



# Preparing for emergencies



**Main Line Health<sup>®</sup>**  
HomeCare & Hospice

Resources for help during an emergency:

Main Line Health HomeCare & Hospice

Home Health: 484.580.1601

Hospice: 484.580.1550

Ready.PA

1.888.973.2397

[www.ReadyPA.org](http://www.ReadyPA.org)

You can download a copy of the Pennsylvania Emergency Preparedness Guide at [www.ReadyPA.org](http://www.ReadyPA.org) or the Red Cross Disaster Plan Guide at [www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/make-a-plan](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/make-a-plan).

This guide is adapted from those materials.

**If you need of immediate medical attention,  
please activate Emergency Medical Services by calling**

**9.1.1.**

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## **Preparing for emergencies**

Emergencies can happen anytime in any location. It is important to prepare for the unexpected, including power outages, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, blizzards, and other emergencies.

During severe weather or emergency conditions, we will make every effort to continue home care visits and ensure that your health care needs are met. The agency will contact you by phone and inform you of our emergency plan. We will prioritize client visits based on medical necessity. When roads are too dangerous to travel, our staff will contact you by phone to let you know that they are unable to make your visit that day.

Twenty-four-hour telephone assistance is available by calling 484.580.1601. If you are in need of immediate medical attention, please activate Emergency Medical Services by calling 9.1.1.

In case of a power outage, if you require assistance and our agency phone lines are down, please follow the following directions:

- If you are in a crisis or have an emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.
- If it is not an emergency, but you need assistance, call your closest relative or neighbor. Our agency will get in touch with you as soon as possible.

In the event of a natural disaster or federal emergency, follow the direction of the Emergency Broadcasting Network or the Federal Emergency Management Association. Your local radio and television stations will broadcast specific direction for personal and medical safety. Resources for additional assistance are also listed on the inside cover of this Emergency Preparedness Guide.

Following these guidelines will help to ensure that your comfort, safety, and medical needs will be met during an emergency:

Plan ahead • Keep informed • Keep in touch • Contact the agency

## **Why get ready now for emergencies?**

Emergency and healthcare workers will help after a disaster strikes, but they may not be able to reach everyone right away. That's why it's so important to be ready for live on your own for at least three days during an emergency. This may mean having another place to stay, extra food, water, first-aid, and other basic needs. We can't control natural disasters, emergencies, or terrorist attacks, but we can be ready for them and know what to do to take care of ourselves and our loved ones.

This guide will help you become better prepared by learning about different types of emergencies, how to create emergency plans and kits, and how to plan for any special needs. Emergency planning helps make sure that you will have the things you need to get through an emergency. The more prepared you are, the safer and more comfortable you will be.

## Be prepared at home

If an emergency happens, it's important to have a plan of action for you and your family. Creating an emergency contact list, planning for you and your family, and having an emergency kit on hand are the most important things you can do to be prepared.

1. Meet with your family and talk about the dangers of different emergencies, including things like floods, severe weather, nuclear accidents, and flu pandemics.
2. Talk about how you and your family will respond to each possible emergency.
3. Keep it simple. The best emergency plans are simple enough so that everyone can remember the important details.
4. Talk about your disaster plans with your home healthcare team.
5. Complete your emergency plan of action found at the back of this book.
6. Keep a list of people (names and phone numbers) of people who can help: Put emergency contacts near all telephones. Enter emergency numbers in your cell phones contact list.
  - Family or friends
  - Neighbors
  - Doctor
  - Homecare provider
  - Pharmacy
  - Local hospital
  - Medical suppliers
  - Ambulance or other emergency medical service (EMS)
  - Utility companies
  - Fire
  - Police
  - Local Red Cross
  - Local emergency management office
7. It is important to know who in your community can help you in the event of a disaster. Your county emergency management agency can help you get ready for emergencies before they happen.
  - EMA/ DOH Contact List:
    - Chester County 610.344.5000
    - Delaware County 610.565.8700
    - Montgomery County 610.631.6530
    - Philadelphia County 215.686.4465

- For public health preparedness information, call your designated health department listed below (1.877.724.3258) (1.877.PA.HEALTH)
    - Chester County Health Department: 610.344.6083
    - Montgomery County Health Department: 610.278.5117 X6713
    - Philadelphia Department of Public Health: 215.685.6741
8. Ask your local fire department or emergency management agency if they keep a list of people with special medical needs. If they do, make sure the information they have for you is up-to-date.
  9. If you need electricity for your medical equipment, notify your local power company before a disaster strikes. Some companies will first help those with special medical needs during a disaster.
  10. Plan how your family will communicate. Consider asking a relative or friend who lives outside of your area to be your family contact. In a disaster, local telephone service may be disrupted, but long-distance lines are more likely to be open. For this reason, an out-of-town contact may be better able to communicate among family members who become separated. Everyone should know the name, address and telephone number of this contact person.
  11. Consider a personal emergency response system so that you can signal for help if you can't get to the phone.
  12. Turn on the radio, the weather station, or television for emergency information. Have a battery-powered radio available in the event of power failure. Be sure to have extra batteries.
  13. Know what to do in case power is out or someone is hurt.
  14. Know who could walk to your home to help you if other kinds of transportation, like public buses, are not working.
  15. Prepare to leave your home. If you need to leave your home because of a fire or other emergency, have a plan to get out quickly and safely. List escape routes from each room in your house. Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut.
  16. Learn how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at main switches. If for any reason you turn off natural gas service to your home, call your gas company to restore service. Do not attempt to restore service yourself.
  17. Prepare to evacuate the area. If authorities ask you to evacuate, have a plan for you and your family to leave the area.
  18. Pick two meeting places- a place near your home and a place outside your neighborhood- in case you cannot return after an emergency.
  19. Take your pets with you but remember that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. This guide will give you can find more information about what to do with your pets in an emergency.
  20. Take your emergency supply kit, copies of your important papers, and your medicine or other medical supplies with you.
  21. Consider a medical bracelet to alert rescue crews to any medical condition you may have. You may also consider carrying a medical ID card and posting medical instructions on your refrigerator or another easy to see location.
  22. Keep family records and recent photos (including photos of pets) in a waterproof and fireproof safe. Inexpensive models can be purchased at most hardware stores.

23. Take a Basic First Aid and CPR class. Contact the American Red Cross for more information at: [www/redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or call 1-800-REDCROSS (1.800.733.2767). Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is also available through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) at 717.651.2141.

## **Know the threats**

In this section you will find information about what types of disasters are most likely to occur in Pennsylvania, along with how to prepare for each and what to do if you are faced with one of these emergencies.

