



YOUR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

What to do before, during and after an emergency

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A Message from York Region Chairman and CEO and Members of Regional Council

In York Region, we may experience many different types of emergencies, including extreme weather events, flooding, hazardous spills, tornadoes and power outages.

By being prepared and knowing what to do in advance, we can all limit the potential impact of these situations. However, being prepared for the unexpected requires planning.

This guide outlines some practical steps you can take to become better prepared to face a range of emergencies – anytime, anywhere.

We encourage York Region residents to take the time to review this publication and share it with your family and friends.

Use this guide to build your emergency plan today and help reduce the potential stress and impact of an emergency later.



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Accessible formats or communication supports available upon request.

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When to call 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Number

Calling 9-1-1 provides instant access to emergency services and should only be used for immediate police, fire and ambulance response. If 9-1-1 is overwhelmed with non-emergency calls, then true emergency calls will have more difficulty getting through and that delays any emergency response.

Always dial 9-1-1 if:

- You or someone else is seriously injured or sick
- You smell smoke, see fire or a carbon monoxide or smoke alarm goes off
- You witness an emergency such as an assault, a motor vehicle collision where someone is injured or if someone may be in danger (i.e. you hear screaming or gunshots)
- You see a crime in progress
- You see or know of any serious crime that has just occurred

Not an emergency?

Call a non-emergency number for information in a situation like a power outage or severe weather event (where there is no immediate danger to life, health or property). Please refer to the Municipal Contact Information on page 49.

Contact the York Regional Police non-emergency line at 1-866-876-5423 if you are reporting:

- A crime with no suspect or when no suspect is present, like fraud or cyber crime
- A non-emergency like missing property
- Suspicious circumstances that may indicate ongoing criminal activity like a marijuana grow operation or a suspicious business

Text with 9-1-1 service

The Text with 9-1-1 service allows citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired (DHHSI) to communicate directly with a 9-1-1 call taker. Once registered, users can simply dial 9-1-1 and a text session will be initiated by the York Regional Police Communications Centre. This service enables us to better meet the needs of the DHHSI community.

To find out more about Text with 9-1-1 or to register, please visit textwith911.ca

Waiting for paramedics?

Be sure to:

- Clear a path to the patient
- Unlock doors
- Turn on outside lights
- Secure pets
- Clear cars from your driveway
- Get patient's medication (if applicable)
- Have someone wait out front

Do not move the patient unless their life is threatened.

Types of EMERGENCIES that could occur in York Region



Power Outage

A power outage occurs when the systems that generate and bring electricity to your home or business fails in some way. It can be caused by a strain on the electrical system (through overuse), failure in the plants that generate power (something stops working) or damage to the systems that bring power to your home or business (power lines break or towers are damaged).

Before the power goes out:

- Use surge protectors to protect valuable electronics like computers and home entertainment systems
- Know how to safely shut off your electricity, water and gas (and if any special tools are needed)
- Keep your vehicle with no less than a half tank of gas because gas stations are electrically operated and won't work during a power outage
- Have back-up light sources such as flashlights with batteries in all major rooms of your house
- Have a corded telephone that will work without home power (cordless phones will not work without electricity)
- Know how to release your electric garage door opener and how to open the door without electricity (some openers have a battery back-up)
- Have a cooler on hand that can be filled with ice or freezer blocks for cold food storage if needed

If you depend on home oxygen (or other life-sustaining equipment), have a back-up that does not rely on power (such as battery back-up). Contact your service provider for options.

During a power outage:

- NEVER use outdoor grills, smokers or barbecues indoors (fire hazard and they release deadly carbon monoxide gas)
- NEVER operate any fuel burning equipment (including generators) inside your home, basement, garage or other enclosed area

- To keep food cool, limit the number of times you open the refrigerator, unless absolutely necessary
- Use camping equipment in a space away from where you live and sleep, and be sure to store fuels safely
- Turn off appliances not required (electric range and washer/dryer), as appliances left on during an outage will start up when electricity is restored
- Use safe candle holders — never leave burning candles unattended — if using candles for heat and light

Portable Generator Safety:

- ALWAYS read the owner’s manual before operating
- ALWAYS keep your generator outdoors and away from doors and windows
- ALWAYS use a proper rated extension cord (in good condition)
- NEVER add fuel while it is running (fire hazard)
- NEVER connect to a wall outlet (very dangerous when power is restored)

When power is restored:

- Only turn on what you need to give the system a chance to stabilize
- Check your fridge and freezer for spoiled food (discard immediately). Don’t risk eating spoiled food
- Reset your clocks, timers and alarms (replace any items used from your home Emergency Kit)

Driving during a power outage: Four-way stops

- A traffic light intersection becomes a four-way stop when signal lights are not working
- The first vehicle to arrive and stop has the right of way
- If two or more vehicles stop at the same time, the vehicle on the right has the right of way, meaning it proceeds through the intersection first
- Shortly after a power outage, stop signs may be temporarily placed at many designated traffic light intersections
- Stop signs override the four-way stop rule and create a two-way stop instead

Severe Summer Weather

Severe summer weather is caused by high and low pressure systems converging and can result in dangerous and damaging storms.

Watches and Warnings:

A WATCH means there is an area-wide risk of a storm but does not mean that the storm will happen. A WATCH means that the probability for severe weather is high so pay attention. Everyone in an area identified by a WATCH should be careful and be ready to act quickly if a storm occurs.

A WARNING means that severe weather exists within an area now, or will occur. Everyone in an area identified by a WARNING should monitor their local weather conditions and be prepared to take cover.

Thunderstorm

Thunderstorms can be accompanied by hail, lightning, high winds, heavy rain and can also spurn tornadoes. Thunderstorms are usually short and over within an hour although a series of thunderstorms can last for several hours.



To receive weather forecasts and alerts from Environment and Climate Change Canada, download the WeatherCAN App to your mobile phone.

Lightning

Lightning can strike anywhere within the same area that thunder sound travels. If you can hear thunder, you can be struck by lightning and should seek shelter immediately. There is no safe place outdoors during a thunderstorm. If thunder roars, go indoors!

If outside:

- Stay away from trees, telephone poles, wires, fences, or anything metal
- Seek a low lying area and don't stand near anything made of metal

If indoors:

- Stay away from appliances or equipment — anything that will conduct electricity including sinks, tubs and showers
- Avoid using a telephone that is connected to a landline

If driving or boating:

- Do not park under tall objects that could topple
- Do not stop or exit vehicle if there are power lines down nearby
- Quickly get to shore, especially in an open cabin boat, and find shelter



Tornado

A tornado is an extremely powerful, dangerous, funnel-shaped wind vortex that comes into contact with the ground and causes damage. Tornado season runs from March to October with peak activity in late June or early July. These dangerous storms leave a path of destruction in their wake and an average tornado can cause a trail of damage six kilometres long.

Signs of a tornado include: a dark greenish sky, large hail, often with little rain, visible cloud rotation, a funnel cloud hanging towards the ground, visible debris and a rumbling or whistling sound.

If indoors:

- Stay tuned to your local weather station for updated information
- Go to your basement, cold cellar or take shelter in a small interior windowless ground floor room (such as a bathroom, closet or hallway)
- Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside
- Shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck

If at the office or apartment building:

- Take shelter in an inner hallway or room (ideally in the basement) or ground floor
- Do not use the elevator and stay away from windows
- Avoid large rooms that are not supported in the middle such as gymnasiums, churches and auditoriums

If outside:

- Take shelter immediately if a warning has been issued (never wait until you see a tornado)
- Don't go under an overpass or bridge — you're safer in an open flat area
- If you cannot find shelter, lie flat in a ditch and cover your head with your hands
- Always get as close to the ground as possible and watch for flying debris (small objects become lethal weapons when carried by tornado winds)
- If you are driving and see a tornado, get to a nearby shelter or travel away from the tornado
- Do not use your car as a shelter - debris may come through the windows, or the vehicle may be swept away.

Afterwards:

- Monitor media and social media for information about how to access assistance
- Be mindful of any debris, damage to homes, buildings, roads, bridges
- Report any emergency situations to local police, fire or paramedic services
- Notify your insurance agent or broker if your property is damaged
- Check for blown fuses, circuit breakers, or short-circuits in your home wiring and equipment (If a problem exists, call an expert)
- Check for gas leaks in your home and if you smell gas (a rotten egg odour), evacuate the house immediately and call 9-1-1

- Always follow instructions provided to you by your local gas company and local emergency responders
- DO NOT approach or touch any liquid or vapour cloud that might have come from a gas line leak and remove your car or any equipment that could be a potential ignition source. This includes smoking, lighting a match or using electronics (cell phones, pagers, flashlights, keyless entry remotes, and vehicle alarms).

