

Prepare Yourself

**A GUIDE TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
IN THE CAPITAL REGION**

Stay safe in a disaster

Be self-sufficient for seven days

Reunite with family

Reduce risks of property damage



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Introduction

Emergency Preparedness is a Responsibility that We All Share

When disaster strikes, the most important person is you. If you are well prepared, you will be in a better position to help your family, friends and neighbours. Your first priority is always personal safety and reducing the risk of injury. **Most people survive disasters.** But following a disaster, your family's safety, health, comfort and general well-being may be entirely in your own hands.

Major disasters may disrupt the normal functions of society and seriously affect infrastructure and public services:

- shops may be closed or quickly run out of supplies;
- businesses, schools and public offices may shut down;
- hospitals may be overwhelmed;
- transportation and communications may be very difficult; and
- utilities like water, power and gas may be unavailable or unreliable.

Emergency officials, first responders and community agencies can handle "normal" emergencies, but will likely be overwhelmed with a widespread or long-lasting disaster. Immediate priorities will be:

- life-saving (first aid, search & rescue, evacuations, medical care);
- damage control (fighting fires, preventing the spread of disease, dealing with hazardous materials); and
- restoring or maintaining critical services needed for emergency response (transportation, hospitals and emergency shelters, communications and basic utilities, for example).

On the next page you will find **contact information for your local emergency programs.** These programs are in place to help their communities prepare, and are a great source of information, so please get in touch with them if you have any questions.

Following the emergency program information within Section 5 is something you can start right now to get prepared! The emergency programs in the Capital Region are promoting **"26 Weeks to Emergency Preparedness"** which is an easy way to get prepared by completing one simple task each week over a 26 week period.

This workbook outlines the key steps on how you can get prepared for emergencies in the Capital Region: **Make an Emergency Plan, Get an Emergency Kit,** and **Know the Risks** locally.

Worksheets are referenced throughout the book that will help you and your family in all stages of an emergency. These worksheets are all located at the back of this book in a handy tear-out format and can be filled out and referenced at any time. A pocket has been included on the back cover to keep your pulled-out worksheets together.

26 Weeks to Family Emergency Preparedness

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO GET YOU AND YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY PREPARED IN 26 WEEKS!

- WEEK 1.** Get a large **portable container** with a lid to use as an emergency kit, preferably with wheels. Choose an accessible location for the container near an exit and label the container. Make sure all family members know what it will be used for and where it is.
- WEEK 2.** Stock your kit with *at least* a **seven day supply of water** for every family member and your pets. It is best to plan for four litres of water per person, per day—two for drinking and two for food preparation and hygiene. You might also consider the addition of **water purification tablets**.
- WEEK 3.** Stock your kit with several varieties of **packaged foods, canned meats, dried fruit and a manual can opener**. If needed, include **infant supplies** like disposable diapers, disposable bottles and formula. Plan for *at least* a seven day supply of food for each family member.
- WEEK 4.** Arrange an **out-of-area phone contact** person in case you are separated from your family so they can relay messages until you are reunited. Keep this and other emergency phone numbers near each telephone. Teach family members these numbers.
- WEEK 5.** Add **food items and supplies for pets** to your kit.
- WEEK 6.** Get a **portable radio and extra batteries** for your emergency kit.
- WEEK 7.** **Learn about hazards.** Know the hazards in your community. Find out if the area where you live is vulnerable to landslides, flooding or fires. Do a home hazard hunt to make your home safer: Secure appliances and heavy furniture and move beds away from overhead objects.
- WEEK 8.** **Prepare a first-aid kit** that includes prescription medications, eyeglasses, bandages, sterile gauze pads, tape, scissors, tweezers, antibiotic ointment, hydrogen peroxide and other items such as over-the-counter pain pills.
- WEEK 9.** Give every family member **specific safety tasks** to do in an emergency. For example, designate one person to be in charge of turning off electricity, one to collect the emergency container, one to track down family members and make sure people with disabilities or special health needs are provided for. Make sure someone is also designated to looking after any pets.
- WEEK 10.** **Identify safe places** in your home and on your property. Plan and practice earthquake **“drop, cover, hold”** or evacuation drills using different escape routes. Know where your community may set up a **reception centre** for evacuees during an emergency.
- WEEK 11.** Identify a **family meeting place** away from home but close to your regular spots (between home and work or school).
- WEEK 12.** Add a **flashlight and extra batteries**, along with **candles and waterproof matches** to your kit.

- WEEK 13.** Add some **dried soups and other food items** such as peanut butter to your emergency kit.
- WEEK 14.** **Check your insurance policies** and make records of your possessions (in case you need to make a claim) and add the list to your emergency kit.
- WEEK 15.** Stock your kit with both large and medium-sized **plastic garbage bags** (orange or yellow make good visible signals). Large bags can also be used as ponchos, ground covers or blankets. Add **plastic or paper dishes and cups** as well.
- WEEK 16.** Add a **change of clothing** for each family member to your kit. Be sure to include warm clothing, heavy work gloves and sturdy shoes.
- WEEK 17.** Add additional **canned or freeze-dried food** like stews, tuna fish, baked beans and vegetables to your kit.
- WEEK 18.** Enroll a family member in a **first-aid course**. Pack **HELP/OK signs** in your kit.
- WEEK 19.** **Assemble important documents** like wills, insurance papers, medical records, credit card numbers, inventory of possessions, identification, etc. Make copies and store originals in a fireproof/waterproof container that will be accessible if your home is damaged.
- WEEK 20.** Add **personal items** such as toilet paper, handi-wipes, soap, detergent, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, sanitary supplies, etc. to your emergency kit.
- WEEK 21.** Add **evaporated, canned or powdered milk** to your kit.
- WEEK 22.** **Get a large bucket** with a tight-fitting lid to use as a toilet, and put it with your emergency kit. Use the bucket to store other **emergency tools** like an axe, a folding shovel and rope.
- WEEK 23.** Add **sleeping bags or blankets** (foil blankets take up less space) and consider adding **plastic emergency ponchos** to your kit.
- WEEK 24.** Add more **canned, freeze-dried, or dehydrated food products** to your kit until you have *at least* a seven-day supply for each family member.
- WEEK 25.** Add a **pocket knife, cutlery, a whistle** and **spare set of house and car keys** as well as items such as **books, toys and cards as well as a family photo album** to your kit.
- WEEK 26.** **Meet with neighbours to discuss emergency preparations** and the possibility of sharing items such as generators.

Local Emergency Programs

The Capital Region is made up of 13 municipalities and three electoral areas and each is responsible for their own local emergency program. These emergency programs help support and manage the planning, preparedness, and response efforts in your community. You can contact your local program for:

- information on emergency preparedness and upcoming workshops and events;
- how to arrange an emergency preparedness workshop for your organization or community group; and
- how to volunteer for local neighbourhood programs such as Emergency Social Services (ESS), Search and Rescue (SAR), and Amateur Radio Emergency Communications.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	WEB ADDRESS	PHONE	EMAIL
Central Saanich	www.centrialsaanich.ca	250.544.4238	emergencyprogram@csaanich.ca
Colwood	www.colwood.ca	250.478.5999	emergencyprogram@colwood.ca
Esquimalt	www.esquimalt.ca	250.414.7120	emergency.program@esquimalt.ca
Highlands	www.highlands.ca	250.474.1773	rhobbs@highlands.ca
Juan de Fuca Electoral Area	www.crd.bc.ca	250.642.8105	jdfepc@crd.bc.ca
Langford	www.cityoflangford.ca	250.478.9555	firechief@cityoflangford.ca
Metchosin	www.metchosinemergencyprogram.ca	250.478.1307	eocchief@metchosin.ca
North Saanich	www.northsaanich.ca	250.656.1931	gwilton@northsaanich.ca
Oak Bay	www.oakbay.ca	250.592.9121	obep@oakbay.ca
Saanich	www.saanich.ca	250.475.7140	SEP@saanich.ca
Salt Spring Island Electoral Area	www.crd.bc.ca	250.537.1220	SSIEPC@crd.bc.ca
Sidney	www.sidney.ca	250.656.2121	bmikkelsen@sidney.ca
Sooke	www.sooke.ca	250.642.5422	info@sooke.ca
Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area	www.crd.bc.ca	866.308.6160	sgiepc@crd.bc.ca
Victoria	www.preparevictoria.ca	250.920.3733	vema@victoria.ca
View Royal	www.viewroyal.ca	250.479.7322	emergencyprogram@viewroyal.ca

Section 1: Before an Emergency

This section will teach you and your family what you can do **before** an emergency happens to become prepared for at least seven days. You will learn general information that will prepare you for all emergencies, including how to make an emergency plan to reunite with your family, learn about your home and build emergency kits. After you know how to be prepared, you will learn about the hazards in the Capital Region and specific considerations for each of those hazards.

Make An Emergency Plan

Contact Information and Reunification Planning

One of the most important things you can do is to plan how you will connect with your family in case of an emergency. An emergency can strike at any time and may be while you are at home, work, and school, driving, or pursuing hobbies. It is important to know where each family member will be, how you will communicate with each other, and to have a reunification spot identified ahead of time. A family reunification and sheltering plan worksheet can be found in Section 5.

PLANNING FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

An emergency plan will help to guide you and your family in case of an emergency. The plan should include:

- Places to stay in case you cannot access your home, like a friend or relative's house, RV, boat, or hotel.
- Two routes that everyone knows to the reunion sites from where they live, work and play.
- How you will communicate in case you and your family members are separated.
- Contact persons both in and out-of-province.
- Safe exit routes from your home and work.
- Risks in the region.
- Locations and use of important equipment such as fire extinguishers, gas and water valves, floor drain(s), and the electrical box.
- Health information such as allergies or necessary medication and equipment.
- Understanding who may rely on you for assistance: Children, family members with special considerations and pets.
- Arrangement for care and evacuation of farm animals if you are away when disaster strikes.

- A list of important contacts, as well as vital documents and small valuables to take with you if you are evacuated.
- Understanding insurance policies and documenting belongings

A Family Reunification and Sheltering Plan Worksheet Can Be Found Within Section 5.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some people may have special considerations during an emergency. Take time to think about all the things that you or your family and friends may need inside and outside of home and include these considerations in your plan.

Planning for the Special Considerations

- Develop a “buddy” system for family, friends and neighbours to check on each other after an emergency. Telephones may not be working, so this should be arranged between people who live near one another. You may want to give your “buddy” a key to your home.
- Keep a list of your medicines, allergies, and your special equipment. Include the name, address and telephone numbers of important contacts like your doctor, pharmacist, family members, clergy, or special friends. Give a copy to each “buddy” and keep a copy with you at all times.
- Get rid of hazards in the home that could fall or cause injury.
- Develop a backup plan for any life sustaining equipment/apparatus so it works in the event of a power outage, which may include buying an emergency generator. Ensure you know how to properly operate and fuel your equipment.
- If you use oxygen, have someone secure the tank to prevent it from tipping.
- If you use a wheelchair or walking aids, keep them near you at all times and have extra walking aids in other areas of the house.
- Place a battery-operated night light in each room.
- Keep a whistle or horn handy to signal for help.
- If you use battery-operated equipment, ensure you have extra batteries properly stored and accessible.
- If you require continued service from a specific service provider during an emergency, ask them if they have an emergency or business continuity plan.

▶ TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS: PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS

1. *Ask an out-of-province friend or relative to act as contact for family members who may become separated during a disaster.*
2. *Decide in advance, as a family, where to meet and where to shelter in case you are separated and/or unable to remain in your home in a disaster.*
3. *Pack a separate small Grab & Go Kit for each family member, tailored to their needs.*
4. *Store seven days of drinking water and emergency foods in your home.*
5. *Make copies of important photos and documents and store them offsite, online or on a USB drive.*

PLANNING FOR PETS AND FARM ANIMALS

Pets

Plans for pets can save precious time and maybe even your pet's life. Make sure you designate someone to care for or evacuate your pet if you are not home when disaster strikes.

If you have to leave your home, you will have to decide whether to take your pet with you. Keep in mind if you are evacuated to a group lodging facility or reception centre, pets can create health and safety issues for people and other pets (including your own).

► *The most important thing you can do for your pet in an emergency is to make sure they have a collar and an up-to-date license and/or ID tag!*

► *Did you know that local governments in the CRD and the Ministry of Agriculture have mass carcass disposal plans in place in case of an emergency? You can contact your local emergency program or visit the CRD website for more information.*

If you choose to leave your pet at home:

- Make sure they have dry food and water for at least seven days.
- Put them in a room where there is access to a high counter in case of flooding and that is free of hazards like windows, large mirrors or picture frames.
- Separate your dogs, cats and other smaller pets as they may behave differently under stress.
- Leave a sign on your door with the number of animals in the house along with their locations so emergency responders know where to look.

If you choose to take your pet with you:

- Put them in a portable carrier and make sure they are comfortable with it beforehand.
- Include items for your pet in your emergency kit, such as dry food, water and medications. A detailed worksheet for pets can be found at the end of this book.

