

PATIENT AND FAMILY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

A Resource Toolkit for Home Care and Hospice



Developed with the Support of a NYS Office of Health Emergency Preparedness Grant



OVERVIEW

Home Care Emergency Preparedness Toolkit: An Essential Resource for Providers

Emergency preparedness in home care and hospice presents a unique challenge. Unlike facilities and institutions, patients are cared for at home, provided a wide variety of medical and personal care for a broad spectrum of conditions and needs, are geographically widespread across their communities, and as such require a more complex approach to preparedness and response.

During an emergency, each patient's home, neighborhood, and/or community is a distinct emergency in and of itself that must be navigated and managed by the home care or hospice agency. The agency's navigation responsibilities also extend to the patient's physician, managed health plan, hospitals or nursing homes if the patient happens to be in transition, pharmacy, and core community supports, especially family.

Description

This Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for home care and hospice was compiled with the assistance of a workgroup (please see *Acknowledgements*) of providers, the Home Care Association of New York State (HCA), the New York State Association of Health Care Providers (HCP) and the New York State Department of Health (DOH) Office of Health Emergency Preparedness (OHEP) and the Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management (OPCHSM). HCA and HCP are collaborative partners to the Department on multi-tiered initiatives in emergency preparedness and response.

It is a compilation of resources to help agencies to assist their patients and their families prepare in advance for any type of emergency situation. Together, these resources address a variety of issues and considerations necessary for effective preparedness planning for patients at home. The information within the Toolkit can be incorporated into preparedness planning in conjunction with admission to your agency so that the planning process is begun and in place as intended – well before an emergency event takes place.

This Toolkit should also assist agencies and patients under the new Federal Conditions of Participation for emergency preparedness, which require patient-specific emergency plans.

Please use this Toolkit in the manner that best suits your agency. The Toolkit can be shared in its entirety with staff, patients and families; or an agency can select from among the resources provided that best fit the needs of their staff and clientele.





Toolkit Access and Contact Information

The Toolkit can be found on the Health Commerce System (HCS) or via HCA and HCP. Feedback and further recommendations on Toolkit resources may be sent to the contacts below.

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SECTION I

GENERAL PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Keep Your Family Ready for Emergencies

A Consumer's Guide to Food Safety



FREE and LOW-COST IDEAS

Keep Your Family Ready for Emergencies

Follow us on:
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youtube.com/NYSDOH



**Department
of Health**



Imagine...

Be Ready for Bad Weather

A Bad Storm...Serious Flooding...A Chemical Spill... Widespread Disease...Terrorism

We want to keep our families safe during emergencies. Having a family emergency plan is important. Most families have the tools handy to create a good plan.

Use the free and low-cost ideas in this brochure to make your plan. A good plan will help keep your family safe and help you be able to bounce back more quickly after the emergency.

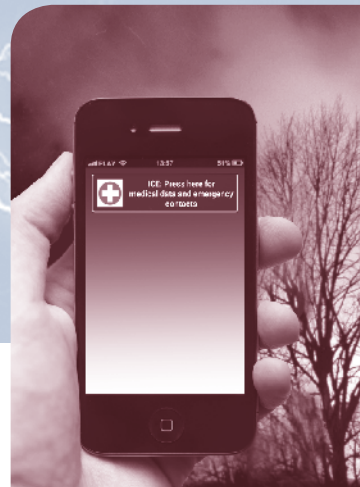
Many ideas are simple and use items that you already have or can get for free. Have everyone help make the plan. It's an important family project.

Regularly review and update your family emergency plan. Make changes when needed.

Ideas for Being Ready

Have ICE? Check your phone.

- Many cell phones have an "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) in the contact list.
- Fill in the name and number of a trusted person.
- Emergency responders will look for your ICE contact and call that number if you are unconscious or seriously injured.
- List other emergency contacts as ICE1, ICE2, etc.



- If you have a smart phone, check out the many useful apps for emergency situations. Apps can keep you updated about weather conditions, help you locate emergency shelters, allow you to use your phone as a flashlight or alert signal, and much more.
- For apps, check your phone carrier's apps store, as well as fema.gov and redcross.org



Have Extra Quantities on Hand

- Stock essentials like powdered milk, high energy foods, and canned meats, soups, pasta and other family favorites. Consider adding flashlights, radios and extra batteries, disposable diapers, baby food and formula, paper products, a manual can opener, bleach and plastic bags.
- Buy in bulk and split costs with another family.
- Use coupons and watch for sales.
- Buy a little at a time, if you can. Store in a dry, dark place, such as a closet.
- Rotate items and check for expiration dates, such as on batteries and bottled water.

Stay Connected

- Connect with family and friends through your cell phone or land line, and other electronic devices. Being connected with loved ones during uncertain times is comforting.
- Use social media to connect with family and friends and to follow news and weather updates. Consider getting a weather app for your smart phone.
- Weather news and emergency advice can change rapidly and without warning. Check for updates.
- Get emergency news by registering for NYAlert at nyalert.gov. You can receive alerts through your phone, computer or text messages (the text messages are charged to your mobile account).
- Consider investing in emergency chargers. They are powered by batteries, solar power, or hand cranking. They can charge your phone and electric devices during a power outage. Get more information on the emergency chargers on the Internet.

More Emergency Preparedness Links

cdc.gov

health.ny.gov

redcross.org

dhses.ny.gov

ready.gov

weather.gov

No Cell Phone? You May Be Able To Get One Free.

- Assurance Wireless offers a no-cost, wireless phone and free minutes of wireless voice service to low-income New Yorkers. Call 1-888-898-4888 or go to assurancewireless.com to apply.
- SafeLink Wireless also offers a free cell phone and free minutes, including text messaging, if you meet eligibility requirements. More information is available at SafeLinkwireless.com or by calling 1-800-977-3768.

Use The Internet

- Don't have Internet access? Go to your public library. You will need a library card to use the Internet, but the card is free.
- You will find many tips on the Internet to help plan for an emergency.

Go To Events

- Fairs, exhibits, first aid trainings, and children's photo identification (ID) programs are excellent sources for items such as:

- emergency planning books;
- first aid kits;
- flashlights;
- materials on shelters, emergency food pantries at home, emergency pet care, evacuations; and
- photo ID cards.



Important Phone Numbers	
Main contact person	Out-of-state contact #2
Phone/cell	Phone/cell
Contact person #2	Place family meets, if separated
Phone/cell	Physician
Out-of-state contact	Hospital
Phone/cell	Pediatrician
	Dentist
	Pharmacist
	Medical Insurance
	Veterinarian/Kennel
	Other

An illustration at the bottom of the form shows a man in a dark shirt talking on a mobile phone. To his left is a house, and to his right is an ambulance.

The New York State Department of Health offers a family health emergency wallet card. Visit:

health.ny.gov/publications/7280.pdf for a free copy.

Make Your Own Contact Lists

- List phone numbers for ambulance, poison control center, doctors, pharmacy, weather stations, school and bus companies, and workplaces, and keep in plain sight.
- Add these emergency numbers to all your phones.
- Keep a contact list of family and friends in your children's backpacks, your wallet and at work. Explain to your children when to use the contact list.

Make Your Own Family Emergency Plan

Recycle a binder. Keep materials together. You could include these items:

- A plan to get out of the house fast.
- A place to meet if your family is split up.
- A phone contact list.
- Emergency plans for school, work and home.
- Copies of ID cards, credit card numbers, an extra set of house and car keys, insurance and health policies, current family photos and some cash.
- A list of everyone's medications, medical histories, allergies, blood type, and immunization records. As a backup, consider electronically saving documents to a "flash drive," a very small device that stores documents, photos and videos. Learn more about flash drives on the Internet.
- Pet boarding information, photos, and copies of vet records. Emergency shelters do not allow pets with the exception of service animals. Plan ahead where you can leave your pet, if needed.



Keep Backpacks Ready To Go

- Pack clothing for each family member, high-energy foods (peanut butter, crackers, granola bars, trail mix, nuts and seeds), flashlights, and a first aid kit.
- Make a kit for work, too.
- In addition to a "to-go" bag for your family, you could also pack one for each family member.

A "to-go" bag is a bag, suitcase or backpack that is packed with your essential items and ready to go in case you must leave your home in a hurry. Regularly review its contents and replace items as necessary.

- Include essential items, such as water, clothing, and personal care items.
- For individuals with disabilities, include these items: medicines and prescriptions, insurance cards, food and drink for special dietary needs, medical bracelets or an identifying alert item, extra eyeglasses and batteries for hearing devices, and wheelchairs.
- For babies and small children, include: diapers, rash ointment, disposable wipes, bottles and sippy cups, formula, powdered milk, medicines, food or drink for special dietary needs, favorite toys and books.

Make Your Own Car Kit

- Pack walking shoes, a warm jacket, blankets, a flashlight and extra batteries, a battery-operated radio, a first aid kit, lists of personal medical information and emergency contacts, foil water pouches or bottled water. Replace expired items.

A Consumer's Guide To Food Safety

SEVERE STORMS & HURRICANES



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

May 2006
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Food Safety During An Emergency

Did you know that a flood, fire, natural disaster, or the loss of power from high winds, snow, or ice could jeopardize the safety of your food? Knowing how to determine if food is safe and how to keep food safe

will help minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of food-borne illness. This Consumer's Guide will help you make the right decisions for keeping your family safe during an emergency.

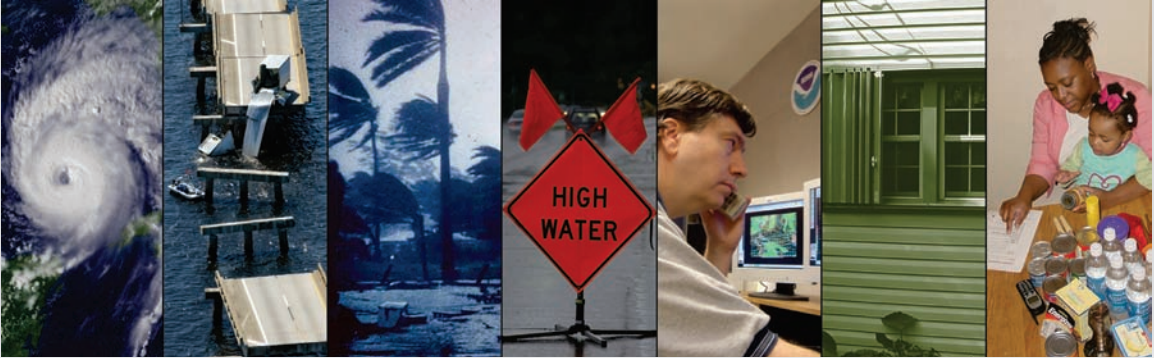
Power Outages

We practice basic safe food handling in our daily lives, but obtaining and storing food safely becomes more challenging during a power outage or natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods.