Extreme Heat

Extreme heat or heat waves can be particularly dangerous for children, seniors, people with medical conditions and pets. A heat wave is a prolonged period of excessively hot weather that can be made worse by poor air quality.

Environment Canada issues heat warnings when:

- The temperature is expected to reach 30 degrees celsius or more and the humidex value is expected to reach 40 degrees celsius or more
- The humidex combines temperature and humidity into one number describing how hot, humid weather feels to the average person
- The higher the humidex, the harder it is for perspiration to evaporate and cool the body
- York Region issues heat advisories when Environment Canada issues a heat warning for the area



Air Quality

If poor air quality conditions are expected:

- Avoid or reduce strenuous physical outdoor activities
- Avoid exercising near areas of heavy traffic

If you have heart or lung conditions, talk to your physician about additional ways to protect your health.

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) helps people plan ahead by letting them know the best time of day to be physically active and when to reduce or reschedule strenuous outdoor activity. AQHI forecasts are posted at airhealth.ca

Preparing for Extreme Heat

You can prepare for extreme heat by taking the following measures:

- Install window air conditioners snugly; insulate if necessary
- Check air conditioning ducts for proper insulation
- Install temporary reflectors, such as foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside
- Weather-strip doors and windows to keep cool air inside
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings or blinds, which can reduce the heat that enters a home

What you should do during extreme heat:

- Stay indoors as much as possible
- If air conditioning is not available, stay on a lower floor out of the sun
- Eat well-balanced light and regular meals that don't need to be cooked
- Drink plenty of water even if you do not feel thirsty
- Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured and lightweight clothing made of breathable fabrics.
- If your home is not air conditioned, consider spending the warmest part of the day in air conditioned buildings such as libraries, movie theatres, shopping malls, and other community facilities
- Take cool showers or baths until you feel refreshed

How to conserve energy during extreme heat

- Adjust or turn off your air conditioner when not home – use a programmable thermostat
- Use ceiling or portable fans instead of air conditioners in or next to an open window (so heat can exhaust to the outside)
- Close blinds and curtains during the day to help keep heat out
- Replace incandescent lighting with fluorescent lights
- Turn off lights, computers, stereos, televisions, and other electronics when not being used
- Prepare healthy meals that do not require cooking
- Shower, run dishwasher, washer and dryer during off-peak hours
- Dry wet clothes outdoors
- Avoid using heat producing small appliances (toasters, hair dryers)
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible

Flooding

The risk of flooding is increased with changing rainfall patterns, more extreme storms, and rapid snow melt due to climate change.

Historically, flood damage has the highest impact recovery costs based in insurance industry information. Therefore all levels of government work to reduce the impacts of flooding.

Flood-contaminated water can also carry bacteria and disease that can impact human health.

By planning ahead and taking sensible precautions, you can do your part to protect your home, health and help minimize flood damage.

Be Prepared for Flooding

If you are a homeowner, renter or business owner, please take the following precautions to help prevent or lessen the effects of flooding:

- Ensure sump pump is working; have a battery back-up
- Clear eaves troughs, catch basins, culverts and drainage ditches
- Review your insurance policy to ensure you are adequately covered
- Ensure your insurance coverage includes sewer back-up insurance
- Assemble a 72-Hour Emergency Kit (see page 21 for a checklist)



When There's a Flood Warning:

If a flood warning has been issued for your area, follow the advice and instructions from emergency response authorities. When flooding is imminent, take these precautions to ensure that your family and property are protected:

- Have emergency food, water and medical supplies on-hand
- Move furniture, electronics, appliances, equipment and other belongings off the floor
- Remove or seal hazardous products like cleaning chemicals
- Remove toilet bowl water and plug basement sewer drains and toilet connections
- Have sandbags ready to use
- Evacuate your home or vehicle as requested by authorities

Evacuation

If you are advised by the authorities to evacuate your home, do so. Ignoring the warning could jeopardize the safety of your family or those who may have to rescue you.

Evacuating While On the Road

- Only follow routes specified by officials and don't take shortcuts that could put you in a dangerous situation
- If you encounter a closed road (due to washed out roads or those that are water covered), take a different route
- If caught in fast rising waters and your car stalls, leave it and save yourself and your passengers

Returning Home

Take care when re-entering your home after a flood, as water may be heavily contaminated with sewage and other pollutants that can pose a health hazard. Do not return home until local authorities have deemed it safe and take the following precautions:

- Do not enter your home until municipal authorities state it is safe to do so
- Check building for foundation damage and make sure all overhangs are supported
- Dispose of all contaminated food
- Inspect for damage inside your house
- Drain basement water by one-third of the volume of water per day (draining quickly can structurally damage your home)
- Use a dry piece of wood to turn off electricity at main breaker or fuse box
- Wear rubber gloves, rubber boots and protective eyewear when cleaning up
- Never use wet appliances unless they have been serviced by a qualified electrician
- Contact a heating repair company to inspect your furnace and chimney
- For instructions on how to disinfect wells and cisterns, contact York Region's Health Connection line at 1-800-361-5653

Drinking Water Supply

- Flooded wells should be tested for bacteria, disinfected and found to be safe before anyone drinks water from them
- Contact York Region's Health Connection line at 1-800-361-5653 for water sample bottles and instructions for disinfecting wells

Health Emergencies

Health emergencies may be caused by the spread of communicable diseases and contaminants in the air, food or water. In case of a health emergency:

- Follow directions provided by Public Health and the Medical Officer of Health
- These directions are usually announced through the media and social media, and posted on York Region's website at york.ca
- Continue to visit york.ca for up-to-date information
- Contact your health care provider if you feel you may have been exposed to the infectious disease or contaminant of concern and are not feeling well

General Prevention:

- Keep your immunizations up to date
- Stay home if you are ill to prevent spreading disease to others
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water
- if soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue if you sneeze or cough
- Regularly clean and disinfect commonly-touched surfaces

For more information about health emergencies contact:

- York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 (TTY 1-866-252-9933)
- york.ca



Winter Storms

Winter storms are linked to the death of more than 100 people every year in Canada. Winter storms include blizzards, ice storms, extreme cold, etc. It's best to stay indoors if possible.

At Home

- Leave your radio/television on and check for weather updates (websites also)

Fireplace or Woodstove Safety

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use
- Inspect and clean your chimney regularly
- Inspect chimney for creosote and soot build up (fire hazard)
- Inspect walls for excessive heat during prolonged usage
- Check seals on gas fireplaces for leakage
- Install a rain cap on metal / masonry chimneys
- Watch for smoke coming into the room due to damper issue or chimney blockage
- Protect floors and walls from heat and sparks by always using a properly fitting screen
- Keep combustibles away from fireplaces and handle hot ashes with care
- Regularly check your fireplace for corrosion or rust stain

On a Farm

- Bring livestock indoors and make sure they have plenty of water and food
- If you must go to the outbuildings, dress for the weather
- You may also want to string a lifeline between your house and any outbuildings which you may have to visit during a storm
- Ensure fireplaces are in good working order and sufficient fuel is available



Hypothermia and Frostbite

Hypothermia is when the body loses heat faster than it can produce heat. Signs will include increased shivering, slurred speech, impaired judgement, and poor muscle co-ordination. To treat a person with hypothermia, move them to a warm room and call 9-1-1. Remove wet clothing and slowly warm the person by wrapping them in blankets and offering warm drinks (non-alcoholic and non-caffeine).

Frostbite has a numbing effect on the body and warning signs include stinging or aching feeling, followed by numbness. Waxy, cold skin and skin colour will change to red at early signs to blue or black in extreme cases. To treat someone with frostbite, move them to a warm room and call 9-1-1. Do not rub or directly re-warm the affected body part. Do not let them walk if frostbite is located on their feet.

Vehicle and Winter Driving Safety:

- Have an emergency kit in your car
- Keep your gas tank almost full and have windshield washer fluid more than half-full at all times
- Use gas line anti-freeze on-hand in extreme cold weather events
- Have a charged cell phone in your car in case you have to call for help
- If travelling, do so during the day. Let someone know your route, departure, and estimated arrival time
- If your car is stuck in a winter storm, remain calm and stay in your car
- Keep fresh air in your car by opening the window slightly on the sheltered side, away from the wind
- Run the car engine about 10 minutes every half-hour if the exhaust system is not obstructed (potentially fatal carbon monoxide fumes have no smell)
- Keep moving, exercise hands and feet periodically
- Avoid falling asleep
- Keep watch for traffic or searchers



Hazardous Materials Incidents

Hazardous materials are substances (liquids, solids and gases) that pose a potential risk to life, health or property if released into the environment.