The following are potential weather-related and human-made emergencies you should be informed about:

- Floods
- Fire
- Winter storms
- Heat waves
- Tropical storms, tornadoes, and thunderstorms
- Influenza (flu) pandemic
- Hazardous material incidents
- Earthquakes and landslides
- Nuclear threat
- Dam Failures
- Terrorism

## **Floods**

Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Pennsylvania and can happen in different ways. Flooding can be caused by rapid heavy rain or can start slowly during a long period of rain. Flooding can also occur if warm air follows heavy snow fall. Others, like flash floods, can happen very quickly. Flooding can also be caused by heavy rain, burst water pipes, backed up sewers, or a dam that bursts. No matter where you live, you should always be ready for a flood emergency.

### **Take the following steps to prepare for a flood emergency:**

Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days. Gather medical supplies you previously stocked in your home.

- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Learn about the emergency plans that have been established in your area by your state and local government.
- For flooding that results in your floors getting wet, move furniture, equipment and supplies as needed. If the floor is wet, do not touch appliances, fixtures or switches.
- For deeper waters, plan for evacuation. Know safe routes to higher ground.
- Turn off the main power switch and close the main gas valve if evacuation is necessary.
- Visit [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) to find out if your home is at risk for a flood.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
- Consider installing "check valves" to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home. As a last resort, use large corks or stoppers to plug showers, tubs, or basins.
- If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- Understand the difference between a flood watch and a flood warning:
  - Flood Watch: Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.
  - Flood Warning: Flooding is occurring or will occur soon. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

### **What to do in a flash flood:**

Flash floods occur within six hours of the beginning of heavy rainfall. Below are some guidelines for keeping safe during a flash flood:

- Go to high ground immediately.
- Get out of areas subject to flooding, such as low spots, canyons, washes, etc.
- Do not attempt to cross a flowing stream on foot. Even water only six inches deep, when moving at a high rate of speed, can knock you off your feet.
- Never drive through flooded areas or standing water. Shallow, swiftly flowing water can wash a car from a roadway. Also, the roadbed may not be intact under the water.
- If the vehicle stalls, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground. Rapidly rising water may engulf the vehicle and its occupants.
- Be especially cautious at night when it's harder to recognize flood dangers.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.

# Fire

Like flooding, fires affect thousands of Americans and cause billions of dollars in damage every year. Fires, however, are often preventable. Fires can spread quickly, so they can become life threatening in two minutes and destroy a home in as little as 5 minutes. As the fire burns, poisonous gases are sent into the air that can make you feel drowsy and less in control of your thinking and movements. The top reason people die from fires is from smoke inhalation (breathing in smoke), not burns.

## **How to prepare for (and help prevent) a fire emergency:**

- Installing smoke alarms is the single most important step you can take to prepare for a fire. According to PA State Fire Commissioner, properly working smoke alarms decrease your chances of dying in a fire by 50 percent.
- Place smoke alarms on every level of your residence. Place them outside bedrooms on the ceiling or high on the wall (4 to 12 inches from ceiling), at the top of open stairways or at the bottom of enclosed stairs and near (but not in) the kitchen.
- Test and clean smoke alarms once a month and replace batteries at least once a year.
- Replace smoke alarms once every 10 years.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family. Your plan for fire emergencies should include identifying multiple escape routes from the building, identifying a meeting place and having regular fire drills.
- Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut.
- Make sure you have working fire extinguishers in your home and teach family members how to use them.
- Have the wiring in your house checked by an electrician.
- Place heaters at least three feet away from flammable materials. Use extreme caution when using alternative heating sources, such as kerosene heaters.
- Learn about the emergency plans that have been established in your area by your state and local government.

## **What to do if there is a fire:**

- If you suspect fire, get out of the building as quickly as you can. Call the fire department from a neighbor's house.
- Don't waste time gathering valuables or making a phone call.
- Once you're out of your home, do not go back in for any reason.
- Know at least 2 ways out of the home from each room. Try to find an exit that does not require opening the bedroom door. If a door feels hot, do not open it. Do not open any doors except for the ones you have to escape through.
- If there is smoke in the house, stay low to the ground as you exit to avoid inhaling potentially toxic fumes.

- If your fire escape is cut off, remain calm, close the door, and seal cracks to hold back smoke. Signal for help at the window.
- If you live in an apartment building, use the exit stair location. Do not use elevators in a fire emergency.
- In the event of fire, a bed bound patient can be relocated to safety by placing the patient on a sturdy blanket and dragging the blanket out of the house.
- Determine a meeting place for all household members away from the house.
- Teach children not to hide under beds or in closets in the event of a fire emergency, as this will make it more difficult for firefighters to find them

## **Winter storms**

The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the “deceptive killers” because most deaths are not a direct result of the storms. People are injured or killed in traffic accidents on icy roads or suffer from hypothermia (low body temperature) due to being cold for a long period of time.

Another major danger with winter storms is that they can knock out power. Expect utility loss during any unusual or severe weather emergency. Have a plan for providing and receiving care without utilities.

Storms and other weather emergencies can be anticipated, or they might arrive suddenly and take us by surprise. The impact of the storm can vary from community to community. It is important to heed the warnings of township officials and follow local weather alerts and instructions.

### **Snow and ice storm tips:**

The following are general tips that can help you to stay safe during snow and ice storms:

- Winterize your home before the winter.
- Don't let your supply of heating fuel get too low.
- Have extra blankets on hand.
- Stay indoors during storms.
- Gather supplies: food, water, batteries, rock salt or cat litter, supplies needed to perform your care.
- Make arrangements for snow and ice removal.
- Ensure adequate food and water. Have someone deliver groceries if possible.
- Arrange to have someone check on your safety.

## Cold weather tips:

Serious health problems can result from prolonged exposure to the cold such as hypothermia and frostbite. You can stay warm and safe during the cold winter months by following a few safety tips:

- Heat your home safely.
  - Furnace safety: Have a qualified serviceman check your furnace and clean it. Remove trash, papers, and paint from the area around the furnace. Use metal containers for ashes.
  - Fireplace safety: Cover the fireplace opening with a sturdy metal screen or heat-tempered glass door. Never leave a fire unattended. Before and after heating season, have qualified personnel clean the chimney and check it for crumbling bricks, loose mortar, obstructions, and creosote buildup. Burn only dry, well-seasoned hardwoods like oak and birch; avoid pine, spruce and wood that is green and moist.
  - Woodstove safety: Cast iron or heavy steel stoves with a damper or draft control are recommended. There should be a minimum clearance of 36 inches between stove and walls and ceiling. Woodstoves should be positioned on a base such as metal or brick which extends 18 inches beyond stove in all directions.
  - Portable space heaters: Do not place a space heater within 3 feet of anything that can catch fire. Never place a space heater on top of furniture. Do not use space heaters around explosive fumes or materials. Be sure the heater shuts off if it tips over. Ensure adequate ventilation if you must use a kerosene heater. Use caution around kerosene heaters with canister vacuum cleaners which can spread flames onto carpets or drapes. Never leave children unattended with the heater.
- Make certain curtains and blankets do not touch heaters.
- Plug equipment into separate outlets or use heavy duty extension cords.
- Dress warmly, even if you don't feel cold.
- Eat regularly and drink plenty of nonalcoholic, noncaffeinated beverages.
- Avoid unnecessary opening of doors or windows. Close off unneeded rooms and cover windows with drapes or blankets.
- Have extra blankets available.
- Never fold or roll an electric blanket as heat builds up and the wires break. Store flat and unplugged.
- Check the temperature of your home often.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia including: lowered body temperature, severe shivering, confusion, sleepiness, slurred speech, or arm and leg stiffness. Ask neighbors and relatives to check on you during times of extreme cold.

