller pieces to cool it faster. This prevents bacteria from multiplying rapidly in the warm food.
- Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature. Either cook it frozen, thaw it in the refrigerator or another place where the temperature is under 45 degrees F.
- Use only pasteurized milk.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before handling food, especially after handling raw meats or poultry and after using the bathroom.
- Do not leave high protein foods (raw or cooked) setting out at room temperature. Keep them hot (over 145 degrees F) or keep them cold (under 45 degrees F).

## Examine Canned Goods

Carefully examine canned goods that have been submerged in flood waters, frozen, in a fire or crushed. Some cans may be safe to use after a good cleaning and some may not. Follow these guide-lines:

- Containers with cork lined lids or caps, screw tops or pop tops are nearly impossible to clean thoroughly around the opening after being underwater or in a fire. If there have been any major temperature changes, contaminants may actually have been sucked into the container. Discard these containers.

- Tin cans are usually safe if they appear undamaged. Wash these cans in bleach water (1/4-cup bleach in one gallon of water) for one minute, then dry to prevent resting.

- If cans have pitted rust spots that cannot be buffed off with a soft cloth, corrosion may allow contamination to enter through holes in the walls of the can. Discard these cans.

- Cans with ends that bulge or spring in and out when pressed, should be discarded immediately. This usually means bacteria are growing inside and producing gas to expand the can. **Do not taste the contents of such cans.**

- If a can is crushed, dented or creased, closely examine it to see if it is safe to use. A dent may weaken the seam and allow contamination. If a dent or crease is very sharp, the contents may be contaminated. Discard these cans. **Do not taste.**

### *What to do when your freezer fails*

When the electricity is off, a fully stocked freezer will keep food frozen two days if the door remains closed. A half-full freezer can keep foods frozen about one day. What can you do if electric service will not be reconnected within one or two days?

- Keep the freezer door closed.

- Divide up your frozen foods among friends' freezers if they have electricity.

- Seek freezer space in a store, church, school or a commercial meat locker or freezer that has electrical service.

- Know where you can buy dry or block ice.

- Put dry ice in your freezer. **Never touch dry ice with bare hands!** It freezes everything it touches. Twenty-five pounds of dry ice will hold a 10-cubic-foot freezer below freezing for three or four days. Do not stick your head into a freezer that contains dry ice. Dry ice gives off carbon dioxide, which replaces oxygen, so leave the door open a short time before examining your food.

- If you are not sure how long the electricity has been off, discard any food that smells bad, is slimy, has an unusual color or is room temperature.

- If food is still "cold-to-the-touch," it may be cooked and eaten immediately, or refrozen.

## *What To Do When your Refrigerator Fails*

When power goes off in the refrigerator, you can normally expect food inside to stay safely cold for four to six hours, depending on how warm your kitchen is.

- Add block ice to the refrigerator if the electricity is off longer than four to six hours.

- High-protein foods (dairy products, meat, fish, poultry) should be consumed as soon as possible if power is not restored immediately. they cannot be stored safely at room temperature.

- Fruits and vegetables can be kept at room temperature safely until there are obvious signs of spoilage (mold, slime, wilt). With good ventilation, vegetables last longer at room temperature. Remove them from the refrigerator if electrical service do not resume soon.

## Cleanup

If property damage is extensive, heavy equipment such as bulldozers will be used. It is important to identify or "flag" any underground utilities, such as private sewage systems or water wells, so they are not damaged by the equipment.

During cleanup, it is important to wear protective clothing, Boots, rubber gloves and long-sleeved shirts help reduce contact with contaminate items. Take care not to step on nails or other protruding items.

## *Sewage disposal*

Often sewage systems are not useable after disasters. earthquakes can cause extensive underground damage of buildings and dwellings. Tornado damage is typically limited to above ground. In either case, an extensive period of time is required to make repairs. After flood waters recede, minimal repairs are usually necessary for the sewage system to properly function.

The community will provide portable toilets, but these may be limited. Flooded outdoor toilets should be scrubbed thoroughly with a solution of one-half cup of laundry bleach per gallon of water.

If no toilet facilities are available, deposit body waste in a water-tight receptacle used for that purpose only. Place a small amount of water in the receptacle before it is used to make emptying it easier. Dig a trench or pit and empty the contents of the receptacle into this pit as soon as possible after each use. Cover the waste in the trench after each use with a small layer of dirt, ashes or lime. Also empty the water used to wash the receptacle into the pit or trench. When closing the trench, cover it with at least 12 inches of earth.

## *Tornadoes*

A tornado is a violent storm with whirling winds of up to 300 miles per hour. It appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, from gray to black in color, which extends toward the ground from the base of a thunder cloud. A tornado spins like a top and may sound like the roaring of an airplane or locomotive. These short lived storms are the most violent of all storms and the most destructive. They occur most frequently during April, May, and June.

If a **Tornado Watch** is issued, it means that tornadoes may occur in or near your area. Listen to local radio or television stations for information and advice. Do not use the telephone. Watch the sky to the south and southwest for revolving, funnel-shaped clouds. Report these immediately to your local police department, sheriff's office or weather service.

If a **Tornado Warning** is issued, it means a tornado has been sighted, or has been indicated by radar, and may strike in your vicinities. **Take shelter immediately.**

## What To Do During A Tornado

Take action to protect yourself from being injured by falling objects, flying debris or blown away. The best protection is an underground shelter, cave or steel-framed or reinforced concrete building. If none of these are available, there are other places where you can take refuge:

**If You Are At Home** go to an underground storm cellar or basement if you have one. If not, go to a corner of your home and take cover under a sturdy workbench or table (but not underneath heavy appliances on the floor above). If your home has no basement, take cover in the center part of the house, on the lowest floor, in a small room such as a closet or bathroom, or under heavy furniture. Stay away from windows to avoid flying debris. Do not remain in a trailer or mobile home if a tornado is approaching; take cover in a nearby shelter or lie flat in the nearest depression or ditch.

If You Are At Work, in an office building, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor or to a designated shelter area.

**If You Are At School**, follow the instructions of school authorities. These usually involve taking shelter in interior hallways on the lowest floor, and staying out of structures with wide, free span roofs, such as auditoriums and gymnasiums.

**If You Are Outside In Open Country**, take cover and lie flat in the nearest depression, such as a ditch, culvert, excavation or ravine, and cover your head with your arms.

## *Floods*

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural hazards. Some floods develop over a period of days, but flash floods can produce raging waters in just a few minutes. Water runs off steeper ground very rapidly, causing natural drainage systems to overflow with rushing flood waters and a deadly cargo of rock, mud, smashed trees and other debris.

Remember, even very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds or low-lying ground that may appear harmless in dry weather can flood.

Wherever you live, be aware of potential flooding hazards. If you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam, you should be prepared for a flood.

Know the National Weather Service terms that warn of potential flooding conditions that will be broadcast on the radio and television and through local government personnel:

- Flood forecast means rain fall is heavy enough to cause rivers to overflow their banks or melting snow is mixing with rain fall to produce similar effects.
- Flood Warning or forecast of impending floods describes the affected river or lake, the severity of flooding (minor, moderate or major) and when and where the flooding will begin.

- Flash flood watch means current or expected heavy rains may cause sudden flash flooding in specified areas. Be alert to the possible emergency, which may require immediate action.

- Flash Flood warning is announced when flash flooding is occurring or imminent along certain streams and designated areas. Careful preparation and prompt response will ensure personal safety and reduce property loss.

## Before the Flood

Flood losses are not covered under normal homeowners insurance policies, but flood insurance is available in participating communities through the federally-sponsored National Flood Insurance Program. Contact a local licensed insurance broker or agent for more information. Usually there is a five-day waiting period for coverage to take effect, so do not wait until the last minute.

Find out how many feet your property is above or below possible flood levels. When predicted flood levels are broadcast, you can determine if you may be flooded.