Hazardous materials are part of our everyday lives – everything from chemicals used in industry to household cleaners – can be hazardous when not handled or contained in a safe manner.

Hazardous materials incidents can range from a chemical spill or fire on transportation routes or at industrial sites to a household chemical spill.

Determine how close you are to major highways, rail lines, pipelines or factories that may produce or transport hazardous materials.

When a Hazardous Spill Occurs:

- If you witness (or smell) a hazardous materials accident, call 9-1-1 and report it
- Move away (up wind) from the incident site to minimize the risk of exposure or contamination
- Follow instructions from emergency responders

If inside:

- If you are in a building, remain indoors and bring any pets inside
- Monitor radio or television news for updates and instructions
- Close all windows / doors and turn off furnace / air conditioner to not bring in outside air
- Go into a shelter room above ground with the fewest openings to the outside
- Seal gaps under doorways / windows with wet towels / plastic sheeting and tape



- In large buildings, set ventilation systems to 100 per cent re-circulation so that no outside air is drawn into the building – if not possible, turn off the system
- Shut off all vents; close fireplace dampers
- Avoid eating or drinking any food or water that may be contaminated

If outside:

- If outside, move upstream / upwind / uphill as hazardous fumes and gases are generally heavier than air
- Get as far away as you can from the danger area
- Do not approach or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists, or solid chemicals
- Try not to inhale gases, fumes and smoke – cover mouth with a cloth
- Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified

If in a vehicle:

- Stop and seek shelter in a permanent building if possible
- If that is not possible, remain in your vehicle
- Keep windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner and heater

If fumes threaten you personally:

- Evacuate the area immediately if instructed to do so by local authorities
- If not ordered to evacuate, stay indoors with the building sealed as much as possible
- If time permits, close all windows, shut vents, and shut off heating / air conditioning
- Seek immediate medical attention if you are experiencing adverse health symptoms



What to do before an **EMERGENCY**

Be Prepared and Make a Plan

Be Prepared in 10 Easy Steps:

1. **Meet with household members** and discuss the dangers of possible emergency events in your community.
2. **Plan how your family would stay in contact** if separated by identifying an out-of-town contact such as a family friend, aunt, etc.
3. **Plan where your family could stay** if you had to leave your home quickly; can you take your pet there? This could be a relative outside of your area, or good friends also away from your home or city. If the emergency is widespread, you cannot go to your neighbours as he/she will be dealing with the same problem.
4. **Learn how to turn off the water, gas and electricity** at main switches (Note: if for any reason you do turn off natural gas service to your home, call your local gas utility to restore service. NEVER attempt to restore gas service yourself).
5. **Post emergency contact numbers** near all telephones (If there's been a major disaster, only use the phone if it's absolutely necessary. Emergency responders will need all available land lines).
6. **Take a Basic First Aid and CPR class.** These are often available through your local municipal recreation department, or through organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross, Heart and Stroke Foundation and St. John Ambulance (York Region branch). York Region paramedics provide public CPR instruction during CPR month annually in November (york.ca/paramedics).
7. **Review property insurance policies** to make sure they are current and meet your needs (type of coverage, amount of coverage, hazards covered).
8. **Think about the needs of any household members who have disabilities or special health considerations.** You may have to take extra steps to ensure their comfort and safety in an emergency.
9. **Protect family records** (passports, birth certificates, etc.) by keeping them in a waterproof and fireproof safe, and/or scan and save important documents on a flash drive.
10. **Make emergency kits**, ahead of an emergency (see page 21 for a checklist).

Seniors

An emergency situation or an evacuation can be a frightening and confusing time. It is important that seniors be educated about the potential for emergencies, the steps to take to be prepared and, the programs and services available to help get them through the emergency and return to their regular routine.

Seniors that live on their own need to have supplies in a 72-Hour Kit in case they need to Shelter-in Place. In case they have to evacuate, they should have the following items packed in a Go-Bag in advance, in case they need to leave quickly:

- Assistive devices such as canes, walkers, hearing aids, breathing apparatus, etc.
- Prescription eyeglasses and footwear
- Extra dentures and cleanser
- Extra medication, supplements and a list of their prescriptions
- Personal identification and list of numbers and names for doctor(s), case worker(s), senior's group contact person, etc.

For more information about seniors with special needs, please refer to the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs on Page 40.



Family Pets

The family pet is an important member of your household. Like other family members, pets are also affected by emergencies. Think about them when you make your Emergency Plan including where you can and cannot take your pets.

Add pet supplies to your Go-Bag in case you and your pet have to evacuate your home. Or, make a separate Pet Kit that would include the following:

- Copies of important pet records (i.e. rabies shots) and small amount of prescription medication
- Leash, blanket and toys
- Small amount of food, water bottle and bowl

Please see page 53 for a pet record that you can tape inside your window. Use it if you are unable to take your pet with you during an evacuation. This lets responders know what type of pet you have, their temperament, their name and how to contact you.



Make a Kit or Bag for each Situation

Shelter-in-Place Kit (72-Hour Kit)

A Shelter-in-Place Kit will help your family be self-sufficient for three days during an emergency by making sure you have enough clean water and food to eat. The kit should have different amounts of each item, depending on how many people are in your family. If possible keep most of the items all together in a bin or box.

When building your kit, think about what you and your family would need if you could not leave your home due to debris or ice build-up on roads, or a power outage. Some emergency situations leave families without electricity or clean water in their homes. Stores, businesses and schools may also be closed.

Evacuation Go-Bag

Assemble your Go-Bag before an emergency happens. You can use a large duffel bag or knapsack for your Go-Bag items. If you have to leave your home quickly (evacuate) you can grab the bag and have essential items already packed. Each family will have different items and amounts for a Go-Bag, depending on how many family members (including pets) they have.

You may have to leave your home due to flooding or tornado damage. You will most likely go and stay with other family or close friends outside of the evacuation area.

If you do not have family or friends in another town or city, there may be temporary shelters where you could stay for a few days. In both situations there will be food, water and a place for you to sleep. However, it won't have the comforts of home such as your own clothes, medicine or personal items.

Road Safety Car Kit

Every driver should carry a survival kit in their vehicle in case of a winter storm, flood or other situation that would require you to stay with your car. You can keep your items in a bag or a box.

PRO TIP:

In case of power outages, pack a solar-powered phone charger and a portable radio (battery-operated or crank) in your survival kit.



Checklist: What You Need in Your Survival Kit/Bag

Use this handy checklist to pull together your 72-Hour Kit, Go-Bag and Car Kit.

Items	72-Hour Kit (3-Day)	Go-Bag	Car Kit
Radio and flashlight (or candles with matches) - battery or crank operated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First aid kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whistle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small amount of non-perishable emergency food/snacks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Four litres of water per person, per day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Current family photos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Medication (prescription and over-the-counter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Money, cash	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Set of clothing for each person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Baby supplies and/or pet supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Copies of important documents, address book	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personal care items, toothbrush and toothpaste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Land line home phone (does not require power to work)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Address book	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Board games	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Booster cables			<input type="checkbox"/>
Road map			<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved gas container (4 litres; empty)			<input type="checkbox"/>
Small tool set; duct tape			<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency flares or triangles			<input type="checkbox"/>
Sand, salt or kitty litter during winter			<input type="checkbox"/>
Air compressor and/or puncture seal gels; tire gauge			<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire extinguisher			<input type="checkbox"/>
Ice scraper and brush			<input type="checkbox"/>
An emergency blanket			<input type="checkbox"/>



What to do during an **EMERGENCY**

Shelter-in-place

Any time you are required to stay indoors because of an emergency situation, you are sheltering in place. Sheltering in place may be short-term, such as going to a safe room for a short period of time while a tornado warning is in effect. It may also be longer term, such as when you stay in your home for several days without electricity or water services following a severe storm.

The appropriate steps to take in preparing for short-term, in-place sheltering will depend on the particular emergency you are facing.

How to shelter in place and seal the room:

- Bring your family and pets inside
- Lock doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers
- Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems
- Take your emergency kit unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated
- Go into an interior room with few/no windows, if possible
- Seal all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting the sheeting in advance to save time
- Place a damp towel or clothes along the base of the door
- Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to seal gaps so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination
- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available

Tips for Parents

During emergencies, your child looks to you for your guidance and comfort. The calmer you are, the calmer they will be. Here are a few tips for parents:

- Talk with your children about emergencies common to your community
- Have your children help you put together your family Emergency Plan, your 72-Hour Emergency Kit and Go-Bag (Include items for babies and toddlers)
- During and after the emergency, talk about what is happening in a way they will understand it. Explain the problem and what is being done to correct it
- Do not dismiss their fears or anxieties. Let children know they can ask questions
- Listen to what they have to tell you – be patient with them
- Allow them to express their feelings; encourage them to draw a picture
- Monitor what they watch on TV and the internet. News coverage can have distressing images and information

Visit page 49 for emergency information specific to your municipality, such as phone numbers and social media channels.