## **Preparing for a winter storm emergency:**

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days.
- Check and update your family's emergency supply kit before winter approaches and add the following supplies in preparation for winter weather:
  - Rock salt to melt ice on walkways.
  - Sand to improve traction.
  - Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
  - Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you and your family warm.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Listen to your radio, television, or NOAA Weather Radio for weather reports and emergency information.
- Make sure your home is well insulated and that you have weather stripping around your doors and windowsills to keep the warm air inside.
- If you have no heat, close off unneeded rooms, stuff towels or rags in the cracks under doors and cover windows at night.
- Cover pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Learn how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts. If the pipes freeze, remove any insulation or layers of newspapers and wrap pipes in rags. Completely open all faucets and pour hot water over the pipes, starting where they were most exposed to the cold (or where the cold was most likely to penetrate).
- Use extreme caution when using alternative heating sources. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep them at least three feet from flammable objects. Also, when using kerosene heaters, be sure to maintain ventilation to avoid build-up of toxic fumes.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Several layers of lightweight clothing will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Wear gloves (or mittens) and a hat to help prevent loss of body heat.

## **Heat waves**

When it is very hot for long periods of time, there are health risks. In recent years, excessive heat has caused more deaths than all other weather events, including floods. A heat wave is a prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity. During a heat wave, temperatures are generally 10 degrees or more above the average high temperature for the region during summer months, last for a long period of time and occur with high humidity as well.

When a heat wave hits, it is important to make sure the weather doesn't harm you. Knowing how to cope and keep cool during a heat wave can prevent heat illness and save lives.

## **What is heat illness?**

Heat illness includes conditions known as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. As heat and humidity rises so do the number of cases of heat illness.

- Heat cramps are muscle spasms in the stomach, arms or legs which may begin during or after heavy activity and may cause mild discomfort or severe pain.
- Heat exhaustion causes feelings of extreme weakness, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and fainting. The person's skin turns pale, cold and moist with sweat.
- Heat stroke (also known as sunstroke) is a life-threatening condition in which a person's temperature control system stops working and the body is unable to cool itself. The body does not produce sweat and the skin becomes red, hot and dry. Heat stroke is a health emergency which can cause a person to lose consciousness.

## **Who is at risk for heat illness?**

Anybody is at risk for heat illness if exposed to the effect of heat and humidity for - prolonged periods of time without taking proper precautions. However, the very young, the elderly, and those with serious health conditions are at risk of health problems when the weather is very hot.

Those who are at greater risk and should take greater precaution include:

- Children
- Seniors
- Persons with obesity
- Persons who work outdoors
- Persons with chronic illnesses, such as heart or breathing problems
- Persons taking certain medicines such as vasoconstrictors, beta blockers, diuretics, antidepressants, antipsychotics, stimulants for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and illegal stimulants such as amphetamines and cocaine.
- Persons with vomiting or diarrhea

## **How can I prevent heat illness?**

- Drink plenty of cool water on hot summer days. If you are on a fluid restriction or take water pills, ask your doctor how much you should drink when the weather is hot.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages or caffeine.
- Avoid taking salt tablets unless ordered by your doctor.

- Wear light-colored and porous clothing, preferably made of cotton. Wear a hat when exposed to direct sun light.
- Reduce your physical activity and plan to do necessary activities at cooler times during the day. Take breaks and rest between activities.
- Remain indoors during the heat of the day. Cover sunny windows with drapes or awnings.
- Use air conditioning, if possible. If you do not have air conditioning, consider going to an air-conditioned environment.
- If you do not have air conditioning, keep windows open and use fans to keep the air circulating. Never use a fan with closed windows.
- Ask neighbors and relatives to check on you during times of extreme heat.
- Report any signs or symptoms of heat illness to your doctor immediately.

## **Tropical storms, tornadoes, and thunderstorms**

Tropical storms, tornadoes, and thunderstorms can cause a lot of damage and very dangerous weather emergencies. Tropical storms bring high winds and sometimes serious flooding. Violent tornadoes can happen suddenly and without warning- sometimes you can't see them until a funnel cloud shows up. Thunderstorms can bring dangerous lightning, one of the main causes of weather-related deaths in the United States each year.

### **Preparing for tropical storms:**

Tropical storms have sustained winds of up to 73 miles per hour and can bring intense rain that causes severe flooding.

The following are steps you can take to prepare for tropical storms:

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Know the difference between a tropical storm watch and a tropical storm warning:
  - Tropical Storm Watch- Conditions indicate that a tropical storm is possible but has not yet occurred.
  - Tropical Storm Warning- a tropical storm is expected to strike the area within 4 hours. This warning will include an assessment of flooding dangers, high wind warnings for the storm's periphery, estimated storm effects and recommended emergency procedures.
- Bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans and anything else that is not tied down.
- Keep all trees and shrubs well-trimmed so they are more wind resistant.

- Secure your home by closing shutters and securing outdoor objects or bringing them inside.
- Turn off utilities as instructed. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Cover your home's windows with pre-cut ply wood or hurricane shutters to protect your windows from high winds.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

### **Preparing for tornadoes:**

Even though tornadoes are more common in the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest, they can occur in any state and at any time of the year. In Pennsylvania, there have been 170 tornadoes recorded in just the last 10 years (source: National Climactic Data Center). With tornadoes, planning and practicing specifically how and where you take shelter is a matter of survival.

The following are steps you can take to prepare for tornadoes:

- Go to the basement. If you do not have a basement, or cannot get to your basement, go to the lowest floor possible.
- If underground shelter is not available, go to an inside room or hallway in the center of the building on the lowest floor possible.
- Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. Go to the center of the room. Stay away from corners because they attract debris.
- If you live in a mobile home or trailer, go to a sturdy building nearby. If that is not possible, go outside, and lie flat in a ditch or low area. Cover your head with your arms. Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Know the difference between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning:
  - Tornado watch: conditions are favorable for tornadoes in and close to the watch area.
  - Tornado warning: A tornado has been detected by Doppler Radar and/or has been sighted.

