

# Your Personal Preparedness Guide



**Preparedness...It's Everybody's Business!**

This Personal Preparedness Guide was adapted and produced by the City of Toronto, Office of Emergency Management. Additional copies are available from: City of Toronto, Office of Emergency Management

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# Introduction

**In** your day-to-day living, disasters may seem a distant possibility. Yet natural disasters such as floods or tornadoes, technological or environmental accidents such as chemical spills, or service disruptions such as power failures during the winter, can strike any community, including yours, at any time.

If a disaster occurs in the City of Toronto, the emergency services will try to help you. But you need to be ready as well. Local responders may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere.

We know that disaster preparedness works. Take action now that will help protect your family, reduce the impact an emergency has on your life, and deal with the chaos if an incident occurs near you.

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## **The City of Toronto's Emergency Management Program**

The City's comprehensive Emergency Management Program provides for:

- An emergency plan
- An identified Committee responsible for managing and coordinating emergency operations and providing the personnel and resources needed
- A method of notifying key officials and staff when an emergency response is required
- A procedure for declaring an emergency and the legal authority to mount an appropriate response
- A dedicated Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) from which to manage the entire emergency
- Coordination of assistance from and to neighbouring municipalities and senior levels of government
- Regular exercises to test both the plan and its components



# Planning for an Emergency

**You** should be prepared to respond to any type of disaster that could occur in your area. Being prepared for an emergency situation can reduce stress and trauma to you and your family, and even reduce damage to your property. This means having enough supplies on hand to be self-sufficient for at least three days. During an emergency you may need to provide for your own shelter, first aid, food, water and sanitation before emergency personnel can restore regular services.

You also need to prepare for the possible psychological effects of being in a disaster survival situation. When under abnormal amounts of stress, people can become irritable, fatigued, hyperactive, angry and withdrawn. Children and older adults are especially vulnerable to post-disaster psychological effects.

There are a number of common sense steps that you can take right now to ensure that you are prepared in the event of an emergency. The following section includes information on preparing for many different types of emergencies including power failures, winter storms, flooding and hazardous materials emergencies.

Please take the time to look through this guide; it's an excellent resource for children, seniors, families and all residents of the City of Toronto.

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## Creating your emergency plan

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### Develop a plan

Make sure everyone in your family knows what to do before, during and after an emergency. Set up a family meeting to discuss how you can best prepare for an emergency.

### Keep emergency numbers handy

Keep a list of key telephone numbers and addresses near the phone. (During an emergency remember to use the phone for emergency calls only). Select a person in another area to be your family's contact person if you get separated during an emergency. Ensure that everyone memorizes this person's name and telephone number.

### Develop a home escape plan

Develop an escape plan by drawing a floor plan of your residence (or use the space provided on page 11). Show the location of doors, windows, and stairways. Indicate the location of emergency supplies (i.e. emergency kits). Mark a place outside of the home where family members should meet in case of emergency. Practice emergency evacuation drills annually.

### Prepare a family emergency kit

Assemble an emergency kit to manage an evacuation or to shelter-in-place (this means to take refuge in a small room/area where you currently are). Make sure everyone in the household knows where to find this kit.

#### *Know where to get information and what it means*

Tune in to your local television and radio news channels for important updates about the emergency. Officials will make recommendations, based on the emergency, for actions that citizens should take to protect themselves. Examples of these recommendations include:

#### Shelter-In-Place

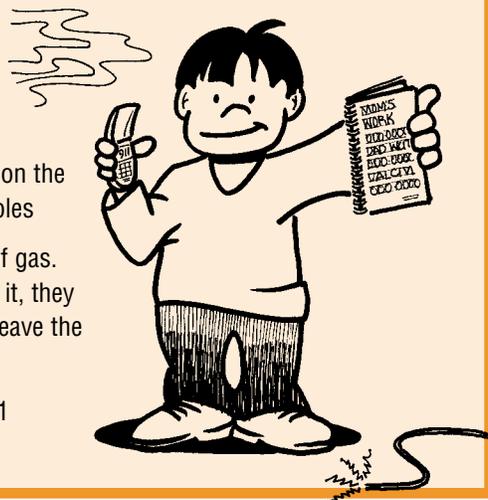
- Stay inside.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Turn off all heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems.
- Try to seal off windows and doors.
- Tune to your local radio and television stations for more information.