Follow @YorkRegionGovt and #YRemergency for emergency updates.

Evacuation

If a flood, fire, hazardous materials spill or another emergency poses a threat or potential threat to your safety or that of your property, local authorities may direct you to evacuate.

General evacuation guidelines:

- Try to seek shelter with friends or relatives located outside of the affected area
- Emergency shelters can be set-up in locations such as schools, municipal buildings, community centres. When you are advised to evacuate, you will also be advised of the nearest emergency shelter

Evacuation instructions may come with little warning, so it is important to include plans for evacuation as part of a family, business, and neighbourhood preparedness plan. Should an evacuation be necessary, law enforcement officers, fire department personnel or other local officials will notify you directly through established emergency communication systems.

When evacuation instructions are issued, listen to your radio to make sure the evacuation instructions apply to you, and if you should evacuate immediately or if you have time to pack some essentials.

It is important to stay calm, listen carefully, and follow all instructions.

- Before you leave your home, turn off power, water, and gas (if instructed to do so by local officials)
- Close and lock your windows and doors
- Take your Emergency Kit
- Take your pets

After you leave your home:

- Should time allow, leave a note affixed to your door informing others when you left and where you went
- Follow the route authorities recommend. Don't take shortcuts on the way to the shelter, they may be blocked or expose you to dangerous hazards
- If you need a ride, ask a neighbour or check with local municipal transportation
- Check on neighbours to make sure they have been notified and offer help to those with disabilities or other special needs. Seniors, people with disabilities, caregivers and large families may require additional assistance in emergency situations
- If you are evacuated to a reception centre, you will be asked to register so that you can be contacted and reunited with your family and loved ones

Returning Home

If you were evacuated from your home during an emergency, care should be taken when re-entering your home. Remain safely sheltered, outside the evacuation area, until told by authorities it is safe to return.

- Stay tuned to local radio and TV stations for advice and instructions from municipal officials about medical help, emergency housing, clothing and food assistance, ways to help yourself and your community
- Drive only when necessary and be especially careful. Streets may be filled with debris and downed power lines
- Avoid loose or dangling power wires and report them immediately to the local power company
- Report broken gas, sewer or water mains to your local municipality
- Check refrigerated food for spoilage. Don't risk eating spoiled food
- Stay away from danger areas. Debris, broken bottles, and boards with nails will be everywhere. Watch your step



What to do after an **EMERGENCY**

Coping with a disaster...what you might experience

Emotional Challenges: After a disaster

Emotional challenges following a disaster can further aggravate issues that already existed in daily life. These may not be from personal reactions or poor coping skills. Challenges can include:

- Dealing with the emotional reactions of family members
- Family and marital challenges including domestic violence
- Uncertainty about insurance coverage or the need to borrow money because of insurance shortfall
- Reconstruction strains and delays
- The discomfort and lack of privacy of having to live in shelters, damaged homes, motels or with relatives

How you can help

If you want to help your community recover from an emergency, here are some ways:

Make a Donation

- Making a financial contribution to a volunteer agency involved in disaster relief is often the most sensible and efficient way of helping people in need after a disaster
- Before donating any goods, including food or clothing, confirm the items required directly with local officials or check with the organization. Unneeded items overwhelm the recovery effort and may go to waste

Become a Volunteer

Many volunteer agencies may be brought in to help during a disaster, each one providing a different service. Here are a few tips about volunteering:

- Volunteer with a recognized disaster response organization (such as the Red Cross or St. John Ambulance) before a disaster happens
- Do not go directly to volunteer at a relief organization, hospital or disaster site during or immediately following an emergency
- Wait for instructions from local officials, or check with specific organizations as to their needs
- Be prepared to provide information on what skills and training you have to offer
- Be patient. Immediately following a disaster, there are often many people waiting to volunteer. But remember there may be a greater need for volunteers in the weeks and months following a disaster

Know your insurance

Damage from most storms, including hurricanes, tornadoes, wind and hail, is generally covered by insurance. Also, water damage caused by water coming through storm damaged roof and windows, broken pipes or overflowing appliances is usually covered.

Other water damage such as sewer backup may, or may not, be covered.

Insurance often covers more than damage to your home and contents. Additional living expenses are an example. It pays for the increase in living expenses, including moving expenses, if your home is unfit to live in or you have to move out while repairs are being made.

If a generator is hardwired into your electrical panel, notify your insurance representative and ensure the work was done by a qualified professional.

Be prepared. Protect your financial assets. Discuss your insurance needs with an agent, broker or insurance representative.

What should you do if damage occurs?

Take steps immediately to protect your property from further damage. If it is safe to do so, take photos of the damage. Board up holes and shut off water supplies to ensure your belongings are not damaged further. If possible, get your car under cover.

Save receipts for materials you use. Any reasonable costs incurred to protect your property may be covered by your insurance company. Advise your insurance representative about your loss as soon as possible. For free information on car and home insurance, call the Insurance Bureau of Canada Consumer Information Centre at 1-800-387-2880 or visit ibc.ca.

Guide for People with DISABILITIES/SPECIAL NEEDS

Acknowledgements

This Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities and/or Special Needs was prepared by the Government of Ontario's Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management in partnership with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

In order to produce a guide that promotes the values and protects the integrity, independence and safety of all Ontarians, the following organizations were consulted for their subject matter expertise and special insights, for which we are most appreciative:

- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Canadian MedicAlert Foundation
- Canadian Red Cross
- Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc.
- CNIB
- Global Affairs Canada
- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
- March of Dimes Canada
- Ministry of Community and Social Services Emergency Management Unit
- Ministry of Government and Consumer Services
- Ministry of Seniors Affairs
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, Toronto Chapter and Ontario Division
- National (USA) Organization on Disability
- Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management
- Ontario SPCA (Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
- SOS Emergency Response Technologies
- Spinal Cord Injury Ontario
- St. Demetrius Development Corporation
- Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

Since not every emergency situation is similar or predictable, every person should rely on and use their best judgement when offering assistance to others in an emergency, without putting their own or other people's safety at risk.

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Introduction

Emergencies can occur suddenly and without any advance warning. Although Ontario has effective emergency management legislation and programs, individuals and families play a vital role in preparing for times of crisis when emergency services and other government resources may be strained. It is important that individuals and families prepare to be self-reliant for at least three (3) days immediately after or during an emergency. This guide provides special emergency preparedness considerations and advice for the estimated 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities and/or special needs, including seniors with special needs.

Prepare Now

Emergency preparedness includes developing and practicing a family emergency response plan and the preparation of an emergency survival kit. For those living with a physical, visual, auditory and/or other non-visible disability, emergency preparedness should also involve incorporating special accommodations into their family emergency response plan. To best prepare for an emergency according to one's special needs, please refer to the appropriate category in this guide for a list of suggested emergency survival kit items and contingency planning considerations.

For more information on emergency management arrangements in your area contact your municipal Emergency Management Coordinator through your local government office.

Using this Guide

This guide covers topics relevant to the emergency preparedness needs of people with visible and/or non-visible disabilities and seniors with special needs.

- Disabilities/special needs are identified as separate categories according to colour and a symbol shown on the top right hand corner of each page
- Each category provides information on how individuals should prepare for an emergency given their special needs, how the public can best assist a person with a disability and additional suggested survival kit items
- The last page is an additional contact information resource for the reader
- Copies of this guide are available in both English and French, in HTML and in alternative formats upon request. Please contact:

Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management

Tel: 647-329-1100

Toll-free: 1-800 565-1842

Email: AskOFMEM@Ontario.ca

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

Tel: 416-849-8276

Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025

TTY: 416-325-3408 Toll-free

TTY: 1-800-268-7095

Emergency Survival Kit

This Emergency Survival Kit checklist outlines the basic items every individual should keep in an easy-to-reach place to help them be self-reliant for at least three (3) days immediately after or during an emergency. Since emergency supply requirements vary for individuals with different disabilities, please refer to the appropriate category in this guide for additional suggested survival kit items.

