



Working from the same page

consistent messages for CDEM

PART A: General information



Evacuation, sheltering- in-place and post- emergency safety

- **Learn about your local evacuation arrangements including evacuation zones, routes and shelters**

In this chapter

Awareness messages

Why talk about evacuation?	3
Why talk about sheltering-in-place?.....	3
Special preparations for pets	3

Action messages

Evacuation	4
Sheltering-in-place	6
Long-term sheltering-in-place at home	6
Staying safe after an emergency	7

Appendix: Emergency sanitation.....	10
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CORE ACTION MESSAGES IN THIS CHAPTER (pp4-9)

- ▶ **Keep listening to local radio or television stations.**
- ▶ **If authorities tell you to evacuate immediately, take your Getaway Kit and go.**
- ▶ **If you have more time, prepare your home and critical buildings.**
- ▶ **Prepare to be self-sufficient for at least three days.**
- ▶ **Stay put until authorities say you can leave.**
- ▶ **Follow your plan.**
- ▶ **Stay alert to hazards.**
- ▶ **Do not use candles.**

For general preparedness, every household should create and practice a Household Emergency Plan and assemble and maintain Emergency Survival Items and a Getaway Kit.

Please note: Core Action Messages should be read in conjunction with the rest of the text in this chapter.

Awareness messages

Why talk about evacuation?

At any time of the year, at any time of day or night, an emergency, or threat of an emergency could force people to leave their homes, offices, and schools or even the community in which they live. People evacuate a dangerous place to go to a safer place, and they usually need to act in a hurry. Preparing before an emergency by learning about the community's warning systems and evacuation routes, and by making evacuation plans and discussing them with household members, is the best way to be ready in case an evacuation is necessary. Making plans at the last minute can be upsetting, create confusion, and cost precious time.

Why talk about sheltering-in-place?

Sometimes, an emergency or threat of an emergency mandates that people shelter-in-place in their home or in whatever building they happen to be. Safe shelter requires having a safe place to go and having the time to get there. It is important to know which room to shelter in and what to do to stay safe while there. At other times, people are forced to evacuate the immediate area, or even the entire region, and to shelter at public facilities. Knowing in advance what to expect and preparing for all sheltering scenarios will make sheltering experiences safer and more comfortable.

Special preparations for animals

Because evacuation centres generally do not accept pets except for service animals, you must plan ahead to ensure that your family and pets will have a safe place to stay. Do your research early.

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets. Ask about any restrictions on number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies would be waived in an emergency. Make a list of pet-friendly places and keep it handy. Call ahead for a reservation as soon as you think you might have to leave your home.

Check with friends, relatives, or others outside your immediate area. Ask if they would be able to shelter you and your animals, or just your animals if necessary. If you have more than one pet, you may have to be prepared to house them separately.

Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinary offices that might be able to shelter animals in emergencies and include 24-hour numbers.

Ask your local animal shelter if it provides foster care or shelter for pets in an emergency. This should be your last resort, as shelters have limited resources and are likely to be stretched to their limits during an emergency.

If you have domestic animals (such as horses, pigs or poultry) or livestock, ensure that you have a plan in place so that they will be secure, have food, water and shelter. The responsibility for animal welfare remains with the owner.

Action messages

Evacuation

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- ▶ **Keep listening to radio or television stations.**
- ▶ **If authorities tell you to evacuate immediately, take your Getaway Kit and go.**
- ▶ **If you have more time, prepare your home and critical buildings.**

Consider your transportation options in case you have to evacuate. If you do not own or drive a car, ask your local emergency management staff about plans for people without private vehicles.

If you are in an area that is being evacuated:

1. Evacuate immediately if told to do so by authorities. Authorities do not ask people to leave unless they conclude that lives may be in danger.
2. Listen to a radio or television station and follow the instructions of local emergency officials. Local officials know the most appropriate advice for your particular situation.
3. Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes. The most common injury following emergencies is cut feet.
4. Secure your home as you normally would when leaving for an extended period, and if you have time, any critical buildings.
5. Take your pets with you when you leave, provided you can do so without endangering yourself.
6. Use travel routes specified by local authorities. Since certain areas may be impassable or dangerous, avoid shortcuts. Do not drive through moving water. Barriers are placed for your safety; if you come upon a barrier, follow posted detour signs.