#### Evacuation

- Remain calm.
- Pack only what you and your family will need.
- Turn off all your lights, appliances, heating and air conditioning.
- Leave your refrigerator and freezer on.
- Lock your house.
- Evacuate to an appropriate location.

## Every child should know...

- Family contact information for use in an emergency
- Never to touch wires lying on the ground or hanging from poles
- How to identify the smell of gas. Tell them that if they smell it, they should tell a grown-up or leave the building
- How and when to call 9-1-1



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## Record of Important Information

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**Local contact:**

Name, Address

**Nearest Relative:**

Name, Address

**Family Phone Numbers—out-of-area contact:**

Telephone (Work/House/Cell)

Name, Address

**Children's School(s)/ Daycare Information:**

Telephone (Work/House/Cell)

Name, Address

**Family Doctor:**

Name, Address, Telephone (Work/House/Cell)

**Emergency Meeting Locations:**

Outside the home but nearby:

**Other:**

Away from the neighbourhood, in case you cannot return home, meet at:

**Insurance Company Information:**

Name, Address, Telephone

Name, Address, Telephone, Broker/Agent, Policy Number

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**During significant emergencies, an information line will be set up through the local media. As soon as you are aware of it, write it down.**

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## Emergency Checklists

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- Make sure all family members know where the kit is located.
- All family members could have their own kit and another bag could be devoted to equipment, food and extra bottles of water for the whole family.
- Make copies of all your prescriptions and keep a minimum one-week supply of medications in your emergency kit.

### Food and water:

- At least three litres of bottled water per person, per day
- Canned food: soups, stews, beans, pastas, meat, poultry, fish, fruits and vegetables
- Energy bars and dried foods
- Honey, peanut butter, nuts, syrup, jams, salt and pepper, sugar, instant coffee and tea
- Comfort/stress foods such as cookies and hard candy
- Food for infants, seniors or special diets

*\*Keep enough water and non-perishable food to meet your needs for at least 3 days. Check the food and replace the water every year.*

### Basic supplies and tools:

- Small fuel-driven stove and fuel (follow the manufacturer's directions and store properly), waterproof matches, plastic garbage bags, duct tape and paper towels
- Disposable plates and glasses, knives, forks, spoons
- Crank or battery-operated radio with extra batteries
- Flashlight(s) with extra batteries
- Candles and matches in airtight package
- Fire extinguisher
- Manual can opener and bottle opener
- Utility knives
- Pliers, screw driver and duct tape
- Aluminum foil
- Zip-lock bags
- Signal flare
- Thread
- Paper, pencil
- Plastic sheeting
- Wrench (to turn off household gas and water)
- Candles and matches or lighter
- Whistle (in case you need to attract attention)
- Toiletries, spare eyeglasses and other personal items
- First aid kit, prescription drugs
- Extra set of keys and money (including small change for pay telephones)

- Map of the area (for locating shelters)
- Winter clothing, boots and blankets or sleeping bags

*\*Each member of the family could have their own personalized survival kit in a backpack, ready to go in case you need to evacuate. Place all these items in a portable container and keep it accessible.*

### **First Aid: assemble one kit for your home and one for your vehicle**

- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- Thermometer
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 5-centimetre sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 10-centimetre sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Triangular bandages (3)
- 5-centimetre sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 10-centimetre sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Cleansing agent and soap
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Tube of antifungal or antibiotic ointment
- Sunscreen
- Non-prescription medication: aspirin or other pain reliever, anti-inflammatory, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid and laxative
- Prescription medication
- First aid manual