STEPS TO FOLLOW TO PREPARE FOR A POSSIBLE WEATHER EMERGENCY:

Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. An appliance thermometer will indicate the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer in case of a power outage and help determine the safety of the food.

- Make sure the freezer is at 0 °F (Fahrenheit) or below and the refrigerator is at 40 °F or below.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator, or coolers after the power is out.
- Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately—this helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.
- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerator food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours. Purchase or make ice cubes and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Freeze gel packs ahead of time for use in coolers.
- Group food together in the freezer—this helps the food stay cold longer.



STEPS TO FOLLOW DURING AND AFTER THE WEATHER EMERGENCY:

- Never taste a food to determine its safety!
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
- The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed).
- Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below.
- Obtain block ice or dry ice to keep your refrigerator and freezer as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot full freezer for 2 days.
- If the power has been out for several days, then check the temperature of the freezer with an appliance thermometer or food thermometer. If the food still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below, the food is safe.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, then check each package of food to determine its safety. If the food still contains ice crystals, the food is safe.
- Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers, and deli items after 4 hours without power.
- **When in Doubt, Throw it Out!**

Safety of Food in Containers Exposed to Flood Waters

HOW TO DETERMINE WHAT FOOD TO KEEP OR DISCARD

- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water.
- Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container if there is any chance that it has come into contact with flood water. Food containers that are not waterproof include those with screw-caps, snap lids, pull tops, and crimped caps. Also, discard cardboard juice/milk/baby formula boxes and home canned foods if they have come in contact with flood water, because they cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Inspect canned foods and discard any food in damaged cans. Can damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing/denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener.

POTS, PANS, DISHES, AND UTENSILS:

- Thoroughly wash metal pans, ceramic dishes, and utensils (including can openers) with soap and water, using hot water if available. Rinse and then sanitize them by boiling in clean water or immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available).

COUNTERTOPS:

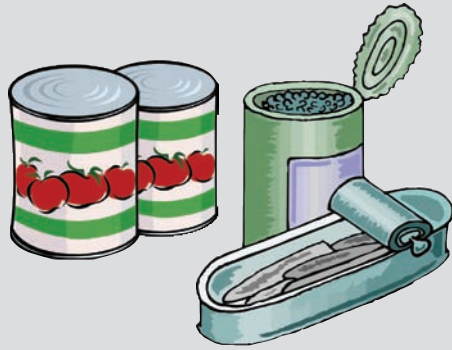
- Thoroughly wash countertops with soap and water, using hot water if available. Rinse and then sanitize them by applying a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available). Allow to air-dry.



STEPS TO SALVAGE ALL-METAL CANS AND RETORT POUCHES

Undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans and retort pouches (for example, flexible, shelf-stable juice or seafood pouches) can be saved if you do the following:

- Remove the labels, if they are the removable kind, since they can harbor dirt and bacteria.
- Thoroughly wash the cans or retort pouches with soap and water, using hot water if it is available.
- Brush or wipe away any dirt or silt.
- Rinse the cans or retort pouches with water that is safe for drinking, if available, since dirt or residual soap will reduce the effectiveness of chlorine sanitation.
- Then, sanitize them by immersion in one of the two following ways:
 - Place in water and allow the water to come to a boil and continue boiling for 2 minutes, or
 - Place in a freshly made solution consisting of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water (or the cleanest, clearest water available) for 15 minutes.
- Air-dry cans or retort pouches for a minimum of 1 hour before opening or storing.
- If the labels were removable, then re-label your cans or retort pouches, including the expiration date (if available), with a marker.
- Food in reconditioned cans or retort pouches should be used as soon as possible, thereafter.
- Any concentrated baby formula in reconditioned, all-metal containers must be diluted with clean, drinking water.



SAFETY OF DRINKING WATER IF FLOODING OCCURS

- Use bottled water that has not been exposed to flood waters if it is available.
- If you don't have bottled water, you should boil water to make it safe. Boiling water will kill most types of disease-causing organisms that may be present. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, and draw off the clear water for boiling. Boil the water for one minute, let it cool, and store it in clean containers with covers.
- If you can't boil water, you can disinfect it using household bleach. Bleach will kill some, but not all, types of disease-causing organisms that may be in the water. If the water is cloudy, filter it through clean cloths or allow it to settle, and draw off the clear water for disinfection. Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops) of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach for each gallon of water, stir it well and let

it stand for 30 minutes before you use it. Store disinfected water in clean containers with covers.

- If you have a well that has been flooded, the water should be tested and disinfected after flood waters recede. If you suspect that your well may be contaminated, contact your local or State health department or agriculture extension agent for specific advice.



Food Safety: Removing Odors from Refrigerators & Freezers

Refrigerators and freezers are two of the most important pieces of equipment in the kitchen for keeping food safe. We are instantly reminded of their importance when the power goes off, flooding occurs, or the unit fails, causing food to become unsafe and spoil. The odors that develop when food spoils can be difficult to remove. Use this information to learn how to remove odors from units or how to safely discard an affected unit.

TO REMOVE ODORS FROM REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS

If food has spoiled in a refrigerator or freezer and odors from the food remain, they may be difficult to remove. The following procedures may help but may have to be repeated several times.

- Dispose of any spoiled or questionable food.
- Remove shelves, crispers, and ice trays. Wash them thoroughly with hot water and detergent. Then rinse with a sanitizing solution (1 tablespoon unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water).
- Wash the interior of the refrigerator and freezer, including the door and gasket, with hot water and baking soda. Rinse with sanitizing solution as above.
- Leave the door open for about 15 minutes to allow free air circulation.

If odor remains, try any or all of the following:

- Wipe inside of unit with equal parts vinegar and water. Vinegar provides acid which destroys mildew.
- Leave the door open and allow to air out for several days.
- Stuff both the refrigerator and freezer with rolled newspapers. Close the door and leave for several days. Remove paper and clean with vinegar and water.
- Sprinkle fresh coffee grounds or baking soda loosely in a large, shallow container in the bottom of the refrigerator and freezer.
- Place a cotton swab soaked with vanilla inside the refrigerator and freezer. Close door for 24 hours. Check for odors.
- Use a commercial product available at hardware and housewares stores. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

IF ODORS REMAIN

If odors cannot be removed, then the refrigerator or freezer may need to be discarded. If you need to discard the refrigerator or freezer, discard it in a safe manner:

- “Childproof” old refrigerators or freezers so children do not get trapped inside. The surest way is to take the door off.
- If the door will not come off, chain and padlock the door permanently and close tightly, or remove or disable the latch completely so the door will no longer lock when closed.

It is unlawful in many jurisdictions to discard old refrigerators or freezers without first removing the door.



Depending on where you live, your appliance will be picked up by your solid waste provider, a recycler, a retailer (if you buy a new unit), or program sponsored by local or regional utilities.

Refrigerator Foods

WHEN TO SAVE AND WHEN TO THROW IT OUT

FOOD	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
<u>MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD</u>	
Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood; soy meat substitutes	Discard
Thawing meat or poultry	Discard
Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad	Discard
Gravy, stuffing, broth	Discard
Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard
Pizza – with any topping	Discard
Canned hams labeled “Keep Refrigerated”	Discard
Canned meats and fish, opened	Discard
<u>CHEESE</u>	
Soft Cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco	Discard
Hard Cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano	Safe
Processed Cheeses	Safe

FOOD		Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
Shredded Cheeses		Discard
Low-fat Cheeses		Discard
Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in can or jar)		Safe
<u>DAIRY</u>		
Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk		Discard
Butter, margarine		Safe
Baby formula, opened		Discard
<u>EGGS</u>		
Fresh eggs, hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products		Discard
Custards and puddings		Discard
<u>CASSEROLES, SOUPS, STEWS</u>		
<u>FRUITS</u>		
Fresh fruits, cut		Discard
Fruit juices, opened		Safe
Canned fruits, opened		Safe
Fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates		Safe
<u>SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS</u>		
Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish		Discard if above 50 °F for over 8 hrs.
Peanut butter		Safe
Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles		Safe
Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, Hoisin sauces		Safe
Fish sauces (oyster sauce)		Discard
Opened vinegar-based dressings		Safe
Opened creamy-based dressings		Discard
Spaghetti sauce, opened jar		Discard
<u>BREAD, CAKES, COOKIES, PASTA, GRAINS</u>		
Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas		Safe
Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough		Discard
Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes		Discard
Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette		Discard
Fresh pasta		Discard
Cheesecake		Discard
Breakfast foods –waffles, pancakes, bagels		Safe
<u>PIES, PASTRY</u>		
Pastries, cream filled		Discard
Pies – custard, cheese filled, or chiffon; quiche		Discard
Pies, fruit		Safe
<u>VEGETABLES</u>		
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices		Safe
Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged		Discard
Vegetables, raw		Safe
Vegetables, cooked; tofu		Discard
Vegetable juice, opened		Discard
Baked potatoes		Discard
Commercial garlic in oil		Discard
Potato Salad		Discard

Frozen Food

WHEN TO SAVE AND WHEN TO THROW IT OUT

FOOD	Still contains ice crystals and feels as cold as if refrigerated	Thawed Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
<u>MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD</u>		
Beef, veal, lamb, pork, and ground meats	Refreeze	Discard
Poultry and ground poultry	Refreeze	Discard
Variety meats (liver, kidney, heart, chitterlings)	Refreeze	Discard
Casseroles, stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
Fish, shellfish, breaded seafood products	Refreeze However, there will be some texture and flavor loss	Discard
<u>DAIRY</u>		
Milk	Refreeze May lose some texture	Discard
Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze May lose some texture	Discard
Hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Casseroles containing milk, cream, eggs, soft cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
<u>FRUITS</u>		
Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops
Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze Will change texture and flavor	Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops
<u>VEGETABLES</u>		
Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours
Home or commercially packaged or blanched	Refreeze May suffer texture and flavor loss	Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours
<u>BREADS, PASTRIES</u>		
Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling	Refreeze	Discard

FOOD	Still contains ice crystals and feels as cold as if refrigerated	Thawed Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
BREADS, PASTRIES Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze Some quality loss may occur	Refreeze Quality loss is considerable
OTHER Casseroles – pasta, rice based	Refreeze	Discard
Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze
Breakfast items –waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
Frozen meal, entree, specialty items (pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods)	Refreeze	Discard

Got Food Safety Questions?

