

Let's plan for the unexpected.



Notes and exercises
to prepare
for emergencies.



Canadian Red Cross

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In this document, the use of the masculine gender bears no sex discrimination and is used only to lighten the text.

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An emergency preparedness program

The Canadian Red Cross plays an essential role during emergencies. It provides numerous services to disaster victims in order to meet their essential needs in shelter, clothing and food. It also provides personal services for moral support and first aid. During evacuations, it registers and informs the evacuees.

To prepare the population to act safely during unexpected events, the Red Cross has developed the preparedness program " Expect the Unexpected " to get ready for emergencies.

This preparedness program is intended for students, their parents, teachers and Canadian Red Cross facilitators who may be called upon to contribute in class.

The objective of this program is to allow the population to become more knowledgeable and acquire skills and attitudes to react efficiently in case of emergencies.

Reminder for parents

In addition to the awareness provided at school, students must also get information at home. Discussions between parents and students are essential to make everyone responsible and to implement safety rules in case of emergencies. This dialogue is one of the first things to establish because once the students know the nature of the problem, they can react properly in emergencies. This brochure is an essential reference tool consisting of reminders to ensure that parents are also ready to act efficiently in case of an emergency. In addition, it allows the students to assimilate and apply the knowledge acquired in class.

The parents' role.

A traumatizing experience can mark someone for life. It is highly important for parents to participate in preparing each family member to properly manage a crisis and resume normal life after an emergency. Parents have the responsibility of constantly ensuring the safety of their children. They must be ready not only to react efficiently in order to ensure their survival and limit damage, but also to remain calm and controlled in an emergency. By reading this brochure, parents will be better prepared to react quickly in emergencies, ensure the survival of their family and guide their children in developing safe reactions and attitudes.

Major natural disasters

Many natural disasters can cause major damage when they occur close to residential areas. This section provides a summary of the disasters and briefly describes each one of them. Information is provided on the nature of these disasters, their geographic distribution and some of the damage they can cause.

Lightning storms and lightning bolts



Lightning storms consist of lightning flashes followed by thunder. Thunder can smash windows, start a fire, cause power failures and explosions if it comes in contact with fuel. It can be dangerous or fatal to humans by causing serious burns and electrocution.

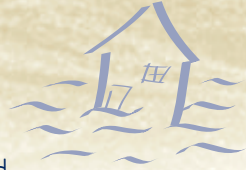


Earthquakes

Earthquakes or tremors are sudden movements of the earth's crust. The tremors usually occur suddenly and leave very little time to react. However, major earthquakes are often followed by weaker tremors.

Floods

Floods are the overflows of rivers, lakes and waterways caused by an excessive rise in the water level. The rise can be caused by heavy summer precipitation, sudden thawing of snow in the spring, ice jams or break-ups.



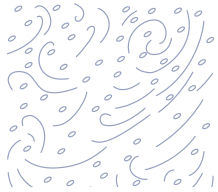
Hail



Hail is an ice particle type of precipitation that occurs during a storm. It can fall in all regions of Canada but western Canada and the southwestern part of Ontario are the areas where it occurs most often. Hail can strike the ground at a speed of 130 km/h and cause major damage to crops, houses and cars. People and animals can also be injured by hail.

Snowstorms and blizzards

Snowstorms occur less suddenly than other disasters and it is therefore easier to prepare for them. Strong or violent winds and heavy snowfalls are typical of snowstorms in Canada. Blizzards are violent winds from the North during snowstorms.



Tornadoes

Tornadoes are funnel shaped whirlwinds that point toward the ground. A tornado can damage everything in its path. This phenomenon can uproot trees, turn cars over and tear off roofs. The regions in Canada where it occurs most often are the Prairie Provinces, southeastern Ontario and sometimes the southern part of Quebec. Hot and humid summer days are most favourable to tornadoes, especially at the end of the day.





