

Safety Tips

Are you and your family prepared for an emergency situation?

Here are a number of helpful tips to get you and your family prepared for different emergency situations... but they're only helpful if you actually do them! Plan ahead and be prepared.

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WEATHER WARNINGS

Environment Canada monitors the weather 24 hours a day, every day of the year. They provide two types of weather alerts; a WEATHER WATCH is provided when conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop. It is advisable to pay close attention to the weather and listen to local radio, weather radio and television for updated information.

A WEATHER WARNING means that severe weather is happening or that severe weather is imminent. A warning means it is time to take cover.

For Weather Information: call 1-204-983-2050; visit www.weatheroffice.gc.ca; or listen to a weather radio.

PACK A HOME EMERGENCY KIT

Your Emergency Supplies Kit should be prepared in advance and contain the following as a minimum. Kits can also be purchased from Canadian Tire, Acklands Grainger, and from Red Cross (www.moreprepared.com)

- An extra set of car keys and house keys
- First aid kit
- Blankets or sleeping bag
- Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members
- Special medications necessary for period of at least one week
- Copies of prescriptions and extra eyeglasses
- Battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Bottled water sufficient for at least 3 days. Two to four litres per person per day—two for drinking and two for food preparation, hygiene and dishwashing



- A three-day supply of non-perishable or canned foods and a manual can opener
- Toys and games for any children in your care
- Sewing kit
- Candles and a supply of matches and/or cigarette lighter.
- Utensils (knives, forks, pots, etc.)
- Paper plates and paper towels
- Resealable plastic bags
- Plastic garbage bags to store waste
- Sanitation supplies (soap, paper towels, toilet paper, tissues, pre-moistened towelettes, waste containers, feminine hygiene products, etc.)

THUNDERSTORMS

A thunderstorm is a localized storm cloud producing thunder, lightning and often gusty winds, heavy rain and hail. Thunderstorms occur when warm, humid air is lifted by surface heating, upslope flow, or a front. Severe thunderstorms commonly threaten life and property with lightning, strong gusty winds, heavy rain or large hail. If thunderstorms occur in areas with restricted drainage, flash floods may result. Thunderstorms may also generate funnel-shaped tornadoes, with their violent rotating winds and hazardous pressure drops. Most thunderstorms are usually over in an hour, although severe thunderstorms, such as multicell storms or supercell storms, can last for several hours.



HEAVY RAINFALL

Heavy rainfall may result in flash floods, washed out roads and bridges, and in some rare cases sink holes. Avoid driving over flooded out roads as you can't tell how deep the water is. Also, flowing water does not need to be deep to push a car along with the flow, so turn around and find another way to get to your destination.

DOWNBURSTS OR STRAIGHT LINE WINDS

Straight-line winds are often forgotten when severe thunderstorms are imagined, but they account for a third of the severe weather events in the Prairies. Straight-line winds can be very strong and gusty, and they can present a hazard: it is the debris, which the winds pick up that causes the most damage.

The safety precautions to take are the same as for tornadoes: find a well-constructed building and head for the basement;

put as many walls between you and the outside as possible; stay away from windows; avoid shopping malls, arenas... buildings with wide-span roofs as these tend to fail under strong wind loads.

Downbursts, also known as straight line winds, plough winds, microbursts, derechos, are often accompanied by a loud roar.

For more information, visit www.getprepared.gc.ca.

PACK A VEHICLE EMERGENCY KIT

You may want to prepare two small emergency kits – one to put in the trunk of your vehicle and the other in the cab of the vehicle. Kits can also be purchased at Canadian Tire, Acklands Grainger, and from Red Cross (www.moreprepared.com). It is a good idea to always keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full during the winter and to have extra windshield washer fluid and antifreeze on hand as well.

The trunk kit should include:

- Shovel, sand, salt, kitty litter or other traction aids;
- Tow chain and booster cables;
- Fire extinguisher, warning light or flares; and
- Extra clothing, including mittens, hats and boots.

The kit in the cab of the vehicle should include:

- Flashlight;
- Blanket;
- First-aid kit
- Matches, candles (in a deep can to warm hands or heat a drink) and emergency food pack.