A Worksheet for Pets Can Be Found Within Section 5.

Farmed animals

Farmed animals include alpacas, cattle, donkeys, fur-farmed animals, goats, horses, llamas, mules, poultry, rabbits, sheep and swine. Make sure you have an evacuation plan in place, and that you designate someone to execute the plan in case you are away when an emergency happens.

PLANNING FOR YOUR HOME BUSINESS

A continuity plan for your business will help ensure that the critical functions of your business or organization will be able to provide for your customers in the event of an emergency. This can be as simple as having an emergency preparedness plan, setting up procedures to help your business recover and having emergency supplies on hand. You should consider business interruption insurance and arranging for off-site back up services for critical business records so that you're in position to recover more quickly should a disaster strike.

Know your Place, Secure your Space

Learning about your home before a disaster will make you and your family safer when one happens.

UTILITIES

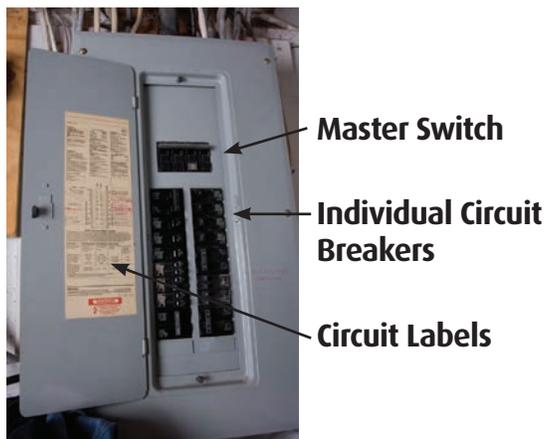
Human error, aging infrastructure, technical failures and natural disasters can lead to complete utility service disruptions or cause unpredictable, intermittent service. In several types of disasters, you may have to shut off one or more of your utilities if they are obviously damaged, if you are evacuating, or if emergency officials or the utility companies instruct you to do so. Everyone in your household should know where utilities are located and how to shut them off.

Shutting off Electricity

- If power is disrupted during a disaster, turn off the main circuit breaker as well as individual circuits/fuses to lessen the risk of fire damage if no one is home when the power system is restored.
- When power is restored, turn on the main breaker first then turn individual circuits on one by one.

NOTE: If you are ordered to evacuate, do not turn off power unless advised to do so.

- When turning off your circuits or master switch, use your non-dominant hand, stand to one side, and look away in case of arcing.



If you have fuses rather than circuit breakers, turn fuses to the left to unscrew.

▶ TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS: SECURE YOUR SPACE

1. *Prepare for service disruptions by purchasing basic, affordable emergency equipment and supplies to substitute for lost services.*
2. *Learn how to stay safe while using emergency equipment, and how to minimize the impact of service disruptions.*
3. *Learn how and when to shut off utilities. Don't wait until disaster strikes to figure it out.*
4. *If you live in a multi-residential complex, find out who has 24/7 emergency access to, and responsibility for, centrally-controlled utilities.*
5. *Follow instructions and advice from utility companies and consult them if you have questions.*

► UTILITY TIPS

Turning off the water at the meter, usually located in a concrete box, is not recommended because it is difficult to turn this valve. The exception would be if there is a break in the water line between this valve and the main valve to your home, causing water to flood the area. If you cannot turn off this valve, contact a plumber who offers 24/7 emergency service.

If you have an electric hot water tank: When you turn off your main water supply, turn off the electric circuit for the hot water tank so that the unit will not burn out as emergency water is drawn from the tank.

Water Line Shut-Off

Locate the shut-off valve for the water line that enters your home. Make sure this valve can be completely shut off. Your valve may be rusted open, or it may only partially close. Check it periodically and replace if necessary.

Make sure all household members know where the shut-off valve is located (often hidden in a crawl space or in a closet). Your main water shut-off valve may look like one of these:



Propane Tank Shut-Off

Learn how to shut off your home propane tank at the outdoor valve by following the manufacturer's instructions.

Shutting off Your Propane Tank

If your home gas supply is a propane tank, you may turn the propane valve off and on again at any time without help from a technician. This is because your gas supply comes from a stand-alone tank, rather than from a pressurized community pipeline.

NOTE: Turning off the propane tank (as explained above) is a minor procedure, whereas disconnecting the tank from household appliances is a major procedure. There are specific instructions later in this booklet under 'Floods and Marine', outlining how to disconnect your propane tank from home appliances if flooding is imminent. In that scenario, you'll need a technician to safely reconnect the tank to home appliances after the emergency is over.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is one of the safest gases. The gas meter and gas appliances have a pressure regulator to maintain a safe flow of gas. They have a shut-off in case of leaks, which can be recognized by the smell of sulphur (rotten eggs) that is added for detection.



Natural Gas Shut-Off

To shut off natural gas at the meter, give the valve a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn left or right with a wrench.

Do **NOT** practice shutting off your natural gas meter. If you do, only a qualified technician is permitted to turn it back on.

If there is a minor leak in the line for a specific appliance, you can turn off the individual gas valve for that line, and turn it back on yourself once the leak is repaired.

When the bar on the valve is across the pipe, the gas supply is **OFF**.

Fuel Oil Tanks

One cup of oil can pollute an Olympic-sized swimming pool so home owners should check their aging tanks for rust regularly. Tanks rust from the inside out and a pin-hole size on the outside may indicate a large thinning area on the inside.

You may want to consider replacement with double hulled tanks strapped to concrete pads.

▷ TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS: HOME PREPAREDNESS

1. *Understand your homeowner/tenant insurance policy in detail: What disasters and damages are covered, your responsibility after a disaster occurs, etc. Home insurance can mean the difference between eventual disaster recovery and financial loss.*
2. *Install smoke alarms to save lives. If you use propane, a wood burning stove or use natural gas indoors, install carbon monoxide detectors. These are just as important as smoke alarms.*
3. *Buy an ABC-type fire extinguisher for each floor of your home, plus kitchen and workshop.*
4. *Secure your hot water tank to the studs with steel strapping.*
5. *Secure furniture and contents. Use Velcro strips or putty to secure art and mirrors.*

HOME INSURANCE

Purchasing homeowner/tenant insurance is an important step toward emergency preparedness and disaster recovery. Insurance provides some peace of mind and covers out-of-pocket expenses in the stressful days immediately following an event. Longer term, it helps fund the cost of repairing or replacing your home and contents to reduce the impact on your family's financial security.

- Keep your insurance up-to-date.
- Find out how to reduce the cost of your insurance. For example, many insurers offer discounts if you have a monitored security system with fire detection and alarms built-in.
- Inform your insurance company of any changes that might alter your coverage or the value of your dwelling and possessions.
- Find out if your insurance policy includes replacement value and what out-of-pocket expenses are covered if you must evacuate your home.
- Find out what emergencies are not insured. For example, most insurers do not cover damage from overland flooding from any cause including tsunami, and earthquake coverage in Greater Victoria is a costly but important option.
- Understand the deductibles in your policy. For example, the deductible for fire damage may be much smaller than the deductible for earthquake damage.
- Find out what benefits and services your insurer will provide after an insured loss.
- Document your belongings with receipts and digital images or photos and store in a bank safe deposit box or digitally at a secure internet site.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Combustible materials are divided into four classes:

- CLASS A** Ordinary Combustibles (wood, paper, cloth, rubber, etc.)
- CLASS B** Flammable Liquids (fuel oil, gasoline, cooking grease, solvents, etc.)
- CLASS C** Electrical Equipment (wiring, fuse box, motors, electronics, etc.)
- CLASS D** Combustible Metals (magnesium, sodium, zirconium, etc.)

An ABC extinguisher will handle most types of home fires. Type D is appropriate if you work with combustible metals like magnesium and sodium.

Place extinguishers where they are readily accessible. When used correctly, they can keep small fires from becoming big ones. Having several small extinguishers located throughout the house on each level is easier than having one large one that may be difficult to find or move quickly.

Regularly review their operating instructions and at least once a year turn your fire extinguisher upside-down, smack the bottom and shake it to keep the chemical powder from caking. Check the extinguisher's gauge to ensure the pressure is at the recommended level (in the green zone). Consult with your owner's manual, extinguisher label or the manufacturer for specific care instructions.

How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

Only fight a fire if:

- 1 The fire is small and contained **and** you are safe from toxic smoke and
- 2 You have a means of escape if the fire spreads, **and** your instincts say it's okay.

Place yourself between the exit and the fire so you can exit if the fire does not go out. Fight the fire using the PASS method:

Pull the Pin at the top of the extinguisher. The pin releases a locking mechanism and will allow you to discharge the extinguisher.

Aim at the base of the fire, not the flames. This is important - in order to put out the fire, you must extinguish the fuel.

Squeeze the lever slowly. This will release the extinguishing agent in the extinguisher. If the handle is released, the discharge will stop.

Sweep from side to side. Using a sweeping motion, move the fire extinguisher back and forth until the fire is completely out. Operate the extinguisher from a safe distance, several feet away, and then move towards the fire once it starts to diminish. Be sure to read the instructions on your fire extinguisher - different fire extinguishers recommend operating them from different distances. Remember: Aim at the base of the fire, not at the flames!!!

Watch the fire area. If the fire re-ignites, repeat the process.

Extinguishers will work for approximately 30 seconds. If you have not put the fire out in that time, or if the smoke becomes hazardous, leave the area immediately.

▶ *Always buy extinguishers which have been UL or CSA approved.*

▶ *Once you leave a burning room, do not re-enter. Close the door to a room with a fire. Evacuate your home. In a multi-unit residential building, activate the fire alarm. Once outside, call 911.*

KNOW YOUR HOME AND MAKE IT SAFE

There are several preparations that can make your home safe for most earthquakes and other emergencies:

- Know the safe and dangerous places in your home:
 - **SAFE:** Under heavy tables or desks; interior hallways; corners of rooms or archways.
 - **DANGEROUS:** Near windows or mirrors; under any objects that can fall; the kitchen where the stove, refrigerator or contents of cupboards may move violently; doorways because the shaking may slam the door on you; garages and workshops where tools and debris may fall.
- Ensure the home is properly bolted to its foundation.
- Inspect and, if necessary, reinforce cripple walls (a.k.a. 'pony walls').
- Consult an engineer on how to secure brick, stone and masonry.
- Reinforce windows.
- Protect interiors from falling chimney bricks.
- Secure and arrange objects in your home to prevent injuries:
 - Strap the water heater to wall studs.
 - Secure tall, free standing furniture to wall studs.
 - Secure microwave ovens, TVs, computers and other electronics so they do not fly off the shelf.
 - Use "earthquake" hooks for heavy and framed, glass-covered pictures.
 - Install earthquake-proof latches on cupboards.
 - Ensure hanging lamps are securely affixed to the ceilings.
- Keep sturdy shoes and flashlight under your bed.
- Use child-proof or safety latches on cupboards to stop contents from spilling out.
- Keep flammable items and household chemicals away from heat and where they can't spill. Keep them in a safe cupboard if they can't be stored in an outside shed.

Emergency Kits

Having essential supplies handy in an emergency is a vital part of preparedness. A home kit enables survival for a minimum of seven days. It's a good idea to have smaller versions of your kit accessible outside of your home because you may be at work, school or in your vehicle when an emergency occurs.

You can find detailed worksheets for all of these kits within Section 5.

All types of emergency kits should include basic survival items like food, water, blankets, first aid materials, flashlights, matches, a radio and batteries.

You will have to plan for different types of kits depending on where you are at the time of an emergency. Your kit at home will have more supplies than your Grab & Go Kits, work or school kits and car kits.

Kits will also differ depending on some special considerations like if they are for the elderly, children, persons with disabilities or pets.

Home Kits

After a disaster, it's best to remain in your own home if you can do so safely. You will need supplies for cooking, making temporary repairs and providing comfort for your family. The emergency supplies should be kept separate from the things you normally use, to ensure they are available and in working order.

Your home kit will enable you to be comfortable for up to seven days and should contain at least 4L of water per person per day. You should budget 2L for drinking and 2L for hygiene and cooking. You should also have a seven-day supply of food for each person that your family members already like. Your kit should also contain extra car keys, cash in smaller bills, prescription medications and copies of personal documents.

▷ TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMERGENCY KITS

1. *Pack a small Grab & Go Kit at home for each family member and pet and tailor it to their needs.*
2. *Keep kits at work, school, your car or anywhere else that you spend time.*
3. *Try to store an emergency kit outside (in a shed or garage) in case you can't access your home.*
4. *Check your kits twice a year to rotate supplies before they expire. You can work this into a family drill and use your home kit for an evening to see what you may be missing - be sure to replace what you use!*
5. *Include items for family comfort like games, toys, and books.*

▶ TIP

If creating your own kit seems overwhelming, take the 26 weeks to emergency preparedness challenge! If you complete one easy step a week, you will be emergency prepared with the kits you need in no time. You can also buy pre-made kits at several businesses in the region. Most of what you need is already in your home and it is simply a matter of centralizing materials and planning.