Landslides

Landslides are movements of clay type soils saturated with water.

These ground movements occur very rapidly and leave the population very little time to react.

Forest fires



The majority of fires that destroy our forests are caused by human negligence such as campfires not properly put out or lit during dry

periods. However, fires caused by lightning bolts are the most devastating and often burn out vast areas.



Volcanoes

Volcanoes are mountains that erupt molten lava. Western Canada has

numerous inactive volcanoes and the possibility of an eventual eruption is undeniable. Volcanoes in this part of the country are part of the ring of fire located around the Pacific Ocean.

Heat waves

During the summer, we experience at least one extreme heat wave that can cause problems if people are active without taking the necessary precautions.

Hazardous materials releases

Hazardous materials releases are incidents that involve an accidental spill or leak of hazardous chemical products that are dangerous to humans and the environment.



These hazardous products can contaminate the soil or water or be spread in the air. If they become airborne, they may or may not be visible as a toxic cloud. Sometimes, you can smell or taste the hazardous product. Inhaling toxic fumes or drinking contaminated water can be hazardous to your health. The risk depends on the toxicity of the substance in question, its concentration and how long you are exposed to it.

Preparing for emergencies

Nature's sudden mood swings can strike at anytime without warning. Planning and preparing for such events can help us to better react and to limit the damage.

Have you ever seriously thought of emergency situations? Would you know what to do? Would you remain calm? The basic rule is simple: Be ready. Only a few precautions are required to ensure your safety and the safety of your family. The following steps are necessary to plan for the unexpected.

Discuss with your family

- Analyse and study the risks of disasters in your area and learn safe behaviours.
- Discuss the behaviours to adopt.
- Discuss with your children the emergencies that can occur because of bad weather (snowstorms, power failures).

Prepare your house

- Move or fasten objects that can fall and cause injury.
- Carry out regular maintenance (chimney, heating system, etc.).
- Store toxic or flammable products away from sources of heat and avoid storing them in the basement.
- Repair any cracks in the ceiling or walls.
- Prepare safety items in case of a power failure (flashlights, spare batteries, warm blankets, non-perishable food).
- Place your valuables on the upper floor of your house.
- Store matches where children will not find them and show teenagers where they are stored in case of a power failure.

Prepare an action plan

- Prepare your home for disasters.
- Make an action plan :
 - Plan for safety measures in case of power failures or other emergencies;
 - Keep your list of emergency phone numbers at hand;
 - Plan on two meeting places ahead of time in case an evacuation is necessary : one, close by, outside your home and easy to get to in case of a sudden emergency like a fire; another one outside your neighbourhood in case you cannot go back home;
 - Have each member of your family know the phone number of someone who lives out of town in case you get separated;



- Let the children find out what a smoke detector sounds like; replace the batteries (with new ones) twice a year (when you set the time changes);
- Practice the evacuation plan at home and the techniques to remain sheltered in your home in case of a hazardous materials release;
- Turn off the water and power if all family members know how to, have time to do it and if recommended by the authorities;
- Never use the elevator in case of an emergency;
- Teach the children to recognize emergency exits and smoke detectors at home, in school and in public places;
- Plan alternative living quarters;
- Take a Red Cross first aid course.

Prepare a survival kit, a first aid kit and a car emergency kit using the lists on pages 21 and 22 of this brochure.

Prepare food supplies to last 72 hours in case of an emergency using the list on page 22 of this brochure.



Exercises for you
and your family

Exercises for you and your family

Knowing what to do is fine, knowing how to do it is even better. Carrying out prevention and safety exercises at home is ensuring the proper behaviour of your family during emergencies. In this section of the brochure, you will find exercises to carry out with your children. These exercises are designed for certain types of emergencies.