Ask Karen



ASK KAREN!

The FSIS automated response system can provide food safety information 24/7. Visit us at AskKaren.gov

USDA Meat and Poultry HOTLINE

1-888-MPHotline

(1-888-674-6854)

English & Spanish

10:00-4:00 ET

TTY: 1-800 256-7072

MPHotline



Food Safety Contacts for Areas Affected by Severe Storms and Hurricanes

FSIS

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service

Consumers with food safety questions can phone the toll-free **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline** at **1-888-MPHotline** (1-888-674-6854); TTY, 1-800-256-7072.

The Hotline is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (ET) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

Consumers can also ask safe food handling questions by logging on to FSIS' online automated response system called "Ask Karen," on the Food Safety and Inspection Service's Web site: www.fsis.usda.gov

E-mail inquiries can be directed to MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov.

Additional information about USDA's food safety efforts can be accessed on the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov

CDC

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Call 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636, TTY 1-888-232-6348, for information on hazards, safe clean up, and preventing illness and injury.

Available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
www.cdc.gov

FDA

Food and Drug Administration

- For information on safe food handling for foods other than meat, poultry, or egg products, call FDA's toll-free information line at 1-888- SAFEFood or 1-888-723-3366. www.cfsan.fda.gov
- FDA emergency number, staffed 24 hours a day, 1-866-300-4374.

OTHER

Environmental Protection Agency

EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline:

1-800-426-4791

www.epa.gov

Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA)

Food and Water in an Emergency

www.fema.gov

General Disaster Assistance Site: www.foodsafety.gov

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SECTION II

EMERGENCY SUPPLY LIST





Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children



Ready

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.®



Emergency Supply List



FEMA

www.ready.gov



Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation

Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food

Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both

Flashlight and extra batteries

First aid kit

Whistle to signal for help

Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place

Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation

Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities

Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)

Local maps

Through its *Ready Campaign*, the Federal Emergency Management Agency educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including natural disasters and terrorist attacks. *Ready* asks individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses.

All Americans should have some basic supplies on hand in order to survive for at least three days if an emergency occurs. Following is a listing of some basic items that every emergency supply kit should include. However, it is important that individuals review this list and consider where they live and the unique needs of their family in order to create an emergency supply kit that will meet these needs. Individuals should also consider having at least two emergency supply kits, one full kit at home and smaller portable kits in their workplace, vehicle or other places they spend time.


Ready



Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, DC 20472

SECTION III

COMMUNICATION PLANS

Create Your Family Emergency Communication Plan

Family Communication Plan for Kids





BE SMART. TAKE PART. CREATE YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

Join with others to prepare for emergencies and participate in America's PrepareAthon! | ready.gov/prepare

Creating your *Family Emergency Communication Plan* starts with one simple question: "What if?"

"What if something happens and I'm not with my family?" "Will I be able to reach them?" "How will I know they are safe?" "How can I let them know I'm OK?" During a disaster, you will need to send and receive information from your family.

Communication networks, such as mobile phones and computers, could be unreliable during disasters, and electricity could be disrupted. Planning in advance will help ensure that all the members of your household—including children and people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, as well as outside caregivers—know how to reach each other and where to meet up in an emergency. Planning starts with three easy steps:



1. COLLECT.

Create a paper copy of the contact information for your family and other important people/offices, such as medical facilities, doctors, schools, or service providers.



2. SHARE.

Make sure everyone carries a copy in his or her backpack, purse, or wallet. If you complete your *Family Emergency Communication Plan* online at ready.gov/make-a-plan, you can print it onto a wallet-sized card. You should also post a copy in a central location in your home, such as your refrigerator or family bulletin board.



3. PRACTICE.

Have regular household meetings to review and practice your plan.

**TEXT
IS
BEST!**

If you are using a mobile phone, a text message may get through when a phone call will not. This is because a text message requires far less bandwidth than a phone call. Text messages may also save and then send automatically as soon as capacity becomes available.

**The following sections will guide you through the process to create and practice your
Family Emergency Communication Plan.**



HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Write down phone numbers and email addresses for everyone in your household. Having this important information written down will help you reconnect with others in case you don't have your mobile device or computer with you or if the battery runs down. If you have a household member(s) who is Deaf or hard of hearing, or who has a speech disability and uses traditional or video relay service (VRS), include information on how to connect through relay services on a landline phone, mobile device, or computer.

SCHOOL, CHILDCARE, CAREGIVER, AND WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLANS

Because a disaster can strike during school or work hours, you need to know their emergency response plans and how to stay informed. Discuss these plans with children, and let them know who could pick them up in an emergency. Make sure your household members with phones are signed up for alerts and warnings from their school, workplace, and/or local government. To find out more about how to sign up, see *Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings* at <http://1.usa.gov/1BDloze>. For children without mobile phones, make sure they know to follow instructions from a responsible adult, such as a teacher or principal.

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT

It is also important to identify someone outside of your community or State who can act as a central point of contact to help your household reconnect. In a disaster, it may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town because local phone lines can be jammed.

EMERGENCY MEETING PLACES

Decide on safe, familiar places where your family can go for protection or to reunite. Make sure these locations are accessible for household members with disabilities or access and functional needs. If you have pets or service animals, think about animal-friendly locations. Identify the following places:

- Indoor:* If you live in an area where tornadoes, hurricanes, or other high-wind storms can happen, make sure everyone knows where to go for protection. This could be a small, interior, windowless room, such as a closet or bathroom, on the lowest level of a sturdy building, or a tornado safe room or storm shelter.
- In your neighborhood:* This is a place in your neighborhood where your household members will meet if there is a fire or other emergency and you need to leave your home. The meeting place could be a big tree, a mailbox at the end of the driveway, or a neighbor's house.
- Outside of your neighborhood:* This is a place where your family will meet if a disaster happens when you're not at home and you can't get back to your home. This could be a library, community center, house of worship, or family friend's home.

- Outside of your town or city:* Having an out-of-town meeting place can help you reunite if a disaster happens and:

- You cannot get home or to your out-of-neighborhood meeting place; or
- Your family is not together and your community is instructed to evacuate the area.

This meeting place could be the home of a relative or family friend. Make sure everyone knows the address of the meeting place and discuss ways you would get there.

OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND INFORMATION

You should also write down phone numbers for emergency services, utilities, service providers, medical providers, veterinarians, insurance companies, and other services.



- Make copies of your *Family Emergency Communication Plan* for each member of the household to carry in his or her wallet, backpack, or purse. Post a copy in a central place at home. Regularly check to make sure your household members are carrying their plan with them.
- Enter household and emergency contact information into all household members' mobile phones or devices.
- Store at least one emergency contact under the name "In Case of Emergency" or "ICE" for all mobile phones and devices. This will help someone identify your emergency contact if needed. Inform your emergency contact of any medical issues or other requirements you may have.
- Create a group list on all mobile phones and devices of the people you would need to communicate with if there was an emergency or disaster.
- Make sure all household members and your out-of-town contact know how to text if they have a mobile phone or device, or know alternative ways to communicate if they are unable to text.
- Read *Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings* at <http://1.usa.gov/1BDloze> and sign up to receive emergency information.



Once you have completed your *Family Emergency Communication Plan*, made copies for all the members of your household, and discussed it, it's time to practice!

Here are some ideas for practicing your plan:

- Practice texting and calling. Have each person practice sending a text message or calling your out-of-town contact and sending a group text to your mobile phone group list.
- Discuss what information you should send by text. You will want to let others know you are safe and where you are. Short messages like "I'm OK. At library" are good.

- Talk about who will be the lead person to send out information about the designated meeting place for the household.
- Practice gathering all household members at your indoor and neighborhood emergency meeting places. Talk about how each person would get to the identified out-of-neighborhood and out-of-town meeting places. Discuss all modes of transportation, such as public transportation, rail, and para-transit for all family members, including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.
- Regularly have conversations with household members and friends about the plan, such as whom and how to text or call, and where to go.
- To show why it's important to keep phone numbers written down, challenge your household members to recite important phone numbers from memory—now ask them to think about doing this in the event of an emergency.
- Make sure everyone, including children, knows how and when to call 911 for help. You should only call 911 when there is a life-threatening emergency.
- Review, update, and practice your *Family Emergency Communication Plan* at least once a year, or whenever any of your information changes.

To help start the conversation or remind your family why you are taking steps to prepare and practice, you may want to watch the 4-minute video, *It Started Like Any Other Day*, about families who have experienced disaster, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_omgt3MEBs. Click on the closed captioning (CC) icon on the lower right to turn on the captioning.

After you practice, talk about how it went. What worked well? What can be improved? What information, if any, needs to be updated? If you make updates, remember to print new copies of the plan for everyone.

OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING IN DISASTERS¹

- Text is best when using a mobile phone, but if you make a phone call, keep it brief and convey only vital information to emergency personnel and/or family or household members. This will minimize network congestion, free up space on the network for emergency communications, and conserve battery power. Wait 10 seconds before redialing a number. If you redial too quickly, the data from the handset to the cell sites do not have enough time to clear before you've re-sent the same data. This contributes to a clogged network.
- Conserve your mobile phone battery by reducing the brightness of your screen, placing your phone in airplane mode, and closing apps you do not need. Limit watching videos and playing video games to help reduce network congestion.
- Keep charged batteries, a car phone charger, and a solar charger available for backup power for your mobile phone, teletypewriters (TTYs), amplified phones, and caption phones. If you charge your phone in your car, be sure the car is in a well-ventilated area (e.g., not in a closed garage) to avoid life-threatening carbon monoxide poisoning.