Grab & Go Kit – Home, Work and School

A disaster could force you to spend an extended time away from home. Ahead of time, you should put together an easily accessible small backpack with food, water, and personal supplies that will allow you to be as comfortable as possible. Every person and pet in your family should have a kit with basic survival supplies and other items that meet their own needs. You may also want to keep a Grab & Go Kit at work and school in case of an emergency.

A worksheet for a Grab & Go Kit can be found within Section 5.

Car Kits

If you spend a lot of time in your car, boat or RV, you should have an emergency kit to supplement your Grab & Go Kit, or a separate kit to keep in your vehicle. Regularly maintain your vehicles and keep the fuel tanks at least half full so you're ready to leave in a hurry. Even if you do not have to evacuate, your car can be a place for shelter, to recharge your cell phone, to warm up, or to listen to radio reports.

A worksheet for your Car Kit can be found within Section 5.

Special Considerations

You may have some special considerations for family members, including pets, when preparing your kits. If you have children, you should include items that will make them feel comfortable, like toys, games and other entertainment. Others may require special medications or equipment. Your pets will need their own food, water and hygiene supplies.

Know the Risks

Risks will vary throughout the region. Different considerations will need to be taken for your home depending on the risks relevant to your area. Remember to think about different locations where you may be when considering risks. This could include home, work, school, driving, or engaging in recreational activities.

The best way to prepare for any emergency is to have an emergency plan and an emergency kit for any situation. Hazards in the Capital Region include earthquake, tsunamis, severe weather, power outages, fires, disease outbreak, hazardous materials spills, flooding, marine, wildlife and back-country risks. Tips on how to deal with specific hazards are described on the following pages.

Earthquake

Earthquakes are common in British Columbia and more than 1,200 are recorded each year. They are caused by the continual movement of tectonic plates and strike without warning.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

According to seismic experts, there is a 32% probability of a damaging earthquake occurring in our region in the next 50 years. Although we cannot predict when this will happen, you can be prepared to avoid injury, minimize damage to your home and to survive afterwards for at least seven days without help. Other things you can do:

- Ensure family members know the safe spots in each room – against inside walls and corners, in narrow hallways, under sturdy tables or desks, and in closets.
- Search for potential hazards in your home using the Home Safety Worksheet. **A worksheet can be found within Section 5.** Make recommended modifications to your home and furniture.
- Conduct earthquake drills. Call out “Earthquake!” Give family members time to react. After the drill, discuss what each did to be safe, and what each could have done to improve.

▶ TOP 6 RECOMMENDATIONS: PERSONAL SAFETY

1. *Practice safe responses before disaster strikes. Training your body to respond automatically will free your mind to think more clearly during the event.*
2. *In an earthquake, DROP to the ground, take COVER under a sturdy table, or cover yourself with anything available, and HOLD your position/hold onto the table. When the shaking stops, COUNT to 60 and assess your escape route before moving.*
3. *To extinguish fire on your clothing STOP, DROP and ROLL.*
4. *Plan and review escape routes with your whole family. Practice escaping from each room in daylight and in the dark.*
5. *Before taking action at a disaster scene, always check for hazards around you and in your intended path. Don't leave a safe place for one that could be more dangerous.*
6. *Have emergency kits ready to go.*

The most important thing to remember during an earthquake:

- **DROP** to the ground (before the earthquake drops you!),
- Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy desk or table (or against a wall with your arms covering your head/neck), and
- **HOLD ON** to your shelter and be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops.

These three steps are the best way to reduce injury and death during an earthquake.

**DURING AN EARTHQUAKE****Drop, Cover, and Hold On!**

- If you're inside your home, stay there. Get out of the kitchen. Safer places are in hallways, in corners and in archways. Take cover under a heavy table, desk or any solid furniture that you can get under and hold onto.
- If you're in bed, stay there and protect your head and face with a pillow.
- If you're in a wheelchair, lock your wheels, cover yourself with a blanket, and assume the airplane crash position until the shaking stops.
- If you're outside your home, stay outside and get clear of buildings and wires that could fall on you.
- Avoid outdoor areas where you may be hit by falling debris – sidewalks next to tall buildings are particularly dangerous.
- Avoid elevators. If you're in an elevator when an earthquake happens, hit all floor buttons and get out when you can. High rise residents will hear fire alarms go off and electricity may fail.
- If you're in a vehicle, pull over to the side (leave the road clear), away from bridges, overpasses and buildings. Stay in your vehicle.
- If you're in a crowded public place, take cover and watch that you don't get trampled. In shopping centres, take cover in the nearest store and keep away from windows, skylights and display shelves of heavy objects.

- Remain in a protected place until the shaking stops. Anticipate aftershocks – they may occur soon after the first quake.
- Try to remain calm and help others.

AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

- Stay in your safe location and count to at least 60 seconds to give things time to settle.
- Before you move, check your immediate area for hazards: broken glass, spilled chemicals, or items that have shifted and may easily fall in an aftershock.
- Check yourself and others nearby for injuries, and administer first aid to yourself before assisting others.
- If you are evacuating, locate and take your emergency kit with you.
- Check utilities but do not shut them off unless damaged or instructed to do so by authorities.
- Leaking gas will smell. Don't light matches or turn on light switches until you are sure there are no gas leaks or flammable liquids.
- Wear sturdy shoes, gloves and protective clothing if it is winter and/or if there is debris, particularly broken glass.
- Check on your neighbours after looking after your own family. Your first help after an earthquake usually will come from family and friends.
- Place a "HELP" sign in windows if you need extra assistance or the "OK" sign if you do not.
- Confine frightened pets.
- Don't flush toilets if you suspect nearby your sewer pipes or nearby lines may be broken.
- Secure your home against intruders.
- Turn on your battery-powered radio (or car radio) and listen for broadcast emergency instructions. Monitor local social media, particularly government and other authorities, as well as local media outlets.
- Avoid waterfront areas because of the threat of large waves (tsunamis).

▶ IF YOU ARE NEAR THE OCEAN DURING AN EARTHQUAKE:

DO move to higher ground once the shaking stops.

DO stay tuned to local media.

DO follow the instructions of authorities.

DO NOT go near the water to watch.

Tsunamis

A tsunami is a natural hazard consisting of a series of long surge-like waves typically generated by major earthquakes where there is significant movement of the ocean floor or coast. Major earthquakes also cause some of the biggest tsunamis, in terms of wave height at shore and the size of the area subject to flooding.

Landslides and volcanic eruptions can occasionally cause tsunamis, but these affect a much smaller length of coast and are infrequent.

If you are near the ocean and feel a major earthquake, or if the motion makes it hard to stand, **DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON**, then get to higher ground immediately – do NOT wait for an official warning. **THE SHAKING IS YOUR WARNING.**

Local government officials may not have enough time to issue a warning to residents in the event of tsunami created by a near-shore earthquake. Roads may be congested and communications systems compromised.

Generally, four metres or 13 feet elevation above sea level is considered a safe distance from the ocean on Southern Vancouver Island. You **DO NOT** need to go to the highest point in the region.

There is no way to predict if a tsunami may occur.

TSUNAMI PREPAREDNESS

The probability that a tsunami will do damage along British Columbia's coast is small, but very real. If you live in a coastal area of the Capital Region, you and your family need to know what to do in the event of a tsunami and be prepared to respond.

Stay Alert for Natural Warnings of a Tsunami

Tsunami signs to watch for:

- A sudden rise or fall of ocean level
- A loud roaring noise coming from the ocean

It is important to remember that the waves will continue to arrive for some time after the initial rise and fall of the ocean level – do NOT go back to tsunami hazard areas until instructed by local government officials.

TSUNAMI ALERTS

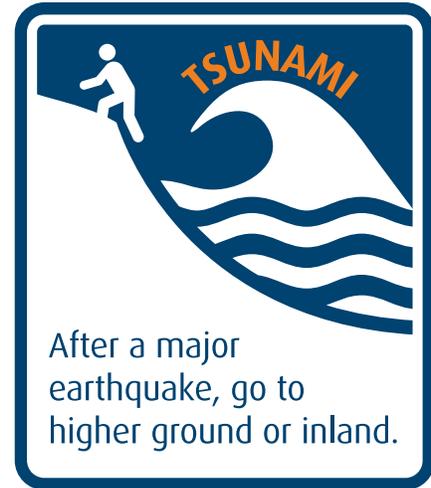
There are two types of tsunamis: local and distant. A local tsunami will be associated with a “felt” earthquake, while a distant tsunami will happen far away and may not be felt, like Japan or Alaska. Authorities will let you know if any action is necessary from a distant tsunami by issuing one of three alerts:

- 1 A **Watch** (least serious level of alert) is issued if the danger level is not known and you should stay alert for more information.
- 2 An **Advisory** (second highest level of alert) indicates that strong currents are likely and you should stay away from the shore.
- 3 A **Warning** (most serious level of alert) indicates that an inundating wave is possible and evacuation may be suggested.

Local government officials will tell you when the danger has passed.

If a Tsunami Warning, Advisory, or Watch is issued for your area, listen to your local media and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.

Local emergency programs have pre-identified safe areas that you should be aware of, and you can find out if you are in a hazard area by checking with your local emergency program. Stay tuned to your radio and other media for updates.



► *A tsunami is a series of waves. The first wave to arrive is often not the largest, and each wave may be separated by up to an hour or more. Waves may continue for many hours – stay away from the shore until local government officials tell you it is safe to return.*

Local Tsunami: Arrival Times and Wave Height

CRD/GREATER VICTORIA From a 2012-2013 CRD-commissioned scientific study.	FIRST WAVE ARRIVAL TIME	TIME TO MAXIMUM WATER LEVEL *	MAXIMUM WATER LEVEL (M)/(FT)
Port Renfrew (entrance)	35 min	50 min	3.5/11.5
Sooke Harbour (entrance)	60 min	75 min	2.5/8.2
Esquimalt Harbour (entrance)	77 min	96 min	2.7/8.9
Victoria Harbour & Gorge Waterway (entrance)	76 min	95 min	2.5/8.2
Cadboro Bay	90 min	160 min	2.0/6.6
Sidney	110 min	150 min	2.0/6.6

Severe Weather

Severe weather can develop quickly and include events such as blizzards, hail, heavy rain, ice storms, thunderstorms, storm surges and high winds. Severe weather events are expected to increase in our region over the next 50 years due to a changing climate. These events potentially threaten life and property, so it makes sense to get prepared.

PREPARING FOR SEVERE WEATHER

Make sure you have an emergency plan and an emergency kit for everyone in your family. Stock up on extra fuel and food, and stay tuned to radio and television stations for weather updates.

Preparedness Tips

If a severe storm is forecast, secure everything that might be blown around or torn loose – indoors and outdoors. Flying objects such as garbage cans and lawn furniture can injure people and damage property.

- If you are indoors, stay away from windows, doors and fireplaces.
- You may want to go to the sheltered area that you and your family chose for your **emergency plan**.
- If you are advised by officials to evacuate, do so. Take your **emergency kit** with you.
- Never go out in a boat during a storm. If you are on the water and you see bad weather approaching, head for shore immediately. Always check the marine forecast before leaving for a day of boating and listen to weather reports during your cruise.
- If you are in a car, stop the car away from trees or power lines that could fall on you. Stay there.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE AND DURING...

Blizzards

- If a blizzard or heavy blowing snow is forecast, you may want to string a lifeline between your house and any outbuildings to which you may have to go during the storm.
- If you must travel during a winter storm, do so during the day and let someone know your route and arrival time.
- If your car gets stuck in a blizzard or snowstorm, remain calm and stay in your car. Beware of exhaust fumes and check the exhaust pipe periodically to make sure it is not blocked with snow. Remember: You can't smell potentially fatal carbon monoxide fumes.
- To keep your hands and feet warm, exercise them periodically. In general, it is a good idea to keep moving to avoid falling asleep and avoid overexertion.

Hail

- If you are outside, take cover when hail begins to fall.
- If indoors, stay there and keep yourself and pets away from windows, glass doors and skylights which can shatter if hit by hailstones.
- Protect your vehicle by putting it in the garage.

Heavy Rain

- Checking the drainage around your house to reduce the possibility of flooding after a heavy rain. See page 29 for more information on flooding.

Ice Storms

- If you must go outside after an ice storm, pay attention to branches or wires that could break due to the weight of the ice and fall on you. Ice sheets could also do the same.
- Assume all power lines are live and keep a distance of at least 10 meters or 33 feet, and shuffle away backward keeping your feet touching each other and never lifting from the ground.
- When freezing rain is forecast, avoid driving.