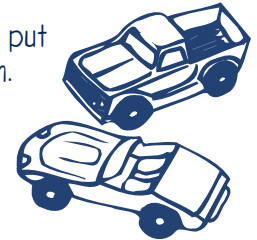
Identifying potential hazards at home

The exit doors of the house

- Check if there are objects close to the doors that could impede evacuation.
- Make sure that no object ever blocks the exit doors.
- Ask your kids to always place their shoes in the closet.

The children's room

- Initiate thinking by asking them to identify the potential hazards in that room.
- Move the picture frames over their beds to other walls.
- Check the condition of your electrical appliances (alarm clock, radio-cassette player, computer, etc.).
- Make sure curtains and blinds do not touch the heating boards.
- Make the kids aware that it is important to put away their toys when they do not use them. An object close to the heating board may set off a fire.



Evacuation Routes

In case of an evacuation, the children must know the route to follow to exit the home quickly.

- Draw a plan of your home with them, taking care to identify all the rooms including the basement.
- Discuss the various routes to follow from each room in case an evacuation is required.
- Ask your kids to draw a route on the plan, using various colours.
- Post this plan in a visible place in the house.
- Simulate a house evacuation.
- Make sure that both exit doors are used for evacuation.



Protecting yourself in case of earthquakes

It is wise to carry out an exercise with your children to get prepared for an earthquake.

- Identify the furniture in your home under which you could seek shelter (sturdy table, bed, etc.).
- Identify walls free of objects.
- Practice both ways of protecting yourself in case of an earthquake: seeking shelter under furniture or getting your back against a wall free of objects and protecting your head.

Protecting yourself against tornadoes

It would be wise to carry out an exercise with your kids to get prepared for a tornado.

- Identify the areas away from windows, doors and heavy objects in the house.
- Identify the larger rooms of the house that you should avoid.
- Determine which walls of the house are free of objects.
- Go down to the basement and identify a small safe place that could be used for shelter (closet, hallway, etc.).
- Practice both ways of protecting yourself against a tornado :
 - Seeking shelter under sturdy furniture holding on with one hand and use the other to protect your head.
 - Placing your back against a wall free of objects.

Preparing a family survival kit

The best way to make your children aware of the importance to have a safety kit in the house is to let them help prepare it :

- Start by choosing a suitable back-pack in which to place your safety kit material.
- Gather the objects suggested in the list on pages 21 and 22 and place them on the table in your kitchen.
- Ask your children to bring these objects themselves.
- Ask them if they would include other objects in the back-pack.
- Decide together on a safe and accessible place to store that kit.



Telephone to get help

- Ask your children where they would call if they were in distress.
- Note their answers on a sheet of paper. You should find the following numbers : 9-1-1, fire station, police station, ambulance, mother's phone number at work, father's phone number at work, another adult's phone number (parent or relative, neighbour, babysitter), local community health service, family doctor, poison centre.
- Find the corresponding telephone numbers in the telephone directory and write them clearly next to each person or organization.
- Write your home address and telephone number at the top of this list.
- Place this list next to the telephone.



Actions to take in case of natural disasters

In Canada, the natural disasters that are most likely to occur are lightning storms, earthquakes, floods and tornadoes. The following information gives the main instructions to follow and tells you how to react during these natural disasters. Do not forget that you should always remain calm and avoid using the telephone.



Lightning storms

At home

- Stay in your house.
- Stay away from windows and metal objects.
- Turn off your electrical appliances (television, kitchen appliances, etc.).

Away from home

- If you are close to your house, go inside and follow the previous instructions.
- If you are far from home, seek shelter inside a building nearby.
- If you are in an open area, crouch down and keep your head low.
- Stay away from power or telephone lines and metal objects.
- Never seek shelter under a tree.
- Avoid using your bicycle or motorcycle.



In the car

- Park your car far away from power or telephone lines and large trees.
- Turn off the engine and remain inside until the storm is over.