¹ Federal Communications Commission, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. (n.d.) *Tips for communicating in an emergency*. Retrieved from <http://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/emergency-information/tips.html>

- If driving, do not text, read texts, or make a call without a hands-free device.
- Maintain a household landline and analog phone (with battery backup if it has a cordless receiver) that can be used when mobile phone service is unavailable. Those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities and use devices and services that depend on digital technology (e.g., VRS, Internet Protocol [IP] Relay, or captioning) should have an analog phone (e.g., TTY, amplified phone, or caption phone) with battery backup in case Internet or mobile service is down.
- If you evacuate and have a call-forwarding feature on your home phone, forward your home phone number to your mobile phone number.
- Use the Internet to communicate by email, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media networks. These communication channels allow you to share information quickly with a widespread audience or to find out if loved ones are OK. The Internet can also be used for telephone calls through Voice over Internet Protocol. For those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities, you can make calls through your IP Relay provider.
- If you do not have a mobile phone, keep a prepaid phone card to use if needed during or after a disaster.
- Use a pay phone if available. It may have less congestion because these phones don't rely on electricity or mobile networks. In some public places, you may be able to find a TTY that can be used by those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities.

America's PrepareAthon! is a grassroots campaign for action to get more people prepared for emergencies. Make your actions count at ready.gov/prepare.

The reader recognizes that the Federal Government provides links and informational data on various disaster preparedness resources and events and does not endorse any non-Federal events, entities, organizations, services, or products.



10 WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN AMERICA'S PrepareAthon!



Access Alerts and Warnings



Test Communication Plans



Assemble or Update Supplies



Drill or Practice Emergency Response



Participate in a Class, Training, or Discussion



Plan with Neighbors



Conduct an Exercise



Make Property Safer



Document and Insure Property



Safeguard Documents

FAMILY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Home #:

Address:.....

Name: Mobile #:

Other # or social media:

Email:

Important medical or other information:

.....

Name: Mobile #:

Other # or social media:

Email:

Important medical or other information:

.....

Name: Mobile #:

Other # or social media:

Email:

Important medical or other information:

.....

Name: Mobile #:

Other # or social media:

Email:

Important medical or other information:

.....

SCHOOL, CHILDCARE, CAREGIVER, AND WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLANS

Name:

Address:.....

Emergency/Hotline #:

Website:

Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

**SCHOOL,
CHILDCARE,
CAREGIVER, AND
WORKPLACE
EMERGENCY PLANS**

Name:
Address:.....
Emergency/Hotline #:
Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:.....
Emergency/Hotline #:
Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:.....
Emergency/Hotline #:
Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

**IN CASE OF
EMERGENCY
(ICE) CONTACT**

Name: Mobile #:
Home #: Email:
Address:

**OUT-OF-TOWN
CONTACT**

Name: Mobile #:
Home #: Email:
Address:

**EMERGENCY
MEETING PLACES**

Indoor:
Instructions:
Neighborhood:
Instructions:

Out-of-Neighborhood:
Address:.....
Instructions:

Out-of-Town:
Address:.....
Instructions:

**IMPORTANT
NUMBERS OR
INFORMATION**

Police: Dial 911 or #:

Fire: Dial 911 or #:

Poison Control: #:

Doctor: #:

Doctor: #:

Pediatrician: #:

Dentist: #:

Hospital/Clinic: #:

Pharmacy: #:

Medical Insurance: #:

Policy #:

Medical Insurance: #:

Policy #:

Homeowner/Rental Insurance:

#:

Policy #:

Flood Insurance: #:

Policy #:

Veterinarian: #:

Kennel: #:

Electric Company: #:

Gas Company: #:

Water Company: #:

Alternate/Accessible Transportation:

#:

Other: #:

Other: #:

Other: #:



Ready



Write your family's name above

Family Emergency Communication Plan

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Home #:
Address:
Name: Mobile #:
Other # or social media: Email:
Important medical or other information:
Name: Mobile #:
Other # or social media: Email:
Important medical or other information

Name: Mobile #:
Other # or social media: Email:
Important medical or other information:

Name: Mobile #:
Other # or social media: Email:
Important medical or other information:

SCHOOL, CHILDCARE, CAREGIVER, AND WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLANS

Name:
Address:
Emergency/Hotline #: Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:
Emergency/Hotline #: Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:
Emergency/Hotline #: Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:
Emergency/Hotline #: Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (ICE) CONTACT

Name: Mobile #:
Home #: Email:
Address:

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT

Name: Mobile #:
Home #: Email:
Address:

EMERGENCY MEETING PLACES

Indoor:
Instructions:
Neighborhood:
Instructions:

Out-of-Neighborhood:
Address:
Instructions:

Out-of-Town:
Address:
Instructions:

IMPORTANT NUMBERS OR INFORMATION

Police: Dial 911 or #:
Fire: Dial 911 or #:
Poison Control: #:
Doctor: #:
Pediatrician: #:
Dentist: #:
Medical Insurance: #:
Policy #:
Hospital/Clinic: #:
Pharmacy: #:
Homeowner/Rental Insurance: #:
Policy #:
Flood Insurance: #:
Policy #:
Veterinarian: #:
Kennel: #:
Electric Company: #:
Gas Company: #:
Water Company: #:
Alternate/Accessible Transportation: #:
Other:
Other:



Family Communication Plan

Emergencies can happen at any time. Does your family know how to get in touch with each other if you are not all together?

Before an emergency happens, have a family discussion to determine who would be your out-of-state point of contact, and where you would meet away from your home — both in the neighborhood and within your town.

Let them know you're OK!

Pick the same person for each family member to contact. It might be easier to reach someone who's out of town.

Important Information

Fill in this information and keep a copy in a safe place, such as your purse or briefcase, your car, your office, and your disaster kit. Be sure to look it over every year and keep it up to date.

Out-of-Town Contact

Name: _____
Home: _____
Cell: _____
Email: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____

Neighborhood Meeting Place:

Regional Meeting Place:

Work Information

Workplace: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

Workplace: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

School Information

School: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

School: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____

School: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Facebook: _____
Twitter: _____
Evacuation Location: _____





Important Information (continued)

Family Information

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Medical Contacts

Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Pediatrician: _____

Phone: _____

Dentist: _____

Phone: _____

Dentist: _____

Phone: _____

Specialist: _____

Phone: _____

Specialist: _____

Phone: _____

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

Veterinarian/Kennel: _____

Phone: _____

Insurance Information

Medical Insurance: _____

Phone: _____

Policy Number: _____

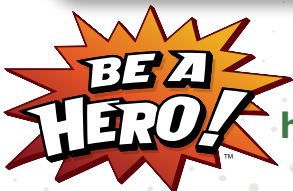
Homeowners/Rental Insurance: _____

Phone: _____

Policy Number: _____

Text, don't talk!

Unless you are in danger, send a text. Texts may have an easier time getting through than phone calls, and you don't want to tie up phone lines needed by emergency workers.



SECTION IV

UTILITY OUTAGES

Going Off Grid: Utility Outages

Carbon Monoxide Safety

How to Prepare for and Respond to Power Outages

Safely Operating Generators for Standby Power



GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

ACTIVITY GUIDE



FEMA

ACTIVITY: PREPARING A CHECKLIST FOR GOING OFF GRID

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to educate individuals and families on how to prepare for a utility outage.

Objectives:

- List the critical items to have and actions to take in a utility outage.
- Identify how to practice for a utility outage.

Preparation and Needed Materials: Prior to conducting this activity, you may want to:

- Gather information about local utility companies (phone numbers and Web sites) and where people can find information in the local area when utilities go out (radio stations, phone numbers of local emergency management offices, chapters of the American Red Cross, etc.).
- Try the suggested “Family Off the Grid Night” activity so you can share lessons learned with participants.
- Work with local merchants to get donations of essential items such as flashlights, batteries, appliance thermometers, etc.

Presentation Tips:

- Welcome participants to the session.
- Explain that by the end of the session, they will be able to take steps at home to prepare for utility outages.
- Ask the participants the following discussion questions: When was the last time the power went out? How often does it happen? How long does the average power outage last in this area? How long should you plan to take care of yourself until heat or power or water is restored?
- Acknowledge the answers and then present the following key points:
 - The length of power outages can really vary, from a few hours to several days. Severe weather can prolong them. Plan to get by without utilities for at least 3 days.
 - You can take steps ahead of time in your own home to make life off the grid easier. These basic steps are not time consuming or expensive. Many of the items you need may be found around your home.

GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

ACTIVITY GUIDE



FEMA

ACTIVITY: PREPARING A CHECKLIST FOR GOING OFF GRID

Presentation Tips: (Continued)

- Distribute the Outage Checklist handout. Briefly review the items, and give the participants local numbers and information so that they may begin filling in the checklist.
- Suggest that families may want to plan a “Family Off the Grid Night” to practice the steps on a checklist before an actual outage occurs. Besides revealing things you haven’t considered, unplugging for the evening can be fun for the family as well. It is an opportunity to relate to one another without the distractions of phones, computers, and television.
- Optional Activity: If feasible, demonstrate how a “Family Off the Grid Night” might work.
 - Divide the groups into teams and have each one pick a type of outage. The outages can also be combined. For example, extreme cold weather or storms can cause electrical outages, which in turn can freeze pipes causing a water outage.
 - Ask them to discuss assessing their neighborhoods. How would they handle the tasks on their checklists in their households? Who would do what? What items do they need to find or purchase?
 - Reassemble the participants and review what they discovered in exploring the checklist.
 - If you’ve done the activity beforehand, share the lessons you learned with the group.
- Optional Demonstrations: If feasible, demonstrate where some of the utility cut-offs are in your meeting place and discuss what tools you might need to shut down service.
- Conclude the session by noting there are other diagrams and handouts they may find helpful. Ask participants if they have any questions about the items on the checklist. Thank the participants for attending the session.

GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

OUTAGE CHECKLIST: HANDOUT



FEMA

Important Phone Numbers

- Electric company phone number/Web site: _____
- Natural gas company phone number/Web site: _____
- Water company phone number/Web site: _____
- Plumbing company phone number/Web site: _____
- Oil/gas heat service phone number/Web site: _____
- Telephone company phone number/Web site: _____
- For more information about outages and public shelters, listen to or contact: _____

If you use medical equipment that requires electricity to operate, register with your power company and health care provider to learn about alternatives.

