

# SENIORS AND SPECIAL NEEDS

## How to be Prepared for Emergencies



### Why Be Prepared?

Emergencies are a fact of life. Tornadoes, floods, blizzards, ice storms, chemical spills.. they occur in communities in Ontario. They have the potential to put your health, safety and security at risk. Since an emergency situation or an evacuation can be a frightening and confusing time, it is important that seniors, especially those with special needs, know the steps to take in an emergency. There are simple steps you can take to help protect yourself and your loved ones during an emergency. Everyone should have an **emergency plan** and a **kit** to take care of themselves for at least three days. This guide supplements the Perth County's **Emergency Preparedness Guide**.

### 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.

- **Determine 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 your neighbourhood, in case the emergency affects a large area.
- **Develop a family communication plan.** During an emergency, local telephone lines and networks may not work. Identify one or two out-of-town contacts you and your loved ones can call to connect and share information.
- **Make 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 including family members, neighbours, and health-care and personal support workers.
- **Contact service providers.** If someone in your home gets routine treatment outside the home or 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 recommended. Have a grab and go emergency bag ready.
- **Plan for your pets.** Often, only service animals are allowed at reception centres. If possible, identify someone who can take your pets if you have to leave your home.
- **Consider your living situation.** Do you live in an isolated community? In an apartment building? 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 special arrangements, if necessary.



### Know • Plan • Prepare

**KNOW** the Risks  
**Make a PLAN**  
**PREPARE** Your Kits

- Discuss your plan with family and friends so they know what you would do.
- Teach others about any special 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 media before and during an emergency.
- Follow the advice of first responders and officials.

#### For More Information:

[www.perthcounty.ca/emergency](http://www.perthcounty.ca/emergency)

Contact Us at:  
[cemc@perthcounty.ca](mailto:cemc@perthcounty.ca) or



[@PerthCoEmrgMgt](https://twitter.com/PerthCoEmrgMgt)

This document available  
in alternate formats

**Together We're Ready**  
Know • Plan • Prepare

## DO's and DON'Ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- Check on neighbours who are seniors with special needs to find out if they need your help during an emergency or evacuation.
- Allow the person to describe what help they need and how it can be provided to them.
- Be patient, listen actively.
- If the person appears anxious or agitated, speak calmly and provide assurance that you are there to help.
- If evacuation is necessary, offer a ride to seniors who do not have access to a vehicle.
- Follow instructions posted on special needs equipment and/or assistive devices.
- If time permits, offer to carry the person's grab and go bag to your car, along with any equipment or assistive devices they will need.

## Get Emergency Ready!

## Build An Emergency Survival Kit

- Container (box or plastic tub) for your kit
- Food for 3 days per person and (bottle) water (4 L per person, per day)
- Flashlight and batteries
- Radio and batteries or crank radio
- Spare batteries and phone chargers
- Family first aid kit
- Candles and matches/lighter
- Extra car keys and cash
- Important papers (identification)
- Clothing and footwear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Toilet paper and other personal items
- Whistle, (to attract attention, if needed)
- Playing cards, games, toys
- Manual can opener, bottle opener
- Duct tape and plastic sheeting
- Water purification tablets
- Corded telephone (non-electricity dependent)
- Pet food and supplies
- Pocket knife or multi tool
- Non-perishable healthy food
- Cook stove, lantern and fuel (follow manufacturer's instructions; never use barbecues indoors)
- Disposable; cups and plates; knife, forks and spoons
- Choose ready-to-eat foods that your family likes and that don't need refrigeration:
  - Canned food, such as soups, stews, baked beans, pasta, meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruits.
  - Crackers and biscuits, honey, peanut butter, syrup, jam,
  - Salt and pepper, sugar, instant coffee, tea.

**Note: Consume and replace water and canned food and dry goods once a year.**

### Special Considerations

- Supply of food items appropriate to your disability or dietary restrictions.
- Assistive devices needed such as canes, walkers, lightweight manual wheelchair, hearing aids, breathing apparatus, blood glucose monitoring device, etc.
- Prescription eyewear and footwear (if required).
- Extra supply of medications and vitamin supplements.
- Personal disability-related list of all your needed medical supplies and special equipment.
- Copies of medication prescriptions.
- Extra dentures (if required) and cleaner.
- Latex-free gloves (to give to anyone providing personal care to you).
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.
- Remember: Individuals are best at knowing their own needs and these should be respected.



**IS YOUR FAMILY PREPARED?**