Earthquakes

At home

- Stay at home : **drop, cover and hold on.**
- Stay away from windows and shelving.
- Seek shelter under a sturdy furniture.
- If in bed, hold on and stay there protecting your head with a pillow.
- If you cannot seek shelter under furniture, set your back against a wall and protect your head.
- Stay in the area where you found shelter until the tremors are over.
- Expect other tremors.

Away from home

- Find a clear spot away from buildings and trees or other structures that could collapse.
- Stay away from telephone or power lines.
- Drop to the ground and stay there until the shaking stops.

In the car

- Park the car in a safe area far from bridges, overpasses and other structures that could collapse.
- Turn off the engine and remain inside, with your seat belt fastened, until the tremors are over.

Floods

At home

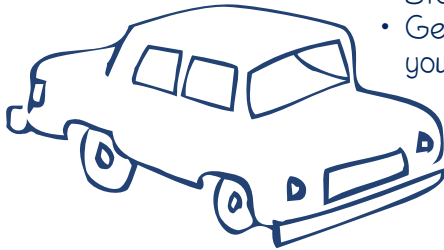
- Turn off power and gas lines, if instructed to do so.
- Place your valuables on the upper floor of your house.
- Remain on the upper floor and wait for instructions from your local authorities.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks and plastic bottles with clear water.

Away from home

- Stay away from flooded areas and head toward elevated areas.
- Avoid crossing flooded areas; the strength of the water current could carry you away.
- Remain in an area where you are visible and safe.

In the car

- Avoid remaining in your car; 60 cm of water can carry a car away.
- Go to an elevated area and park your car there.
- Turn off the engine, get out of your car and move to higher ground.



Tornadoes

At home

- Stay away from windows and doors.
- Seek shelter in the basement, under a staircase, under sturdy furniture or in a closet.
- Avoid seeking shelter in large rooms (gymnasiums, shopping malls, etc.) that could collapse.
- Hold on to a sturdy object with one hand and use the other arm to protect your head and neck from falling or flying objects.

Away from home

- If there is no shelter, lie down in a ditch or ravine.
- Protect your head.
- Stay away from overpasses and bridges.

In the car

- Stop the car and turn off the engine.
- Get out of the car, seek shelter in a ditch or ravine and protect your head.

Heat waves

- Take it easy : avoid strenuous activities; take frequent breaks while working or exercising.
- Stay out of the heat and look for cool and shaded areas.
- Drink lots of water to prevent dehydration.
- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose clothing, a hat and use sunscreen to prevent burns.

A few words about hazardous materials releases

In case of a hazardous materials release, the authorities may ask that you remain indoors and use Shelter-In-Place techniques, until you receive instructions to leave the building (unless a flammable substance like natural gas is involved).

Indoors

- Stay indoors until you are instructed to evacuate;
- Make sure to shut all openings properly : doors, windows, ventilating systems, fireplace, dryer, and air conditioning;
- Remain in an inside room, far from windows and doors;
- Do not smoke;
- Do not go out before the authorities allow it;
- Listen to your local television or radio station for the authorities' instructions;
- Do not use the telephone.

Outdoors

- Stay away from the smoke or toxic fumes;
- Stay away from access routes to allow emergency help arrive quickly;
- If you are in your car, leave the area and avoid toxic fumes.

After the disaster

Once the disaster is over, you should :

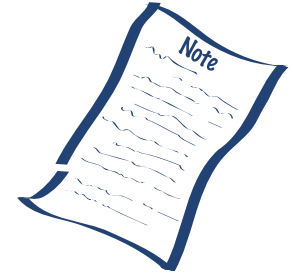
- Give first aid to injured people;
- Take your survival kit and your first aid kit along;
- Listen to your local radio station in case you are asked to evacuate.



If asked to evacuate : I am ready!

If the authorities ask you to evacuate, do not insist on remaining in your house. Leave your house immediately, taking care to :

- Bring along a survival kit and a first aid kit;
- Wear proper clothing;
- Make sure your pets are safe;
- Leave a note on the table indicating the time of departure and destination;
- Lock all the doors while leaving.