### **Preparing for thunderstorms:**

Every thunderstorm produces lightning, which means every thunderstorm is dangerous. Because lightning is so unpredictable and can occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall, being prepared and knowing what to do in a thunderstorm will decrease your risk of being injured. Other dangers associated with thunderstorms include tornadoes, strong winds, hail and flash flooding, which is responsible for more fatalities than any other thunderstorm-associated hazard.

Remember the 30/30 lightning safety rule: Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder. Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors in the summer months during the afternoon and evening, so be particularly cautious of lightning this time of year.

The following are steps you can take to prepare for thunderstorms:

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days in case there is a long-term power outage.
- Know the difference between a Thunderstorm Watch and a Thunderstorm Warning:
  - Thunderstorm watch: There is a possibility of a thunderstorm in your area.
  - Thunderstorm warning: A thunderstorm is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to take shelter, do so immediately.
- If a thunderstorm is likely in your area, postpone outdoor activities.
- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage during a severe thunderstorm.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades or curtains.

### **During a thunderstorm:**

- Stay inside a home or building, away from windows. If you are outside and cannot find shelter, get inside a hard-top automobile (not a convertible). Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.
- Do not go outside. If you are caught outside, go to a low spot.
- Avoid the following:
  - Natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
  - Hilltops, open fields, the beach or a boat on the water.
  - Isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
  - Anything metal, such as tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs and bicycles.
  - Water.
  - Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.
- Avoid showering or bathing. Stay away from water and faucets. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Use a corded telephone only for emergencies. Cordless and cellular telephones are safe to use.

- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Listen for weather updates from local officials.

## **Influenza (flu) pandemic**

Like the seasonal flu many people experience every year, pandemic flu will probably spread by infected people coughing or sneezing and by touching an infected surface. Unlike seasonal flu, people will have little or no protection against the new flu virus which causes a pandemic, and many more people will get sick. When flu pandemics happen, they will likely go on for a while and cover a lot of area, causing changes in many parts of our everyday lives. During a flu pandemic, healthy people may have a higher risk for serious illness or complications.

Right now, there is no immediate threat of a flu pandemic in Pennsylvania or the United States. However, Pennsylvania is taking an aggressive approach to preparing for the possibility of a pandemic flu outbreak in humans or animals sometime in the future. It's important to know that there are steps you and your family can take as well to help prepare for this threat.

### **Prepare for an influenza pandemic:**

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Practice good hygiene and wash your hands frequently.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Regularly clean surfaces that are touched by multiple people.
- Stay home from work or school when you are sick.
- Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, getting regular exercise and getting enough rest.
- Get a yearly flu vaccination, especially if you are at high risk for flu complications.
- Discuss individual health concerns with your doctor.
- Plan to help your family, friends and neighbors, especially those who live alone or may need assistance in an emergency.
- Stay informed about pandemic influenza and be prepared to respond.

## **Hazardous material incidents**

Hazardous materials are substances (like chemicals, liquids, or gases) that if released or misused can pose a threat to the environment or people's health. Because hazardous materials are moved along our roadways, railways, waterways and pipelines every day, a hazardous material incident can happen anywhere, and you need to be prepared in case an incident happens near you.

Chemical manufacturers are one source of hazardous materials, but there are many others, including service stations, hospitals, and hazardous materials waste sites. Many hazardous materials do not have any odor and may only be detected once physical symptoms like watering eyes or nausea occur. Some hazardous materials can cause death, serious injury, long-lasting health effects, and damage to buildings and property.

### **Preparing for hazardous material incidents:**

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days. Be sure to include plastic sheeting, duct tape and scissors in your emergency kit.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Find out if your community has a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). LEPCs collect information about hazardous materials in the community and make this information available upon request. The LEPC may also have an emergency plan to respond to hazardous materials emergencies in the community and can tell you ways the public will be notified if an incident does happen.

### **What to do if a hazardous materials incident occurs:**

- Listen to local radio or television stations for detailed information and instructions.
- If you witness a hazardous materials incident, spill or leak, call 911, your local emergency number or the fire department as soon as possible. Avoid contact with any spilled liquid materials, airborne mist or condensed solid deposit.
- Stay away from the incident area to minimize the risk of contamination.
- If you are caught outside during an incident try to stay upstream, uphill and upwind. Hazardous materials can be transported quickly by water and wind.
- In general, try to go at least one-half mile (10 city blocks) from the incident area.
- If you are in a vehicle, stop and seek shelter in a permanent building. If you must remain in your car, keep car windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner and heater.
- If you are told to evacuate, do so immediately.
- If you are requested to stay indoors or shelter-in-place:
  - Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close vents, fireplace dampers, and as many interior doors as possible.

- Turn off air conditioners and ventilation systems. In large buildings, set ventilation systems to 100 percent recirculation so that no outside air is drawn into the building. If this is not possible, ventilation systems should be turned off.
- Go into a pre-selected shelter room. This room should be above ground and have the fewest openings to the outside.
- Seal the room by covering each window, door, and vent using plastic sheeting and duct tape. Use material to fill cracks and holes in the room, such as those around pipes.
- Keep your body fully covered and wear gloves, socks and shoes even though these measures may offer minimal protection.
- Avoid eating or drinking any food or water that may be contaminated.

### **What to do after a hazardous materials incident:**

- Return home only when authorities say it is safe. Open windows and vents and turn on fans to provide ventilation.
- Act quickly if you have come into contact with or have been exposed to hazardous materials:
  - Follow decontamination instructions from local authorities. You may be advised to take a thorough shower, or you may be advised to stay away from water and follow another procedure.
  - Seek medical treatment for unusual symptoms as soon as possible.
  - Place exposed clothing and shoes in tightly sealed containers. Do not allow them to contact other materials. Call local authorities to find out about proper disposal.
  - Advise everyone who comes in to contact with you that you may have been exposed to a hazardous material.
- Find out from local authorities how to clean up your land and property.
- Report any lingering vapors or other hazards to your local emergency services office

## **Earthquakes and landslides**

Earthquakes and landslides are frightening and destructive natural disasters.

### **Preparing for earthquakes**

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rock deep underground. If an earthquake happens in an area with a lot of people, it can cause many deaths and injuries. Although most people think of our

country's west coast when they think of earthquakes, there are 45 states and territories throughout the United States (including Pennsylvania) that are risk.

Because of how fast and suddenly earthquakes and happen, it is important for you and your family to prepare ahead of time.