Assess Your Neighborhood

- If there is a utility outage, who may need extra support because of their functional or medical needs?
- Does anyone in the neighborhood have special skills who can help others?

Electricity Outages

- Locate and label utility shutoff (see diagram at the end of this handout).
- Post instructions next to fuse box or circuit breaker.
- Are there enough flashlights on hand (at least one for each person in the house)? Are the batteries working? (Tip: Store batteries in the refrigerator for longer life.)
- Do not use candles. They are a fire hazard.
- Keep on hand ready-to-eat meals that don't require cooking or cooling.

GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

OUTAGE CHECKLIST: HANDOUT



FEMA

Electricity Outages (Continued)

- Freeze water in plastic water bottles or old milk containers, leaving about an inch at the top for frozen water to expand. When placed in a refrigerator and freezer, they will keep food cold for several hours.
- Know where to get dry ice to keep food cold as necessary.
- Are there cordless phones that need electricity to run? If so, what can be used as a backup? (Standard telephone with cord, cell phone, etc.)
- Find a new or used battery-operated radio to get updates on information, shelters, etc.
- Is there an alternate heating source? Make sure it is properly vented and in good working order. Make sure all chimneys are clean and all flues are operational. Do you have enough wood, pellets, or heating fuel?
- If heating system involves an electronic ignition or fan, know who to call for service/restarting assistance.
- If there is an electric garage door opener, where is the manual release? Post instructions on how to use it and practice!
- When possible, keep car gas tanks at least half full. Gas stations need electricity to power the pumps.

When the power goes out . . .

- Are all the pots and pans off the stove? Are the stove range and oven turned off?
- If you have a space heater, make sure it's at least 3 feet away from furniture or other flammable objects. Keep it unplugged when not in use.
- In cold weather, maximize heat coming from the sun. Open shades, curtains, or louvers so that sun may heat the glass. Close them when the sun is no longer shining directly to hold in the heat. In hot weather, minimize heat by closing shades, curtains, and louvers.

POST THIS PAGE IN YOUR HOME!

GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

OUTAGE CHECKLIST: HANDOUT



FEMA

Natural Gas Outages

- Locate and label gas shutoff valve(s). There may be more than one (see diagram at the end of this handout).
- Post shutoff instructions near the meter and make sure a nonsparking wrench is stored nearby.
- If your gas meter is located inside your home, you should only shut off gas flow when instructed to by local authorities.

Also see “Electricity Outages” above for more tips.

Water Outages

- Locate and label main water cutoff. Make sure any special tools needed are stored nearby. (Tip: The main water cutoff is usually on the outside wall of the house where the water meter is. With a well, the cutoff is usually on the well pump.)
- Have 3 days of drinking water stored (1 gallon of water per person per day).

If pipes may freeze . . .

- Wrap insulation, tape, newspapers, or rags around them.
- Store water in buckets or bathtubs to flush toilets.
- Leave water trickling out of the faucets.

If pipes do freeze . . .

- Remove any insulation or newspaper and wrap them in rags.
- Completely open all the faucets. If you can still heat water, pour hot water over the pipes, starting with where they are most cold. If you have electricity, try using a blow dryer.

If pipes burst . . .

- Know where circuit breakers and fuses are and how to shut off the power. See “Electricity Outages” above.
- Never enter a flooded basement or walk through standing water to shut off electrical supply because water conducts electricity.

GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

OUTAGE CHECKLIST: HANDOUT



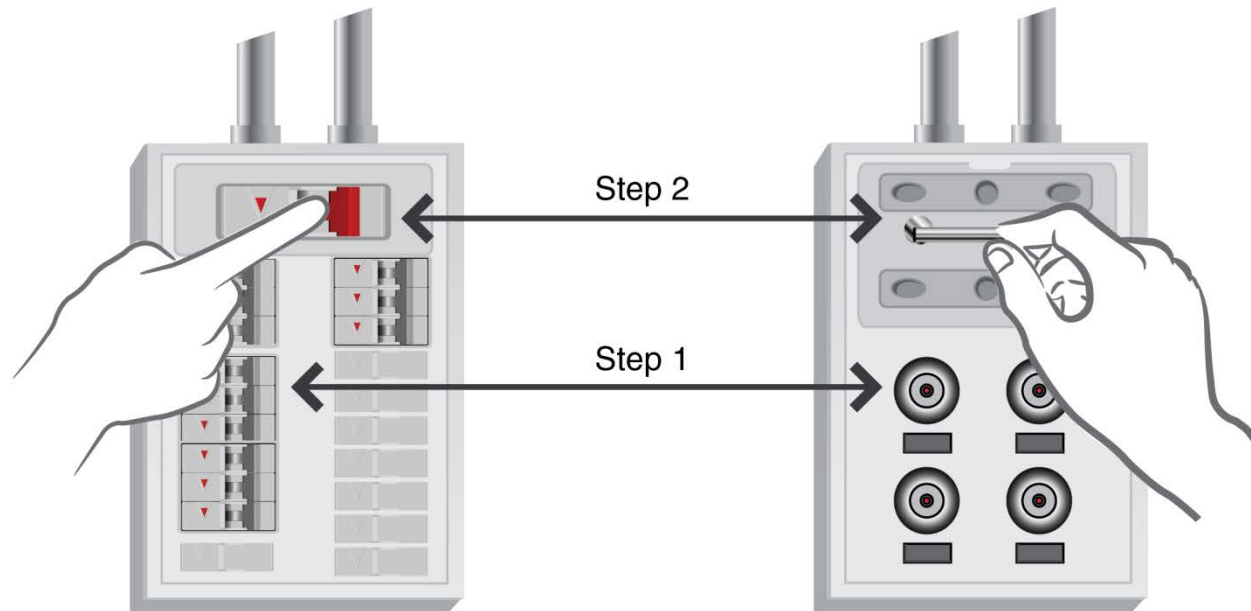
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Phone Outages

- Have on hand a backup way to communicate (cell phone, computer via cable connection, etc.).

Shutting Off Electricity

Unscrew individual fuses or switch off smaller breakers first, then pull the main switch or breaker. When restoring power, turn on main switch or breaker, then screw in smaller fuses or turn on smaller breakers, one at a time.



Circuit Breaker Box With Shutoff

Shutoff steps:

- Step 1: Shut off individual breakers.
- Step 2: Shut off main breaker.

Fuse Box With Shutoff

Shutoff steps:

- Step 1: Pull out individual fuses.
- Step 2: Pull out main fuse.

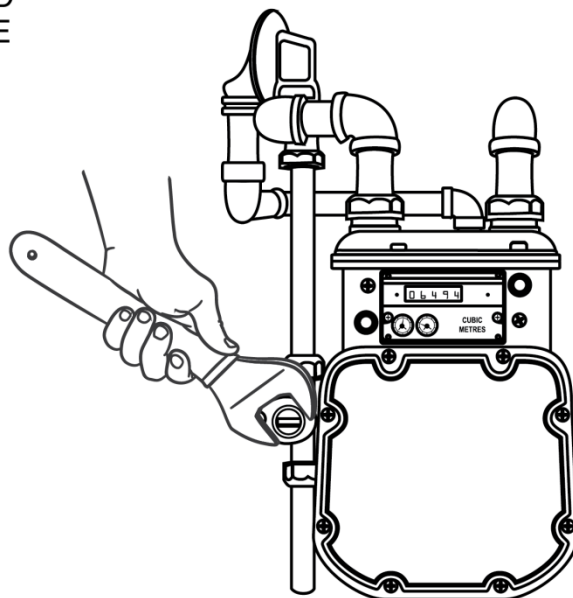
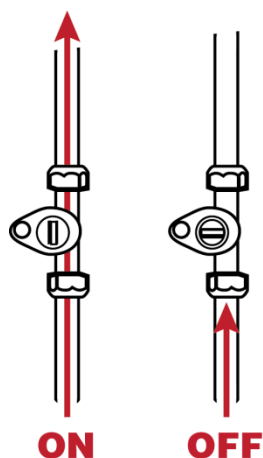
GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

OUTAGE CHECKLIST: HANDOUT



FEMA

GAS METER AND SHUT-OFF VALVE



Shutting Off Gas

The gas meter shutoff diagram indicates the shutoff valve location on the pipe that comes out of the ground. To turn off the valve, use a nonsparking wrench to turn the valve clockwise one-quarter turn. Remember that, in all cases, natural gas flow should only be turned on by a licensed technician.

Please note: Some gas meters have automatic shutoff valves that restrict the flow of gas during an earthquake or other emergency. These are installed by a licensed plumber, downstream of the utility point of delivery. If you are unsure whether your home has this shutoff device, contact your gas service company. If this shutoff device is closed, only a qualified professional should restore it.

Gas Meter in the Home

If you smell gas or see the dials on your meter showing gas is flowing even though appliances are turned off, you should evacuate the premises and call 911. Do not attempt to shut off the gas from inside the building if gas may be in the air.

Gas Meter Outside the Home

You should turn off the meter from outside the building if you smell gas or you see dials on the meter showing gas is flowing even though appliances are turned off. If there is a fire that you cannot extinguish, call 911 and turn off the gas only if it is safe to do so.

GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

OUTAGE CHECKLIST: HANDOUT



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Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Food should be okay for around 4 hours. Refer to the chart below to know when to save food and when to throw it out.