HAIL

Hail forms when updrafts in thunderclouds carry raindrops upward into extremely cold areas and freeze layer upon layer until they are too heavy and fall to the ground. Hailstones vary in size from peas to grapefruits and fall at great speed. Hailstones have seriously injured people.

What To Do When It Hails:

1. Take cover when hail begins to fall.
2. Do not go out to cover plants, cars or garden furniture or to rescue animals.
3. Stay indoors, and keep yourself, your family and pets away from windows, glass doors, and skylights which can shatter if hit by hail.

POWER OUTAGES

During a power outage, you may be left without heating/air conditioning, lighting, hot water, or even running water. You can greatly lessen the impact of a power outage by taking the time to prepare in advance. You and your family should be prepared to cope on your own for at least 72 hours. This involves three basic steps:

1. Finding out on what to do before, during, and after a power outage.
2. Making a family emergency plan, so that everyone knows what to do, and where to go if you need to leave your home.
3. Getting an [emergency kit](#), so that you and your family can be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours during a power outage.

Preparing for a Power Outage

Ensure you have a corded phone or cell phone because if you have only a cordless phone you could be left without phone service during a power outage.

Ensure you have a battery-powered or crank radio, or you may have no way of monitoring news broadcasts.

You can install a non-electric standby stove or heater.

Choose heating units that are not dependent on an electric motor, electric fan, or some other electric device

to function. It is important to adequately vent the stove or heater with the type of chimney flue specified for it. Never connect two heating units to the same chimney flue at the same time.



Before considering the use of an emergency generator during a power outage, check with furnace, appliance and lighting fixture dealers or manufacturers regarding power requirements and proper operating procedures.

People with Disabilities or Others Requiring Assistance

Consider how you may be affected in a power outage, including:

Your evacuation route — without elevator service (if applicable)

Planning for a backup power supply for essential medical equipment

Keeping a flashlight and a cell phone handy to signal for help

Establishing a self-help network to assist and check on you during an emergency

Enrolling in a medical alert program that will signal for help if you are immobilized

Keeping a list of facilities that provide life-sustaining equipment or treatment

Keeping a list of medical conditions and treatment

If you live in an apartment, advise the property management that you may need assistance staying in your apartment or that you must be evacuated if there is a power outage. This will allow the property manager to plan and make the necessary arrangements on your behalf.

During a power outage:

Check whether the power outage is limited to your home. If your neighbours' power is still on, check your own circuit breaker panel or fuse box. If the problem is not a breaker or a fuse, check the service wires leading to the house. If they are obviously damaged or on the ground, stay at least 10 meters back and notify Manitoba Hydro. Keep the number along with other emergency numbers near your telephone.

Turn off all tools, appliances and electronic equipment, and turn the thermostat(s) for the home heating system down to minimum to prevent damage from a power surge when power is restored. Turn off all lights, except one inside and one outside, so that both you and hydro crews outside know that power has been restored.

Don't open your freezer or fridge unless it is absolutely necessary. A full freezer will keep food frozen for 24 to 36 hours if the door remains closed.

Never use charcoal or gas barbecues, camping heating equipment, or home generators indoors. They give off carbon monoxide. Although you can't smell or see it, carbon monoxide can cause health problems and is life-threatening.

Use proper candleholders. Never leave lit candles unattended and keep out of reach of children. Always extinguish candles before going to bed.

Listen to your battery-powered or wind-up radio for information on the outage and advice from authorities.

Make sure your home is equipped with working smoke detectors and a working carbon monoxide detector. If they are hard-wired to the house's electrical supply, ensure they have a battery-powered back up.

Home generators are handy for backup electricity in case of an outage, but must only be used in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines. A back-up generator may only be connected to your home's electrical system through an approved transfer panel and switch that has been installed by a qualified electrician. Never plug a generator into a wall outlet as serious injury can result when the current produced by the home generator is fed back into the electrical lines, and transformed to a higher voltage. This can endanger the lives of utility employees working to restore the power.

To operate a generator safely:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Ensure that the generator operates outdoors in well-ventilated conditions, well away from doors or windows, to prevent exhaust gases from entering the house.