Emergency Survival Checklist

- Flashlight and batteries
- Radio and batteries or crank radio
- Spare batteries (for radio, flashlight, assistive devices)
- First-aid kit
- Candles and matches/lighter
- Extra car keys and cash
- Important papers (identification)
- Non-perishable food and bottled water
- Manual can opener
- Clothing and footwear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Toilet paper and other personal items
- Telephone that can work during a power disruption
- Medication
- MedicAlert® bracelet or identification
- Backpack/duffle bag
- Whistle (to attract attention, if needed)
- Playing cards



Service Animal Emergency Kit

This Service Animal Emergency Kit checklist outlines the basic items every person with a service animal should have prepared in advance to keep their service animals comfortable during the stress of an emergency situation. It is advisable to keep all items in a transportable bag that is easy to access should evacuating the home become necessary. Also, remember to check the kit twice a year (an easy way to remember is to do it when you check your smoke alarms bi-annually) to ensure freshness of food, water and medication, and to restock any supplies you may have “borrowed” from the kit.

Service Animal Emergency Kit Checklist

- Minimum 3-day supply of bottled water and pet food
- Portable water and food bowls
- Paper towels and can opener
- Medications with a list identifying reason (medical condition) dosage, frequency and contact information of prescribing veterinarian
- Medical records including vaccinations
- Leash/harness
- Muzzle (if required)
- Blanket and favourite toy
- Plastic bags
- Up-to-date ID tag with your phone number and the name/phone number of your veterinarian (microchipping is also recommended)
- Current photo of your service animal in case they get lost or separated from you
- Copy of licence (if required)

Pet Owners:

While service animals are accepted at shelters in an emergency, family pets may or may not be. It is advisable for pet owners to prepare a similar emergency kit for each family pet according to the needs of each different animal (cat, rabbit, bird, dogs). In the case of cats, include a cat carrier, little pan, litter, scooper and plastic bags. It is also recommended for pet owners to have prior arrangements made with family or friends to take care of their animal, should evacuating the home be necessary during an emergency. For additional information on pets and emergencies, please visit the Emergency Management Ontario website at ontario.ca/emo

Important Considerations

Remember ...

- The emergency survival items listed in this guide are only a suggestion and may or may not apply to every emergency situation and/or a person’s special needs. Therefore you should decide which essential items to include for yourself and your family members.
- During an emergency you may have no electrical power.
- During an emergency you may need to go to an emergency evacuation shelter. It is recommended that you and your family have a designated contact person that resides outside of your immediate community. This way, in the event of an evacuation, family members can easily notify each other by calling their designated contact person.

- Pack and store all emergency survival items (including medications, medical supplies and/or assistive devices) in an easy-to-access and easy-to-transport container should you need to evacuate.
- Select a network of individuals at work and at home that will be able to assist you during an emergency. (Make sure you inform your network of where you keep your emergency survival kit).
- Prepare a list of any food or drug allergies you might have and all the medications you are taking. You may want to provide this list to your designated network and also keep a copy in your emergency survival kit, on your person, at home, your workplace and in your car (if applicable).
- On your list of medications, specify the reason for each medicine that you are taking (medical condition being treated) including the generic name, dosage, frequency and the name and contact information of the prescribing physician.
- If you have children with a disability or special needs, prepare a similar list for each of your children and provide it to their caregiver, school and emergency contact members.
- If you have an allergy, chronic medical condition or special medical need, you may want to consider owning and wearing a MedicAlert® bracelet or identification as part of your emergency preparedness plan. For more information, visit [medicalert.ca](https://www.medicalert.ca)
- Regularly check expiration dates on all medications, bottled water and canned/package food in your emergency survival kit. It is best to replace food and bottled water at least once a year.
- Prepare a contact information list of all your emergency contact persons and provide a copy to your designated network at work and/or home. Also keep a copy in your survival kit, on your person, at home, at your workplace and in your car (if applicable).



- Provide written instructions for your network on how best to assist you and your service animal (if applicable) during an emergency.
- Label all your special needs equipment and attach laminated instruction cards on how to use, retrieve and/or move each assistive device during an emergency.
- Since your medications and assistive devices may change over time, it is advisable for you to regularly assess your needs and incorporate any changes to your emergency survival kit supplies and your family emergency plan.
- If your personal needs require regular attendant care and/or life sustaining apparatus, arrange with your network to check on you immediately if an emergency occurs or if local officials issue an evacuation.
- Carry a personal alarm that emits a loud noise to draw attention to your whereabouts.
- If you rely on any life sustaining equipment /apparatus develop an emergency back-up plan that will ensure the equipment/apparatus works in the event of a power outage.
- Install working smoke alarms on every story of your home and outside all sleeping areas. Test alarms monthly by pushing the test button. Replace batteries once a year or whenever the low battery warning sounds.
- Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms outside all sleeping areas if your home has a fuel-burning appliance, fireplace or attached garage.
- Develop and practice a home fire escape plan or refer to your building's fire safety plan so that everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a fire.
- Practice your emergency plan with your network at least twice a year.
- If during an emergency your support network cannot assist you for whatever reason, ask other individuals around you to help. Remember to inform them of your special needs and how they can best offer any assistance to you.



Tips on Helping a Person with a Disability

- “Ask First” if the person needs or wants your help – do not just assume that they do
- Allow the person to identify how best to assist them
- Do not touch the person, their service animal and/or their assistive device/equipment without their permission
- Follow instructions posted on special needs equipment and/or assistive device during an emergency
- Avoid attempts to lift, support or assist in moving someone unless you are familiar with safe techniques
- Never administer any food or liquids to an unconscious or unresponsive person
- Be aware that some people who have disabilities may request that you use latex-free gloves to reduce spread of viral infection to them
- Ask the person with special needs if areas of their body have reduced sensation and if they need you to check those areas for injuries after a disaster

Mobility

Mobility limitations may make it difficult for a person to use stairs or to move quickly over long distances. These can include reliance on mobility devices such as a wheelchair, scooter, walker, crutches or a walking cane. In addition, people with a heart condition or various respiratory difficulties can experience certain levels of mobility limitations.

Emergency Plan for Mobility:

- Ask your network to practice moving your special needs equipment during your emergency practice plan; this will help your network become more comfortable handling or using your special needs equipment during an emergency
- If you use a wheelchair or scooter, request that an emergency evacuation chair be stored near a stairwell on the same floor that you work or live on, so that your network can readily use it to help you safely evacuate the building
- In your instruction list for your network, identify areas of your body that have reduced sensation so these areas can be checked for injuries after an emergency, if you cannot check them yourself
- Check with your local municipal office to find out if emergency evacuation shelters in your area are wheelchair accessible

Dos & Don'ts for Mobility Assistance

- ✓ Use latex-free gloves when providing personal care whenever possible (people with spinal cord injury have a greater risk of developing an infectious disease during an emergency; gloves help control secondary medical conditions that can easily arise if personal care is disrupted during an emergency)
- ✓ Ensure that the person's wheelchair goes with the person
- ✗ Do not push or pull a person's wheelchair without their permission

Additional Emergency Survival Kit Items for Mobility

- Tire patch kit
- Can of seal-in-air product (to repair flat tires on your wheelchair or scooter)
- Supply of inner tubes
- Pair of heavy gloves (to protect your hands while wheeling or making way over glass or other sharp debris)
- Latex-free gloves (for anyone providing personal care to you)
- Spare deep-cycle battery for motorized wheelchair or scooter
- A lightweight manual wheelchair for backup to a motorized wheelchair (if feasible)
- Spare catheters (if applicable)
- An emergency back-up plan that will ensure any life sustaining equipment/apparatus is operable in the event of a power outage
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs

Vision

Vision loss can include a broad range of conditions ranging from complete blindness to partial or low vision that cannot be corrected with lenses or surgery. A person's ability to read signs or move through unfamiliar environments during an emergency may be challenged, creating a feeling of being lost and/or being dependent on others for guidance.