*\*Store items in zip-lock bags or other air-tight containers to avoid moisture and contamination. Be sure to include any medication commonly used by members of the household.*

### **Clothing:**

- Clothing and bedding
- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Hats and gloves
- Rain gear
- Thermal underwear
- Blankets and sleeping bags
- Sunglasses



*\*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear for each person, as well as blankets or sleeping bags. Make sure your winter kit includes heavy footwear, hats and gloves and thermal underwear.*

### Vehicle kit:

- Shovel, scraper and snow brush
- Sand, salt or non-clumping cat litter and antifreeze
- Matches and candles in a metal container
- Spare clothing and shoes, blanket
- Tow rope, jumper cables, windshield-washer fluid
- Warning light or road flares and fire extinguisher
- First aid kit with seatbelt cutter
- Water and emergency food (such as energy bars)
- Roadmaps, whistle and flashlight

*\*Always try to keep your gas tank at least half full, especially in the winter.*

### Special items:

#### For Baby

- formula
- diapers
- bottles
- medications

#### For Adults

- heart and blood pressure medication
- insulin
- prescription drugs
- denture needs
- contact lenses and supplies
- extra eye glasses



### Important documents:

- Wills, insurance policies
- Health Card and Social Insurance numbers
- Passports, social insurance cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Cash (banks and automated banking machines may be unavailable during a severe situation)
- Checkbooks
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods
- Important telephone numbers
- Family records, such as birth, marriage and death certificates.

*\* Make copies of these and keep them in a portable, waterproof container. The best place for original documents when they are not in use is a safety deposit box.*

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## Escape Plan

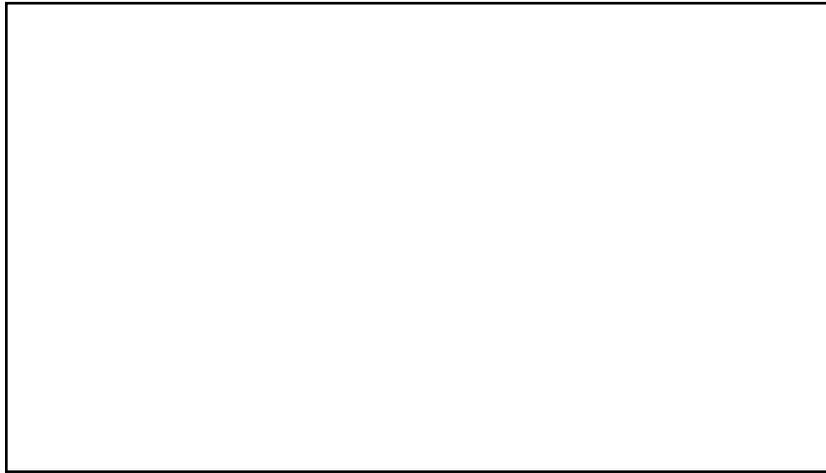
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Develop an escape plan by drawing a floor plan of your residence. Be sure to indicate:

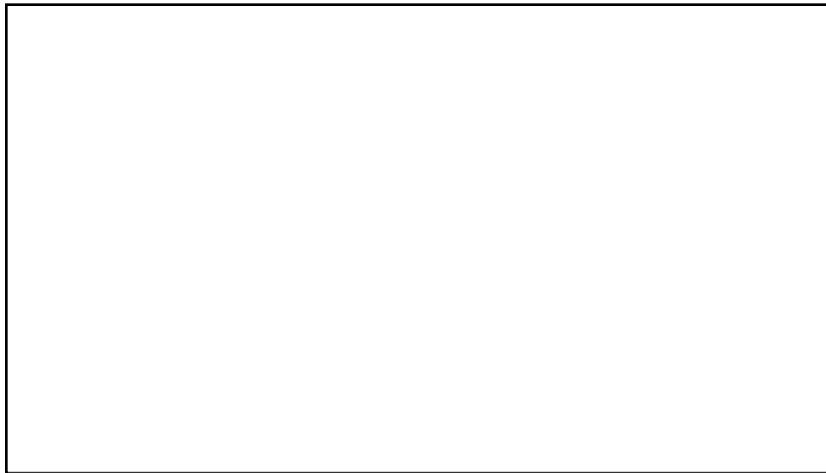
- the location of doors, windows, and stairways
- the location of emergency supplies (i.e. emergency kits)
- a place outside of the home where family members should meet in case of emergency