Lightning and Thunderstorms

- To estimate how far away lightning is during a storm, count the seconds between the flash of lightning and the thunderclap. Each second is about 300 metres. If you count fewer than 30 seconds look for shelter. If you count fewer than 5 seconds take shelter immediately.
- Before a thunderstorm, unplug radios and televisions – listen for weather updates on your battery-powered radio.
- During thunderstorms, you should stay away from items that conduct electricity, like telephones, appliances, sinks, bathtubs, radiators and metal pipes.
- Do not go out to remove the laundry on the clothesline because it may conduct electricity.
- Always take shelter during lightning. If you are outside and can't find a building, get in a depressed area such as a ditch, culvert or cave and never go under a tree.
- If you are caught in the open, do not lie flat. Get in the "leap-frog" position to minimize your contact with the ground, and your chance of being electrocuted by a ground charge.
- Do not ride bicycles, motorcycles, tractors, golf carts or use metal shovels or golf clubs because they may conduct electricity.

Power Outages

PREPARING FOR AN OUTAGE

- Have an emergency plan and kit.
- Choose manual equipment like basic can openers, non-electric phones, battery, wind-up or solar powered radios and a manual hacksaw for your home emergency kit.
- Have safe, stable sources of light in your emergency kit like flashlights or candles.
- People who rely on life-sustaining equipment should contact their local health provider and consider purchasing or renting a small generator on a priority basis.
- Stock fuel for barbeques and camp stoves. Store safely and **use only outside**.
- If you have an electric garage door opener, learn how to open the garage door manually. Follow the instructions supplied by the manufacturer.

DURING AN OUTAGE

- Check whether the power failure is limited to your home. If your neighbour's power is still on, check your circuit breaker panel or fuse box.
- Call BC Hydro at **1.888.POWERON (1.888.769.3766)** or ***HYDRO (*49376)** on your cell phone. Tell them about the outage so they can send the right crews and equipment to the right location.
- Tune into your local radio station for storm and power outage updates.
- Turn off all appliances, including home computers and peripherals, especially those that generate heat. This helps prevent hazards or damage when service is restored.
- Turn off all lights except for one inside your home and one outside. The inside light lets you know and the outside light lets BC Hydro crews know, when the power is back on.
- Use surge protectors to protect sensitive electrical equipment such as computers, DVD players and TVs.

Portable Generator Safety Precautions

- Never use a portable generator indoors, including inside a garage or other enclosed or partially enclosed area to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Only operate portable generators outdoors and at a location where the exhaust cannot enter into your home or other buildings through doors or windows.
- If you start to feel dizzy, nauseous, a headache or tired while using a generator, get to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention.
- Use a battery operated CO detector at home. This is also advisable for homes that have a natural gas fired forced air heating system.

Prevent Electric Shock and Electrocutation

- Never plug a portable generator into a regular household electrical outlet as it can cause fire and impact neighbours and utility workers by causing back-feeding to the BC Hydro electrical grid.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a properly sized CSA-approved 3-pronged extension cord in good condition.
- Use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) portable extension cord if using the portable generator to power electrical tools for outdoor use.
- Keep the generator dry and protected from rain and snow.

► *Safety first! Never go near or touch a fallen power line. Always assume that a line or anything it is in contact with, is energized. Stay at least ten metres (33 feet) away at all times and do not attempt to remove debris surrounding the line. If you see a fallen power line, report the exact location to 1.888.POWERON.*

Fires

WILDLAND FIRES

Each year there are more than 2,000 wildfires in British Columbia. Although many occur far away from communities, as people build more homes in wildland-urban interface areas, more fires are impacting residential areas. Every year, interface fires threaten or burn homes, cabins and other high value resources. Our region will experience drier summers in the coming years as a result of climate change, increasing the risk for fires.

Preparing for Wildfires

Ensure that you have a family emergency plan and emergency kit and be prepared in case you are required to leave your home on short notice. It is a good idea to obtain a **FireSmart Manual** from your local fire department or the BC Wildfire website as a reference.

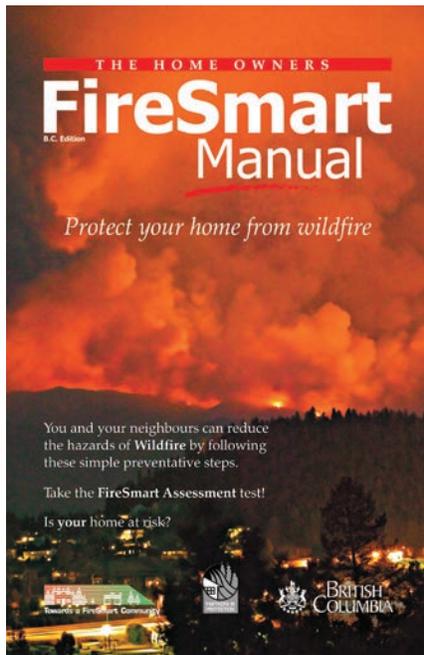
Extended warm, dry weather conditions increase the possibility of wildfire activity. Everyone should be extra cautious and mindful when enjoying outdoor summer activities.

If you are planning to hike, camp or participate in other back-country activities, be sure to check the latest information on any travel restrictions and fire bans:

- > Know the fire danger rating before heading out.
- > Make sure your campfire is completely extinguished and the pit is cool to the touch before leaving it.
- > Always ensure cigarette butts are put out properly in an ashtray and not tossed away carelessly.
- > If you live in or near a forested area, or in an interface zone, make sure your home is protected by removing debris from the roof and maintaining a safety zone around your house clear of flammable debris, shrubs or trees.
- > Move flammable materials like wood piles or propane tanks away from your house and outbuildings.
- > Check your home insurance policy to make sure that you have the appropriate coverage.

PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless gas in the engine exhaust of a generator and in BBQs. You may not smell the exhaust but could still be exposed to CO so do not use them indoors.



► ***If you spot a wildfire, report it as soon as possible by calling 1.800.663.5555 or *5555 on your cell phone.***

STRUCTURE FIRES

Did you know that fire doubles in size every 30 seconds and can fill an average-sized room with deadly fumes within 20-45 seconds and consume an average-sized room within three minutes?

How to Prepare

Statistics show families that practice fire drills at home have a much higher chance of surviving a dwelling fire. With your family, make a step-by-step plan for escaping a fire:

- Draw a floor plan of your home, marking two ways out of every room – especially sleeping areas. Discuss the escape routes with every member of your household.
- Make sure everyone in the household can unlock all doors and windows quickly, even in the dark. Windows or doors with security bars should be equipped with quick-release devices. Everyone in the household should know how to use them.
- Make sure everyone in the household recognizes the sound of fire detectors and knows how to react.
- If you live in a multi-storey building and you must escape from an upper story window, be sure there is a safe way to reach the ground, such as a fire-resistant escape ladder. Some high-rise buildings may have evacuation plans that require you to stay where you are and wait for the fire department. Know what to do in your building.
- Make special arrangements for children, older adults and people with disabilities. People with mobility challenges should have a phone and, if possible, sleep on the ground floor.
- Agree on a meeting place, where every member of the household will gather outside your home after escaping a fire to count heads and inform the fire department if anyone is missing.
- Practice your escape plan at least twice a year. Have a fire drill in your home. Appoint a monitor, and have everyone participate. This is not a race. Get out quickly, but carefully.
- Make your exit drill realistic. Pretend that some exits are blocked by fire, and practice alternative escape routes, pretend that the lights are out and that some escape routes are filling with smoke.

How to Respond to a Dwelling Fire

Get out fast. Do not try to rescue possessions or pets. Go directly to your assembly point, then call 911 from a neighbour's phone or a cell phone. If you live in a multi-storey building, pull the fire alarm switch on your way out if possible. Everyone in your family should know how to call 911 and inform the dispatcher of the fire.

If you are at the spot where the fire has started and can quickly put it out with a fire extinguisher, try to do so. If you cannot control the fire, get everyone out immediately and call 911 from outside the building.

If you are in a closed room and there is fire elsewhere in the building, check closed doors for heat with the back of your hand before you open them.

If you cannot escape, or your escape route is blocked, close all doors between yourself and the fire. Place cloths at the bottom of the door to keep out fumes. Call 911 and tell the dispatcher your location within the building. Stay by the window, alerting fire fighters to your presence. If there is no phone, use a whistle to draw attention.

Kitchen Fires (Oil and Grease)

- Smother the pan fire by putting a lid on the fire. If that doesn't work, immediately use an ABC type fire extinguisher (which contains dry chemical, not water).
- Never use water to extinguish oil or grease fires. When oil mixes with water, the mixture superheats, vaporizing into a ball of flaming steam.
- Never carry a flaming pan outside – the draft will fan the flames.

Infectious Disease

Infectious disease is a part of everyday life. The occurrence of infectious disease can increase significantly during a disaster due to the disruption of normal prevention practices. Officials may declare an infectious disease outbreak, like pandemic influenza, to be a distinct emergency.

▶ *If your clothing is on fire, do NOT run: stop, drop and roll to smother the flames.*

▶ FOR HEALTHLINK BC

Dial 811 from anywhere in British Columbia to access a Registered Nurse 24/7. A dietician and pharmacist are available 9-5 M-F.

For people with hearing impairments dial 711.

Infectious diseases are caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly from one person to another. Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases of animals that can cause disease when transmitted to humans.

Preventing and controlling infectious disease is a responsibility shared by government, the medical community and the general public. Many infections can spread quickly affecting individuals, families and entire communities. Globalization also increases the likelihood that an infectious disease appearing in one country will spread rapidly to another.

By working together, keeping informed on best practices and doing everything we can to prevent infections before they happen and to control their spread if they do, we all play a part in keeping each other safe.

How can you stay safe from infectious disease both in your day-to-day lives and during an emergency or disaster?

- > Make your health and safety your first priorities.
- > Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub.
- > Practice safe food storage and handling.
- > Stay informed. Knowledge helps prevent the spread of infection. The emergence of new infectious agents such as SARS and the re-emergence of community-acquired communicable diseases puts us all at risk.
- > Keep your vaccinations current. Talk with your doctor about an annual flu shot.
- > Know whom to call – your doctor, pharmacist and/or HealthLink BC.
- > Make arrangements with family, friends and/or neighbours to help you if you are affected by an infectious disease.

During an infectious disease outbreak...

- > Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available.
- > If you are sick, stay at home. Observe any quarantine or isolation periods identified by health officials.
- > Stay away from people who may be contagious. Practice the one metre (three feet) rule if you are with people who may be contagious. Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- > Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Discard tissues into the garbage after each use. Cough into your sleeve, if you don't have a tissue. Wash your hands.
- > Maintain good environmental hygiene. Surfaces that you touch or use often, like door knobs, hand rails and counter tops, should be cleaned and disinfected often.

Take extra precautions during an emergency or disaster...

- > Listen to trusted sources, including Public Health Officers and local Health Authority representatives on local television and radio stations for current health conditions and updates.
- > Follow the directions of health officials regarding any infectious disease outbreaks.
- > Be prepared to purify your water supply. Listen for "boil water" announcements.
- > Discard any food that may have become contaminated or has not been stored safely.
- > Have a supply of gloves, face masks, protective clothing, including sturdy closed-toe shoes, hand soap, alcohol-based hand rub and disinfectant in your emergency kits.

Hazardous Material (Hazmat) Spills

Hazardous material (hazmat) spills may include chemical, radiation, biohazard, propane, oil and gas, flammable materials, industrial products and mixed waste.

PREPARING FOR HAZMAT SPILLS

Spills of chemicals and other contaminants may occur in transportation, industry, businesses, medical centres and even our homes. Hazardous spills can also create a secondary disaster following an event such as an earthquake or flood. Be prepared to evacuate if instructed by authorities by following your emergency plan and locating your emergency kit.

After a large spill, evacuation is common but in some cases, officials may judge that evacuation would pose a greater risk than having people remain indoors. Be prepared for either scenario.

Floods and Marine

Winter storms in our region bring high water and waves. When combined with high tides (especially King Tides) these conditions can create storm surges which can cause flooding and coastal erosion. As sea level is expected to rise dramatically over the next century, it is expected that storm surges will be able to flood areas not previously impacted, affecting near-shore development. Some areas in our coastal communities may be susceptible and must prepare for potential flooding and marine impacts.

Before a Flood

- Know if you live in a flood-risk area.
- Keep important papers in watertight containers and have a record of your valuables in a safe place.
- If flooding is likely in your area, pay attention to the local media for information.
- Watch for warning signs: Increase in height and intensity of water flows, mudslides, debris in creeks, colour changes in water or leaning trees.
- Know that banks of rivers and streams may be unstable and dangerous.
- Find out what kinds of flooding are covered by your home insurance policy.
- Learn the safest route from your home or business to high, safe ground. Be aware that high waters can cut off your return route.

▷ **TO REPORT A HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILL**

Call the Ministry of Environment at 1.800.663.3456 then call 911.