Keep materials like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting and lumber on hand for emergency water-proofing. If flooding of significant depth is imminent, **DO NOT** stack sandbags around the outside walls of your house to keep water out you basement. Water seeping downward through the soil (*either beyond the sandbags or over them*) may collect around the basement walls and under the floor, creating pressure that could damage the walls or raise the entire basement. In most cases, it is better to permit the flood waters to flow freely into the basement.

*(This will equalize the water pressure on the outside of the basement walls and floors, thus avoid structural damage to the foundation and the house.)*

If flooding is likely and time permits, move essential items and furniture to the upper floors of your house. Disconnect any electrical appliances that cannot be moved, but do not touch them if you are wet or standing in water.

## Evacuation

If you are advised to evacuate your home and move to another location temporarily, there are certain things to remember to do. The following are the most important: **FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE OF YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.** If you are advised to evacuate, do so promptly. If you are instructed to move to a certain location, go there, do not go anywhere else. If travel routes are specified or recommended, use those routes rather than trying to find short cuts on your own.

It would be helpful if you previously became familiar with the routes likely to be used. If you are told to shut off water, gas or electrical service before leaving home, do so. In the event you need housing or food stations, listen to your local radio or television broadcastings to find out where they are located. **SECURE YOUR HOME BEFORE LEAVING.** If you have time, and if you have not received other instructions from local authorities, take the following actions before leaving home:

- Bring outside possessions inside the house, or tie them down securely. This includes outdoor furniture, garbage cans, garden tools, signs and other movable objects that might be washed away.
- Disconnect any electrical appliances or equipment that cannot be moved, but do not touch them if you are wet or standing in water.
- Lock all doors and windows. **TRAVEL WITH CARE.**

If you are walking or driving your car to another location, keep in mind:

- Leave early enough to avoid being marooned by flooded roads.
- Make sure you have enough gasoline in your car.
- Follow recommended routes.
- As you travel, listen to the radio for additional information and instructions from local authorities.
- Watch for washed-out or undermined roadways, earth slides, broken sewer or water mains, loose or downed power lines, and falling or fallen objects.
- Watch for areas where rivers or streams may suddenly flood.
- Do not try to cross a stream or pool of water unless you are certain the water will not be over your knees, or above the middle of your car wheels. Sometimes the water hides a bridge or part of the road that has been washed out. If you decide it is safe to drive across, put your car in low gear and drive very slowly to avoid splashing water into the engine and causing it to stall. Also, remember your brakes may not work very well after the wheels of your car have been in deep water. Pump the brakes a few times when you reach dry ground.

## Special Advice On Flash Floods

In many areas, unusually heavy rains may cause quick or "flash" floods. Small creeks, gullies, dry stream beds, ravines, culverts or low-lying ground can flood quickly and endanger people, sometimes before any warning can be issued.

The National Weather Service issues two types of flash flood advisories: a flash flood watch and a flash flood warning. A **watch** means that heavy rains occurring or expected may soon cause flash floods in certain areas, and citizens should be alert to the possibility of a flood emergency that would require immediate action. A **warning** means that flash flooding is occurring or imminent on certain streams or designated areas, and immediate action should be taken by those affected.

During heavy rains, be aware of the hazards of flash floods and be prepared to protect yourself. If you see any possibility of a flash flood occurring where you are, immediately move to a safer location and then notify local authorities of the danger, so other people can be warned.

During periods of heavy rainfall: **STAY AWAY FROM STREAMBEDS**, gullies and other drainage channels during and after rainstorms. Water runs off the higher elevations very rapidly, causing the natural drainage system to over-flow with floodwaters and their deadly cargo of rocks, mud, smashed trees and other debris.

### **USE YOUR MAPS.**

Know where you are and whether you are on low ground. You do not have to be at the bottom of a hill to be a target of flash flooding.

KNOW WHERE HIGH GROUND IS and how to get there in a hurry. Many roads and trails parallel existing drainage patterns and may be swept away by flood waters.