The need to cooperate

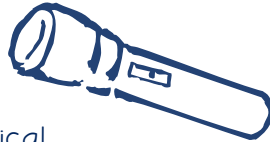
Your patience and your cooperation will facilitate the work of authorities, rescuers and first aid personnel.

- Listen carefully to the instructions given by the authorities and rescue personnel;
- Always follow the route which has been laid out for you;
- Go to the meeting place designated by the authorities;
- Observe what is around you and notify the authorities and people about anything that may seem abnormal or dangerous.

Returning home

Before going back home, you should know which safety measures to follow to allow authorities to carry out their work :

- Check the condition of your house to evaluate the damage;
- Use a flashlight to inspect the site : it may be hazardous to turn on the lights;
- Check the condition of your electrical appliances;
- Get in touch with specialists for any electrical, heating or gas problems;
- Drink bottled water until authorities confirm that the water is safe to drink;
- Check the food in your refrigerator and freezer : throw out all spoiled food;



- Use the phone only for emergencies : the work teams may still need all the telephone circuits for a certain amount of time.

External resources

Even if the situation is under control after a disaster, you may feel the need to seek help from other people in your community. Various organizations offer assistance. Feel free to ask for their help. These resources are there to serve you and your family :

- Canadian Red Cross;
- Local community health service;
- Local police and fire departments;
- Local, provincial and federal public security;
- Armed forces;
- Weather forecasting services;
- Community organizations;
- Etc.

Web sites :

- www.angelfire.com/on/predictions/
- www.colorado.edu/hazards
- www.disasterRelief.org/
- www.disasterwarning.com/
- www.ec.gc.ca/climate/index.html
- www.ec.gc.ca/water/
- www.eventbasedscience.com
- www.fema.gov/
- www.ifrc.org
- www.icic.org
- www.msp.gouv.qc.ca/jeunesse
- www.ncdc.noaa.gov/
- www.ns.ec.gc.ca/weather/hurricane/hurricanes_f.html
- www.nssl.noaa.gov/
- www.uwex.edu/ces/news/handbook.html
- www.prevention2000.org

Children and emergencies

An emergency situation after a natural disaster can mark someone for a long time. Kids are especially vulnerable. Depending on their age, their reactions may be different. For example, kids between seven and twelve years old may :

- Fear being injured or separated from their parents;
- Fear noise and darkness;
- Experience headaches or stomach aches and loss of appetite;
- Experience nightmares;
- Experience anger and irritability;
- Be nervous;
- Experience withdrawal.

Moreover, teenagers may :

- Feel strong emotions such as fear, worry, sorrow or even deny the importance of the events or its impacts;
- Have a tendency to isolate themselves or to constantly seek the company of friends;
- Experience sleeping problems : insomnia, nightmares and hypersomnia;
- Wish to forget the event by smoking, drinking alcohol or taking drugs;
- Have fits of anger;
- Experience physical problems : headaches, stomach aches or no appetite;
- Have concentration and absenteeism problems at school;
- Lose interest in previous regular activities or become nonchalant;
- Have suicidal tendencies.

Reference: Régie régionale de la santé et des services sociaux du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean (Québec) (1996). **Pour qu'après la pluie vienne le beau temps.** Quebec: Régie régionale de la santé et des services sociaux du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

These signs of distress that children experience are normal. To help your children overcome them :

- Get their trust and make them feel secure;
- Do not punish them, their reactions will only persist. Try rather to understand them and help them get rid of their fears;
- Get closer to them and give them more affection;
- Explain to them what happened;
- Take their fears seriously;
- Listen to what they have to tell you and be patient with them;
- Do not force them to face their fears and worries;
- Congratulate them for any good behaviour;
- Ask them to help with various household tasks;
- Give them a responsibility;
- Allow them to express what they feel, by drawing, by talking, etc.