Protecting Your Home When Flooding is Imminent

- Wrap the exterior lower levels of your home with polyethylene sheeting to provide extra protection to your home's structure. Use sandbags to secure the base of the sheeting – officials will announce where sandbags and sand can be obtained.
- Shut off the main power breaker to your house and outbuildings. In suburban or rural areas the yard switch must be opened.
- Shut off the gas supply valve to all appliances. These valves are usually in the gas line near the bottom of the appliance.
- Turn off the propane valve at the tank. Disconnect tubing to tank and securely plug it. Fasten a cable, heavy rope or chain around the tank and secure the other end to a pole, building or substantial structure to prevent the tank from floating away.
- Move chemicals such as weed killer, insecticides and corrosives to a dry area to reduce the likelihood of contamination, fires, explosions and personal injuries.
- If time allows, move valuables to upper floors.

If You Must Evacuate

- Lock all doors and windows. Ensure gas and other heating fuel sources are turned off and that electricity and the water are shut off at the main valve or breaker leading to the house.
- Remove insecticides and toxic chemicals from the house to prevent contamination.
- In your Grab & Go Kits, ensure all personal documents and family papers are sealed in plastic. In addition to the Grab & Go Kits, take a blanket, warm clothing, and waterproof outerwear and footwear for each person.
- Ensure each family member has identification, especially the young children. Name tags on the inside of clothing, wallet cards or wrist bands are all useful.
- Review your family reunification and sheltering plan.

Staying Safe During a Flood

- Avoid floodwaters as they may be contaminated.
- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall.
- If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving and use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Be careful when entering buildings. There may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.

Returning Home

- Do not return home until local officials announce that it is safe to do so in your area.
- You may not be permitted to return to your neighbourhood until officials have made arrangements for:
 - > a safe water supply,
 - > utilities inspections/service restoration, and
 - > sewerage
- Your house may be inspected for health and safety hazards before it is declared safe for occupancy.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings: there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations. Wear rubber boots and gloves to avoid contamination.
- Allow the building to air out to prevent mould.

Landslides

Some landslides are triggered by storms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, fires, erosion and human modification to slopes. Others are mudflows which develop when heavy rain or rapidly melting snow saturates and destabilizes the ground.

Masses of rock, earth or debris move down a slope. These flows can develop rapidly, striking with little or no warning and travelling at avalanche speeds. They can travel several miles from their source, growing in size as they pick up trees, boulders and debris. The longer and higher the slope, the greater the risk.



BE AWARE

Consult a qualified expert on corrective measures if you notice:

- changes in your landscape such as patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes (especially where runoff water converges), land movement, small slides, flows, or progressively leaning trees;
- new cracks appearing in plaster, tile, brick, or foundations;
- outside walls, walks, or stairs pulling away from the building;
- cracks developing over time on the ground or on paved areas; or
- tilting or movement in fences, retaining walls, utility poles, or trees.

HOW TO RESPOND

- Move away from the path of a landslide as quickly as possible. Curl into a tight ball and protect your head if escape is not possible.

AFTER A LANDSLIDE

- Stay away from the slide area. There may be a danger of additional slides.
- Watch for hazards, like broken utility lines, damaged roadways, bridges and railways.
- On damaged ground, plant vegetation with good root systems as soon as possible to prevent erosion and further slides.
- Hire a geotechnical expert to evaluate remaining hazards and design corrective measures to reduce risk.

Preparing for Other Hazards

GENERAL OUTDOOR PREPAREDNESS TIPS

The best way to prepare for a trip in the back-country is to make a trip plan and be sure to leave it with a friend or family member. While you're on your trip, stick to the plan!

Having the right gear on your trip is also essential so be sure to have these things with you:

- 1** Flashlight, spare batteries and bulb
- 2** Firemaking kit – waterproof matches/lighter, firestarter/candle
- 3** Signalling device – whistle or mirror to signal searchers if you become lost
- 4** Extra food and water – one litre/person (4L per person in your home kit)
- 5** Extra clothing (rain, wind, water protection and toque)
- 6** Navigational/Communication Aids (maps, compass, GPS, charts, cellular phone, satellite phone, hand held radio - fully charged battery) - know how to use them
- 7** First Aid kit – know how to use it
- 8** Emergency shelter – orange tarp or large orange garbage bag. These can also be used as signalling devices
- 9** Pocket knife
- 10** Sun protection (glasses, sunscreen, hat)

Section 2: During an Emergency

Evacuation

When events such as fire or floods endanger communities, residents may need to evacuate the area until it is safe to return. Evacuation is the process of removing persons from an area of danger to an area of safety. Evacuation may be either local, affecting a single building or group of buildings, or widespread, affecting a whole community.

This section only provides general information; during an evacuation, emergency personnel will contact you and give specific instructions. Fire fighters and other emergency personnel cannot work on the fire or other problems until life and safety issues are under control. Resisting evacuation orders wastes rescuers' precious time and puts others' lives at risk.

You can help by tuning into local media, remaining aware of the situation, and getting organized to leave. If you hear a media bulletin about an evacuation, be sure to note whether it is an Alert or an Order. The response is different for each stage. Following these guidelines helps first responders protect you.

Evacuations have a provincial standard of a three-staged process.

Evacuation Stages

STAGE 1 - EVACUATION ALERT

An Evacuation Alert allows for the population at risk to begin preparing to voluntarily leave the affected area when it is necessary.

If an evacuation alert is issued:

- Make sure your emergency kit is assembled.
- Arrange transportation if necessary.
- Make sure you know the planned meeting place for your family.
- Prepare to evacuate children, the disabled and elderly and relocate pets, if possible.
- Arrange accommodation for your family, if possible.
- Follow the directions of authorities.

STAGE 2 - EVACUATION ORDER

Sometimes an Evacuation Order is immediate and in other cases may be preceded by an Evacuation Alert.

To order an evacuation, a local government authority must declare a “State of Local Emergency” as enabled under the Emergency Program Act. These orders are issued in the interest of life safety and will be enforced and carried out by local authorities through door-to-door contact, radio and television broadcasts and telephoning.

If an evacuation order is issued:

- > Comply! And leave the area immediately.
- > Gather your family, pets, and emergency kits.
- > Time permitting, turn off appliances, close doors and windows, turn off utilities (when instructed) and lock your house.
- > Report to the nearest reception centre.
- > Follow the instructions of authorities.
- > Take everything that you will need as you may not be able to return.

STAGE 3 - RESCIND

Once the emergency area is declared safe, a rescind declaration is issued and residents will be allowed to return to their homes.

Reception Centres

Reception centres are set up to help evacuees. Public facilities such as recreation centres, schools, places of worship and shopping malls may be converted for this purpose. Reception centres are staffed by trained volunteers on a call-out basis.

Officials will decide when and where reception centres will open and provide residents with the details through local media.

Upon arrival, you will meet with an Emergency Social Services (ESS) volunteer, who will help:

- > Register all your family members living at your address and whom you know to be safe. Tenants will register separately. Registrations are confidential.
- > If a family member is missing, the volunteer will help you complete an inquiry request, to learn whether he or she has registered elsewhere and to help with reunification.
- > As needed, you may receive vouchers for food, lodging (hotel room, billeting or group lodging), and basic necessities for up to 72 hours after the disaster occurs.

Accessible washrooms, children’s play area (but not childcare), light refreshments, basic first aid and basic emotional care will usually be available. Animals other than service dogs are not allowed inside. To protect evacuees’ privacy, media are not allowed inside the reception centre, and no one may use any kind of camera inside.

Communicating During a Disaster

It is hard to predict how a disaster will affect communications. Communication lines may be overwhelmed by the volume of users. The infrastructure may be damaged and work only part of the time. Some systems may not work at all, while others may be fine. Calls within the disaster zone may be difficult while out of area calling may be normal. **Expect all communication systems to behave erratically.**

- Call 911 only when life is at risk. Tune in to the local media to learn more about the event.
- Have more than one option available for contacting family and friends: Land line, internet, cell phones. Know how to use these options to their best advantage.
- Keep communications brief to reduce strain on the system. Write down your message first, and keep a flashlight by the phone.
- Ask an out-of-province friend or family member to be the emergency contact in case your family members are separated during a disaster. Ideally, the contact should have voice mail, e-mail and a cell phone. This person will pass messages among the family members until they are reunited. This person can notify family and friends living outside the disaster area, to update them on your situation.

911 Emergency Services

Contact a 911 dispatcher when you need immediate emergency assistance from Police, Ambulance or Fire Departments. Never call 911 unless life is at risk. You may endanger someone else's life by tying up emergency dispatchers.

These departments are dispatched separately, so the first question you need to answer is: "Police, Ambulance or Fire?"

Once connected to the right dispatch centre:

- give the address or location and phone number from which you are calling;
- speak clearly and describe the problem (e.g., there has been a hazardous spill, or someone is injured, or a power line is down);
- follow instructions from dispatch or emergency personnel;
- stay with the injured person and give comfort if you can do so without risking your own safety; and
- ask bystanders to stay back and clear the way for responders.

Amateur Radio Operators

Amateur radio operators can provide disaster officials with communications through the use of ham radios and other stand-alone systems when other communication utilities fail.

▶ TIP

Pay telephones are also emergency telephones. When you pick up the receiver, the line may sound “dead”, continue holding and wait for the dial tone.

▶ TIP

Enter a contact name or next of kin under “ICE” (in case of emergency) in your cell phone directory. First responders can contact this person via your cell phone if you are unable to.

▶ TIP

Most cell phones emit a GPS signal that cell phone companies can “ping” or contact to discover the nearest tower the signal is coming from. Police use this method to find missing persons so, if you are lost, stay in one place.

Phones and Internet

LAND LINE PHONES - You have land line service if your phone is activated by phone jacks in the wall. If land lines are working, there is enough power to operate a simple phone even during a power failure. Cordless phones will not work during power failures. Buy an inexpensive corded land line phone for your emergency kit.

- > After an earthquake, when there may be aftershocks, choose one land line phone and make sure the receiver stays on the hook, or unplug it when the phone is not in use. Use masking tape to secure the receivers on other phones, or unplug them.
- > When you place a call, wait on the line for up to two minutes until you hear a dial tone, then dial quickly and state your message. If there is no dial tone, hang up and try again later. If you are able to dial but hear no ring at the other end, wait on the line for a minute or two. Your call may be queued because of heavy volume.
- > After a major disaster, home phone service might be the last lines restored. Land lines for emergency officials, public services and businesses will have higher priority.

INTERNET DEVICES (computers, smart phones, and tablets)

- > When the internet is operating, use social networking sites to keep people up to date on your situation.
- > Send brief email messages to people, but avoid large attachments. Compose and save your message in a word processing program first, then copy to email and send. (If the send fails, you don't have to re-enter the message).
- > Follow local officials on Twitter. They may tweet brief updates on the situation, time allowing. Do not tweet them or expect personal replies.

CELL PHONES - If infrastructure is damaged, cell phone towers can often be restored to service more quickly than phone and cable lines.

- > Keep your cell phone charged and keep a charger in each vehicle as it can be used for 911 calls if the battery is charged even without a service plan.
- > Even if you don't use a cell phone often, be sure your service plan includes texting, and learn how to use it. Texting uses less data than a voice call and can be sent in an instant. If you leave your phone on, the text message will be held in queue until it can be delivered. You won't have to re-dial and re-text, and you can send the same message to several destinations.
- > For 911 calls, cell phone locations **do not** display an address, even if the call comes from within the subscriber's home so provide an exact location.

How to Stay Informed

- Emergency officials will rely partly on broadcast media and the internet to get information to the public. Cable TV, radio and the internet are some of the tools that help communicate evacuation alerts and bulletins about impending dangers like severe storms, wildfires and tsunamis.
- After a disaster officials will provide updates via the media as facts and information are confirmed.
- Most local broadcasters (TV and radio) do not have broadcast staff on duty 24/7; so become familiar with your local broadcasters, and **check periodically which stations have 24/7 live broadcasts**. In Greater Victoria, local broadcast media include:
 - The Q – 100.3 FM (*as of January 2013, the only local broadcaster with 24/7 broadcast staff*)
 - CFX – 1070 AM
 - CBC Radio One – 90.5 FM
 - CBC Radio Two – 92.1 FM
 - Jack FM – 103.1 FM
 - Kool FM – 107.3 FM
 - The Ocean – 98.5 FM
 - The Q – 100.3 FM
 - The Zone – 91.3 FM
 - CFSI FM Salt Spring Island
 - SHAW Cable
 - CBC Television
 - CHEK News

During a disaster, tune in to local media for news updates via your emergency radio. Join EMBC's Twitter feed to stay up to date: @EmergencyInfoBC

There will be lots of rumour, opinion and speculation, especially on the internet. When making decisions for yourself and your family, rely on news that clearly comes from official sources such as local government officials, first responders, utilities and Environment Canada.

How to Help

After an emergency or disaster occurs, people naturally want to assist those in need. While this is appreciated, donations can be a major issue to manage. It is best to stay tuned to media or contact those agencies assisting with the emergency to find out how to help. Alternatively, cash donations allow organizations to purchase anything they may need.

Section 3: After an Emergency

Utilities

After any disaster, you can expect to have a disruption or lose utility services all together. The following tips will help you know what to do.

Electrical Utilities

After any disaster or emergency, you will want to keep your power on. However, in some cases, you may have to turn it off.