Emergency Plan for Vision:

- Have a long cane available to readily manoeuvre around debris on the floor or furniture that may have shifted after an emergency
- Mark all emergency supplies in advance with fluorescent tape, large print or in braille
- Mark gas, water and electric shutoff valves in advance with fluorescent tape, large print or in braille
- Familiarize yourself in advance with all escape routes and locations of emergency doors/exits on each floor of any building where you work, live and/or visit

Dos & Don'ts for Vision Assistance

- ✓ Always ask first if you can be of any assistance to them
- ✓ For people who are deaf-blind, use your finger to draw an "X" on their back to let them know you are there to help during an emergency
- ✓ To communicate with a deaf-blind person, try tracing letters with your finger on the palm of their hand
- ✓ To guide the person, offer them your arm instead of taking theirs and walk at their pace (keep half a step ahead of them)
- ✓ If the person has a service dog, ask them where you should walk to avoid distracting the animal
- ✓ Provide advance warning of upcoming stairs, curbs, major obstacles or changes in direction
- ✓ Watch for overhangs or protrusions the person could walk into
- ✗ Do not assume the person cannot see you, or that they need your help
- ✗ Never grab or touch a person with vision loss

- X Do not touch, make eye contact or distract the person's service dog as this can seriously endanger the owner
- X Do not shout at a person with vision loss. Speak clearly and provide specific and precise directions
- X Avoid the term "over there". Instead, describe locating positions such as, "to your right/left/straight ahead/ behind you", or by relaying clock face positions. (For example: 12 o'clock)

Additional Emergency Survival Kit Items for Vision

- Extra white cane, preferably a cane that is longer in length
- Talking or braille clock
- Large-print timepiece with extra batteries
- Extra vision aids such as an electronic travel aid, monocular, binocular or magnifier
- Extra pair of prescription glasses – if you wear them
- Any reading devices/assistive technology to access information/ portable CCTV devices
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs

Hearing

A person can be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. The distinction between these terms is based on the individual's language and means of communicating rather than the degree of hearing loss.

In an emergency, the method in which emergency warnings are issued becomes critical to how a person with hearing loss is able to respond and follow instructions to safety.

Emergency Plan for Hearing:

- If your network is unavailable during an emergency, seek the assistance of others to whom you can communicate your hearing loss by spoken language, moving your lips without making a sound, pointing to your ear, using a gesture, or if applicable, pointing to your hearing aid
- Keep a pencil and paper handy for written communication
- Obtain a pager that is connected to an emergency paging system at your workplace and/or the building that you live in
- Install a smoke detection system that includes smoke alarms and accessory flashing strobe lights or vibrators to gain your attention if the alarms sound
- Test smoke alarms on a monthly basis by pushing the test button
- Replace batteries in battery-operated smoke alarms every six months and whenever the low-battery warning sounds
- Keep a laminated card on your person and in your survival kit that identifies you as deaf or hard of hearing and explains how to communicate with you

Dos & Don'ts for Hearing Assistance

- ✓ Get the person's attention via a visual cue or a gentle touch on their arm before speaking to them
- ✓ Face the person and make eye contact when speaking to them as they may rely on speechreading
- ✓ Communicate in close proximity
- ✓ Speak clearly and naturally

- √ Use gestures to help explain the meaning of what you are trying to communicate to the person
- √ Write a message if there is time and keep a pencil and paper handy
- ✗ Avoid approaching the person from behind
- ✗ Refrain from shouting or speaking unnaturally slowly
- ✗ Do not make loud noises as hearing aids amplify sounds and can create a physical shock to the user

Additional Emergency Survival Kit Items for Hearing

- Extra writing pads and pencils for communication
- Flashlight, whistle or noisemaker
- Pre-printed key phrases you would use during an emergency
- Assistive devices - unique to your needs (hearing aid, pager, personal amplifier)
- Portable visual notification devices that allow you to know if a person is knocking on the door, ringing the doorbell or calling on the telephone
- Extra batteries for assistive devices
- A CommuniCard (produced by The Canadian Hearing Society) that explains your hearing loss and also helps identify how rescuers or assisters can communicate with you during an emergency
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.

Note: Typically people who are deafened or hard of hearing will need information presented in a text format.



Non-Visible Disabilities

Non-visible disabilities can include communication, cognitive, sensory, mental health, learning or intellectual disabilities in which an individual's ability to respond to an emergency is restricted. They can also range from allergies, epilepsy, hemophilia, diabetes, thyroid condition, multiple sclerosis, pulmonary or heart disease and/or dependency on dialysis, sanitary or urinary supplies. Individuals with non-visible disabilities may have difficulty performing some tasks without appearing to have a disability.

Emergency Plan for People with Non-Visible Disabilities:

- Prepare an easy-to understand list of instructions or information for yourself that you think you may need in an emergency
- Keep an emergency contact list on your person of key people that are aware of your special needs
- Inform your designated support network of where you store your medication
- Keep a pencil and paper or portable electronic recording device handy to write down or record any new instructions provided to you in an emergency
- Consider owning and wearing a MedicAlert® bracelet or identification because it will help notify emergency responders about your non-visible disabilities. For more information visit: medicalert.ca
- Request a panic pushbutton to be installed in the building you work and/or live in, so that in the event of an emergency you can notify others of your whereabouts and that you need special assistance
- People with Multiple Sclerosis: Symptoms are often made worse by heat and humidity. Be prepared to keep cool and dry
- People with Diabetes: Keep frozen water bottles or ice packs in your freezer
- Have an insulated bag or cooled thermos ready to store your insulin, should there be a power outage or you need to evacuate

Dos & Don'ts for Assisting People with Non-Visible Disabilities

- ✓ Allow the person to describe what help they need from you
- ✓ Find effective means of communication (provide drawn or written instructions; when giving directions use landmarks instead of terms "go left" or "turn right")
- ✓ Be patient, flexible and maintain eye contact when speaking to the person
- ✓ Repeat instructions (if needed)
- ✓ Ask the person about their medication and if they need any help taking it. (Never offer medicines not prescribed by their physician.)
- ✓ Keep people with multiple sclerosis cool and dry to avoid making their symptoms worse
- ✗ Avoid shouting or speaking quickly. Instead, speak clearly but not so slowly as to offend the person
- ✗ Do not restrain a person having a convulsion. Instead, roll them on their side to keep their airway clear and place something soft (your jacket) under their head to protect it from injury. Once the convulsion passes and they become conscious, help them into a resting position

Additional Emergency Survival Kit Items for Non-Visible Disabilities

- Supply of food items appropriate to your disability or dietary restrictions
- List of instructions that you can easily follow in an emergency
- Personal list and minimum three days' supply of all needed medications, medical supplies and special equipment (ventilator for asthma, nitro lingual spray for heart condition, Epinephrine pen against allergic reaction/anaphylactic shock)
- Detailed list of all prescription medications
- MedicAlert® identification
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs

For Example: People with Diabetes

- Extra supply of insulin or oral agent
- Extra supply of syringes, needles and insulin pens (if used)
- Small container for storing used syringes/needles (if applicable)
- Blood glucose testing kit, spare batteries and record book
- Supply of blood glucose and urine ketone testing strips
- Fast-acting insulin for high blood glucose (if applicable)
- Fast-acting sugar for low blood glucose
- Extra food to cover delayed meals
- Ice packs and thermal bag to store insulin (if applicable)

Seniors with Special Needs

Since an emergency situation or an evacuation can be a frightening and confusing time, it is important that seniors, especially those with special needs, know the steps to take in an emergency. This includes seniors contacting their local municipal office to find out about programs and services available in their community that will help them during an emergency and assist them to return to their regular routine.

Emergency Plan for Seniors with Special Needs:

- Create an emergency contact list with names and telephone numbers of your physicians, case worker, contact for your seniors group, neighbours and building superintendent. Keep a copy of this list in your survival kit and on your person
- Write down the names and phone numbers of on-site doctors, nurses and social workers at your place of residence (if applicable), including the hours they keep
- Familiarize yourself with all escape routes and location of emergency doors/exits in your home
- Know the location of emergency buttons (many seniors' buildings have emergency buttons located in bedrooms and washrooms that have a direct link to 911 or the building's superintendent)
- If asked to evacuate, bring with you any equipment or assistive devices you may need immediately
- Always wear your MedicAlert® identification

Dos & Don'ts for Assisting Seniors with Special Needs

- ✓ Check on neighbours who are seniors with special needs to find out if they need your help during an emergency or evacuation
- ✓ Allow the person to describe what help they need and how it can be provided to them.
- ✓ Be patient, listen actively
- ✓ If the person appears anxious or agitated, speak calmly and provide assurance that you are there to help
- ✓ If evacuation is necessary, offer a ride to seniors who do not have access to a vehicle
- ✓ If time permits, offer to carry the person's emergency survival kit to your car, along with any equipment or assistive devices they will need
- ✓ Follow instructions posted on special needs equipment and/or assistive devices during an emergency
- ✗ Refrain from shouting or speaking unnaturally slowly
- ✗ Avoid being dismissive of the person's concerns or requests

Additional Emergency Survival Kit Items for Seniors with Special Needs

- Supply of food items appropriate to your disability or dietary restrictions
- Assistive devices needed such as canes, walkers, lightweight manual wheelchair, hearing aids, breathing apparatus, blood glucose monitoring device
- Prescription eyewear and footwear (if required)
- Extra supply of medications and vitamin supplements
- Personal disability-related list of all your needed medical supplies and special equipment
- Copies of all medication prescriptions
- Extra dentures (if required) and cleaner
- Latex-free gloves (to give to anyone providing personal care to you)
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs
- For Seniors with Diabetes:
 - Please refer to previous "Other Non-Visible Disabilities" category