<i>FOOD IN REFRIGERATOR</i>	Held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD: Any raw, leftover, or thawing. Also includes soy meat substitutes, salads, lunch meats, pizza, cans that have been opened, fish, or meat sauces.	Discard
CHEESE: Any soft cheeses, shredded cheeses, or low-fat cheeses	Discard
Hard cheeses such as cheddar, colby, swiss, parmesan, provolone, romano, or hard cheeses grated in can or jar	Safe
DAIRY: Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk, opened baby formula	Discard
Butter, margarine	Safe
EGGS: All eggs and egg products, such as puddings	Discard
CASSEROLES, SOUPS, STEWS	Discard
FRUITS: Fresh fruits, cut	Discard
Opened fruit juices or canned fruits, along with fresh fruits, coconut, raisins, dried fruits, candied fruits, dates	Safe
SAUCES, SPREADS, JAMS: Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish	Discard if above 50 °F for over 8 hours
Other sauces, including soy, barbecue, taco. Also peanut butter, jelly, relish, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles, and vinegar-based dressings.	Safe
Opened creamy-based dressings and opened spaghetti sauce	Discard
BREAD, CAKES, COOKIES, PASTA, GRAINS, PASTRY: Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas, waffles, pancakes, bagels, fruit pies	Safe
All other rolls, dough, cooked pasta, rice, potatoes, pasta salads, fresh pasta, cheesecake, cream-filled pastries or pie	Discard
VEGETABLES: Fresh raw vegetables or mushrooms, herbs, spices	Safe
All other pre-cut, pre-washed, cooked vegetables, tofu, opened vegetable juice, garlic in oil, potato salad	Discard

GOING OFF GRID: UTILITY OUTAGES

OUTAGE CHECKLIST: HANDOUT



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FOOD IN FREEZER	Still contains ice crystals and feels as cold as if refrigerated	Thawed; held above 40 °F for over 2 hours
MEAT, POULTRY, SEAFOOD	Refreeze. However, seafood will have some texture and flavor loss.	Discard
DAIRY: Milk and soft or semi-soft cheese	Refreeze. May lose some texture.	Discard
Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
Hard and shredded cheeses, casseroles with dairy products, cheesecake	Refreeze	Refreeze
FRUITS: Juices, packaged fruits	Refreeze. However, home or commercially packaged fruits will have texture and flavor change.	Refreeze. Discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops.
VEGETABLES: Juices, packaged vegetables	Refreeze. Vegetables may suffer texture and flavor loss.	Discard after held above 40 °F for 6 hours
BREADS, PASTRIES: Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
Cakes, pies, pastries with custard or cheese filling	Refreeze	Discard
Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze. Some quality loss may occur.	Refreeze. Quality loss is considerable.
OTHER: Casseroles – pasta, rice based	Refreeze	Discard
Flour, cornmeal, nuts, waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
Frozen meals	Refreeze	Discard

For more information, see <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/emergency/index.html>

Protecting Yourself and Your Family

Stay Aware, Stay Safe

The following information can help you increase your safety awareness and protect yourself and your family from deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.

Facts about Carbon Monoxide

The same substance that comes out of a car's exhaust pipe, carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas. Carbon monoxide is especially dangerous because it is colorless, odorless and tasteless—making it almost impossible to detect without a carbon monoxide alarm.

Carbon monoxide is produced when common fuels—such as oil, coal, natural gas, kerosene or wood—are burned incompletely. When carbon monoxide gas builds up in any enclosed area in your home, it can cause severe illness and even death.

The problem of carbon monoxide buildup can be especially severe during the coldest weather, when houses are closed up tight and heating equipment runs much of the time.

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Because carbon monoxide poisoning can feel like the flu, it can be hard to know when you are suffering from it. If undetected, however, carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to unconsciousness and even death. Those most at risk are elderly people, children, someone who is or has been ill, and anyone who spends most of the time indoors during the winter.

Depending on how long it goes unchecked, a person exposed to carbon monoxide can experience any number of the following symptoms:

- Headaches
- Sleepiness
- Dizziness
- Redness of the skin
- Weakness
- Tightness of the chest
- Nausea
- Fluttering of the heart
- Confusion
- Loss of muscle control



Important Action Steps

- **Seek fresh air and remain outside.**
Take everyone with you including pets.
- **Call 911 or your local fire department.**
- **Seek medical attention immediately.**

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Carbon Monoxide Safety

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Common Household Causes

Carbon monoxide buildup can be caused when an appliance—a heating system, water heater, clothes dryer or range—isn't getting enough air or is venting improperly. Common causes of potentially hazardous conditions include:

Blocked Ventilation

- Bird and squirrel nests, and leaves can block chimneys and keep them from venting properly. Heating equipment should also be kept free of excess lint, dust and other materials.
- Vents and exhaust ducts of appliances (such as water heaters, ranges and clothes dryers) should never be sealed shut or blocked by any debris that could keep them from working properly.

Insufficient Household Air

- A fire in an open fireplace, the prolonged use of kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans and the use of power attic vents can significantly reduce the amount of air in an enclosed home. This can cause improper combustion and result in a backup of carbon monoxide and other flue gases.

Operating Fuel-Burning Equipment in an Enclosed Area

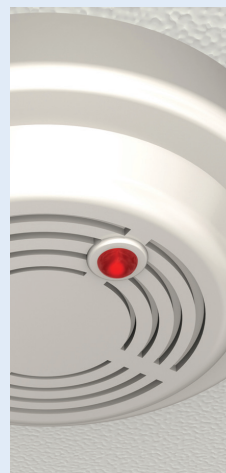
- Fuel-burning equipment needs surrounding air in order to function properly. If you are adding walls or shelving near a heating system or water heater, take care to allow space for air flow.

If you have any questions, please contact a licensed or qualified electrician or a National Grid customer service representative.

Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Here are some tips to protect your family:

- Install a UL-listed home carbon monoxide detector.
- Have an annual heating system checkup—no matter what energy source you use.
- Properly maintain and ventilate your appliances.
- Keep all sidewall vents clear of brush and snow.
- Never run a vehicle in the garage—even with the door open, CO can seep into your home.
- Inspect your chimney for any blockages.
- Never heat your home or building with your gas range or oven.
- Do not use your gas (or charcoal) grill in enclosed areas.
- Never use a fuel-fired space heater, kerosene stove, or charcoal grill in an enclosed area.



National Grid is an international energy delivery company. In the U.S., National Grid delivers electricity to approximately 3.3 million customers in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island, and manages the electricity network on Long Island under an agreement with the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA). It is the largest distributor of natural gas in the northeastern U.S., serving approximately 3.4 million customers in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island. National Grid also owns over 4,000 megawatts of contracted electricity generation that provides power to over one million LIPA customers.

Information resources: For more information to help you use energy safely and efficiently at home, visit www.nationalgridus.com.

CM4412 AllReg (01/16)

National Grid Customer Service Centers

Upstate NY: **800-642-4272**
Long Island: **800-930-5003**

NYC: **800-930-5003**
Rhode Island: **800-322-3223**

Massachusetts Electric: **800-322-3223**
Massachusetts Gas: **800-233-5325**

www.nationalgridus.com

How to Prepare for and Respond to Power Outages

nationalgrid

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Protect yourself and your home

Storms can happen at any time, in any season. If they do disrupt your power, National Grid emergency crews are available year-round, day and night, to restore service as quickly as possible. However, there are several things you can do before, during and after a storm to minimize inconvenience and ensure your safety.

Before the storm

Place National Grid's power outage number on or near the phone: New England **800-465-1212**
New York **800-867-5222**.

- Place working flashlights throughout the house and be sure all family members know where they are.
- Have a battery-operated radio on hand for storm information.
- Have extra flashlight and radio batteries ready.
- Keep extra drinking water, a manual can opener and a supply of canned and dried foods on hand in case an outage lasts more than a few days.
- If you depend on electrically operated life support equipment call us at **800-322-3223** NE and **800-642-4272** NY for information about planning for an emergency.

During the storm

- If your power does go out, first check to see if your neighbors have power or if you have power in other parts of your home. (You may have simply blown a fuse or tripped a circuit breaker.) If your home is the only one without power, call our Customer Service Contact Center at **800-322-3223** MA, RI and **800-642-4272** NY for help in identifying the source of the problem.
- If your neighborhood is without power, call **800-465-1212** in New England or **800-867-5222** in New York to make sure we know about the outage or for updates on when service is expected to be restored.

Please make sure we have an accurate phone number for you. It is very important that we hear from you regarding your outage. You should never assume we know about the power outage. When calling, please

be prepared to give your address, including the closest intersection, along with additional information such as the location of downed lines or utility poles.

- Turn off any appliances that were on before the outage; unplug sensitive appliances such as DVD players, TVs, computers, stereos and microwaves.
- Leave a light switch on to alert you when the power is back on.
- Never burn charcoal indoors or use a gas range for heating. Both could give off toxic fumes.
- If it appears your house may be without heat for an extended period and the outside temperature is below freezing, drain your water pipes.
- Never touch any fallen lines or anything touching fallen wires. Report all fallen wires to National Grid by calling **800-465-1212** in New England and **800-867-5222** in New York.

After the storm

- If service has been restored to your neighborhood and your home is still without power, call our power outage number at **800-867-5222** in New York and **800-465-1212** in New England.
- If your home has flooded, check with an electrician before turning anything on.
- Gradually reconnect your appliances to avoid overloading circuits when power is restored.
- Replenish any supplies used during the storm.



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How to Prepare for and Respond to Power Outages

Operating standby generators safely

Please observe these safety guidelines to protect yourself and your family.

- Have a licensed or qualified electrician install your generator.
- Make sure the generator has enough capacity to meet your needs.
- When operating the generator, the main circuit breaker must be in the “OFF” position.
- Generators should only be operated outdoors to ensure proper ventilation of carbon monoxide exhaust.
- Never operate a generator indoors regardless of the ventilation.

Understanding power outages and disturbances

Lightning, broken tree limbs, vehicles striking utility poles, equipment failure and even small animals climbing on utility equipment can cause power outages. Split-second decreases or increases in voltage to our system cause power disturbances. A dip in voltage may cause lights to flicker, TV pictures to shrink, digital clocks to flash and personal computers to lose data. Increases in voltage (called “spikes” for momentary increases and “surges” for longer ones) may affect sensitive programmable equipment such as DVD players, microwave ovens and computers.

Protecting against momentary interruptions

Here are some tips to help minimize the consequences of momentary power interruptions.

- When purchasing a programmable appliance, make sure it has a battery-operated backup system that prevents power disruption.
- When working with a home computer, store information into permanent memory periodically throughout the day.

Protecting against power surges

- Small plug-in surge protectors can be bought at most electrical equipment suppliers and will provide protection from voltage spikes.
- Plug sensitive equipment into outlets as far away as possible from main breaker panels or fuse boxes. Such equipment should not be plugged into the same circuit as major appliances such as air conditioners, pumps, refrigerators or washing machines.
- Unplug sensitive equipment such as DVD players, satellite dishes and computers whenever there is the threat of a severe electrical storm. Also unplug phone lines to sensitive equipment or purchase phone line surge protectors.

Priorities for power restoration

When a power outage occurs in your neighborhood, it may in fact be affecting thousands of customers.