If you have only moments before leaving, take your Getaway Kit and go. If you have not prepared a Getaway Kit, at least try to take the following:

7. Cash and personal identification.
8. Torch, radio, and water.
9. A change of clothes and a sleeping bag or blankets for each household member.
10. First aid kit, including prescription medications, dentures, extra eyeglasses, and hearing aid batteries.
11. Car keys and house keys.
12. Any pets that you can get without endangering yourself. You may not be able to come back for them later as it may be too dangerous to return.

If you have time before leaving and local officials have not advised an immediate evacuation, prepare your home before evacuating. Quickly take steps to protect your property and belongings. Depending on the threat, you should:

13. Put your Getaway Kit in your vehicle or by the door if you are being picked up or may be leaving on foot. In some emergency situations, such as tsunami or wildfire, it is better to leave by foot than wait for transportation. Carry what you can, selecting the items most essential to your health and safety.
14. Tell your out-of-town contact in your Household Emergency Plan where you are going and when you expect to get there. Relatives and friends will be concerned about your safety. Letting someone know your travel plans will help relieve the fear and anxiety of those who care.
15. Look for potential hazards around your property. Bring things indoors. Outdoor furniture, rubbish bins, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines, hanging plants, and any other objects that may be blown around or swept away should be brought indoors.
16. Turn off electricity at the main fuse or circuit breaker, turn off water at the main valve.
17. Leave natural gas on, unless local officials advise otherwise, because you will need it for heating and cooking when you return home. If you turn gas off, a licensed professional is required to turn it back on, and it may take weeks for a professional to respond.
18. Turn off LPG gas service valves. Propane tanks often become damaged or dislodged in emergencies.
19. If strong winds are expected, cover the outside of all the windows of your home.
20. Use shutters that are rated to provide significant protection from windblown debris, or put pre-fit plywood coverings over all windows.
21. If flooding is expected, consider using sand bags to keep water away from your home. It takes two people about one hour to fill and place 100 sandbags, giving you a wall 0.3-meter high and 6-meters long. Make sure you have enough sand, hessian or plastic bags, shovels, strong helpers, and time to place them properly.
22. Bring all pets into the house and confine them to one room, if you can, and make evacuation arrangements as needed. Pets may try to run if they feel threatened. Keeping them inside and in one room will allow you to find them quickly if you need to leave. If you have large, rare or numerous animals, start evacuating them or moving them to your shelter area (if you are sheltering in place) as soon as you are aware of impending danger.
23. Move livestock to safe paddocks. Ensure they have water, food and shelter and that they are secure if there is no power. Make arrangements for their ongoing welfare if the evacuation lasts longer than expected.

Sheltering-in-place

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- ▶ **Prepare to be self-sufficient for at least three days.**

Taking shelter, having a safe place to go and having the time to get there, are often a critical element in protecting yourself and your household in times of emergency. Sheltering can take several forms. Sheltering-in-place is appropriate when conditions require that you take protection in your home, place of employment or other location you may be in when an emergency strikes.

How and where to shelter in place depends entirely on the emergency situation. For instance, during a tornado warning you should go to an underground room or a “wind safe” room, if such a room is available. During a chemical release, on the other hand, you should take shelter in a room above ground level. Because of these differences, short-term in-place shelter is described in the chapters dealing with specific hazards. See the chapters on “Thunderstorms” and “Tornadoes” for more information on short-term sheltering.

Long-term sheltering-in-place at home

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- ▶ **Stay put until authorities say you can leave.**

Taking shelter may also be necessary for longer periods of time and will require different preparation. Sometimes, emergencies make it unsafe for people to leave their residences for extended periods. Winter storms, floods, and landslides may isolate individual households and make it necessary for each household to take care of its own needs until the emergency abates, such as when snows melt and temperatures rise, or until emergency services arrive. Your household should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least three days if cut off from utilities and from outside supplies of food and water. Being prepared for two weeks is safer.

If you are sheltering at home, you should:

24. Stay in your location until local authorities say it is safe to leave. The length of your stay can range from a few hours to two weeks.
25. Maintain a 24-hour communications watch. Take turns listening to radio or television stations. Listen to battery-operated radio or television for local news updates for short periods of time to preserve the batteries.