The following are steps you can take to prepare for earthquakes:

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days. Be sure to include plastic sheeting, duct tape and scissors in your emergency kit.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Know important terms you may hear during an emergency:
  - Earthquake- a sudden slipping or movement of a portion of the earth's crust, accompanied and followed by a series of vibrations.
  - Aftershock- an earthquake of similar or less intensity that follows the main earthquake.
  - Fault- the break in the earth's crust which moves during an earthquake. The movement may range from less than an inch to more than 10 yards in a severe earthquake.
  - Epicenter- the place on the earth's surface where the earthquake rupture began. Once fault slippage begins, it expands along the fault during the earthquake and can extend hundreds of miles.
  - Seismic waves- vibrations that travel outward from the earthquake fault at speeds of several miles per second. Although fault slippage by itself can cause considerable damage, the vibrations of seismic waves cause most of the destruction during earthquakes.
  - Magnitude- the amount of energy released during an earthquake, which is computed from the amplitude of the seismic waves. A magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter Scale indicates an extremely strong earthquake. Each whole number on the scale represents an increase of about 30 times more energy released than the previous whole number represents. Therefore, an earthquake measuring 6.0 is about 30 times more powerful than one measuring 5.0
- Have a licensed professional repair defective electrical wiring, leaky gas lines, and inflexible utility connections (flexible fittings are more resistant to breakage).
- Store breakable items such as bottled foods, glass, and china in low, closed cabinets with latches.
- Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products securely in closed cabinets with latches and on bottom shelves.
- Fasten shelves securely to walls. Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Anchor overhead lighting fixtures and hang heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from beds, couches, and anywhere people sit.
- Locate safe spots in each room under a sturdy table or against an inside wall. Hold earthquake drills with your family members so everyone knows what to do.

- Be prepared for aftershocks that may follow the earthquake. Aftershocks are usually not as powerful as the main earthquake but may cause additional damage and weaken structures.

## **What to do during an earthquake:**

If you are indoors:

- Stay inside and find cover. If you are near sturdy furniture, get under it.
- If you are not able to get under something sturdy, sit on the floor and crouch in an inside corner of the building. Cover your face and head with your arms.
- Stay away from glass, windows, glass panels, hanging objects or lighting fixtures, bookcases, china closets, outside doors and walls, or other large objects that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- If you are in a wheelchair, brace your chair against an inside wall, or stay where you are and lock the wheels. Cover your face and head with your arms.
- If you are in bed when the earthquake strikes, stay in bed and pull the covers up (unless your bed is under a heavy light fixture that can fall, in which case you should move to the nearest safe place). Hold on and protect your head with a pillow.
- Use a doorway for shelter only if it is near you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load bearing doorway.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Most injuries during earthquakes occur when people are hit by falling objects when entering into or exiting from buildings.
- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- DO NOT use the elevators if you are in an apartment building or other high-rise building.

If you are outdoors:

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights and utility wires.

If you are in a moving vehicle:

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle.
- Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped, watching for road and bridge damage.

If you are trapped under debris:

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- If possible, cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.

- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available.
- Shout only as a last resort, as shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

## **Preparing for landslides**

Landslides happen in all 50 states. During a landslide, large amounts of rock, earth or other items move down a slope (hillside, mountain, etc). They can be started by storms, earthquakes, fires and man-made construction. Landslides can move quickly, striking with little or no warning at very fast speeds. They also can travel several miles from where they start, growing in size as they pick up trees, boulders, cars, and other materials.

The following are steps you can take to prepare for and help prevent landslides:

- Be aware of changes in and around your home that could signal a landslide is likely to occur, such as changes in landscape and water drainage, or new cracks in foundations and sidewalks.
- Follow proper land-use procedures. Avoid building near steep slopes or along natural erosion valleys. Land-use zoning, professional inspections and proper design can minimize many landslide, mudflow and debris flow problems.
- Get a ground assessment of your property and, if necessary, consult a geotechnical expert for evaluating landslide hazards or designing corrective techniques to reduce landslide risk.
- Minimize home hazards by having flexible pipe fittings installed to avoid gas or water leaks, as flexible fittings are more resistant to breakage (only the gas company or professionals should install gas fittings).

## **Landslide warning signs**

- Changes occur in your landscape such as patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes (especially the places where runoff water converges), land movement, small slides, flows or progressively leaning trees.
- Doors or windows stick or jam for the first time.
- New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick or foundations.
- Outside walls, walks or stairs begin pulling away from the building.
- Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas such as streets or driveways.
- Underground utility lines break.
- Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope.
- Water breaks through the ground surface in new locations.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles, or trees tilt or move.

## **What to do if there is a landslide or debris flow**

- Move away from the path of the landslide or debris flow as quickly as possible.
- If escape is not possible, curl into a tight ball and protect your head.
- When the landslide ends, stay away from the slide area. There may be danger of additional slides.
- Watch for associated dangers such as broken electrical, water, gas, and sewage lines and damaged roadways and railways.
- Replant damaged ground as soon as possible since erosion caused by loss of ground cover can lead to flash flooding and additional landslides in the future.

## **Nuclear threat**

### **Nuclear facility incidents**

Nuclear power plants use the heat generated from nuclear fission in a contained environment to convert water to steam, which powers generators to power electricity. Although the constructions and operation of these facilities are closely monitored and regulated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commissions (NRC), incidents are possible. An incident could result in dangerous levels of radiation that could affect the health and safety of the public living near the nuclear power plant. Although the risk of an incident is slight, knowing how to react during the emergency can reduce the risk of injury.

### **Nuclear power plants in Pennsylvania**

There are five operating nuclear power plants in Pennsylvania:

- Beaver Valley (2 reactors)
- Limerick (2 reactors)
- Peach Bottom (2 reactors)
- Susquehanna (2 reactors)
- Three Mile Island (1 reactor)

Residents living within a 10-mile radius of a nuclear power plant should be aware of the evacuation routes established for their area and have an emergency plan in place.

### **Important terms:**

Knowing the following terms will help you identify a nuclear power plant emergency:

- Notification of unusual event- A small problem as occurred at the plant. No radiation leak is expected. No action on your part will be necessary.
- Alert- A small problem has occurred, and small amounts of radiation could leak inside the plant. This will not affect you and no action is required.
- Site Area Emergency- Area sirens may be sounded. Listen to your radio or television for safety information.
- General emergency- Radiation could leak outside the plant and off the plant site. The sirens will sound. Tune to your local radio or television station for reports. Be prepared to follow instructions promptly.

## **How to prepare for a nuclear facility incident**

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live for a minimum of 72 hours (3 days). Be sure to include plastic sheeting, duct tape and scissors in your emergency kit.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Learn about emergency response plans established in your area. Local and state governments, federal agencies, and electric utilities have emergency response plans for nuclear power plant incidents that identify two “emergency planning zones”. One zone covers an area within a 10-mile radius of the plant, where it is possible that people could be harmed by direct radiation exposure. The second zone covers a broader area, usually up to a 50-mile radius from the plant, where radioactive materials could contaminate water supplies, food crops, and livestock.
- Obtain public emergency information materials from the power company that operates your local power plant or your local emergency services office. If you live within 10 miles of the power plant, you should receive these materials annually from the power company or your state or local government.