- Make sure everyone in your household knows where your electrical panel is and how to turn it off.
- It is a good idea to tag your electrical panel for quick identification in the event of an emergency.
- Consider turning off individual breakers so when power is restored, you can control the turning on of your appliances, lights and reduce the load on the system when the power does come back on. Label your breakers accurately.

Natural Gas Utilities

Natural gas heats our homes, our water, sometimes our stoves and other appliances. Like most fuels, natural gas is safe when properly used. However, accidents and emergencies can happen and it's important for everyone to know about natural gas safety. If you smell gas or hear the flow of escaping gas, follow these steps immediately:

- Get out and call the FortisBC 24-hour Emergency Line: **1.800.663.9911** or **911**.
- Get out fast! Leave the building; leave the door open and any windows that may already be open.
- Leave on foot and don't start your car, then call 911 from a safe distance.
- Don't use either your cell phone or landline, don't smoke, light matches, operate electrical switches, or create any other source of ignition.

Natural gas and piped propane smell like rotten eggs or sulphur. Natural gas is actually odourless, but trace amounts of a chemical called mercaptan are added, which has a distinctive rotten egg or sulphur-like odour so you can detect and identify it.

After an emergency or disaster, if you do not smell a leak, consider leaving the gas on to provide a source of energy for heat, hot water, and cooking. Check the vents, chimney and connections at each gas appliance to be sure they have not been dislodged or blocked.

If you have turned off your gas, always call a registered gas contractor to turn it back on.

Water Shut-Off Utilities

Another service you may need to shut off is your inside water shut off valve:

- If there is an inside water leak or burst pipe.
- If you are evacuating for the long-term.
- If you are advised to do so by emergency officials.

The water shut off valve controls the water inside your home or building. Make sure that everyone in your household knows where it is and how to turn it off.

Health and Hygiene

Handwashing

After any disaster, stress will be high and immunity low. Children, the elderly and people with chronic health problems or weakened immune systems will be more vulnerable to, and seriously affected by, communicable diseases.

Health officials stress that handwashing is the single most important practice that can protect you and your family members from getting a communicable disease.

Diseases like the cold virus, and influenza can also spread through the air via respiratory droplets.

There must always be some method of handwashing available to people after they use whatever toilet system is in place and before handling, preparing or eating food.

You don't need much water, just one cup:

- pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water on your hands to wet them,
- apply plain liquid soap,
- rub your hands together vigorously for a minimum of 20 seconds,
- pour the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water over your hands to rinse, and
- dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel.

Sewage Interruptions

After a major disaster like an earthquake, water and sewer lines may be broken. Health officials advise separating solid waste from liquid waste.

Urine is not considered a serious health problem. If you use one bucket for urine, you can dispose of it in your back yard or other green space. Feces, on the other hand, are a source of many disease-causing bacteria, including cryptosporidia and cholera.

It must be disposed of more carefully to prevent outbreak of disease. You can use your existing toilet as container to collect solid waste:

- Lift the toilet seat and scoop out the water in the bowl but leave water in the trap to avoid sewer gases. Duct tape the handle so you don't accidentally flush.
- Line the toilet bowl with a double garbage bag (to protect against leakage).
- Put the seat back down.
- After you use the toilet, cover the waste in the bag with a liberal dose of hydrated lime (with caution since it is caustic), baking soda, powdered cleaner or kitty litter.
- Listen to Public Health bulletins for instructions on how to ultimately dispose of the bags.

Water

POTABLE (DRINKABLE) WATER

Only potable water is safe for drinking, cooking, brushing teeth, hand washing, first aid, and washing cooking equipment/surfaces. Storing adequate potable water is essential for survival. You can live for some time without food, but only a few days without drinking water. You may need to drink more in a disaster. Most canned emergency foods contain high levels of salt and/or sugar, so thirst can be a major concern. The simplest way to ensure you have potable water is to purchase bottled water, but be sure to check expiration dates and replace as necessary.

You will need four litres of potable water per person per day, plus water for pets, for a minimum of seven days. A family of four without pets will need about 30 US gallons, or 112 litres. Liquids such as pop, juice, beer and clear soups help keep you hydrated but have limited use compared with clear water.

DISINFECTING DRINKING WATER

To disinfect drinking water means to clean or sterilize it so that it does not infect humans and animals, and their surrounding environments. Disinfect water when there is a chance it carries germs that could make you sick. The following are answers to common questions regarding disinfecting drinking water according to HealthLink BC:

When should I disinfect my drinking water?

In British Columbia, drinking water suppliers are required to treat raw water to remove germs that can make you sick. However, there may be times when you need to disinfect your own drinking water, such as when:

- Your community is given a 'boil water' notice.
- You get your drinking water directly from a stream, river, lake, or creek, or from a shallow or improperly constructed well.
- Tests of your water show it has human waste (feces) in it, which is called fecal coliform.
- A flood, earthquake, or other disaster has disrupted the water supply in your community.
- You are travelling in an area where water is not properly treated.
- You have a weakened immune system.

Why should I disinfect my drinking water?

When you disinfect drinking water, you kill germs such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Many different diseases are spread by germs and can infect drinking water. These are called 'water-borne infections'. Common infections include *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Cholera*, *Amoebic dysentery*, *Giardia* (beaver fever), *Cryptosporidium*, and *Toxoplasma*.

Water-borne infections happen when animal or human feces containing these germs get into drinking water.

Open waters such as lakes and streams are more likely to get infected than water flowing deep under the ground. The closer water is to the surface, the greater chance germs can get in the water.

What is the best way to disinfect water?

- The best way to kill germs such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites, is to boil the water.
- Boil water at a full boil for at least one minute. If you are using an automatic shut-off kettle, make sure the water has boiled for one minute. At elevations, over 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) boil water for at least two minutes to disinfect it.
- Let the water cool. Always store your clean water in clean containers made for storing food or water.
- Boiling **does not** make heavily polluted water safe.

Can I use bleach to disinfect water?

Yes. If you cannot boil water, you can disinfect it using unscented household bleach. Do not use scented bleaches, colour-safe bleaches, bleaches with added cleaners or non-chlorine bleach.

Bleach will kill some, but not all the different types of germs that could be in the water. Water disinfected with bleach is called 'treated water'. Bleach does not work if the water is heavily polluted or when polluted with chemicals. Boil the water if you are concerned your water has parasites such as *Giardia* or *Cryptosporidium*. If you are ever unsure about the safety of your water, even after it has been treated with bleach, do not consume it.

Bleach works best when added to warm water that is about 20°C (68°F). To treat your water, add two drops (0.1 mL) of unscented household bleach (about 5.25% chlorine) to one litre of warm water.

Mix the bleach and water together. Cover it and let it stand for at least 30 minutes before drinking. You should notice a slight chlorine smell after the 30 minutes. If you don't, add another two drops. Let the water to stand for another 15 minutes.

If the water is cloudy, colder than 10°C (50°F), or if your water is from a lake, stream, or shallow well add four drops (0.2 mL) of unscented household bleach (about 5.25% chlorine) to one litre of water.

Mix the bleach and water together. Cover it and let it stand for one to two hours before drinking. If the treated water has a strong taste of chlorine, let the water stand open to the air for a few hours. You can also pour it back and forth from one clean container to another several times. The longer the treated water stands the better it works to disinfect the water.

If you are using water purification tablets, follow the directions on the package.

What if the water is cloudy or murky?

If the water is cloudy or murky, filter it before boiling or treating the water.

Pour the water through a clean cloth or coffee filter. Let any remaining bits settle to the bottom. Pour off the clear water into clean containers made for storing food or water. The water might still look a little cloudy. If you are ever unsure about the safety of your water, even after it has been filtered, do not consume it.

Can I use iodine to disinfect water?

Yes. You can use iodine but only for use over a short period of time. If you use iodine for more than one to two months, you could develop thyroid problems. Pregnant women should not use iodine drops to disinfect water as it could harm the unborn baby.

Iodine works best when added to warm water that is about 20°C (68°F). To treat warm water, add five drops (0.25 mL) of 2% Tincture of Iodine to one litre of warm water.

Mix the iodine and water together. Let it stand for at least 30 minutes before drinking.

To treat cold water that is between 5 to 15°C (41-59°F), use the same amounts, but let it stand for 40 minutes before drinking.

If you are using iodine tablets, follow the directions on the package.

Can I use filtration or other treatment methods to disinfect water?

If your drinking water will require treatment for a long period of time, you may want to think of other sources of drinking water, such as bottled water, or installing a filtration system. If you are going to install an filtration system, make sure to check with a reliable supplier who can help you with installation and ongoing maintenance.

To remove some types of germs, such as *Giardia*, filters must have an absolute pore size of one micron or less, and be certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) International or another accredited third party agency. For more information on the National Sanitation Foundation, visit www.nsf.org.

Jug-type water filters (such as Brita®), are not made to remove germs from an unsafe water supply and will not remove *Giardia*. Some built-in water filtration systems will remove *Giardia*, but they need regular and thorough maintenance to work well. For information on certification of treatment devices, visit the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) at www.scc.ca.

Other types of water treatment units, such as distillation and UV units are also available. Check with local water purification suppliers or your local environmental health officer for more information. The treatment unit should be certified by NSF International, or another accredited third party agency for cyst reduction or inactivation.

When should I use disinfected water?

Use treated, boiled (and then cooled), or store-bought bottled water for the following activities:

- Making baby formula.
- Brushing your teeth.
- Making coffee or tea.
- Cleaning raw vegetables and fruit.
- For drinking or making drink mixes such as using juice concentrates or drink crystals.
- Washing dishes. If you wash dishes by hand, let them air dry. If your dishwasher does not have a hot or sanitation cycle, soak the dishes for one minute in a solution of bleach and warm water. Mix 2 ml of bleach for every one litre of untreated water.
- Filling pet dishes.
- Making ice cubes. Freezing does not kill germs or clean the water.
- Bathing children.

To reduce the chance of your child swallowing water that might still have germs, give sponge baths using clean water. Adults can bathe or shower using water that has not been disinfected, as long as they do not swallow any of the water. After bathing or showering, wash your hands with disinfected water.

Where do I go for more information?

If you have any questions about your drinking water, contact your local environmental health officer or your local health authority.

UTILITY WATER

Water that is not pure enough for consumption may still be clean enough for sponge-bathing (but not for handwashing or first-aid), and for essential laundry and housecleaning (but not for washing dishes). Sources include:

- Expired drinking water
- Water from toilet tank (if not chemically treated)
- Dehumidifiers
- Water beds, swimming pools
- Garden ponds, garden hoses, and irrigation rain barrels

Recovery

Recovery Goals and Resources

Disasters have a definite beginning and end, but recovery continues long after the emergency response and immediate danger have passed.

The goals are to restore infrastructure and public services, help meet short and long term housing needs, restart the local economy and rebuild the capacity of the community to help its own members.

Local government officials can call upon the following agencies:

- Volunteers with the **Emergency Social Services (ESS)** are trained to operate Reception Centres which help evacuees after the disaster. They also operate Group Lodging when other shelter options are not available.
- **BC Housing** provides cots and blankets for Group Lodging, and facilitates the provision of short and long-term housing for evacuees.
- **Canadian Red Cross** provides family reunification services and collects donations for disaster relief.
- **Salvation Army** provides disaster relief and emotional support services.

British Columbia property and business owners may qualify for recovery assistance:

- **Province of BC Disaster Financial Assistance** may be offered to qualifying home owners, tenants, small businesses, farm operations and not-for-profit charitable organizations. The program helps with the cost of repairs and recovery from disaster-related property damage if losses could not have been insured or where other programs are not available.

▶ TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECOVERY

1. *Remember that unfamiliar emotional responses are normal reactions to disasters.*
2. *Recovery can take a long time (even years) so be kind to yourself and others as you work your way through this process.*
3. *Help your children and pets learn to cope with their fears.*
4. *Follow health and safety guidelines throughout the recovery process.*
5. *Attend community meetings or information sessions to find out what resources are available and how community members can help each other.*

▶ TIP

Scan and save your most important documents (e.g., PDF files) and photos (e.g., jpeg files). Forward the scanned files via email to a web-based email account, or upload them to a secure "cloud" (an internet electronic filing cabinet) such as Dropbox or Canada Post's E-Post Vault or place your valuable documents in a bank safe deposit box. These documents help establish proof of identity, insurance coverage, etc. if your originals and paper copies are destroyed.

GETTING BACK ON TRACK

- 1** Take care of yourself and your family first.
 - Stay with family and friends for a few days if possible, as their support can be invaluable. Determine where you will live for the longer term during recovery.
 - Promote physical health: Eat healthy meals, get lots of sleep, drink lots of water and exercise.
 - Return to familiar routines. This is especially helpful for children and pets.
 - Promote emotional health: Learn to recognize symptoms of post-disaster stress in yourself and others; and talk about your experiences with understanding family and friends, or with a professional if you are struggling in any way.
 - Attend debriefing sessions in your community. They provide opportunities to share experiences and get answers to questions. When support services are in great demand, insurance companies and support agencies may participate in these sessions so that many more people can be helped in one place.
- 2** Take breaks, look out for others and ask for help if you need it.
 - Assess losses.
 - Find out if special precautions must be taken before entering your home.
 - Contact your insurance company to start a claim.
 - List items and property you have lost. This may take considerable time and effort.
- 3** Determine what needs to be done.
 - Have your home inspected to determine what the next steps are.
- 4** Determine recovery resources. A Recovery Centre may be set up to help with this.