High-rise Safety

High-rise buildings present unique challenges when evacuation is necessary during an emergency. Residents should make themselves aware of:

- ✓ Building superintendent's name and phone number
- ✓ Who sits on the Building Safety Committee
- ✓ Who the floor monitors are
- ✓ Who conducts evacuation drills, and how often
- ✓ Location of fire extinguishers, automated external defibrillator units, and oxygen tank
- ✓ Location of emergency evacuation device(s)

Emergency Plan for High-rise Safety:

- Advise your manager/superintendent of your special needs and/or requirements during an emergency
- Familiarize yourself with your building's evacuation plan
- Know where all escape routes and location of emergency doors/exits are on each floor
- Know the location of emergency buttons in the building and exits that are wheelchair accessible (if applicable)
- Request that an emergency evacuation chair be installed on the floor you live or work on, preferably close to the stairwell (if applicable)
- If you live in a high-rise building, create a 'buddy' system with your neighbours and regularly practice your emergency response plan with them
- If you rely on any life sustaining equipment/ apparatus, develop an emergency back-up plan that will ensure the equipment/ apparatus is operable in the event of a power outage
- Obtain large printed signs from the building manager that you can place in your window in the event of an emergency, indicating that you need assistance

Dos & Don'ts for High Rise Safety

- ✓ Check on neighbours and/or co-workers with special needs to find out if they need your help during an emergency or evacuation
- ✓ Listen actively to what the individual with special needs is saying
- ✓ During an emergency evacuation (if time permits), offer to carry the person's emergency survival kit for them along with any special equipment or assistive devices they will need
- ✓ Review previous categories in this guide on how to assist people with specific disabilities and/or special needs
- ✗ In general, avoid attempts to lift, support or assist in moving a person down the stairs, unless you are familiar with safe techniques

Additional Emergency Survival Kit Items for High Rise Safety

- Personal alarm that emits a loud noise to draw attention to your whereabouts
- Supply of food items appropriate to your dietary restrictions
- Supply of medications and assistive devices appropriate to your disability
- Supply of plastic bags for storing garbage/personal waste
- Names and contact information of your neighbours, superintendent and property/building manager

- Laminated copy of your building's evacuation plan and diagram of escape routes and location of emergency doors/exits on each floor
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs

Travel Considerations

Whether travelling locally or internationally, people with disabilities and seniors with special needs should take extra time to research and plan their trip to make their travel experience safe and enjoyable. This includes preparing in advance, an emergency plan and "Ready-Go-Bag" with emergency survival items.

Emergency Plan for Travel:

- Before travelling, visit the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada website at travel.gc.ca where you can register and find other helpful travel information safety tips.
- Discuss your particular accommodation needs with your travel agent
- Discuss your trip with your doctor to prepare contingency plans in case of illness
- Obtain necessary travel medical insurance
- Carry a copy of the booklet *Bon Voyage, But...*, that contains contact information for your destination's Canadian office and Emergency Operations Centre. You can order it free of charge at travel.gc.ca
- Divide your medications and medical supplies between your carry-on and check-in baggage, keeping them in their original labelled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions with you
- Always wear your MedicAlert® bracelet
- Inform your travel companion(s) on how to assist you in an emergency
- If travelling alone, establish a network (hotel staff) that can assist you during an emergency
- If you have difficulty using stairs request a room on a lower floor
- Review the hotel emergency exit plan
- If needing to evacuate, bring your emergency "Ready-Go-Bag" and any assistive devices you may need

Dos & Don'ts for Travel

- ✓ Check on fellow travellers with visible disabilities or special needs to find out if they need your help during an emergency or evacuation
- ✓ Listen actively to what the individual with special needs is saying and how they might need your help
- ✓ If they speak in a foreign language that you do not understand, try to communicate using gestures
- ✓ During an emergency evacuation (if time permits), offer to carry the person's emergency survival kit for them along with any special equipment or assistive devices they will need
- ✓ Review previous categories in this guide on how to assist people with specific disabilities or special needs
- ✗ Do not let the person be separated from their wheelchair or mobility aids

Additional Emergency Survival Kit Items for Travel

- Supply of food items appropriate to your dietary restrictions
- Supply of medications/assistive devices appropriate to your disability (Glucagen injection if you manage your diabetes with insulin and you are travelling to a remote location that does not have ambulance service)
- Laminated personal information card that you keep on your person at all times when travelling (card identifies your special needs, lists all medications you are taking, any food/drug allergies you might have, your treating physician's name and contact information and your next of kin)
- Copy of your travel medical insurance and other important travel documents
- A personal alarm that emits a loud noise to draw attention to your whereabouts
- Small container that can store or disintegrate syringes or needles safely (if applicable)
- Anti-nausea and anti-diarrhea pills and pain medication
- Sunblock
- Insect repellent
- Dictionary to help you communicate in a foreign language
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your disability or special needs



For More Information

Specific Disabilities and Special Needs

Canadian Diabetes Association

Tel: 416-363-3373

Toll-free: 1-800-226-8464

Email: info@diabetes.ca
diabetes.ca

Twitter: @DiabetesCanada

Canadian Hearing Society

Tel: 416-928-2500

Toll-free: 1-877-347-3427

TTY: 416-964-0023

Toll-free TTY: 1-877-216-7310

Email: info@chs.ca
chs.ca

Twitter: @CHSCanada

Canadian Red Cross

Tel: 905-890-1000

Toll-free: 1-800-418-1111

Email: wecare@redcross.ca
redcross.ca

Twitter: @redcrosscanada

Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc.

Tel: 416-599-2458

TTY: 416-599-5077

24hr Newline: 416-599-4898

Email: cilt@cilt.ca
cilt.ca

Twitter: @CIL_Toronto

CNIB

Tel: 416-486-2500

Toll-free: 1-800-563-2642

Email: info@cnib.ca
cnib.ca

Twitter: @CNIB

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Tel: 416-929-4311

Email: resource@LDAO.ca
ldao.ca

March of Dimes Canada

Tel: 416-425-3463

Toll-free: 1-800-263-3463

marchofdimes.ca

Twitter: @modcanada

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada – Toronto Chapter and Ontario Division

Tel: 416-922-6065

Toll-free: 1-800-268-7582

Email National: info@mssociety.ca

Email Ontario: info.ontario@mssociety.ca

Email Toronto: Toronto@mssociety.ca
mssociety.ca

Twitter: @MSSocietyCanada

Ontario SPCA (Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)

Tel: 905-898-7122

Toll-free: 1-888-ONT-SPCA (668-7722)

Email: info@ospca.on.ca
ontariospca.ca

Twitter: @OntarioSPCA

Spinal Cord Injury Ontario

Tel: 416-422-5644

Toll-free: 1-877-422-1112

Email: info@sciontario.org
sciontario.org

Twitter: @SCI_Ontario

Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

Tel: 416-597-3422

torontorehab.com

Twitter: @UHN

Accessibility Initiatives

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

Tel: 416-849-8276 Toll-free:

1-866-515-2025

TTY: 416-325-3408

Toll-free TTY: 1-800-268-7095

Email: accessibility@ontario.ca
ontario.ca/accessibility

Twitter: @ONAAccessibility

Ministry of Seniors Affairs

Tel: 416-326-7076 (Seniors' INFOline)

Toll-free: 1-888-910-1999

Toll-free TTY: 1-800-387-5559

Email: infoseniors@ontario.ca
ontario.ca/msa

Twitter: @SeniorsON

Emergency Preparedness

Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management

Tel: 647-329-1100

Toll-free: 1-800-565-1842

TTY: 416-326-5511 Toll-free

TTY: 1-866-517-0572

Email: askOFMEM@Ontario.ca

ontario.ca/beprepared

Twitter: @OntarioWarnings

For Travel Advice and Registration Services when Travelling Abroad

Global Affairs Canada

Tel: 613-944-6788

Toll-free: 1-800-267-8376

travel.gc.ca

For Information on MedicAlert® Bracelets or Identification

Canadian MedicAlert® Foundation

Tel: 416-696-0142

Toll-free: 1-800-668-1507

Email: customerservice@medicalert.ca

medicalert.ca

Twitter: @MedicAlertCA

Acknowledgements

This Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities and/or Special Needs was prepared by the Government of Ontario's Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management in partnership with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. Expressed permission was granted by the OFMEM for York Region to use the EP Guide for People with Disabilities and/or Special Needs (July 20, 2018).