## **What to do if there is a nuclear facility incident**

- If an accident at a nuclear power plant were to release radiation in your area, local authorities would activate warning sirens or another approved alert method. They also would instruct you through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on local television and radio stations on how to protect yourself.
- Take cover immediately, as far below the ground as possible. Close windows and doors. Turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems. Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.
- Remember three key ways to minimize your exposure to radiation: distance, shielding and time.
  - Distance- the more distance between you and the source of radiation, the better. Maximizing distance could mean evacuation or remaining indoors to minimize exposure. Follow instructions from emergency management officials.

- Shielding- having a thick shield of heavy, dense material between you and the source of the radiation will help reduce your exposure to the radiation.
- Time- most radioactivity loses its strength quickly. Minimizing time spent exposed will also help reduce your risk.
- Keep food in covered containers or in the refrigerator. Food not previously covered should be washed before being put in to containers.
- If you expect you have been exposed to nuclear radiation:
  - Change clothes and shoes.
  - Put exposed clothing in a plastic bag.
  - Seal the bag and place it out of the way.
  - Take a thorough shower.
  - Seek medical attention as directed by emergency management officials.
  - Follow directions of emergency management officials.

## **Dam failures**

When a dam fails, huge quantities of water rush downstream with great destructive force. Dam failure or levee breaches can occur with little warning, sometimes within hours of the first signs of breaching. In other cases, failures and breaches can take much longer to occur, from days to weeks, because of debris jams, the accumulation of melting snow or other events. There are nearly 80,000 dams in the United States, and about one third of these pose a “high” or “significant” hazard to life and property if failure occurs. But if you are informed and prepared for what to do in the event of a dam failure, you will greatly reduce the risk to you and your family.

### **How to prepare for a dam failure**

- Know your risk. Do you live downstream from a dam? Is the dam a high-hazard or significant-hazard potential dam? To find out, contact your state or county emergency management agency or visit the National Inventory of Dams (NID) or the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO).
- Find out who owns the dam and who regulates the dam. This information also should be available from your state or county emergency management agency, NID or ASDSO.
- Find out if a current Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is in place for the dam. An EAP is a document that identifies potential emergency conditions at a dam and specifies preplanned actions to be followed to reduce property damage and loss of life.
- If you need to evacuate, know your evacuation route and practice using it to get out of harm's way.

- Get an emergency supply kit that includes enough provisions for you and your family to live on for a minimum of three days. Be sure to include plastic sheeting, duct tape and scissors in your emergency kit.
- Make an emergency plan for you and your family.
- Read more about preparing for flood emergencies.

## **Terrorism**

Terrorism is the use of force or violence against persons or property in violation of the criminal laws of the United States for intimidation, coercion, or ransom. Terrorists typically plan their attacks in a way that generates the greatest publicity for their causes and creates massive fear among the public. Acts of terrorism include threats of terrorism; assassinations; kidnappings; hijackings; bomb scares and bombings; cyber-attacks (computer-based); and the use of chemical, biological, nuclear and radiologic weapons.

Terrorism is a criminal activity that is planned. To combat this, we need to take steps to prepare in advance for this type of emergency.

### **Create an emergency communications plan**

Choose an out of town contact your family will call or email to check on each other. The contact should be far enough away that they will not be affected by the same event.

### **Establish a meeting place**

Have a predetermined meeting place away from your home should your home be affected, or the area evacuated. Include pets in your plan since pets are often not permitted in shelters.

### **Establish a disaster supplies kit**

Prepare a disaster supplies kit in an easy-to-carry container such as a duffel bag. Include first aid supplies (including prescription and medications), a change of clothing, sleeping bag, battery operated radio, food, and bottled water. Also, include some cash and copies of important family documents (birth certificates, licenses).

## **If disaster strikes**

- Listen to your radio or TV for news and instructions.
- Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- If disaster strikes near your home, check for damage using a flashlight – do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches.
- Check for fires and gas leaks. Shut off any damaged utilities.
- Call your family contact.

## **Evacuation**

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and sturdy shoes.
- Take your disaster supplies kit. Take pets with you.
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

## **Planning for special needs**

Some people may need extra planning before an emergency to make sure special needs are met when an emergency happens. This includes young children, older adults, and people with special medical needs. This section will also help you plan for the needs of your pets or service animals.

### **Planning for older adults and people with special medical needs**

#### **Medicine**

- Always have at least a three-day supply or more of your medicines
- Store your medicines in one place in their original containers
- Have a list of all of your medicines and include the name, dose, how often you take it and the name of the doctor prescribing it.

#### **Medical supplies**

- Have an extra three-day supply of any medical supplies such as bandages, ostomy bags, or syringes that you use.

#### **Intravenous (IV) and feeding tube equipment**

- Know if your infusion pump has battery back-up and how long it will last in an emergency.
- Ask your home care provider how to infuse without electricity in case of power outage.
- Have written operating instructions attached to all equipment.

#### **Oxygen and breathing equipment**

- If you use oxygen, have a three day or more emergency supply
- Oxygen tanks should be firmly braced so they do not fall over. Check with your medical supply company regarding bracing directions.
- If you use breathing equipment, have a three-day

#### **Electrically powered medical equipment**

- For all medical equipment needing electric power such as beds, breathing equipment or infusion pumps, check with your medical supply company and get information regarding a back-up power source, such as a battery or generator.
- Check with your local utility company to determine that back-up equipment is properly installed.

#### **Emergency “Go Bag”**

- Always have a bag packed in the event you need to leave your home with:
  - A medicine list
  - Medical supplies for at least three days

- Copies of important medical papers such as insurance cards, advance directive, power of attorney, etc.
- When you leave your home, be sure to take refrigerated medicines and solutions.

## **Planning for people with disabilities**

### **Medical supplies**

- If you use a battery-operated wheelchair, life-support system or other power equipment, call your power company before an outage happens. Many utility companies keep a list and map of the locations of power-dependent customers in case of an emergency. Ask them what other options are available in your area. Contact the customer service department of your local utility companies to learn if this service is available in your community.
- If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, have an extra battery. A car battery also can be used with a wheelchair but will not last as long as a wheelchair's battery. If possible, store a lightweight manual wheelchair for backup.
- Label equipment with simple instruction cards on how to operate it (for example, how to “free wheel” or “disengage the gears” of your power wheelchair). Attach the cards to your equipment.
- If you use a laptop computer for communication, consider getting a power converter that plugs into a USB adapter.