- Connect lights and appliances directly to the generator unless your home is equipped with an approved transfer switch and wired for stand-by power. If extension cords must be used, ensure they are properly rated, CSA-approved cords.

For more information on power outages, visit www.getprepared.gc.ca.

LIGHTNING



During a thunderstorm the air is charged with electricity. Bolts of lightning hit the ground at about 40,000 km per second----so fast that the series of strikes hitting the ground appear to be a single bolt.

What To Do When There Is Lightning:

1. Estimate how far away the lightning is. Every second between the flash of lightning and the thunderclap equals 300 meters. If you count fewer than 30 seconds, take shelter immediately.
2. If indoors, stay away from windows, doors, fireplaces, radiators, sinks, bathtubs, appliances, metal pipes, telephones and other things that

conduct electricity. (You can use a cellular phone)

3. Unplug radios, computers and televisions.
4. Do not go out to rescue the laundry on the clothesline as it conducts electricity. If outdoors, take shelter in a building, ditch, or a culvert but never under a tree.
5. If caught in the open, do not lie flat but crouch in the leapfrog position and lower your head.
6. Do not ride bicycles, motorcycles, or golf carts or use metal tools as they conduct electricity.
7. If swimming or in a boat, get back to shore immediately.
8. If you are in a car, stay there but pull away from trees that might fall on you.
9. You may resume activity 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.

EXTREME HEAT

What To Do When There Is Extreme Heat:

1. Slow down. Your body can't do its best in high temperatures
2. Get out of the heat and into a cooler place as soon as you begin to feel too warm.
3. Drink plenty of water to keep your body from dehydrating.
4. Maintain salt levels in your body. If you are on a salt free diet, check with your doctor.
5. Avoid high protein foods. They increase your body's water loss and heat production.
6. Dress appropriately in lightweight, light-coloured clothing.
7. Avoid getting sunburned; it restricts the body's cooling system.

Humidex

The humidex is an index (a computed value as opposed to something measured) devised to describe how hot or humid weather feels to the average person. The humidex combines the temperature and humidity into one number to reflect the perceived temperature. It takes into account these two important factors that affect summer comfort. It is therefore a better measure of how stifling the air feels than either temperature or humidity alone. A humidex of 40 with, for example, a temperature of 30 degrees means that the sensation of heat when it is 30 degrees and the air is humid is more or less the

same as when it is 40 degrees and the air is dry. We must be careful not to depend on this interpretation alone: it is a mere indication of physiological reactions, not an absolute measure. The humidex is particularly significant when its value is greater than 30. We only display humidex values of 25 or higher for a location which reports a dew point temperature above zero (0°C) and an air temperature of 20°C or more. Below this value, the humidex is too close to the air temperature to be considered significant.

TORNADOES

A tornado is defined as a violently rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground. They are always produced by thunderstorms but not every thunderstorm produces a tornado. They travel between 20 and 90 km/h, are erratic, and can change course suddenly. Do not chase tornadoes. Tornado Watch means the weather could develop a tornado. Tornado Warning means a tornado has been seen or it is very likely that one will develop shortly.

Warning Signs of Tornadoes:

- Severe thunderstorms with frequent thunder and lightning
- An extremely dark sky sometimes highlighted by green or yellow clouds
- A rumbling sound, such as a freight train or a whistling sound similar to a jet aircraft. The rumbling sound is not only associated to tornadoes, any intense thunderstorm wind can produce damage and cause a roar.
- A funnel cloud at the rear of a thunder cloud often behind a curtain of heavy rain or hail

WHAT TO DO DURING A TORNADO

If You Are Near A Building:

1. Listen to your radio during severe thunderstorms.
2. If a Tornado Warning has been issued, take cover immediately.
3. Go to the basement or take shelter in a small interior ground floor room, closet or hallway.
4. Protect yourself by sitting under a heavy table or desk.
5. Stay away from windows and outside walls and doors.
6. Do not use elevators.
7. Avoid large halls, churches, arenas etc.; their roofs are more likely to collapse.
8. Stay close to the ground, protect your head and hide from flying debris.