AURORA | EAST GWILLIMBURY | GEORGINA | KING | MARKHAM | NEWMARKET | RICHMOND HILL | VAUGHAN | WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

MUNICIPAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Stay connected and up-to-date about York Region emergencies through:

- Your local municipality’s website and social media channels*
- york.ca and the York Region app (turn emergency notifications to “on”)
- Provincial alerts to your mobile phone (alertready.ca)
- Broadcasts on Greater Toronto Area (GTA) radio and television stations
- Public alerts - be prepared to stop, listen and respond

*Social media channels are not monitored 24/7

**For all Police,
Fire and Medical
Emergencies call
9-1-1**

AURORA

Website: aurora.ca
 Twitter: @Town_of_Aurora
 Facebook: /townofaurora
 Phone: 905-727-1375

EAST GWILLIMBURY

Website: eastgwillimbury.ca
 Twitter: @townofeg
 Facebook: /
 TownofEastGwillimbury
 Phone: 905-478-4282

GEORGINA

Website: georgina.ca
 Twitter: @georginatown
 Facebook: /TownofGeorgina
 Phone: 905-476-4301

KING TOWNSHIP

Website: king.ca
 Twitter: @KingTownship
 Facebook: /townshipofking
 Phone: 905-833-5321

MARKHAM

Website: markham.ca
 Twitter: @cityofmarkham
 Facebook: /cityofmarkham
 Phone: 905-477-7000

NEWMARKET

Website: newmarket.ca
 Twitter: @townofnewmarket
 Facebook: /TownOfNewmarket/
 Phone: 905-895-5193

RICHMOND HILL

Website: richmondhill.ca
 Twitter: @myRichmondHill
 Facebook: /myRichmondHill
 Phone: 905-771-8800

VAUGHAN

Website: vaughan.ca
 Twitter: @City_of_Vaughan
 Facebook: /thecityofvaughan
 Phone: 905-832-2281

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Website: townofws.com
 Twitter: @townofws
 Facebook: /wstouffville
 Phone: 905-640-1900

YORK REGION

Website: york.ca
 Twitter: @YorkRegionGovt
 Facebook: /YorkRegionGovt
 Phone: 1-877-464-9675

Non-Emergency Contacts

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Phone: 1-877-800-7924

YORK REGIONAL POLICE (YRP)

Phone: 1-866-876-5423
 TTY (for the deaf or hard of hearing):
 1-800-668-0398

Vulnerable Person Registry:

Phone: 1-866-876-5423 ext. 6877
 Email: vpr@yrp.ca

ONTARIO POISON CENTRE

Phone: 1-800-268-9017

ACCESSYORK

Phone: 1-877-464-9675
york.ca
 TTY (for the deaf or hard of hearing):
 1-866-512-6228 or 905-895-4293

YORK REGION HEALTH CONNECTION

Phone: 1-800-361-5653
 TTY (for the deaf or hard of hearing):
 1-866-512-6228

YORK REGION EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Phone: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71219
 Email: Emergency.Management@york.ca



FIRE DEPARTMENTS

AURORA

Phone: 905-895-9222

EAST GWILLIMBURY

Phone: 905-853-8842

GEORGINA

Phone: 905-476-5167

KING TOWNSHIP

Phone: 905-833-2800

MARKHAM

Phone: 905-415-7521

NEWMARKET

Phone: 905-895-9222

RICHMOND HILL

Phone: 905-883-5444

VAUGHAN

Phone: 905-832-2281

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Phone: 905-640-9595

HOSPITALS

MACKENZIE HEALTH

10 Trench Street, Richmond Hill

Phone: 905-883-1212

SOUTHLAKE REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

596 Davis Drive, Newmarket

Phone: 905-895-4521

MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL

381 Church Street, Markham

Phone: 905-472-7000

OTHER

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA

Website: ec.gc.ca

App: WeatherCAN

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Website: getprepared.gc.ca

INSURANCE BUREAU OF CANADA

Website: ibc.ca

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (OFMEM)

Website: ontario.ca/emo

ONTARIO'S EMERGENCY ALERTING SYSTEM

Website: alertready.ca

PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA

Website: publicsafetycanada.gc.ca

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

HOME INFORMATION

Home address: _____
Home phone No.: _____
Cell phone #: _____
House colour: _____
Landmarks: _____
Meeting place during an emergency: _____

**For all Police, Fire and Medical
Emergencies call 9-1-1**

Provide:

- Your name
- Address of the accident
- Description of the emergency
- Time that it happened

NON-EMERGENCY CONTACTS

EMS/Paramedics: 1-877-800-7924
Fire Department: _____
Poison Control: 1-800-268-9017
Family Doctor: _____
Pediatrician: _____
Dentist: _____
Hospital: _____
Pharmacy: _____
Vet: _____

FAMILY CONTACTS

Name: _____
Home No.: _____
Mobile No.: _____
Work No.: _____

Name: _____
Home No.: _____
Mobile No.: _____
Work No.: _____

INSURANCE CONTACTS

Medical Insurance Co: _____
Phone: _____
Policy: _____

Name: _____
Home No.: _____
Mobile No.: _____
Work No.: _____

Home Insurance Co: _____
Phone: _____
Policy: _____

UTILITY CONTACTS

Electric: _____
Water: _____
Gas: _____
Cable: _____
Phone: _____
Other: _____

Auto Insurance Co: _____
Phone: _____
Policy: _____

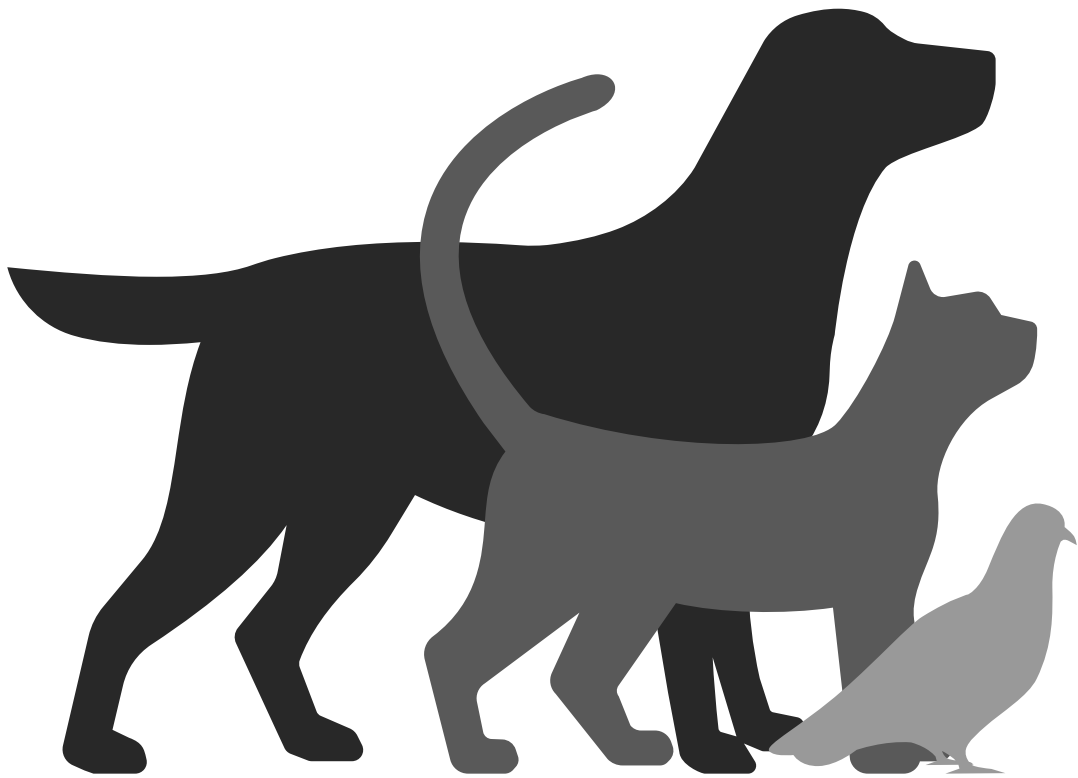
#BePrepared for a #YRemergency!

Visit york.ca/emergencypreparedness



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Please Save Our Pets



Dog Cat Bird Other _____

Pet's temperament: _____

Emergency number: _____





**AURORA | EAST GWILLIMBURY | GEORGINA | KING | MARKHAM
NEWMARKET | RICHMOND HILL | VAUGHAN | WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE**





Know the Risks



Make a Plan



Get an Emergency Kit



york.ca/emergencypreparedness