Emotional Responses to Disasters

TYPICAL FIRST REACTIONS

- Disbelief and shock.
- Disorientation & numbness.
- Fear.
- Reluctance to abandon property.
- Problems with concentration or memory.
- Difficulty in making decisions.
- Need for help and information.
- Helpfulness to others.

SOME LATER RESPONSES

- Frustration and anxiety.
- Anger, frustration and suspicion.
- Moodiness and irritability.
- Apathy and depression.
- Unexplained crying.
- Fatigue, low energy.
- Change in appetite.
- Digestive problems.
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much.
- Headaches, body pain.
- Feelings of powerlessness.
- Feeling overwhelmed.
- Guilt for survival or for not preventing disaster.
- Isolation from family and friends.

▶ TIPS

Emergency officials, first responders, agency staff and community volunteers commonly experience many of the same stress reactions as those they are trying to help. Physical and emotional care are important for everyone involved.

When donating to disaster relief, the best donation is money. Donations of food, clothing, furniture, toys, etc. become a secondary disaster for officials, who must receive, sort and store truckloads of such items. For safety reasons, homemade food donations cannot be accepted.

After a small disaster (e.g., a house fire, or flooding on one street), it is easier to get help with insurance claims, housing, counseling, etc. After a large disaster, services could be overwhelmed for weeks. Remember that everyone is in the same boat.

RESPONSES BY CHILDREN

- Return to past behaviour such as thumb-sucking or bed-wetting.
- Clinging to parents, crying or screaming.
- Reluctance to go to bed.
- Nightmares.
- Fantasies that the disaster didn't happen.
- Refusal to attend school.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Withdrawal, immobility.

RESPONSES BY PETS

- Unusually nervous or fearful.
- Sensitivity to noise or storms.
- Excessive protectiveness.
- Increased aggression.

HEALING EMOTIONALLY

- Discuss what happened; however, you may want to limit your family's exposure to media coverage of the event.
- Recognize the losses you have suffered. Give yourself and your family permission to grieve and time to heal.
- Take time to appreciate what you still have.

Helping Children Cope with Their Fears

Don't ignore the emotional needs of your children once you have determined that everyone is physically okay.

- Give lots of hugs to your children and tell them everything will be okay. This provides physical and verbal reassurance.
- Encourage your children to express their feelings, especially through play and physical activities. Listen to them carefully when they share these things with you.
- Include children in safe clean-up activities. It is comforting to the child to watch the household begin to resume its normal functions. It also gives them a job to do.
- Children may revert to immature behaviour for a few days. Do not focus on this behaviour; rather, praise them for their help in cleaning up, etc.
- Maintain or restore routines but reduce performance expectations. If fears, sleep, or unusual behaviours get worse for more than two weeks, seek professional help.

- After a disaster, pets may be too upset or unpredictable to offer comfort to children. Explain this to your children and teach them not to pat, hold or bother a pet until it is back to normal.
- Anxious children may feel more secure if they can play and sleep under a table draped with a blanket, or in a small pup tent. Lightweight emergency pup tents/tube tents are ideal as they fold very small for storage.

Helping Pets Cope with Fear

Pets may show fear, be in physical pain or display unfriendly behaviours.

- Approach pets slowly and calmly, watching for injuries or unfriendly behaviours. Avoid direct eye contact. Speak to them in soft, reassuring voices.
- Familiar routine is comforting to animals. Provide food and fresh water on a regular schedule for caged or fostered animals.
- Isolate pets from children if pets display aggression or extreme fear.
- Time and patience are often the best medicines, but some pets will require the professional care of a board-certified veterinary behaviorist. Intense fear and anxiety should be considered forms of pain that deserve immediate treatment.

Returning Home and Cleaning Up After a Disaster

Returning home and cleaning up after a disaster can be physically, emotionally and mentally challenging. Following a plan and safety guidelines will help.

RETURNING TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Keep a battery-powered radio with you for emergency updates and news reports.
- Watch out for animals in and around your home.
 - Wildlife can be aggressive and unpredictable. Never approach, corner or attempt to help/rescue it.
 - Be cautious with animals that are obviously lost or abandoned pets. They too can be unpredictable if hungry or frightened. Provide food and water if possible.

▶ TIPS: GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING DISASTER CLEAN-UP

1. *Avoid exhaustion. Don't try to do too much at once. Set priorities, make a plan and pace yourself. Take lots of breaks to rest, eat and rehydrate.*
2. *Be aware of safety hazards created by the disaster; e.g., contaminated buildings, contaminated water or air, gas leaks, broken glass, damaged wiring, slippery floors.*
3. *Inform local authorities of chemical spills, downed power lines, washed out roads, smoldering buildings, dead animals and other hazards. If the hazard presents an immediate danger to life call 911; otherwise use non-emergency contact numbers.*
4. *Wear sturdy shoes and gloves. Depending on the hazards created by the disaster, you may need other protective gear.*
5. *When working in debris wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and clean water.*

- Do not move or touch a dead animal. Carcasses can present serious health risks. Contact your local government or health department for help and instructions.
- Stay off the streets. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects, downed electrical wires, and weakened walls, bridges roads and sidewalks.

BEFORE YOU ENTER YOUR HOME

- Walk around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks or structural damage. Look down as well as up: watch for sink holes, fissures and trip hazards on the ground.
- Do not enter the house if:
 - you smell gas;
 - floodwaters remain around the building;
 - your home has moved even partially off its foundation; or
 - your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.
- If you have any doubts about its safety or structural integrity, have your home inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

Returning home and cleaning up after a disaster can be physically, emotionally and mentally challenging. Following a plan and safety guidelines will help.

Review the Inspection Worksheet within Section 5 before entering your home.

Section 4: Additional Resources

General Information

- BC Ambulance: www.bcas.ca
- BC Centre for Disease Control: www.bccdc.ca
- BC Hydro Outages: www.bchydro.com/outages
- BC Ministry of Health: www.gov.bc.ca/health
- BC RCMP: www.bc.rcmp-grc.gc.ca
- BC Wildfire Management Branch: www.bcwildfire.ca
- Capital Region Emergency Coordinators Committee (CRERCC): www.crercc.com
- Drive BC: www.drivebc.ca
- Emergency Info BC: www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca
- Emergency Management BC: www.embc.gov.bc.ca
- Emergency Preparedness in the Capital Region: www.prepareyourself.ca
- Emergency Social Services BC: www.ess.bc.ca
- Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System: www.gdacs.org
- Government of Canada weather: www.weather.gc.ca
- Island Health: www.viha.ca
- Ministry of Environment: www.gov.bc.ca/env
- Natural Resources Canada: www.nrcan.gc.ca
- Public Safety Canada: Getprepared.ca
- UVic Weather Network: www.victoriaweather.ca
- West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Centre: www.wcatwc.arh.noaa.gov

Grab & Go Kits - For Work, Home & School

Basic Survival

- two small bottles of water, two energy bars, chewing gum
- one week's worth of prescription medication and copy of prescriptions
- extra pair of eye glasses, batteries for hearing aids, etc.
- emergency blanket (Mylar "space blanket")
- emergency rain poncho or large plastic garbage bag
- whistle and dust mask (earthquakes can stir up thick clouds of dust)
- small emergency radio/flashlight with extra batteries
- multi-tool/Swiss Army knife
- mini first aid kit – compact purchased kits may have extra room for small items such as pain tablets, eye drops, ointment, disposable nitrile gloves, foil pack of water, etc.

Security, Peace of Mind

- photocopies of ID cards and insurance policies
- key contacts list, cell phone and phone card
- notebook and pen or retractable pencil
- supply of cash in small bills and coins
- spare keys: home, car
- recent photos of family and pets
- book, cards or puzzles

Warmth

- hand and foot warmers (chemical packets, two of each)
- pair of socks (wool is warmest even when wet)
- toque/knitted hat
- gloves/mitts
- neck scarf (silk is lightweight and effective)
- lightweight warm sweater or vest

Comfort & Sanitation

- basic toiletries including hand sanitizer
- change of underwear
- toilet paper; packet of baby wipes; Ziploc bags
- flip flops (for use in public showers)
- small, rapid-dry camping towel

For Young Children, Include:

- Ziploc bag of important documents
 - full name, address, date of birth and recent photo of child
 - names and current photo ID of adults authorized to accompany child (including family members and legal guardians)
 - name and address of school, family doctor and dentist
 - immunization history; allergies, current medications and instructions
- small stuffed toy or other favourite item

Car/Mobile Kit

If you spend a lot of time in your car, boat or RV, you should have an emergency kit to supplement your Grab & Go Kit. Regularly maintain your vehicles, and keep the fuel tanks at least half full so you're ready to leave in a hurry. Even if you do not have to evacuate, your car can be a place to shelter, recharge your cell phone, warm up or listen to radio reports.

If your Grab & Go Kit is small, or is normally left at home, your mobile kit might include some of the items listed under Grab & Go Kit as well as these suggested items:

- extra water (bottled or foil packs)
- extra packets of nutritious foods (dried fruits, granola bars, unsalted nuts or beef jerky) or emergency rations (compact dry cubes supplying essential nutrients)
- automobile first aid kit and manual
- comfortable, sturdy walking shoes
- change of clothing
- warm blanket or sleeping bag
- candle-in-a can, butane lighter
- toilet tissue & Ziploc bags
- deck of cards, good book
- large, sturdy backpack, in case you have to leave your vehicle
- road map and compass
- shovel, traction aids (sand or kitty litter)
- duct tape and garbage bags
- heavy-duty work gloves (leather)
- axe, crowbar and fire extinguisher
- flares, flashlight (extra batteries), reflective vest or arm bands
- hardhat, eye goggles and coveralls
- ice scraper and brush
- booster cables

▶ TIPS

Plastic water bottles will absorb vehicle fuel vapours, so foil packs are a good option for mobile kits; or place plastic water bottles in a sealed plastic container.

A plastic storage bucket for car / mobile supplies can be converted to a toilet if needed. Small, portable toilet seats can be purchased for some types of buckets.

Home Kit

After a disaster, it's best to remain in your own home if you can do so safely. You will need supplies for cooking, making temporary repairs and providing comfort for your family. The emergency supplies should be kept separate from the things you normally use, to ensure they are available and in working order. Here is what you'll need.

Details and storage tips for some items (***) are provided on following pages.

- ❑ **Potable (drinkable) water**, clean utility water***.
- ❑ **Food, emergency stove and cooking equipment*****: a variety of long-storing healthy foods which do not need refrigeration and which are easy to prepare and eat under difficult conditions.
- ❑ **Health and safety**: home first aid kit*** and first aid manual; power failure lights for halls/ stairwells; fire extinguishers. For safety, candles should be in tins, holders or jars that are heavier, wider and higher than the candles themselves.
- ❑ **Communications*****: a corded land-line phone that works on a phone jack (no electrical power or batteries needed); an emergency radio (wind up, solar powered, or battery).
- ❑ **Heat, light and warmth**: sleeping bags (much warmer than regular bedding; Mylar blankets, ground sheets or air mattresses, newspaper (for insulation); camping tent or tarpaulin and ropes (in case house is unsafe and there are no other alternatives); flashlights with lots of batteries, light sticks, 36-hour candles, battery-operated or solar lanterns.
- ❑ **Sanitation & hand-washing**: duct tape, lots of green plastic garbage bags, emergency toilet kit***, disposable gloves, outside garbage can for disposal of waste bags; toilet paper, baby wipes, liquid soap, potable water, paper towels, kitchen waste bags.
- ❑ **Rescue, repair and clean up**: tarpaulins, nylon ropes, duct tape, plastic sheeting and/or large garbage bags; axe, crowbar, hacksaw; aluminum shut-off wrench for gas meter; head lamp, work gloves, dust masks, coveralls, sturdy shoes, goggles, rags, non-permeable disposable gloves, clean utility water (non drinkable), detergents, garbage bags.
- ❑ **Household generator and fuel**: especially for needs such as refrigerated medication, medical appliances and equipment, etc. Generators must never be operated in the house or other enclosed space. Generators may be a target for theft if left unattended.