- Get back to your family routine as soon as possible;
- Encourage them to exercise and to participate in competitive games;
- Create a comforting atmosphere at bedtime;
- Get the whole family together, especially the first few days following the disaster.

Kits to prepare

A survival kit

The survival kit must include various basic items required for emergencies. It must meet the specific needs of the family, especially baby items and prescription medication. Typical items are listed below :

- Flashlight;
- Portable radio;
- Spare batteries;
- Red Cross first aid kit;
- Candles, matches and a lighter;
- Pocket knife;
- Extra set of car keys;
- Wallet with identification card;



- Spare clothes for each family member;
- Warm blankets (one per person);
- Bottled water;
- Non-perishable food;
- Personal care items.

Emergency provisions

Some disasters such as snowstorms and earthquakes may force you to stay home for a few days.

Always have provisions ready for a three-day period. Make sure they are replaced once a year :

- One liter of drinking water per adult for each day;
- Canned food;
- Crackers, cereal and pasta;
- Peanut butter, tea, coffee, sugar, juice, instant soup and herbal tea.

Automobile kit

You may be in your car when an emergency occurs. Prepare your car accordingly to travel safely :

- Ice scraper and a snow brush;
- Sandbag;
- Shovel;
- Flashlight and spare batteries;
- Booster cables;
- Spare clothes;
- Liquid antifreeze;
- Traction devices;
- Maps;
- Red Cross first aid kit;
- Candles and matches;
- Woolen blankets.

During winter, make sure your gas tank is at least half full.

The Red Cross : anywhere, anytime.

The Red Cross was founded in 1863 by Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman who came to the aid of soldiers wounded at the Battle of Solferino in Italy. The emblem of the international organization, a red cross or crescent on a white background, was created to ensure protection for Red Cross workers, who maintain a neutral position on battlefields during armed conflict.

The international movement led to the creation of 176 national societies, including the Canadian Red Cross in 1896. The Canadian Red Cross is a non-profit humanitarian organization dedicated to serving Canadians and victims of conflicts and disasters worldwide. Its mission is to help people deal with situations that threaten their survival and safety; their security and well-being; their human dignity in Canada and around the world. The Red Cross offers a broad range of international, emergency, first aid and water safety programs and services to millions of Canadians. Some of its programs are preventative, while others focus on health and emergency relief. All are offered through the volunteer participation and financial support of Canadians.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Humanity

Emerging from its concern to provide first aid to the wounded on the battlefield without any discrimination, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with its international and national facets, endeavours to prevent and reduce human suffering in all circumstances. It aims to protect the life and health of humans and to ensure their respect. It favours mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and long-lasting peace between all nations.

Impartiality

It makes no distinction for nationality, race, religion, social status or political opinion. It is devoted solely to providing first aid that will measure up to

the suffering of the people and to meet, by priority, the needs of the most urgent distress.

Neutrality

To acquire everyone's trust, the Federation does not take part in any of the hostilities, nor in any political, racial, religious or ideological controversy.

Independence

The Federation is independent, auxiliary to the authorities in their humanitarian activities and subject to the laws which govern their respective countries. The national societies must nevertheless keep their autonomy which always allows them to act according to the principles of the Federation.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary care movement with no self-interest.

Unity

There may be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in a same country. It must be open to everyone and extend its humanitarian action over the entire territory.

Universality

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in which all the Societies have equal rights and the duty to help each other, is universal.

This text is adapted from fundamental principles proclaimed by the Red Cross XX International Conference in Vienna in 1965. This revised text is found in the Statutes of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, adopted by the Red Cross XXV International Conference in Geneva in 1986.

In compliance with the law, use of the emblem and name of the Red Cross in Canada is reserved exclusively for the Canadian Red Cross Society and to the health care services of the armed forces (Law on the Geneva Conventions, L.R.C., 1985, chap. G-3).



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