

What to Do During a Disaster

What follows are some basic procedures for specific natural disasters. Additional information is also available from other sources. Think about your own unique situation and adapt the procedures to fit your situation and family.

During a winter power failure ...

- ◆ Turn the thermostat down to minimum and turn off all appliances, electronic equipment and tools to prevent injury, fire, or damage to equipment. Electricity can also be restored more easily when the system is not overloaded.
- ◆ Use proper candleholders. Never leave lit candles unattended.
- ◆ Don't use charcoal or gas barbecues, camping heating equipment, or home generators indoors. To operate a generator safely, follow the manufacturer's instructions, and always ensure that the generator operates outdoors in well-ventilated conditions, well away from doors or windows. Connect lights and appliances directly to the generator. If extension cords must be used, ensure they are CSA (Canada Standards Association) approved.
- ◆ Keep in mind that repair crews will be working hard to restore power as quickly as possible, and be patient.

During a Chemical or Hazardous Waste Spill ...

- ◆ Stay inside and close all windows and doors.
- ◆ Turn off your air conditioner and/or furnace fan.
- ◆ Listen to local (Olds) radio station 96.5 FM or (Red Deer) radio stations (e.g. 1170 AM, 95.5 FM, 105.5 FM, 98.9 FM), for instructions about possible evacuation.
- ◆ Prepare for possible evacuation by getting your Emergency Survival Kit ready, along with enough clothing and personal items to last for an extended evacuation time.
- ◆ If you are required to evacuate, contact as many family members as possible to notify them of the situation and the location to which you will be evacuated.

During a Tornado ...

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Stay away from large halls, arenas, shopping malls, etc. as their roofs could collapse.
- ◆ If you are caught outside and there is no shelter, lie down in a ditch or ravine, protecting your head.
- ◆ If you are driving, get out of and away from the car. If could be blown through the air, or roll over on you. Lie down as above.

During a Severe Lightning Storm ...

- ◆ If you are in a building, stay inside. Stay away from windows, doors, fireplaces, radiators, stoves, metal pipes, sinks and other electrical charge conductors.
- ◆ Unplug TVs, radios, toasters and other electrical appliances.
- ◆ Don't use the phone or other electrical equipment.
- ◆ If you are outside, seek shelter in a building, cave or depressed area. Lightning typically strikes the tallest item in an area.
- ◆ If you're caught in the open, crouch down with your feet close together and your head down. Don't lie flat - by minimizing your contact with the ground you reduce the risk of being electrocuted by a ground charge.
- ◆ Keep away from telephone and power lines, fences, trees and hilltops.
- ◆ Get off bicycles, motorcycles, and tractors.
- ◆ If you are in a car, stop the car and stay in it. Don't stop near trees or power lines that could fall.

During a Flood ...

- ◆ Turn off basement furnaces and the outside gas valve.
- ◆ Shut off the electricity. If the area around the fuse box or breaker panel is wet, stand on a dry board and shut off the power with a dry wooden stick.
- ◆ If you are in a car, try not to drive through floodwaters. Fast water could sweep your car away. However, if you are caught in fast rising waters and your car stalls, leave it and save yourself and your passengers.
- ◆ Never try to cross a flood area on foot. The fast water could sweep you away.

Be Ready to Evacuate

If the emergency is serious enough, you may be asked to leave your home and go to a nearby Evacuation Centre, like a school gym or community hall.

Listen to local (Olds) radio station 96.5 FM or (Red Deer) radio stations (e.g. 1170 AM, 95.5 FM, 105.5 FM, 98.9 FM), for information, and follow any instructions that may be broadcast, either through the Alberta Emergency Public Warning System, www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ema_epws.htm or from local Disaster Services officials. Messages broadcast using the Emergency Public Warning System override all programming on radio and television stations. These messages may be broadcast by Disaster Services officials from any municipality in the province.

If you have to evacuate ...

- Leave immediately when requested to do so. Your cooperation frees up emergency personnel for other duties.
- Take your Emergency Survival Kit with you.
- If you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas and electricity.
- If you have pets, bring them and their food with you, or make arrangements for their care.
- Wear clothes and shoes appropriate to conditions.
- Lock your house and any outbuildings.
- Follow evacuation routes specified by Disaster Services officials. Don't take shortcuts, as they could take you to blocked or dangerous areas.
- Leave a note on your door telling others when you left and where you went. This is particularly important for family members who were absent during the emergency and/or call for evacuation.
- Sign up at the registration centre to which you are evacuated, so you can be contacted by or reunited with your family and loved ones.

If you have to evacuate your home for a prolonged period during a winter power failure, drain the water from the plumbing system. Starting at the top of the house, open all taps and flush toilets several times, and open the drain valve in the basement. Drain your hot water tank by attaching a hose to the tank drain valve and running it to the basement floor drain. If you drain a gas-fired hot water tank, turn off the pilot-light first - your local gas supplier can relight it for you later. Unhook and drain washing machine hoses.