Storage Tips for Home Kits

- Finding extra space to store emergency supplies can be a challenge. They will do you little good if they are damaged, or if you cannot get to them after an earthquake.
- If you have a camper or trailer, you may already have all the emergency supplies you need. Remember to restock so that your home-away-from-home is ready for emergencies.
- Perishable supplies will remain stable longer if they are stored in a cool, dark place.
- Place supplies in a large, covered container – preferably plastic or rubber and on wheels. Put the contents inside a tightly closed plastic bag before placing them in the container. Place desiccant sachets in your containers to keep things dry.
- In a shed or other outbuildings, keep supplies off concrete floors (condensation will rust cans and concrete will leach into plastics). Store food and water away from gasoline and other chemicals.
- Food and water containers may be kept on a closet floor, behind a sofa, or under a bed, preferably close to an exit.
- Food or supply bins may be stored in closets, tucked under racks of shirts and jackets.
- Clean out the kitchen junk drawer to make room for a first aid kit, emergency radio and flashlights or light sticks. Store some batteries there and some in the refrigerator.
- A decorative trunk or chest in your family room or entrance hall may be used to store basic cooking equipment and emergency foods.

Emergency Kit for Pets

Don't expect pet rescue centres to have supplies for pets during an emergency. This is your responsibility.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> food/water (seven-day supply) | <input type="checkbox"/> medications and instructions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> manual can opener | <input type="checkbox"/> dog leash/harness and muzzle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ID tag and collar | <input type="checkbox"/> phone numbers and addresses (pet friendly hotels, emergency vet clinic, local animal shelter, boarding kennels, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recent photos of your pet | <input type="checkbox"/> non-spill bowls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sturdy crate/carrier | <input type="checkbox"/> litter and box for cats and other small critters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> copy of pets' current vaccination history | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pet first-aid kit | |

First Aid and Home Nursing

- Consider taking a first aid course. Some are available for children.
- Store prescribed medications and copies of critical medical information in your Grab & Go Kit or in watertight bags in the refrigerator.
- Buy a first aid kit and supplement it with other supplies, or assemble your own using suggestions from the list below. Storing supplies in a case with a handle (e.g., fishing tackle box or tool box) makes them easier to carry. Tape a list of contents inside the lid. When the clocks change, replace expired items.

Bandages

- bandaids
- pressure bandages
- butterfly bandages
- 3-6 triangular bandages
- rolled gauze (1", 2", 3" widths)
- bandage, sterile rolls (2", 4" widths)
- splinting materials
- adhesive tape
- tensor bandages
- cotton tipped swabs

Medications & Remedies

(include remedies appropriate for your children)

- pain relievers, anti-itch powder/lotion
- antibiotic ointment
- sunscreen, insect repellent
- lip balm, cold-sore cream
- diarrhea control, anti-nausea
- antacid, laxative
- eye drops, ear drops
- antihistamines

Additional supplies

- first aid manual
- pen and notebook
- scissors, safety pins
- tweezers and magnifying glass
- individually wrapped alcohol swabs
- plastic bags
- needle and thread
- thermometer
- tissue
- pre-moistened towelettes
- hot water bottle and small towel
- instant cold packs
- Mylar/space blankets
- disposable nitrile gloves

Home Kit: 'KISS' Cooking Equipment (Keep It Super-Simple)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> manual can opener (invest in a good one that always works) | <input type="checkbox"/> oven mitts or pot holders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> utility knife | <input type="checkbox"/> paper towels (lots) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottle opener | <input type="checkbox"/> heavy-duty aluminum foil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> emergency stove and fuel supply | <input type="checkbox"/> heavy duty plastic garbage bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> waterproof matches | <input type="checkbox"/> disposable cutlery, dishes and cups (to reduce potable water consumption) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pot and pan (with lids) | <input type="checkbox"/> dish detergent, pot scrubber and unscented chlorine bleach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ladle, spatula, serving spoon, BBQ tongs | |

Tips

- Pressure cookers reduce cooking time and emergency fuel consumption during a simple power outage, but in more complex and disruptive disasters such as floods and earthquakes, prepare food that can be quickly heated or eaten cold.
- Have at least one alternative to your kitchen stove (for example: kerosene camp stove; sterno stove; compact emergency stove with fuel pellets; buffet burner with butane cartridges (a.k.a. "storm buster"); charcoal/propane/natural gas barbecue, hibachi).
- Be aware: Small butane cartridge stoves are generally safe for indoor use, but barbecues, camp stoves and most other types of emergency stoves and fuels emit deadly amounts of carbon monoxide and are not safe for indoor use. Store extra propane, charcoal, lighter fluid, and matches outside.
- Know how and where to operate the emergency stove safely. In all situations, ensure that the stove is on a stable, non-flammable surface and away from combustibles such as drapery, furnishings, dry grasses, chemicals, etc. Do not try to cook over a live flame if aftershocks are occurring frequently.
- Fireplaces – inspect chimney and flue for cracks before using.
- Small portable stoves and compact fuels are easy to carry if you are evacuated and must provide your own cooking equipment.
- Heavy-duty aluminum foil saves having to clean a pan, thus saving potable water

Worksheets: Family Reunification and Sheltering Plan

- 1 Collect the information you will need to fill out the forms.
- 2 Develop your rough draft separately and then write the final details onto the pages in this workbook as a handy reference tool.
- 3 Give each family member a photocopy of the sheets in a waterproof/Ziploc bag for the Grab & Go Kit.
- 4 Update the information as needed.
- 5 Keep this workbook easily accessible (for example, by the main phone).

Reunification Plan (Rendezvous Sites)

Enter this information on the wallet cards (next page).

- 1 **MEET AT HOME**
- 2 **MEET AT FRIEND'S/NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE** (name, address, phone)

- 3 **LOCATION OUTSIDE OUR IMMEDIATE AREA** (details)

SHELTERING OPTIONS

- 1 **HOME**

- 2

- 3

FAMILY MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Home Address _____

Home Telephone _____

1 Name _____

Work/School Address _____

Phone _____

MSP Medical # _____

Medications/Allergies _____

2 Name _____

Work/School Address _____

Phone _____

MSP Medical # _____

Medications/Allergies _____

3 Name _____

Work/School Address _____

Phone _____

MSP Medical # _____

Medications/Allergies _____

4 Name _____

Work/School Address _____

Phone _____

MSP Medical # _____

Medications/Allergies _____

LOCAL CONTACTS (NEIGHBOURS, INSURERS, DOCTOR, ETC.)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

PETS & FARM ANIMALS – EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Animal Control _____

Boarding Kennel _____

Emergency Clinic _____

Poison Centre _____

Humane Society _____

Micro Chip Registry _____

Missing Pet Registry _____

Out-of-Town Contact _____

Pet Sitter _____

Alt. Pet Sitter _____

PRIMARY VETERINARIAN

Name _____

Address _____

Directions _____

Hours _____

ALTERNATE VETERINARIAN

Name _____

Address _____

Directions _____

Hours _____

Below are four wallet cards to clip and fold. Photocopy this page, complete the information, and make enough completed copies so that each family member has a card to carry in a wallet or Grab & Go bag.

<p>OUT-OF-PROVINCE EMERGENCY CONTACT</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>OUT-OF-PROVINCE EMERGENCY CONTACT</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>OUT-OF-PROVINCE EMERGENCY CONTACT</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>OUT-OF-PROVINCE EMERGENCY CONTACT</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Home Phone _____</p> <p>Work Phone _____</p> <p>Cell/Pager _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>	<p>RENDEZVOUS POINTS</p> <p>1. HOME</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>

Important Family Documents and Small Valuables

(For evacuations – items not already in your Grab & Go Kits)

At the top of the list, place items that can be carried on foot along with (or inside) the Grab & Go Kit. Be realistic about how much you can gather in the time available, and how much weight and bulk you can carry. Consider that you might need hands free to accompany pets, small children or people with disabilities. Also, consider where you can store the valuables when you reach your destination.

List by priority, and note location:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____
- 11 _____
- 12 _____

OTHER/NOTES

Home Safety Hunt

Involve your whole family in the home safety hunt. Identify what needs to be done and then make a plan to do it one step at a time. Every change you make helps a little, and some changes help a lot.

Yes	No		Fixed
		Cooking areas are clean, and clear of combustibles.	
		Electrical outlets near water are Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) equipped.	
		Hot water heater is secured to wall studs.	
		Tall furniture is secured to walls (ideally, to wall studs).	
		Heavy objects are on lower shelves or in lower cupboards.	
		Electronic equipment and small appliances are secured to shelves.	
		Mirrors and framed pictures are secured with earthquake hangers and are not placed above beds.	
		Hanging plants and lights are securely attached to ceilings and will not hit windows if they swing.	
		Cupboards and storage cabinet doors have earthquake-resistant latches.	
		Chemicals are stored safely.	
		House is bolted to its foundation.	
		Cripple walls have been strengthened.	
		Chimneys are stable, and plywood sheathing is nailed or screwed to the attic floor at the base of chimneys	
		There are smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in good working order on each floor of the house and near bedrooms.	
		A qualified professional has installed flexible pipe fittings to minimize line ruptures, natural gas leaks and water leaks.	
		ABC fire extinguishers are easily accessible on each floor of the house, especially in kitchen, garage and workshop.	

Entering Your Home: Inspection Checklist

If you are using a flashlight, turn it on before entering to avoid a spark that could ignite gas that may be leaking inside. Enter carefully, watching for loose boards and slippery floors.

1. Critical Safety Checks

- Natural gas** – Do not smoke or use oil, gas lanterns, candles, or torches, or turn cameras/cell phones and switches on or off until you are sure there is no gas or other flammable materials present. If you detect natural gas, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the gas at the meter if you can. Call the gas company from another location.
- Sparks, broken or frayed wires** – Check the electrical system. If you are wet, standing in water, or unsure of your safety, do not enter. If possible, turn off the electricity at the circuit box. If unsafe, leave the building and call for help. Do not turn lights on until you are sure they are safe to use. Have an electrician inspect your wiring.
- Roof, foundation, and chimney cracks** – If it looks as if the building may collapse, leave immediately and stay back twice the distance of the height of the house. If only the chimney is unstable, stay well back and rope off areas that may be hit by falling bricks or masonry.
- Wild Animals** – If a wild animal is trapped in your house, open a door or window and stay back so it can escape. Call animal control or wildlife officials if the animal will not leave.

2. Damage Assessment and Clean-up

- For insurance purposes, take pictures of damages.** Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs, including the hours your family and friends spend cleaning, etc.
- Basement** – Basement walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged. If your basement is flooded, pump it out gradually (about 1/3 of the water per day) to avoid damage.
- Household chemical spills** – Clean up spills and safely dispose of used rags / paper towels to avoid spontaneous combustion. Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria or chemicals. Also clean salvageable items.
- Appliances** – If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the circuit box. Then unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have a professional check them before using them again.
- Water and sewage systems** – If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with local authorities before using water as it could be contaminated. Pump out wells and have the water tested before drinking. Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are intact.
- Cabinets** – Open cabinets carefully and watch for falling objects.
- Food and other supplies** – Throw out all food and other supplies that may be contaminated or that may have come into contact with floodwater.

Home Fire Safety Worksheet

Simple steps that can save your life. Check off completed items:

- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home. Place them on the ceiling outside bedrooms, in stairways, and near (but not in) the kitchen.
- Install high quality carbon monoxide (CO) detectors if your home heating or cooking is supplied by natural gas, propane, or if you have a wood burning fireplace or stove. Place the CO detectors near bedrooms, and away from gas appliances.
- Test and vacuum the smoke and CO detectors once a month and replace any batteries every six months when the clocks change. Replace detectors immediately if they fail to test properly; otherwise, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maximum operating life before replacement is needed (even if the detectors appear to be operating properly). If you can't find the life span recommendation, replace your smoke detectors after 10 years and your CO detectors after five years.
- Purchase ABC type fire extinguishers for each floor of your home, plus extras for the kitchen and hobby room/workshop.
- If you work with flammable metals, oils or solvents in your hobby room/workshop, you should consider purchasing a D type extinguisher as well as a proper oily-waste container (these are metal receptacles with lids and ventilated bottoms) for rags that are oil or solvent-soaked. Do not clean oily or solvent soaked rags in your washer or clothes dryer.
- Clean out storage areas. Do not let trash and recycling materials stack up.
- Plan and review escape routes with your family. Practice escaping from each room in the daytime and in the dark. Teach family members to avoid elevators, and to stay low to the floor to avoid deadly fumes when escaping from a fire.
- Designate a safe meeting place outside the home where family can assemble, count heads and wait for the fire department.
- Make sure all windows can open and are not nailed or painted shut. Make sure security gratings on windows have a safety feature allowing the window to be easily opened from the inside.
- Consider escape ladders on the upper floors if your home has more than one level.

Made possible by a partnership of the following:

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT OF CENTRAL SAANICH
CITY OF COLWOOD
TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT
JUAN DE FUCA ELECTORAL AREA
DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS
CITY OF LANGFORD
DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN
DISTRICT OF NORTH SAANICH
DISTRICT OF OAK BAY
DISTRICT OF SAANICH
SALT SPRING ISLAND ELECTORAL AREA
TOWN OF SIDNEY
DISTRICT OF SOOKE
SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS ELECTORAL AREA
CITY OF VICTORIA
TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL