



Just in case.



A Family Emergency Guide

This publication and Ready.wv.gov are tools provided by West Virginia Citizen Corps with funding from the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to help you and your families get ready for any kind of disaster.

Thank you to all of the agencies that support citizen preparedness and response in West Virginia. Special thanks to the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Volunteer West Virginia, and the West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety.

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Who can use this book?

Families, individuals, community groups, teachers, housing developments, church groups, social clubs, employees, volunteers.

How to use this book?

- As a guide for you and your family
- As a resource before, during and after an emergency
- As a way to teach others and get your community involved in taking steps to be prepared



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Introduction

Anything can happen at any time. This booklet provides families, neighborhoods and local communities in West Virginia easy access to basic information on how to prepare for emergencies. Being ready ahead of a disaster is the most critical action you can take to protect the things that matter most: your family, your home, your pets, yourselves.

You can't always expect that fire fighters or paramedics will be available. Sometimes you need to rely on yourself. Look carefully at the information included in this book and adopt just one suggested technique. Even small changes make a big difference.

*Get Ready, West Virginia.
Just in case...*

ReadyWV!

The likelihood of surviving a house fire depends just as much on whether there are working batteries in your smoke detector as on the fire fighters who arrive to help. The same is true for other emergencies. Preparing in advance is critical to keeping your family safe.



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Before an Emergency

The Essentials

People never expect emergencies. That is why they can be so harmful. Getting ready in advance is the best way to minimize damage. Whether the emergency is big or small, there are some things your family should always have on hand.

Three things you can't do without...

- Water
- Flashlights
- Radio

Four things you will wish you had...

- Food
- Medicines
- Bank Records
- Warm Clothes and Blankets

Four Steps to Ready

The following sections provide tips, tools and resources for taking steps to protect your family. Build an emergency plan, prepare your home, prepare to evacuate, and improve financial preparedness.

It is easy to take just one step toward getting your family prepared for an emergency. For instance, you can go check your smoke alarm right now, or talk with your family at dinner tonight about where your meeting place should be. Instead of taking one step, we hope you will make progress in four areas.

1 Building Your Plan

One of the most effective ways to prepare your family for a disaster is to create a family emergency plan. Meet with your family to discuss why you need to prepare and explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and floods to children. Use the tips and tools provided in this book or talk to a Citizen Corps representative to learn more about making a family emergency plan.

Use the information that follows to create a family emergency plan.

A. Create a communications plan.

- You should choose an out of town emergency contact for your family. This person should live in a place that is unlikely to be directly affected by the same event. Let this person know that you have chosen them.
- Make sure every household member has all telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for that contact as well as each other.
- Leave these contact numbers at your children's schools and at your workplace.

- Your family should know that if landline or cellular telephones are not working, they need to be patient and try again later or try e-mail. Many people flood the telephone system when emergencies happen but e-mail can sometimes get through when calls don't.

B. Have two pre-identified meeting places.

- Choose a specific outside location on or very near your property in case of a sudden emergency, like a house fire.
- Pick a place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone should know the address and phone number and how to get there.
- Having a set meeting place away from your home will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected or the area evacuated. You may even want to make arrangements to stay with a family member or friend in case of an emergency.



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If there are people who assist you on a daily basis, list who they are and how you will contact them in an emergency. Make arrangements to check in immediately following a disaster. Create a personal network of neighbors and connect with them early.



- Be sure to include pets in your plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters and some hotels will not accept them. *See page 22 for suggestions about pets.*
- Don't be afraid to talk to your children about preparing for different types of disasters. Kids are better able to handle the stress of a crisis when they know what to expect.

C. Inform yourself.

Find out about the emergency plans at your workplace, your church and other places where your family spends time, such as sports facilities, scout troop centers, etc.

Have plans in place to communicate with and pick up family members in case of an emergency.

D. Work with your neighbors.

Neighbors helping neighbors can save lives and property. Talk to your neighbors to plan how you can work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce emergency preparedness as a new activity.

You also can help your family and neighbors by participating in Citizen Corps programs such as Community Emergency Response Team, Volunteers in Police Service, Medical Reserve Corps or Neighborhood Watch.

Discuss how you can work together to handle natural disasters or terrorist problems. Talk about how you can share resources. Know your neighbors' special skills (medical, technical and others). Consider how you can help neighbors with special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Develop a way to stay in touch with them as well.