### **Assisting people with disabilities**

- People with disabilities often need more time than others to make necessary arrangements during an emergency.
- Because disaster warnings are often given by audible (easy to hear) methods such as sirens and radio announcements, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not receive early disaster warnings and emergency instructions. Be their source of emergency information as it comes over the radio or television.
- Some people with vision disabilities, especially older adults, may not want to leave their home when the evacuation notices comes from a stranger.
- A service animal can become confused or disoriented in a disaster. People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their service animal, to safety during a disaster.
- Service animals can stay in emergency shelters with owners. Check with your local American Red Cross chapter or your emergency management officials for more information.
- People with mobility disabilities are often worried about being dropped when being lifted or carried. Find out the best way to move someone in a wheelchair and what exit routes from buildings are best.
- Some people with intellectual disabilities may be unable to understand the emergency and could become disoriented or confused about the proper way to react.

- Many respiratory illnesses can be made worse by stress. In an emergency, oxygen and respiratory equipment may not be readily available.
- People with epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, and other conditions may have very strict medicine needs that cannot be interrupted without serious consequences. Some may be unable to communicate this information in an emergency.

## **Planning for people who are deaf or hard of hearing**

### **Medical supplies**

- Have extra batteries for hearing aids and implants and keep them in your emergency kit supplies.
- Maintain TTY batteries.
  - Store extra batteries for your TTY and light phone signaler. Check the manual for proper battery maintenance.
- Store hearing aid(s) in the same location so they can quickly be found and used during a disaster. Consider keeping them in a water-proof container by your bedside, attached to the nightstand or bedpost with string or Velcro.

### **Communication**

- Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you do not have your hearing aid(s). Keep extra paper and pens in your emergency kit.
- Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of key phrases messages with you such as 'I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter, 'I do not write or read English', 'If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed'.
- Consider getting a weather radio, with a visual/text display that warns of weather emergencies.

## **Planning for people with intellectual disabilities**

### **Before, during, and after a disaster**

- Practice what to do during and after a disaster. Practice leaving places where you spend time until you are sure you know what to do during and after a disaster.
- Keep a written emergency plan with you and in several locations. Make sure your emergency plan is easy to read and understand.
- After a disaster, information comes at you quickly. Think through ways to do things you will need to do after a disaster. A small tape recorder, calendar with room for notes, to do lists, etc., will help you remember things.
- Give copies of your written emergency plan to the people in your personal support network.

### **Communication**

- Think through what a rescuer might need to know about you and be ready to say it briefly, or keep a written copy with you that says things like:
  - 'I cannot read. I enhance my hearing with another communications device. I can point to sample pictures or key words, which you will find in my wallet or emergency supply kit.'
  - 'I may have difficulty understanding what you are telling me, please speak slowly and use simple language.'
  - 'I forget easily. Please write down information for me.'

### **Planning for people who are blind or have visual disabilities**

#### **Medical supplies**

- If you use a cane, keep extras in the same location at your job, home, school, volunteer site, etc. to help you move around.
- Keep a spare cane in your emergency kit.
- If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or Braille.

#### **Alternate mobility cues**

- If you have low vision, place battery-operated security lights in each room, to light your way. These lights plug into electrical wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will, depending on type, continue to operate automatically for one to six hours and can be turned off manually and used as a short-lasting flashlight.
- Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries.
- If you wear soft contact lenses that have to be cleaned using electricity, you should have another way to clean them during a power outage.
- Service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened or disoriented during and after a disaster. Keep them safely confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/ harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use other ways to move around until your service animal has calmed down.
- Plan for possibly losing the auditory (hearing) clues you usually rely on after a major disaster. An example would be auditory street crossings, etc.

## Planning for pets, service animals, and livestock

If you have pets, service animals, and livestock, it's important to include them in your emergency planning. Keep in mind that what is best for you is usually best for your animals. If you evacuate your home, DO NOT leave animals behind. However, because many public shelters will not allow any pets inside except for service animals, you should plan for different shelter options that will work for both you and your pets. Below are some guidelines to help you prepare to meet the needs of your pets, service animals, and livestock during an emergency.

- For pets and service animals, include the following items in your emergency supply kit:
  - Enough pet food and bottled water for a least three days (one to two weeks if possible)
  - Medicines
  - Veterinary records for each of your pets (including a note that allows rescuers to give your pet medical treatment if needed)
  - Registration and/or adoption papers
  - Emergency contacts
  - Cat litter/ pan or bags
  - Manual (non-electric) can opener
  - Food dishes and water bowls
  - Spoon
  - Pet first aid kit
  - Cloth or thermal blanket
  - Collar and leash with tags
  - Treat and favorite toy(s)
  
- Develop a buddy system with trusted neighbors, friends, and relatives to make sure that someone can care for or move pets if you are unable to do so.
- As you prepare your emergency plan, make sure you find an emergency animal shelter in your area.
- Know ahead of time which hotels will accept pets.
- Have a portable crate, collar and leash ready for your pets.
- Keep all vaccinations (shots) up to date.
- Make sure you have more than one way to identify your pets (like having a dog license and a microchip).
- Have a copy of medical records and a list of necessary medicines on hand. Make different lists for each of your pets.
- If you must leave animals behind, place a sign high on your house (like a window or a door) that will be easy for rescuers to see. Make sure the sign includes the type and number of animals which remain. Leave plenty of food and water with feeding instructions for rescuers. Keep the animals in the safest part of your home for the type of emergency you are experiencing. For example, if flooding is likely do not keep your animals in the basement.

## After an emergency

After an emergency is over, there can still be danger. When you plan what you will do before and during a disaster, be sure to include a plan for afterward as well. What you do next can save your life and the lives of others:

- Stay calm. Help family members or neighbors who may need help.
- Check the area around you for safety. In the case of biological, chemical or radiological threats, listen for instructions on local radio or television stations about safe places to go.
- Some natural hazards, like severe storms or earthquakes, may continue to happen over the next several days. Continue to be careful and follow safety instructions.
- Stay tuned to your local emergency station. Information may change quickly after a major disaster, so listen regularly for updates. If the power is still out, listen to a battery-powered radio, television or car radio.
- Wash small wounds with soap and water. To help prevent infection, use bandages and replace them if they become dirty, damaged or soaked through with water.
- Unless told by officials to evacuate your area, stay off the roads so that emergency vehicles (like ambulances and fire trucks) can quickly get where they need to go.
- Avoid using the telephone (cellular or landlines) if many homes in your area have been affected by a disaster. Emergency responders need to have the telephone lines available, so they can quickly help people. During the immediate post-disaster time, only use the telephone to report life-threatening conditions and to call your out-of-town emergency contact.
- Turn off sensitive electrical equipment such as computers, DVD player and televisions to prevent them from being damaged when electricity is restored. You should also turn off major electrical and gas appliances (like stoves, refrigerators and washing machines) that were on when the power went off to help prevent power surges when electricity comes back on.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep in cold. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more information on food and water safety after a disaster.
- Do not use the stove to heat your home — this can cause a fire or deadly gas leak.
- Use extreme caution when driving. If traffic signals are out, treat each signal as a stop sign — come to a full stop at every intersection and look around you before driving through it.
- DO NOT call 9-1-1 to ask about a power outage or to get other information about the emergency. Even during or after a disaster 9-1-1 should be used only for emergencies. In case of a power outage, use battery-operated equipment to listen to news and radio stations for updates.