### **STAY OUT OF FLOODED AREAS.**

The water may still be rising and the current could be swift. Never try to cross a flowing stream on foot if the water is above your knees.

ABANDON STALLED VEHICLES IN FLOODED AREAS if you can do so safely. Flood waters may rise and sweep the vehicle and its occupants away. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.

IF YOU ARE CAUGHT IN FLOOD WATERS, try to keep a flashlight or other light source with you to attract help. To stay afloat, hang on to driftwood or other debris. As a last resort, button up a shirt and tie knots in the sleeves or tie knots in the legs of pants to trap air to act as a life vest.

## After the Flood

- Do not use fresh food that has come in contact with flood waters.
- Have drinking waters tested for contaminants.
- Wells should be pumped out, disinfected and tested before drinking water.
- Do not visit the disaster area. Your presence will interfere with rescue and emergency efforts.
- Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.
- Use battery powered lanterns or flashlights, not oil or gas lanterns or torches, to examine buildings. Flammables may be inside, which could ignite.
- Report broken utility lines to police, fire, or the utility companies.
- Keep tuned to local radio or television stations for advice and instructions on where to obtain medical care, and where to get housing, clothing and food assistance.
- Notify your insurance company if your property was damaged.
- Flooded indoor areas must be scrubbed with warm soapy water. Also, scrub food-contact surfaces (counter tops, pantry shelves, refrigerators, stoves, cutting boards, etc.) and areas where small children play. Then, rinse with a solution made by adding 1/2 cup of laundry bleach to each gallon of water.
- Items in the sun that cannot be washed or dry cleaned, (mattresses, upholstered furniture, etc.) then, thoroughly vacuum them and spray with a disinfectant.

Steam clean carpeting.

## *Winter Storms*

Heavy snow and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. Even areas that normally experience mild winters can be hit with a major snow storm or extreme cold. The results can range from the havoc of cars trying to maneuver on ice-covered highways to isolation due to power outages and blocked roads.

Whatever the case, winter storms can cause seasonal deaths and injuries. To protect yourself and your family from the many hazards of winter weather (blizzards, heavy snows, low temperatures, freezing rain or sleet) follow these safety tips:

### **Keep Posted On Weather Conditions**

Use radio and television to keep informed of current weather conditions and forecasts. Even a few hours warning may enable you to avoid being caught in a storm, or at least be better prepared to cope with it. You should understand the terms commonly used in weather reports:

- A WINTER STORM WARNING is issued when heavy snow (expected snowfall of four inches or more in a 24 hour period), sleet or freezing rain are forecast to occur separately or in combination.

- A WINTER STORM WATCH indicates there is a threat of severe winter weather.

- FREEZING RAIN OR FREEZING DRIZZLE is forecast when expected rain is likely to freeze as soon as it strikes the ground, putting a coating of ice on the roads and walkways. If a substantial layer of ice is expected to accumulate from the freezing rain, a winter storm warning is issued.

- SLEET is small particles of ice, usually mixed with rain. If enough sleet accumulates on the ground, it will make the roads slippery.

- TRAVELERS ADVISORIES are issued when ice and snow are expected to hinder travel but not seriously enough to require warnings.

### **Be Prepared for Isolation At Home**

If you live in a rural area, make sure you can survive at home for a week or two in case a winter storm isolates you making it impossible to leave. You should:

- Keep an adequate supply of heating fuel on hand and use it sparingly. Your regular supplies may be curtailed by storm by storm conditions. If necessary, conserve fuel by keeping the house cooler than usual, or by temporarily closing off some rooms. Have some kind of EMERGENCY heating equipment and fuel available so you can keep at least one room of your house warm enough to be livable. KEEP IN MIND when fuel heating devices are used, there must be adequate ventilation to avoid a buildup of potentially toxic fumes. Be sure to use only the proper fuel recommended by the

manufacturer. If you have a fireplace, keep a good supply of dry wood on hand. If your furnace is controlled by a thermostat and your electricity is cut off by a storm, the furnace would not operate and you would need emergency heat.