Whose electricity is restored first?

National Grid emergency crews follow a time-tested plan to begin restoring service as safely and quickly as conditions allow. Accurate damage surveys, resource assessments and restoration estimates are critical in the preliminary stages of any major weather event.

National Grid is an electricity and natural gas delivery company that connects nearly 7 million customers to vital energy sources through its networks in New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. It is the largest distributor of natural gas in the Northeast. National Grid also operates the systems that deliver gas and electricity across Great Britain.

For more information please visit our website:
www.nationalgridus.com

Upstate New York

Safely Operating Generators For Standby Power


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Putting safety first with electric generators

The electric generators referred to in this flyer are typically engine-driven and may be permanently installed or portable. These may run on gasoline, fuel oil/kerosene, natural gas or propane.

If you have or are planning to buy a standby generator for use when there's an outage on National Grid's system, please observe these guidelines to protect yourself and your family:

- Have a licensed or qualified electrician install your generator. It's not something that untrained people can do safely. The wiring installation must be done according to local codes, the National Electrical Code (NEC), and National Grid's Specifications for Electrical Installations.
 - Make sure you get a generator that has enough capacity for your needs, including inrush for large motors. If it's too small, you could put too much strain on it, causing it to break down. Check manufacturer's instructions for sizing.
 - Your wiring system must be disconnected from National Grid's system before you operate the generator.
 - When using a portable generator, make sure the main circuit breaker in your electric service panel box is in the "OFF" position. If you have a fuse box instead of breakers, pull out the main block, remove the fuses and reinsert the empty block. This is necessary to prevent your generator's electricity from going back into National Grid's system, which could endanger the lives of line crews and your neighbors. Also, it is required by the NEC.
 - For permanent installations, a double throw switch will allow you to easily and safely disconnect from National Grid's system and connect your generator during an outage. Be sure your switch is the type that disconnects your system from National Grid's system before the generator takes over. It is just as easy to reverse the process when National Grid power is on again. This is called "break-before-make" transfer. Have a double throw switch installed. It must be rated for its intended use according to the NEC and listed by a recognized independent test laboratory.
- 
- A generator in a garage or outside building should be properly ventilated, since its exhaust (carbon monoxide) can cause serious injury and even death. **Never** install an electric generator inside a house. Operating a generator indoors, even with a door or window open, is **NEVER** safe!
 - Generators make a lot of noise. Find a place for it where it will disturb your family and neighbors as little as possible.
 - If possible, locate the standby generator close to where National Grid's electric service connects to your house or business. Consult your local city, town or village for any requirements or permits.
 - Please notify National Grid's Customer Service Contact Center when you install your generator.
- If you have any questions, please contact a licensed or qualified electrician or a National Grid customer service representative.

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Safely Operating Generators For Standby Power

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas that is colorless, odorless, tasteless and virtually impossible to detect. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to the flu and include headaches, dizziness, weakness, sleepiness, nausea, confusion, tightness of the chest, fluttering of the heart, redness of the skin and loss of muscle control.

If you suspect carbon monoxide is present in your home, immediately go outside and breathe deeply. If symptoms are severe, get medical attention right away by calling **911**.

Please note that when you call to report a gas odor or suspected carbon monoxide poisoning, emergency responders need immediate access to the premises. If you or a designated person will not be there to provide access, they will, if needed, enlist the help of fire or police departments to gain entry. Any damages and expenses that result are the responsibility of the homeowner.

To protect against carbon monoxide poisoning, here are some steps you can take:

- Install a UL-listed home carbon monoxide detector.
- Arrange for an annual check of your heating system by a licensed professional heating contractor. If you haven't had your heating system inspected yet, call now.
- Check chimneys or flues for debris, bird nests or other blockages, and have them cleaned periodically.
- If your furnace vents in a way other than through a chimney, make sure that the vent is clear of leaves and other debris.

- Be sure space heaters and wood-burning stoves are in good condition, have adequate ventilation and are used in strict compliance with manufacturer's instructions.
- **NEVER** use a gas range for heating, or burn coal or charcoal in an enclosed space.
- **NEVER** leave a car idling in a closed garage.
- If you use a back-up electricity generator, install it outside. Open windows do not provide sufficient ventilation to safely operate a generator indoors.

For other publicly available electrical safety information, please go to Electrical Safety Foundation International at www.esfi.org.

To request a free copy of National Grid's Specifications for Electrical Installations, or for more energy-related health and safety information, call your Customer Service Contact Center, or visit www.nationalgridus.com.



SECTION V

SPECIAL RESOURCES

Protecting Your Pets: Get Ready Today!

Tips for Employers - Retaining and Caring for Staff after a Disaster



Emergency Preparedness: Protecting Your Pets: Get Ready Today!

For millions of animal owners, your pet is an essential member of your family. The ability for you and your animals to survive an emergency, whether it's a hurricane, fire, flood, tornado or terrorist attack depends on making preparations today.

Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or choose to evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. In general, what's best for you is most likely what's best for your animals. If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible. However, it's important to know that animals may not be permitted in a public shelter, so you should prepare in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets.

An emergency back-up plan is important if you are unable to take care of your pets yourself. Ask neighbors, friends or relatives if they would be willing to care for or evacuate your pets if you cannot do so. Also be prepared to use what you have on hand to make it on your own for at least three days, maybe longer if circumstances change and you are unable to evacuate.



Pet Protection: Steps You Can Take

1 *Create a Pet Emergency Kit*

Similar to your family emergency supply kit, consider the basics for your pet's survival, especially food and water. Consider having two kits. In one, put everything you and your pets will need to stay where you are. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you and your pets have to get away. Be sure to review your kits regularly to ensure that their contents, especially foods and medicines, are fresh.

Food. Keep at least three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container.

Water. Store at least three days of water specifically for your pets in addition to water for yourself and your family.

Medicines and medical records. Keep an extra supply of medicines your pet takes on a regular basis in a waterproof container.

First aid kit. Talk to your veterinarian about what is most appropriate for your pet's emergency medical needs. Most kits should include cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors; antibiotic ointment; flea and tick prevention; latex gloves, isopropyl alcohol and saline solution. Include a pet first aid reference book.

Collar with ID tag, harness or leash. Be sure your pet wears a collar with rabies tag and identification at all times. Include a backup leash, collar and ID tag in your pet's emergency kit, along with copies of your pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents and medical records in a clean plastic bag or waterproof container. Consider talking

with your veterinarian about permanent identification such as microchipping, and enrolling your pet in a recovery database.

Crate or other pet carrier. If you must evacuate in an emergency take your pets and animals with you provided that it is practical to do so. In many cases, you will need to have a sturdy, safe, comfortable crate or carrier ready for transporting your pet. The carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around and lie down.

Sanitation. Include pet litter and litter box if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide for your pet's sanitation needs. You can use bleach as a disinfectant (dilute nine parts water to one part bleach), or in an emergency you can also use it to purify water. Use 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented or color safe bleaches, or those with added cleaners.

A picture of you and your pet together. If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you in identifying your pet. Include detailed information about species, breed, age, sex, color and distinguishing characteristics.

Familiar items. Put favorite toys, treats or bedding in your kit. Familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet.

Pet Protection: Steps You Can Take

2 Plan What to do in an Emergency

Be prepared to assess the situation. Be sure to take care of yourself and ensure your pet's safety during an emergency. Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first decision is whether you stay put or get away. Prepare and plan for both possibilities and use common sense to determine if there is immediate danger.

In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for instructions. If you're specifically told to evacuate, shelter-in-place or seek medical treatment, do so immediately.

Create a plan to get away. Plan how you will assemble your pets and anticipate where you will go. If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if practical. If you go to a public shelter, understand that animals may not be allowed. Secure appropriate lodging in advance depending on the number and type of animals you have. Consider family or friends willing to take in you and your pets in an emergency. Other options may include a hotel or motel that takes pets or a boarding facility, such as a kennel or veterinary hospital that is near an evacuation facility or your family's meeting place. Find out before an emergency if any of these facilities in your area might be viable options for you and your pets.

Develop a buddy system. Plan with neighbors, friends or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you cannot do so. Talk with those who will care for your pet about your evacuation plans and show them where you keep your pet's emergency supply kit. Also designate specific locations, one in your immediate neighborhood and another farther away, where you will meet in an emergency.

Talk to your pet's veterinarian about emergency planning. Discuss the types of things that you should include in your pet's emergency first aid kit. Get the names of vets or animal hospitals in other cities where you might need to seek temporary shelter. Also consider talking with your veterinarian about permanent identification such as microchipping and enrolling your pet in a recovery database. If your pet is microchipped, keeping your emergency contact information up to date and listed with a reliable recovery database is essential to your being reunited with your pet.



3 Know About Types of Emergencies

Gather contact information for emergency animal treatment. Make a list of contact information and addresses of area animal control agencies including the Humane Society or SPCA, and emergency veterinary hospitals. Keep one copy of these phone numbers with you and one in your pet's emergency supply kit. Obtain "Pets Inside" stickers and place them on your doors or windows, including information on the number and types of pets in your home to alert firefighters and rescue workers. Consider putting a phone number on the sticker where you could be reached in an emergency. If time permits, write the words "Evacuated with Pets" across the stickers, if you flee with your pets.



Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling an emergency supply kit for yourself, your family and your pets, is the same regardless of the type of emergency. However, it's important to stay informed about what might happen and know what types of emergencies are likely to affect your region as well as emergency plans that have been established by your state and local government. For more information about how to prepare, visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY.

Be prepared to adapt this information about emergency preparedness for your pets to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities during an emergency. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected. Those who take the time to prepare themselves and their pets will likely encounter less difficulty, stress and worry. Take the time now to get yourself and your pet ready.



Tips for Retaining and Caring for Staff After a Disaster

September 19, 2016

When disasters strike, the ripple effects are significant. Survivors may be injured or displaced, or may have loved ones in similar situations. The emotional, physical, and financial tolls can be jarring, and no one in the community is immune. Healthcare providers and staff who maintain facility operations are no exception, and yet they are a critical component of the response phase and expected to care not only for their own loved ones, but community members and the facility, too. Leadership plays a vital role in ensuring staff feel cared for and safe.¹ Remind your team that their jobs are important and secure. Provide regular and clear communication regarding how leadership is working to continue and restore operations.