If You Are Driving:

1. If you are driving, try and get to a nearby shelter—drive away from the tornado at a right angle.
2. Do not get caught in a car or mobile home—take shelter elsewhere. If no shelter is available, lie face down in a ditch or culvert away from the vehicle or mobile home.
3. If a tornado seems to be standing still, it is either travelling away from you or heading right for you.

4. Stay close to the ground, protect your head and hide from flying debris.

For more info, visit www.getprepared.gc.ca.

WINTER STORMS

At Home

If you live in a community located in an area where blizzards or heavy snows are frequent, consider stocking up on heating fuel (if necessary) and ready-to-eat food, as well as battery-powered or crank type flashlights and radios – and extra batteries.

When freezing rain, heavy snow, blowing snow or a blizzard is forecast, leave your radio on to stay informed of the situation and hear updated forecasts.

If a blizzard or heavy blowing snow is forecast and you are on a farm with livestock, bring the animals into shelter. Make sure they have plenty of water and food. You may also want to string a lifeline between your house and any outbuildings to which you may have to go during the storm.

When a winter storm hits, stay indoors. If you must go outdoors, dress for the weather.

Outer clothing should be tightly woven and water-repellent. The jacket should have a hood. Wear mittens – they are warmer than gloves – and a hat, as most body heat is lost through the head.

In wide-open areas, visibility can be virtually zero during heavy blowing snow or a blizzard. You may easily lose your way. If a blizzard strikes, do not try to walk to another building unless there is a rope to guide you or something you can follow.

Ice from freezing rain accumulates on branches, power lines and buildings. If you must go outside during such time, pay attention to branches, wires or sheets of ice that could break, and fall on you. Do not touch power lines: a hanging power line could be live and you would run the risk of electrocution. Remember also that ice, branches or power lines can continue to break and fall for several hours after the precipitation ends, so be vigilant.

In Your Vehicle

Remember to pack your [vehicle emergency kits](#).

If you do not already have a cellular telephone and if the cellular network works in your area, you may want to consider having one with you in your car for emergencies. You could also look into purchasing a pay-as-you-go cell phone to use during longer road trips.

Remember that freezing rain, even just a small amount, or blowing snow can make roads extremely slippery. Driving is not recommended when freezing rain or blowing snow is forecast, or for several hours after freezing rain or blowing snow ends. Road maintenance crews need enough time to clear the roads and spread sand or salt on icy roads.

If you must travel during a winter storm, do so during the day if possible and let someone know your route and expected arrival time.

If your car gets stuck in a blizzard or snowstorm, remain calm and stay in your car. Allow fresh air into your car by opening the window slightly on the sheltered side – away from the wind. You can run the car engine about 10 minutes every half-hour if the exhaust system is working well. 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.)

If stuck in your car during a blizzard or snowstorm, keep your hands and feet warm by exercising them periodically. In general, it is a good idea to keep moving to avoid falling asleep. If you do try to shovel the snow from around your car, avoid overexerting yourself, as shoveling and bitter cold can kill. Keep watch for traffic or searchers. If you are trapped for a longer period of time, open and use the blankets, food, candles and can from your emergency kit.

For more info, visit www.getprepared.gc.ca.

WIND CHILL

Canada's wind chill index is based on loss of heat from the face. The index is expressed in temperature-like units. The best way to understand wind chill is to think of it as a feeling. The wind chill index represents how your skin would feel at a given temperature on a calm day. For instance, if the outside air temperature is -5C and the wind chill is -25, your face will feel as cold as it would at -25C on a calm day even though the temperature is only -5C.

Wind Chill	Health Concern	What To Do
0 to -9	Slight discomfort	Dress warmly
-10 to -24	Uncomfortable Bare skin feels cold Risk of hypothermia	Dress in layers Wear a hat, mitts, and scarf Keep active
-25 to -44	Skin may freeze Risk of hypothermia	Check face, fingers, toes, ears & nose for numbness or whiteness Dress in layers - Cover bare skin Wear a hat, mitts, and scarf Keep active
-45 to -59	Bare skin may freeze in minutes	Check face, fingers, toes, ears & nose for numbness or whiteness Dress in layers - Cover bare skin Wear a hat, mitts, and scarf Keep active
-60 and colder	Bare skin may freeze in less than 2 minutes	It is dangerous! Stay indoors