- Stock an emergency supply of food and water as well as emergency cooking equipment such as a portable stove. Some of this food should not require refrigeration or cooking.

- Keep on hand the simple tools and equipment needed to fight a fire such as a fire extinguisher. Be certain that all family member now how to take precautions to prevent fire at such a time when the fire department may not be available or able to reach you.

### **Dress for the Season**

If you spend time outdoors, wear several layers of loose-fitting lightweight warm clothing rather than a single layer of thick clothing. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Use a hood to protect your head and face and to cover your mouth to protect your lungs from the extremely cold air.

### **Travel Only If Necessary**

If you must travel, use public transportation if possible. If you are forced to use your automobile for a trip of any distance, take these precautions:

- Make sure your car is in good condition, properly serviced, has a full tank of gas and is equipped with all season or snow tires.

- If possible take another person with you.

- Make sure someone knows where you are going, your approximate schedule and your estimated time of arrival

- Have emergency "winter storm" supplies in the car, such as a container of sand, shovel, windshield scraper, tow chain or rope, flares and a flashlight with extra batteries. It is a good idea to have heavy gloves or mittens, overshoes, extra woolen socks and winter headgear to cover your head and face.

- If you can, travel by daylight and use major highways. Keep the car radio tuned to weather information and advice.

- Drive with caution. Do not try to save time by traveling faster than road and weather conditions permit.

● Do not be daring or foolhardy. Rather than risk being stalled, lost or isolated, stop, turn back or seek help if conditions threaten to test your ability or endurance. If you are caught in a blizzard, seek refuge immediately.

### **Keep Calm if You Get In Trouble**

If your car breaks down during a storm, or if you become stalled or lost, do not panic. Think the problem through, decide the safest and best thing to do, use caution. If you are on a heavily-traveled road, indicate you are in trouble.

Turn on your emergency flashers or directional lights, or hang a cloth from the radio antenna or car window. Stay in your car and wait for help to arrive. If you run the engine to keep warm, open a window to provide ventilation and protect you from carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not clogged with snow. Do not leave your car to search for assistance; you may become confused and get lost.

### **Avoid Overexertion**

Every winter many unnecessary deaths occur because people - young and old - engage in more strenuous physical activity than their bodies can stand.

Cold weather alone puts an extra strain on your heart. If you add to this physical exercise you are not accustomed to - such as shoveling, pushing an automobile or even walking - you are at greater risk of a heart attack or stroke. In winter weather, avoid overexertion.

### **Evacuation**

Disasters force people to evacuate their homes more often than you may realize. Transportation or industrial accidents sometimes release harmful substances, forcing thousands of people to leave their home for a safer area. Fires and floods result in evacuation even more frequently.

Therefore, local evacuation planning is important. Specific evacuation plans vary by community and by the type of disaster, so contact your local emergency management or civil defense office for your community's plans.

### **How Much Time Will You Have to Evacuate?**

The amount of time you will have to evacuate your home or community depends on the type of disaster. In disasters resulting from a hazardous material spill, you may have only moments to leave. **This means you must prepare now**, for you may have to collect even the most basic necessities.

## Evacuation Periods

Evacuation periods can last for hours or several days. For part or all of this time, you may be responsible for your own food, clothing and other supplies until help arrives or utilities are repaired.

## Advanced Planning for Evacuation

*Use the Emergency Supplies* chapter as a guide to learn what you should gather for you and your family in case of evacuation. Collect these crucial materials, especially food and water, well in advance of a disaster. Remember, once you are told to evacuate, you may have only minutes to leave.

*Review evacuation procedures* with your family so that everyone understands what to do and where to meet if you are separated.

- Ask a friend or relative outside your area to be the "checkpoint", so family members can call that person to say they are safe.
- Find out where children will be sent if they are in school when an evacuation is announced.

*Plan now where you will go* if you must evacuate.

Consider the homes of relatives or friends who live nearby but outside the potential disaster area.

Contact the local emergency management office for community evacuation plans. Review public information to identify reception centers and shelters areas such as schools, churches, or other public buildings.