**REMEMBER:** an escape plan can only work if everyone knows about it and how to use it. Practice your emergency evacuation drills annually.

Lower Level



Upper Level



First Aid Kit		Normal Exit Route		Smoke Detectors	
Doors		Emergency Exit Routes		Stairways	
Windows		Fire Extinguisher		Utility Shut Off	

# Potential Risks in Toronto

Toronto is a major financial, medical, cultural and economic centre. The city is located close to a nuclear power plant. Over the years, the city has experienced hurricanes, flooding, severe weather, blackouts and disease outbreaks.

The City of Toronto has identified certain risks that could possibly create an emergency situation in our city. Although many of these disasters cannot be prevented, we can prepare ourselves, our families, and our homes ahead of time to reduce the impact that one of these events might have on our lives.

Here is some basic information on some of these specific disasters along with tips on what you should do.

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## **Building Collapse**

Building collapses or explosions occur as a result of structural damage from some sort of emergency.

### **What to do:**

- If possible, get out as quickly and calmly as possible.
  - If you can't get out of the building, get under a sturdy table or desk.
- If you are trapped by debris:
- Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth or clothing.
  - Move around as little as possible to avoid kicking up dust, which is harmful to inhale.
  - If possible, use a flashlight so that you can see your surroundings.
  - Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort as shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

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## **Earthquakes**

Earthquakes of moderate magnitude can occur in Toronto. Although we can't do anything to prevent an earthquake, we can certainly be prepared.

### **What to do:**

- Stay inside, remain as far away from windows as possible, and try to find something heavy to hide under (such as a very large desk, etc.).
- Protect yourself physically, especially your head and neck.
- If you're in a car, stop driving and pull over off the road.

- Avoid bridges, overpasses or underpasses, buildings or anything that could collapse on you and your car.
- **DO NOT** go near downed power lines, fire hydrants or electrical wires under any circumstances.
- **DO NOT** go in the subway.
- **DO NOT** take an elevator.
- After the earthquake, stay out of damaged buildings.

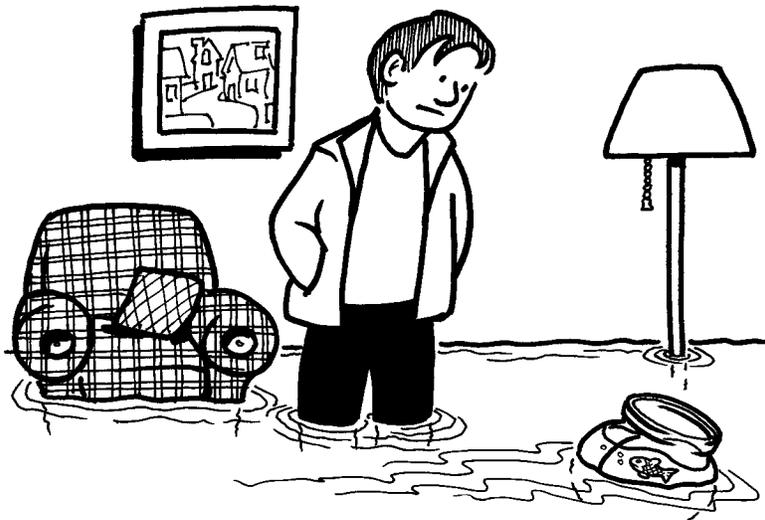
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## Floods

An unusually heavy amount of rain that continues for a prolonged period of time can cause flooding, mudslides, etc. Flash floods can occur without warning and can be hazardous for drivers as well as pedestrians.