This tip sheet assumes that a facility is operational after an event and that certain pre-planning and continuity of operations considerations are already in place. Here we share *general* promising practices—categorized by immediate and short-term needs—for facility executives to consider when trying to retain and care for staff after a disaster.

Immediate Needs

It will be easier to encourage employees to return to work if they know that certain immediate needs will be met. First, try to help your employees (and their loved ones if applicable) receive access to any medical care necessary to address injuries incurred as a result of the incident. Next, try to be as flexible as possible with scheduling just after an event. Consider providing a “concierge service”—the ability for staff to meet with one person in one convenient place who can help employees meet the following immediate needs:

Immediate Needs

- Shelter
- Transportation
- Food, water, hygiene
- Care for loved ones
- Behavioral health care
- Funding
- Communication/
charging stations
- Flexible schedules

- **Shelter.** If staff have lost their homes or their residences are uninhabitable, consider providing them with shelter within or close to the facility. Nearby schools, hotels, houses of worship, and other local stakeholders may be willing to donate space and/or materials. Make sure employees have access to a current list of local shelters as soon as it is available.² After Hurricane Sandy, one health system (comprised of 16 hospitals) placed 62 employees’ families into temporary housing.³
- **Transportation.** It may be difficult for displaced staff to get to and from work after a significant flood or other disaster. Consider partnering with churches or schools to use buses and drivers to transport employees to and from work. In South Carolina, fire personnel used boats to transport

¹ http://www.pnl.gov/main/publications/external/technical_reports/PNNL-18405.pdf

² <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery/find-an-open-shelter>

³ <https://www.northwell.edu/about/news/north-shore-lij-raises-23-m-employees-devastated-hurricane-sandy>

staff through floodwaters to the hospital.⁴ Consider setting up a regular shuttle service or volunteer carpool service. After storms, gas can be in short supply. Facilities in Florida have had a tanker come to the hospital, allowing staff to fill their tanks.

- **Food, water, and personal hygiene.** In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, it may be challenging for staff and their loved ones to access food and water. Work with your facility's cafeteria to ensure food and water is available for staff (and for their loved ones being cared for). Try to ensure staff has access to showers/wipes, antibacterial gels, and other toiletries as available and requested. If their loved ones are staying elsewhere, consider providing employees with potable water, food, and other items to take to them. Some facilities have coordinated the delivery of groceries so that staff had a box of food and drink when they left work. Try to promote the consumption of healthy foods and beverages.
- **Child (or older adult) "daycare."** Healthcare providers will be more likely to report to work if they know their loved ones are cared for and safe. Consider providing on-site child care (and on-site care for older adults, if possible) for all shifts. If practical, work with the local school system to set up temporary transportation to and from local schools to minimize disruption in children's routines.
- **Pet care.** Recent experience has shown that survivors may be reluctant to evacuate their homes because they do not want to leave their pets behind.⁵ Employees may volunteer to "foster" their colleagues' pets in the short term (or make sure the pets have been let out and have an adequate supply of food and water). If practical, identify nearby shelters that accept pets and share this information with your team.
- **Behavioral health care.** Some of your employees may have literally "lost everything." On-site disaster behavior health professionals (e.g., an available member of your facility's employee assistance program [EAP] who is certified in Psychological First Aid⁶) can help staff get through the initial shock of the event, and provide them with additional resources and services as necessary. Leaders trained in "Building Workforce Resilience through the Practice of Psychological First Aid"⁷ can also help leaders guide their teams through stressful disaster response operations. Ensure staff have the time and a safe place to grieve/share stories. Consider scheduling optional meetings where staff can share challenges they are encountering. Provide a designated email address and/or collection box at each facility labeled "Staff Concerns/Questions" to allow those who wish to remain anonymous to share information.⁸ Consider setting up a 24/7 hotline or offer links to professional mental health sources.⁹
- **Funding.** Consider working with your Board of Trustees and other community leaders to commit funding or raise money that can be used to provide assistance to employees and their families. The Board of Trustees from

After his staff and facility experienced a tornado, a hospital Chief Executive Officer noted, "Take time to laugh and cry with each other. Healthcare workers always stand ready to help our community in a time of need and sometimes that is at our own expense."¹

⁴ <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20151009/NEWS/151009909>

⁵ <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/disaster/Pages/PETS-Act-FAQ.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid>

⁷ https://live.blueskybroadcast.com/bsb/client/CL_DEFAULT.asp?Client=354947&PCAT=7365&CAT=9399

⁸ http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/pfa/Healthcare.pdf

⁹ http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/pfa/Healthcare.pdf

a hospital system in New Jersey committed \$1 million to team members affected by Hurricane Sandy.¹⁰ The same group distributed \$350 gift cards to “severely impacted team members” to assist with the purchase of necessities.

A hospital association in Mississippi established a fund for hospital employee families after a tornado devastated the facility and community.¹¹

- **Communication.** Consider using social media to keep employees apprised of any service updates throughout the response and recovery phases. Tools such as Facebook and Twitter can be used to announce upcoming events (e.g., staff meetings, fundraising events). One hospital system used Facebook to provide staff and community members with service updates after a tornado devastated the facility.¹² Residents, the media, and some practitioners used Twitter to share news related to Superstorm Sandy specific to the evacuation of Langone Medical Center.
- **Charging stations.** Make sure staff (and their loved ones, as necessary and practical) are able to charge their mobile devices. This can help them stay in touch with their loved ones, colleagues, and contractors.
- **Flexible scheduling.** There will be staff who cannot make it home, and staff who cannot make it in. In Florida, some facilities stagger work times, allowing employees to meet with contractors and repair teams.

Short-Term Needs

Once employees have been able to adjust to their “new normal” and gain a better understanding of the recovery process that lies ahead, healthcare facilities can continue making it easier for team members to report for duty. In addition to maintaining care that was provided in the immediate aftermath, facility executives may consider providing the following:

- **On-site post-disaster services liaison(s).** Consider staging someone on site (e.g., from the American Red Cross) who can help your staff document their personal loss and create a recovery plan. If closure of the facility is imminent and employees are facing temporary unemployment, you may wish to convene meetings where employees can learn more about Disaster Unemployment Assistance through the Department of Labor¹³ and loans available through the Small Business Association.¹⁴
- **Clothing and laundry services.** Staff who evacuated their homes may not have access to clothes other than what they were wearing at the time the disaster hit. Encourage employees to help one another—in one state, employees brought snacks and toiletry items in for those who were

Short-Term Needs

- Disaster service liaison
- Clothing/Laundry
- Behavioral health care
- Care for loved ones
- Nourishment
- Transportation
- Home improvement
- Paychecks/ leave
- Volunteers

¹⁰ <https://www.meridianhealth.com/media/press-releases/2012/meridian-health-announces-financial-support-for-super-storm-sandy.aspx>; <https://www.meridianhealth.com/media/press-releases/2012/meridian-health-announces-financial-support-for-super-storm-sandy.aspx>

¹¹ <http://www.winstonmedical.org/about-us/tornado/>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/winstonmedicalcenter/?fref=ts>

¹³ <https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/597>; <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/24418>

¹⁴ <https://www.sba.gov/loans-grants/see-what-sba-offers/sba-loan-programs/disaster-loans>

stranded and unable to go home for supplies.¹⁵ Consider relaxing the dress code to help staff deal with laundry challenges. Work with the on-site or subcontracted laundry service provider to collect, track, and launder staff items.

- **Maintaining morale** can help you retain and demonstrate your commitment to the health of employees. Encourage your team to seek help from the EAP or other behavioral health professional if they need to.¹⁶ Consider appointing an employee whose primary duty is to focus on staff wellness and morale. This helps demonstrate your commitment to your team, and can be integrated into the culture of the organization as it moves forward. Find meaningful/genuine ways to acknowledge the work of your employees (e.g., thank you notes, other forms of recognition, and deliveries of coffee and healthy snacks). Encourage and help staff and their loved ones to get back to routine activities as soon as practical.¹⁷ Find ways to create “fun” for the employees and ways for them to appropriately “let off steam” and continue to build a team environment to know they are supported.
- **Home improvement help and materials.** Some staff may have sustained damage to their homes, but can still live in them. Many hospitals in Florida keep a supply of tarps on hand and distribute them to employees after hurricanes. Others even establish a response team from plant operations or facilities management to help “shore up” employees’ homes. Some colleagues and/or team of first responders may be able to help others “dig out” or clean up once the threat has dissipated.
- **Paychecks and donating leave.** Some employees may live “paycheck to paycheck” and others may have relatively low personal leave balances. Rebuilding after a disaster is costly and takes time. Consider paying staff as soon as possible and encouraging colleagues to donate vacation time. Shortly after Hurricane Sandy, employees who were scheduled to work received a full paycheck, even if they were not able to make it in.¹⁸ Also after Hurricane Sandy, staff contributed more than 1,000 vacation hours to their colleagues.¹⁹ Some facilities in Florida have worked with credit unions to establish “ATMs,” allowing employees access to cash. Consider pay incentives for extra work performed by those able to report for duty.
- **Use other professionals and volunteers.** Network with healthcare facilities not affected by the event to borrow staff, with a “no-hire pledge” in place. Identify nurses and other practitioners whose place of employment was damaged, and bring them on to assist with certain tasks (e.g., administrative); their knowledge of clinical language and facility processes will help. Volunteers can free up your staff to perform their regular jobs by serving as runners, performing administrative duties, and even making or delivering sandwiches. Train temporary employees and use downtime procedures for untrained staff.

The aftermath of a disaster can be traumatic. People may want to return to work, but may be hampered by injury, caring for loved ones, or unable to access transportation. These tips can help healthcare facility executives provide support for those who care so much for others, ensuring the continuity of a healthy, safe workforce and a resilient community at large.

¹⁵ <https://www.scha.org/news/sc-hospitals-rise-above-the-flood>

¹⁶ http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/pfa/Healthcare.pdf

¹⁷ http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/pfa/Healthcare.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.meridianhealth.com/media/press-releases/2012/meridian-health-announces-financial-support-for-super-storm-sandy.aspx>

¹⁹ <https://www.northwell.edu/about/news/north-shore-lij-raises-23-m-employees-devastated-hurricane-sandy>

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