Staying safe after an emergency

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- ▶ Follow your plan.
- ▶ Stay alert to hazards.
- ▶ Do not use candles.

After an emergency occurs, you may be in your home, in a public shelter in your community, or far away from your home. No matter where you are, it is probable that many other people are experiencing what you are going through. You will be glad that you and the other members of your household made a plan and practiced it. No matter where you are after an emergency, you should:

26. Remain calm and patient. Staying calm and patient will help you move safely and avoid delays or accidents caused by irrational behaviour. Many people will be trying to accomplish the same things you are for the safety of their families. Patience will help everyone get through a difficult situation more easily.
27. Put your Household Emergency Plan into action.
28. Listen to a radio or television station for news and instructions. Local authorities know the most appropriate advice for your community's particular situation.
29. Check for injuries. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people. Taking care of yourself first will allow you to help others safely until emergency responders arrive.
30. Help people who require special assistance – infants, elderly people, those without transportation, families who may need additional help in an emergency situation, people with disabilities, and the people who care for them.
31. Use your Emergency Survival Items.

If you are at home, or when you return home, you should:

32. Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and sturdy shoes. Emergency areas and debris contain many hazards. The most common injury following emergencies is cut feet.
33. Check for damage in your home. Emergencies can cause extensive damage, sometimes in places you least expect. Look carefully for any potential hazards.
34. Use a battery-powered torch when examining buildings. Battery-powered lighting is the safest and easiest and does not present a fire hazard for the user, occupants, or building.
35. DO NOT USE CANDLES. Candles can easily cause fires. They are quiet and easily forgotten. They can tip over during earthquake aftershocks or in a gust of wind. Candles invite fire play by children.

36. Look for fire hazards, such as broken or leaking gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, or submerged furnaces or electrical appliances.
37. Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone outside quickly. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbour's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
38. Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.
39. Do not use the telephone during the emergency period unless it is to report a life-threatening emergency as telephone lines need to be clear for emergency calls to get through.
40. If you have no electricity, take precautions to keep food safe. (**See** Emergency Survival and Getaway Kit, Appendix: Stocking and Storing Food and Water Safety.)
41. Check for damage to sewage/effluent and water lines. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and drains and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap.
42. Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off. Water is often contaminated after major emergencies. (**See** Emergency Survival and Getaway Kit, Appendix: Stocking and Storing Food and Water Safety.) If your tap water is not working or is not safe, use your emergency supplies.
43. If you need to dispose of sewage, ensure that you do it properly (**See** Appendix: Emergency Sanitation). If you are farming, effluent management regulations still apply.
44. Clean up spills immediately. Especially important to clean up are spilled medicines, bleach, gasoline, and other flammable liquids.
45. Watch for loose plaster and ceilings that could fall.
46. Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.
47. Watch animals closely. Keep all your animals under your direct control. Animals may become disoriented, particularly if the emergency has affected scent markers that normally allow them to find their homes. Animals may be able to escape from your property. Be aware of hazards at nose and paw or hoof level, particularly debris, spilled chemicals, fertilizers, and other substances that might not seem to be dangerous to humans. In addition, the behaviour of animals may change dramatically during an emergency, becoming aggressive or defensive, so be aware of their well-being and take measures to protect them from hazards and to ensure the safety of other people.

48. Let your out-of-town contact know you have returned home, and then do not use the telephone again during the emergency period unless it is to report a life-threatening emergency. Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in emergency situations. They need to be clear for emergency calls to get through.
49. Stay away from downed power lines and report them immediately. Getting damaged utilities turned off will prevent further injury or damage. If you see downed power lines, alert emergency services and stay on the scene to warn others until authorities arrive, if possible.
50. If you are farming, ensure livestock are a safe distance from power lines.

Appendix: Emergency sanitation

In many cases during an emergency, people will need to use improvised emergency toilets if the water supply has been cut off. These toilets may be made from any watertight container with a snug-fitting cover.

- Use a rubbish container or bucket.
- If the container is small, keep a large container (also with a cover) available for waste disposal.
- If possible, line both containers with plastic bags.
- Every time the emergency toilet is used, pour or sprinkle a small amount of regular household disinfectant such as chlorine bleach, into the container to reduce odours and germs.
- After each use, replace the lid.