### What to do:

- Try to remain indoors and if possible move valuable objects out of your basement to avoid water damage.
- Turn off basement furnace, outside gas valve and shut off the electricity.
- Stay out of the basement if flooding is imminent.
- Don't drive anywhere if possible, especially in low-lying areas where flooding is known to occur.
- If your car gets caught in a flood path, get out of the car and sit on the hood if it is not possible to walk or swim away.
- Keep children indoors, away from rivers and creeks.



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## Hazardous Materials Incidents

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Hazardous materials are chemicals that are harmful to humans and to the environment. Accidents can force an evacuation from your home and the surrounding area. Such accidents are likely to occur in industrial parks, along highways, or along railways. Hazardous materials accidents can be very dangerous because of the possibility of dealing with unknown chemicals. Always be very careful around any chemical accident or chemical spill or fire.

### What to do:

- Stay upwind of the area. Be careful where you walk.
- Leave the accident area, move upwind, and help keep others away until officials arrive on the scene.
- If you are told to evacuate, leave your home or office at once.
- Check with your neighbours and assist them if necessary.
- **DO NOT** take chances. Many chemicals cannot be seen or smelled, but they can be **DEADLY**.
- Listen to the radio or television for information and instruction about returning to the area. **DO NOT** enter the area until a proper assessment has been conducted.
- You should assist accident victims **ONLY** if the injury is **LIFE THREATENING**.

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## Health Emergencies or Disease Outbreaks

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Health emergencies can cause significant human injury or illness to our community.

### What to do:

- If you believe that you or your family members have been exposed to a communicable disease, contact your family doctor immediately.
- If there has been a confirmed health emergency in your community, watch your local news and radio station for instruction.

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## Nuclear Emergencies

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Toronto's neighbouring municipality of Pickering is home to the Pickering Nuclear Generating station. Although it is highly unlikely that a nuclear emergency will occur, it is best to be prepared.

### What to do:

- If there is a major emergency, the provincial authorities will notify you and they will provide detailed instructions regarding what to do. Follow those instructions without delay, particularly if it includes an evacuation.

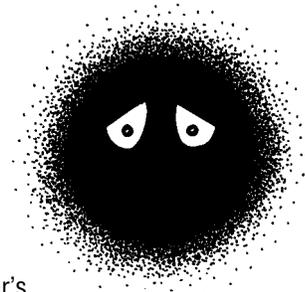
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## Power Failure

A power failure can occur as the result of another situation or as its own emergency. While a brief power failure is usually no cause for concern, it can last for as long as a few days.

### What to do:

- Turn thermostat down to minimum and turn off all appliances, electronic equipment and tools to prevent injury, damage to equipment and fire. Power can be restored more easily when the system is not overloaded.
- Use proper candleholders. Never leave lit candles unattended, or where they might cause a fire.
- Do not use charcoal or gas barbecues, camping heating equipment or home generators indoors.
- Only use home generators following the manufacturer's instructions – outdoors in a well-ventilated place.
- Listen for instructions or information on a battery-powered radio.



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## Terrorism — (Bomb Threats and Suspicious Powders)

Increasingly, throughout the world, we are seeing terrorist activities in the form of bombings and biological threats. Terrorists know no boundaries, and for that reason all communities should be aware of this potential threat.

### What to do:

- Notify the proper authorities immediately.
- **DO NOT** open or move a suspicious package.
- If you have been contaminated, notify the authorities and they will tell you what to do.

For further information contact the Explosive Disposal Unit of the Toronto Police Service at 416-808-3800.



