

## Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Adapted with permission from ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES  
PERSONAL AND FAMILY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

PREPARED BY EMERGENCY/DISASTER MANAGEMENT in partnership with WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

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Is your family prepared? Emergencies and disasters do happen. They strike quickly, and often without warning. It may be a natural disaster, such as a flood or tornado; a pandemic; a service disruption, such as a power failure; or an environmental disaster, such as a chemical spill.

It is estimated that in extreme situations, emergency services may be unable to reach victims for up to 72 hours (3) days. If you are prepared for a disaster, the impact on your health, family, and home can be minimized. Expect the unexpected and plan accordingly. Remember that being prepared is an integral part of being responsible.

What is meant by the term “*disaster?*” A disaster can be defined as a calamitous event, especially one occurring suddenly and causing great loss of life, damage, or hardship, such as a flood, airplane crash, or business failure.<sup>1</sup> This certainly sounds like something worth a few protective measures.

Start by holding a meeting to discuss how you, and each family member, can be better prepared. Focus first on meeting your family’s needs during the *most likely* disaster events in your locality. A key rule to surviving a disaster is, whenever possible, to get out of its way! Preparedness begins with being alert and ready to take action. Avoidance and preparation go hand in hand on the path to survival. So let’s get started with additional help from Dr. Arthur Bradley (<http://disasterpreparer.com>) who identified fourteen needs in his recent book – *Handbook to Practical Disaster Preparedness for the Family*.

- Identify your family’s fundamental needs that must be met in order to survive nearly any situation.

Basic needs:

- Food, water, shelter, light, heating/cooling, air, sleep, hygiene/sanitation

Supporting needs:

- Medicine/first aid, communication, electrical power, financial security, transportation, protection

Together these two lists comprise fourteen areas that should be addressed by a comprehensive preparedness plan.

- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of each family member in response to an emergency or disaster (e.g. gathering pets, administering first aid, cooking, purifying water).
- Draw your home’s floor plan, and identify two escape routes from each room in your home. Rehearse your escape routes at least once per year. Ensure that each person can evacuate without assistance.
- If you live in an apartment, have your family practice using the emergency exits. Also, show them the fire alarm location, and explain how to use it.
- Inform them to use the stairs, NOT the elevator, in an emergency to eliminate being trapped if the power goes out.
- Identify documents, supplies, and equipment that you may need. Make an EMERGENCY KIT.
- Identify special needs for infants, the elderly, and/or disabled persons.
- Identify training that you may need. Have a family member trained in basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); keep training current.
- If you live in a house, teach family members where and how to shut off the water, electricity, and gas supply. Make big, easy-to-see signs, saying “BREAKER PANEL” or “MAIN CIRCUIT BREAKER.” Keep necessary tools close to the cutoff locations.
- Teach members of your family how to open the garage door manually in case the power goes out.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur T. Bradley, Ph.D. Handbook to Practical Disaster Preparedness for the Family; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2012

- Leave a key to your home with a neighbor or other trusted non-family member.
- Listen to the radio and/or television for situation updates and directions.
- Keep your FEPI Contact Information Magnet close at hand for easy access to important Emergency Contact Numbers.
- Make a Family Emergency Kit so that you and your family will be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours. It is recommended that emergency supplies be stored in waterproof containers that are easy to transport. Check your supplies every six months.

WATER	Four liters per person, per day (two for drinking; two for food preparation, hygiene, and washing).
FOOD	Non-perishable food that needs a minimum of preparation. A minimum of three days' worth of food is recommended for your kit. Check your food storage every six months and replace canned and dry good regularly.
FIRST AID	A basic first aid kit (e.g., medicines, prescription medicine, bandages).
MEDICATION	Basic over-the-counter medications and family prescription medications.
CLOTHING	Plan your clothing to suit the seasonal weather conditions that occur in your area. When restocking the kits, ensure that your clothing will be suitable for the upcoming summer/winter season as appropriate. Significant heat loss occurs around the head and neck, so include hats and scarves for winter, as well as sun hats and sunglasses for summer. Select shoes and boots that are warm, strong, and waterproof. Include heavy wool socks, good quality rain gear, and heavy work gloves or mitts with liners.
EMERGENCY SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT	Flashlights with spare batteries, wet wipes, personal items, basic tools, a little cash, disposable respirators, emergency blankets, and whistle. <b>Caution:</b> make sure there are no gas leaks before using any open flame, including matches, candles and lanterns.

- Ensure your vehicle is in good repair with fluid levels topped up, tires properly inflated, and gas tank is at least half full at all times.
- Special needs items, such as infant supplies (diapers/wipes, change of clothes) or a disabled person's kit.
- Review the plan, maintain the kits – An emergency/disaster can happen at any hour on any day. Practicing your Family Emergency Plan will help your family be familiar with what they are supposed to do should an emergency/disaster occur. Knowing what to do is your best protection, so discuss and walk through your plan at least once a year.
- Pets – Ensure that pets are easy to identify using ID tags, implants, licensing, or tattoos. Keep your pets with you if possible. If evacuation is necessary, do everything possible not to leave your pets behind. Most pets are not allowed in most emergency shelters, so plan ahead. If you must leave your pets at home, ensure that they cannot be cut off from water and dry food. Leave a note on your door that pets are inside.
- Phones – Cellular phones will almost certainly fail during a disaster due to high volume usage. Cordless phones will not work in a power outage as the base station still requires electricity to operate. Have a standard "landline" handset in the home for emergency use.
- Generators – Do NOT plug generators into your home's electrical system without a transfer switch or interlock. Improperly connected generators can "back feed" into the utilities supply circuit and injure or kill repair workers attempting to restore power. Stand-by generators, wired into a home's electrical system, must be installed by a professional electrician using an isolation switch and pass local inspection.
- Be ready to evacuate – Take only items that can be easily carried; leave immediately; take your Family Emergency Kit; make arrangements for pets; and listen to the radio, following instructions from local emergency officials. Follow the evacuation routes specified by the officials, and leave a note telling others when you left and where you went. If you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas, and electricity.

This resource is a tool adapted from Alberta Health Services (AHS) DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE, and is intended to assist you and your family in becoming ready to face a disaster. For a full copy of AHS's Guide, see <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/HealthWellness/hi-hw-disaster-preparedness-guide.pdf>