## Home emergency kit checklist

Your home emergency kit should have food, bottled water and supplies to live on for at least three days or longer. Keep your emergency kit in the same place in your home and in an easy-to-carry container in case you need to leave quickly. Make sure that all family members know where the emergency kit is kept.

Below is a checklist of items that you should include in your emergency kit. As you start your kit, include items that best suit your family's unique needs.

- Bottled water — every person in your family needs at least one gallon each day for drinking and bathing for at least three days
- Food - At least a three-day supply that won't spoil
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlights (2) and extra batteries for each
- First aid kit
  - Sterile adhesive bandages (different sizes)
  - Sterile butterfly bandages or Steri-Strips
  - Sterile gauze pads (many 2"x2", 3"x3" and 4"x4")
  - Triangular bandages (4+)
  - Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
  - Antibacterial wet wipes
  - Antiseptic/Pain relief spray
  - Antibiotic ointment
  - Hydrocortisone cream
  - Alcohol prep pads
  - Latex-free examination gloves (several pairs)
  - Trauma sheers or scissors
  - Sharp-pointed tweezers
  - Small folding knife
  - Safety pins (different sizes)
  - Chemical heat packs
  - Instant cold pack/compress
  - Mylar blanket (2)
  - Irrigation syringe
  - CPR mask
  - First Aid card/field guide
  - Non-breakable thermometer
  - Flexible splint or splinting materials
  - Cotton-tipped applicator sticks
  - Needle
  - Eye wash
  - Aspirin & non-aspirin pain reliever
  - Antacid
  - Laxative
  - Anti-diarrhea medication
  - Hand sanitizer gel & bar of soap
  - Magnifying glass
  - Elastic wrap (3 inch and 2 inch)

- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Heavy socks (at least two pair)
- Hats and gloves
- Water purifying tablets
- Extra clothing, blankets & rain gear
- Cash — because ATMs may not work during an emergency
- Tools and supplies
  - Case/nylon bag/fanny pack
  - Mess kits or paper cups, plates, plastic utensils
  - Non-electric can opener
  - Propane cooking stove
  - Pot and pan for cooking
  - Aluminum foil
  - Multi-purpose tool/utility knife
  - Small fire extinguisher
  - Paper and pencil/pen
  - Tent
  - Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place (to be used when directed)
  - Pliers/wrenches
  - Pry bar
  - Compass
  - Light sticks
  - Signal flare
  - Whistle
  - Needles and thread
  - Scissors
  - Matches in a water-proof container or bag
  - Plastic storage containers or plastic storage bags
  - Medicine dropper
  - Dust mask (for dust/debris)
  - Hard hat
  - Work gloves
  - Battery-powered fan
- Extra keys for car and house
- Nylon cord
- Portable generator, if possible
- Spray paint
- Toilet paper/facial tissues/paper towels
- Wet wipes
- Personal hygiene items — toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.
- Feminine supplies
- Plastic garbage bags and ties
- Disinfectant
- Soap
- Towels/washcloths
- Household chlorine bleach
- Small shovel
- Plastic bucket with tight lid (indoor toilet)

## My Emergency Action Plan

My name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Significant illness or health history: \_\_\_\_\_

Advance Directive:  No  Yes (attach copy if applicable) Blood type: \_\_\_\_\_

List of medications (copy attached) Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Contacts and/or Next of Kin:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Power of Attorney Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Doctor(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Emergency Phone Numbers:

SERVICE TYPE	NAME	PHONE #
Police		
Fire Department		
Preferred Hospital		
Preferred Ambulance		
Electric Company	PECO Energy Company	1-800-841-4141
Gas Company	Philadelphia Gas Works Gas Leak Emergencies Only	1-215-235-2050 1-215-235-1212
Water Company	Aqua Pennsylvania  Emergencies between 5PM- 7:30 AM; weekends and holidays	1-800-711-4779  1-610-525-1402
Heating Company		
DME/ Supplies		
Other:		

In the event of evacuation, I prefer to:  stay at home  go to a public shelter

go to a family members home (specify family member name and address)

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go to another safe place (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Designated family meeting place: \_\_\_\_\_

How well I move (walk on my own, use cane or walker, wheelchair, bedbound):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other special needs I have (glasses, hearing aids, communication or language assistance):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Medical supplies I use: \_\_\_\_\_

Special equipment I use (oxygen, nebulizer, insulin pump, IV equipment, blood monitors):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Transportation arrangements needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

Below is a checklist of items to have on hand in case of emergency:

- A three-day supply of bottled water. Each person in your home needs at least one gallon each day for drinking and bathing.
- A three-day supply of foods that won't spoil and that do not require cooking. Be sure to have a manual can opener available.
- A seven-day supply of medicines and your medicine list
- A seven-day supply of medical supplies
- Medical equipment with information on how it is used and extra batteries if needed.
- Extra eye glasses, contacts, and hearing aids
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlights and extra batteries. Do not use candles, as they are a fire hazard.
- Charged cell phone with additional portable chargers
- Standard telephone (that does *not* need to be plugged into an electric outlet) by your bed and in each room, if possible.
- First aid kit
- Sturdy shoes or work boots, at least two pairs heavy socks, hats and gloves
- Extra clothing and blankets
- Rain gear
- Cash (ATMs may not work during an emergency)
- Assorted sizes of re-closeable plastic bags for storing food, or waste.

Keep copies of important papers in a labeled water-proof container or reclosable plastic bag:

- Recent family photos including photos of pets
- Copies of Medicare/ Medicaid and health insurance cards
- Your medicine list including any allergies or sensitivities
- Your advance directive or living will
- Copies of birth certificates
- Copies of drivers' licenses
- Copies of homeowner and car insurance policies
- Bank account numbers
- Local and state maps
- Pre-paid phone cards

Main Line Health HomeCare & Hospice  
offers the following services:

Home Health  
Hospice Care  
Private Duty Services

Home Health  
484.580.1601

Hospice Care  
484.580.1550

[mainlinehealth.org/homecare](http://mainlinehealth.org/homecare)



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**HomeCare & Hospice**

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