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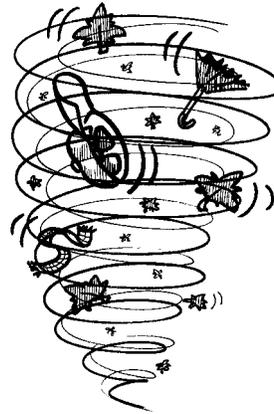
## Tornadoes

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Tornadoes tend to occur between the months of May and September. They can cause tremendous destruction with their high wind speeds.

### What to do:

- If you are in a building, go to the basement immediately. If there isn't one, crouch or lie flat (under heavy furniture) in an inner hallway or small inner room or stairwell away from windows.
- Avoid large halls, arenas, shopping malls, and so on (their roofs could collapse).
- If you're caught outside with no shelter, lie down in a ditch or ravine, protecting your head.
- If you're driving, get out of the car. It could be blown through the air, or roll over on you. Lie down and protect your head.



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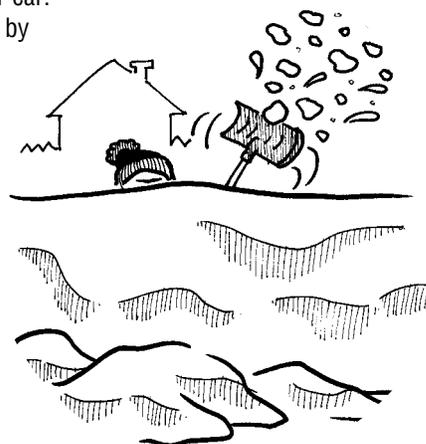
## Winter Storms

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Stormy winter weather is a fact of life in Toronto. Blizzards, heavy snow and ice storms can occur any time during the winter months. While most winter storms are minor and cause little disruption to our daily activities, winter storms can be dangerous.

### What to do:

- Stay inside wherever possible. DO NOT drive anywhere unless it is absolutely critical that you do so.
- If there is a power outage, make sure you have a good supply of propane, logs, candles, proper candleholders and warm clothing both in your home and in your car.
- Prepare your vehicle for winter storms by always keeping a full tank of gas along with a vehicle emergency kit (see page 10).
- If you are caught outside during a blizzard or ice storm, try to find immediate shelter.
- Listen to the radio and television for up to date weather reports.



## Before a disaster occurs

- Train family members.
- Set aside supplies in an accessible location (emergency survival kits).
- Meeting places – list three or four places where you plan to go if you cannot stay in your home, such as a neighbour's or relative's home or local schools or community centres. If you arrive home after the disaster and no one is there.

## During a disaster

- Keep calm – do not run or panic.
- Remain where you are.
- If indoors, stay there – take cover under a desk, table or bench, hallways or against inside walls.
  - Avoid glass windows or skylights; do not use elevators; do not run outdoors (falling debris or live electrical wires may hit you).
- If outdoors, get away from buildings and stick to clear areas.
  - Avoid walls, utility poles and downed wires that could cause serious injury or death; do not rush for a doorway in a crowded place as others may have the same idea.
- If you are in a car, pull to the side of the road, stop the car and stay in your car. DO NOT park under overpasses or overhead wires.

## After a disaster

### If utilities are damaged

- Inspect the gas supply lines for leaks – by smell only!

- If you smell gas:
  - DO NOT use candles, matches or other open flames!
  - Do not operate electrical switches or appliances.
  - Shut off main valve at the meter; open all windows and doors so that the gas can escape.
  - Leave the house and report the leak to authorities.
- If damage to your electrical system is suspected (frayed wires, sparks or the smell of hot insulation), turn off the system at the main fuse box.
- Do not switch on the gas or electricity again until someone from the utility company has first checked your home.
- If water leaks are suspected, shut off water at the main valve.
- Check your neighbours for injuries or fire hazards – help if you can.
- Turn on battery-powered radio or car radio and listen for advisories.
- Check house, roof, and chimney for damage.
- Clean up debris, glass and spilled medicines, flammable liquids, bleaches and gasoline.
- Check your closets and cupboards by opening the doors cautiously; objects tumbling off shelves may cause more damage.
- Do not use your vehicle, unless there is an emergency.
- Do not go sightseeing through badly damaged areas – you will only hamper the relief effort.
- Keep streets clear for emergency vehicles.