*Keep fuel in your car* at all times. During emergencies, filling stations may be closed. Never store extra fuel in the garage.

*If you do not have a car* or other vehicle, make transportation arrangements with friends, neighbors or your local emergency management office.

*Know where and how* to shut off your homes electricity, gas and water at the main switches and valves. Make sure you have the necessary tools to do this (usually a pipe, crescent, or adjustable wrench). Check with your local utility for instructions.

## What to Do When You Are Told to Evacuate

1. If there is time, secure your house.

- Unplug appliances.
- Turn off natural gas, propane or other fuel valves where they enter the house. In a flood hazard area, store propane tanks or secure them to the structure.
- Turn off the main water valve.
- Take any action needed to prevent damage to water pipes by freezing weather, if this is a threat.
- Securely close and lock all doors, windows, and the garage.
- Place a sign on the front door or window to notify authorities that your house or apartment has been evacuated and no one remains inside. If possible, leave a number where you can be reached.
- Make arrangements with a family member or friend to leave your pets with in the event you have to stay at a shelter.

2. Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts. They may be blocked.
3. Listen to the radio for instructions and emergency shelter information.
4. Carry a family safety kit. See *the Emergency Supplies* chapter for a list of supplies the kit should include.

## Returning Home

1. Do not return to the emergency site until local authorities say the area is safe.
2. Continue listening to the radio or television for information and instructions.
3. Use extreme caution when entering or working in the building - structures may be damaged or weakened. Beware of poisonous snakes in flooded structures and debris.
4. Do not take lanterns, torches or any kind of flame into a damaged building. Leaking gas or other flammable materials may be present. Use battery-operated flashlights for light. However if you suspect a gas leak, do not use any kind of light. The light itself could cause an explosion.
5. If you smell gas, turn off the main gas valve at the meter.

- Do not turn on lights, they can produce sparks that will ignite the gas.
- Leave the house immediately and notify the gas company or the police.
- Do not re-enter the house until an authorized person tells you it is safe to do so.

6. Notify the power company or fire department if you see fallen or damaged electrical wires.

7. If any appliances are wet, turn off the main electrical power switch in your home before you unplug them. Dry out appliances, wall switches and sockets.

8. Check food and water supplies for contamination and spoilage. Follow specific instructions from your local health department or agriculture extension agency.

9. Wear sturdy shoes when walking through debris or broken glass, and use heavy-duty gloves when removing debris.

### *Public Emergency Shelters*

In the event of a disaster or an evacuation, the Village of Schiller Park and the Red Cross may establish a community-based shelter for local residents based on the conditions warranted to the event.

There are three types of centers used in mass care situations.

1. Warming or Cooling Centers which allow residents to escape the elements and maintain adequate body temperatures. These facilities are designed for short-term use only. Preparation for overnight stays will normally not be provided and short-term food and other personal hygiene supplies may be available. These facilities are staffed by municipal or township personnel and are usually located in school gyms, malls or other public buildings.

2. Disaster Relief Centers which are for temporary shelter from elements during emergency or disaster events requiring evacuation of the affected population. These centers will provide food and possibly facilities for overnight stays based on the severity of the incident. These facilities will be staffed by the county and supported by municipal personnel.

3. Shelters which are designed to accommodate evacuated population for an extended period of time. Food, facilities for showers and other personal hygiene and overnight stays will be provided. These facilities will be staffed by the county, supported by municipal personnel and may be transferred to the Red Cross.

Persons needing shelter are asked to bring a change of clothing, bathing and sanitary supplies, denture and eye care materials, pre-filled prescriptions and other medical needs and any special dietary supplements you may require. All of these supplies should be in your emergency survival kit along with a supply of water, food and sleeping needs. Bringing extra supplies with you will help ease the burden and demand of supplies that may be at a shortage. With the exceptions of guide dogs, animals are not permitted in shelters.

Emergency shelters are meant for immediate short-term care of residents until other plans can be made to stay with a family member or friend, or until the affected area has been deemed safe to return to your home by official authorities