

Ontario Seniors:

How to Be Prepared
for an Emergency

ontario.ca/BePrepared



Ontario 



The people of Ontario have faced all kinds of emergencies, from ice storms and power outages to tornadoes and industrial accidents. While emergencies are an unfortunate fact of life, being prepared can make the unexpected much more manageable.

Emergencies can strike at any time, and being prepared is critical since it can take time for help to arrive. Everyone should have an emergency plan and a kit to take care of themselves for at least three days. Your emergency plan should reflect your personal circumstances and unique needs.

How to use this guide

This guide is designed for seniors, their caregivers, and members of their extended network. Emergency preparedness applies to all Ontarians, but there are considerations to keep in mind for those who may need extra attention or care during an emergency.

The first part of the guide contains information to help you or someone you care about prepare an emergency plan and emergency preparedness kit for at least three days. The second part of the guide is a form you or someone you care about can fill out with important information for an emergency.



Step 1 – Make a plan

In an emergency, you may not have access to everyday conveniences, and you may be asked to evacuate your home. Thinking about what you would do is the first step to being prepared.

Your plan should include:

- **Two safe locations** in case you have to leave your home. One should be nearby, such as a local library or community centre. The other one should be farther away, outside of your neighbourhood, in case the emergency affects a large area.
- **A household communications plan.** During an emergency, network damage or a jammed system may make it difficult to call someone locally. It may be easier to reach loved ones using text messaging, social media, or a long-distance call.
- A list of the people in **your personal support network.** This includes all the people who will be able to help when you need it. Consider using family members, neighbours and healthcare and personal support workers.

Planning tips

Contact service providers. If you, someone in your household or someone you care for gets routine treatment outside the home or accesses support services at home, work with the service provider on a back-up plan.

Have a buddy. Consider giving an extra set of keys to someone you trust and let them know where you keep your emergency kit. Arrange for that person to check on you during an emergency.

Be ready to evacuate. Plan how you would travel to a safe location if evacuation was advised. Have an emergency preparedness kit ready (see Step 2).

Plan for your pet(s). Often, only service animals are allowed at reception centres. If possible, identify someone who can take your pet(s) if you have to leave your home.

Consider your living situation. Do you live in an isolated community? In a high-rise? Do you or someone you live with have limited mobility? Be familiar with evacuation plans, and talk to your building manager or neighbours to make arrangements, if necessary.



When your plan is ready:

- **Discuss your plan with family and friends** so they know what you would do.
- **Teach others about any of your individual needs**, such as how to use medical equipment or administer medicine.
- **Practice your plan** with those who have agreed to be part of your personal support network.
- **Be aware and follow instructions.** Stay tuned to the news before and during an emergency. Follow the advice of first responders and officials.



Other tips

Contact your local municipal office to find out what phone number to use to get more information during an emergency (211, 311 or other). Also ask if they have a registry for “vulnerable persons” and whether you should sign up. Use 911 only when someone needs help right away to protect their health, safety, or property.

Stay Alert Ready. Alert Ready in Ontario is part of a national service designed to deliver critical and potentially life-saving emergency alert messages to Canadians through television, radio, and compatible mobile devices. Visit ontario.ca/BePrepared and follow the links to check your phone's compatibility.

Consult the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility's Guide to Programs and Services for Seniors in Ontario for additional advice: ontario.ca/document/guide-programs-and-services-seniors



Step 2 – Build an emergency preparedness kit

Your emergency preparedness kit should have everything you and your household would need to be safe and take care of yourselves for at least three days immediately following an emergency. These checklists outline essentials, additional items to consider, and extra supplies to have on hand in case of evacuation. Beyond these lists, consider what additional items you may need to meet your unique circumstances.

What to put in your emergency preparedness kit

Essentials

The following list includes essential items to have in your emergency preparedness kit:

- food (non-perishable and easy-to-prepare items, enough for three days) and a manual can opener
- bottled or bagged water (4 litres per person for each day) and backup water purification tablets
- medication(s)
- toilet paper and other personal items such as soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.
- personal protective equipment (PPE) such as medical masks and respirators
- back up chargers and power banks for cell phone or mobile device
- cash in small bills
- portable light source such as a flashlight, headlamp or glow stick
- radio (crank or battery-run)
- extra batteries
- first-aid kit
- candles and matches/lighter
- hand sanitizer or moist towelettes
- important papers such as a copy of your emergency plan, identification, contact lists, copies of prescriptions, etc.
- extra car and house keys
- whistle (to attract attention, if needed)
- zip-lock bag (to keep things dry)
- garbage bags
- duct tape



Additional considerations

The following list includes additional items you may require to meet your household's unique needs:

- items for babies and small children such as diapers, formula, bottles, baby food, etc.
- comfort and sentimental items such as photos of loved ones, irreplaceable items, etc.
- prescription medication
- medical supplies (cane, walker, hearing aid and batteries, breathing device, etc.), equipment and copies of care/support plans including contact information for doctors or specialists
- extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and solution
- prescription footwear
- pet food and supplies
- dentures and supplies
- any other items specific to your household's needs

Extra supplies for evacuation

- seasonal clothes, shoes and accessories such as hats, gloves, etc.
- sleeping bag or blankets
- personal items (soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, comb, other toiletries)
- lightweight plates and utensils
- survival multi-tool that includes a screwdriver, pocketknife and other basic tools
- local map with your safe meeting places identified
- playing cards, travel games and other small activities
- pen or pencil and a small paper/notepad





Other tips

- Place all these items in an easy-to-carry bag or suitcase on wheels.
- Keep your emergency preparedness kit in a place that is easy to reach.
- Keep your cell phone or mobile device fully charged.

For more information on preparing for emergencies:

AskEMO@ontario.ca

ontario.ca/BePrepared

Additional resources

ServiceOntario

Toll-free: 1-800-267-8097

Toll-free TTY: 1-800-268-7095

Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS)

Tel: 310-2222 (no area code required)

Health811

Tel: 811

Toll-free TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Information for my emergency plan

Fill out this sheet and keep it in a location where you and others can easily find it. Update it as needed, and keep a copy in your emergency preparedness kit. Share the information with key members of your support network.

My support network

List the people who already assist you and others who could help you in an emergency: doctors, pharmacists, personal support workers, in-home health-care workers (including back-up providers), as well as family members, friends and neighbours.

Name	Organization or relationship	Contact number(s)	Notes

My safe locations

In an emergency, you may need to leave your home. List two locations you would go to, one close, the other one far away. Some examples include a local library, place of worship, or community centre.

Location #1 & address	
Location #2 & address	

Location of my emergency preparedness kit

Make a note of where your kit is stored, so others can find it easily if they are assisting you.

Location of my emergency preparedness kit	
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My household communications plan

During an emergency, network damage or a jammed system may make it difficult to call someone locally. It may be easier to reach someone using text messaging, social media, or a long-distance call.

Identify one or two out-of-town contacts you and your household members can call or text message to connect through and share information. Be sure they live far enough away so they will likely not be affected by the same emergency. If an out-of town option is not available, consider a local community or cultural centre.

Make sure everyone in your household, and your two key contacts, knows how to use text messaging - these messages may get through even when phone calls may not.

Contacts	Contact Name	Contact information (phone, email)
Contact #1		
Contact #2		

Important medical information

For each person in your household, note any medical conditions and individual needs, as well as medications and devices.

Occupant name	Medical conditions/allergies/individual needs	Notes

Occupant name	Medication or device	Notes (where supply is stored, batteries, other necessary instructions)	Doctor name & contact number

This guide is courtesy of:

© King's Printer for Ontario, 2023 ISBN 978-1-4868-7108-7

Disponible en français ISBN 978-1-4868-7109-4