**Remind your family to stay close enough to comfort each other, especially children. Assign each family member a chore to do to mend the household. Talk about what happened and be sure to let your children say what they felt, how afraid and how brave they were.**

### Emergency sanitation supplies:

- Portable camp toilet, a sturdy bucket or small trash can with a tight-fitting lid to use as an emergency toilet, with a good supply of plastic bag liners, twist ties, toilet paper and household disinfectant
- Powdered chlorinated lime, household disinfectant and deodorant, insecticides may be added to sewage to deodorize it and keep away insects
- Plastic, zippered bags (can be used and sealed)
- Trash bags – a supply of extra large plastic bags makes sanitary receptacles for smaller bags; store used bags in large covered metal trash cans until they can be properly and safely disposed
- Large trash cans – metal or plastic; for human waste matter and garbage; they should have tight fitting covers

**Military Procedure is to bury human waste matter in trenches 24"–30" deep, and cover with a thin layer of lime. Never deposit waste or garbage on open ground. Note: If damage in the water lines is suspected, do not flush toilets. Turn off water at the main valve so polluted water does not enter your water system.**

### Emergency water supply

You and your family may be on your own to provide a safe and adequate water supply. Don't take a chance! Under serious disaster conditions, no water can be presumed safe and all drinking water should be purified.

Your emergency survival kit should have three litres of water per person, per day. Water should be stored in carefully cleaned, non-corrosive, tightly covered containers.

If your water supply is turned off you can obtain water from other sources. Try water drained from the hot water tank, melted ice cubes, canned fruit and vegetable juices, liquid from other canned foods and water from the toilet flush tank (not the bowl). If you must use toilet tank water, purify it before using. Do not use chemically "blue" water.

### Methods for purifying water for drinking:

- Strain water through clean cloth into a container to remove any sediment or floating matter. Boil vigorously for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Strain water as above. Add liquid household bleach at a ratio of 7 drops per 2.5 litres of water, mix well and let stand 30 minutes. A slight taste or smell of chlorine indicates that the water is good to drink, if not, repeat the dosage.
- Strain water as above. Add household tincture of Iodine (2%) at a ratio of about 20 drops per 2.5 litres of water. Follow directions from above.

### If you must evacuate

**Post a message indicating where you can be found in a prominent, easy to find spot. Take with you, your emergency survival kit (with enough supplies for each person with you); any required medications, eyeglasses, hearing aids and your first aid kit; radio and batteries; important papers and cash; and sleeping bags and extra clothes.**

## Did you know...?

**To be best prepared for an emergency, you should be able to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours (3 days) following a disaster.**

### **Most people can survive...**

- 4 minutes without air
- 4 days without water
- 4 weeks without food

**The way adults handle things during an emergency will determine, to a great extent, how their children will react.**

## Do's and Don'ts during an emergency

**DO** stay tuned to the radio and television.

**DO** follow the instructions of emergency officials. For example, if an evacuation is called, remember your personal safety is the most important thing.

**DO** call family and let them know WHERE you are, and that you are OK.

**DO** call for assistance if there is a need to move someone immediately and you are unable to do so.

**DO** stay inside your home unless otherwise directed.

**DO** try to ensure, wherever possible without putting yourself at risk, that your immediate neighbours are OK.

**DO** keep your cell phone battery charger close by and recharge whenever possible.

**DON'T** tie up the telephone lines. Emergency officials need those lines to conduct business.

**DON'T** venture out, unless directed by emergency officials. Stay inside where it is warm and you have supplies.

**DON'T** attempt to bring your children home from school or daycare in an emergency or evacuation. School officials will be notified of an emergency and they will begin proper procedure to protect the children in their care. You will be notified of when you can be reunited with your children.

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The Office of Emergency Management

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