Make plans for childcare, in case parents can't get home, and exchange contact information.

E. Emergency supplies

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for 7 to 14 days or more if possible. Assemble a family emergency kit with items you may need both for your home and in an evacuation (*see page 28 for a suggested list*). Create a separate evacuation kit stored in sturdy easy-to-carry containers like backpacks, duffel bags or covered trash containers and keep it in an easily accessible location. Replace these supplies periodically.

Keep important family documents in a waterproof and fireproof container or bank safety deposit box.



2 Your Home

Your home is your refuge. It is important to store the things you need in advance of any emergency or crisis situation. You may need to survive on your own during a winter storm, shelter in place during a chemical emergency, or provide your own care if first responders are needed elsewhere.

Keeping enough water and food on hand for your family is part of the equation. Adding light, heat, and comfort items can reduce stress and anxiety during an incident. Review the guidelines that follow and adopt as many tactics as possible to get your home ready.

A. Water

Having a supply of clean water is very important. A normally active person needs to drink at least 8 glasses of water each day. During hot weather, you will need to increase that amount. Children, nursing mothers and sick people will need more. You will also need water to fix meals and to wash. Store at least one gallon of water per person/per day for each member of your family. Don't forget water for pets.

Keep your water in very clean plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held poison. Plastic soft drink

bottles work well for water storage. You can also buy food-grade plastic buckets or drums. Close water containers tightly, date them and keep in a cool, dark place. Change this water with fresh water every six months.

B. Food

You don't need to go out and buy special foods to prepare your emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods and other staples on your cupboard shelves. In fact, familiar foods are important. They can lift spirits and give a feeling of security in times



of stress. Also, many canned foods don't need cooking, water or special preparation. Just be sure to have an adequate supply.

C. Special considerations

People with special diets and allergies will need more attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people. Nursing mothers may need to give their baby liquid formula in case they can't nurse. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people. Make sure you have a hand-operated (not electric) can opener. And don't forget foods for your pets.

D. Heat and light

Have lots of flashlights, extra batteries and bulbs on hand. Keep a flashlight next to your bed. Check batteries often. Be careful using open flame candles or lanterns for emergency lighting.

If you plan to use alternate equipment for heat, cooking and light during a power failure, be sure to check your equipment periodically. Have an adequate supply of fuel stored (not in the house). Have fireplace chimneys and stove flues cleaned regularly.

E. Pharmacies, medication and general health

Your drugstore keeps its records on computers and they may be subject to power or even computer problems. If you take medication regularly, ask your doctor to write an additional prescription so you have an extra supply on hand.

Keep a family medical inventory. List all medications used by family members as well as any necessary supplies such as needles or alcohol swabs. For each family member list medical conditions, allergies and medical devices needed to maintain health care. List the last dates of immunizations for adults and children.

Discuss these lists with your doctor to be sure they are complete. Ask how to handle chronic medical conditions in an emergency and what you can do if needed mechanical or electric equipment fails. Keep medical and dental checkups up-to-date. Maintaining good health is the first line of defense against any unexpected emergency.

F. Fire Safety

Practice home fire drills. Make sure all family members know the outside meeting place and how to get out quickly.

Store any gas cans or other flammable liquids away from the house. Always keep an ABC fire extinguisher close at hand.

Examine your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms now. If you have alarms that are hard-wired into your home's electrical system (most newer ones are), check to see if they have battery back-ups. If not, buy battery-operated smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. If you already have detectors, clean and test them.



Working smoke detectors can double your chances of survival. Replace all batteries in all alarms each year as a general safety precaution.

G. Possible home hazards

During an emergency, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, or break can cause an accident. For example, an unsteady bookshelf is a home hazard. People can trip over loose electric cords or toys on stairways. Make sure that freestanding heaters or lamps cannot be knocked over by active children or pets. Enlist all family members to keep your home hazard free.

H. Utilities

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service meter or main intake pipe, and natural gas meter. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members how to do these things as well.

Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on for use.

If you have your own septic system for sewage, make sure your treatment schedule is up-to-date.

I. Preventing flood damage

If your property has flooded in the past, consider strategies to mitigate damage in the future. Flood mitigation means making changes on your property to prevent future flood losses. Flood mitigation saves lives and money. Some mitigation options are:

- Elevate the buildings on your property above the base flood height
- Relocate buildings out of the floodway
- Allow your county or city government to purchase your property.

Contact your city council, county emergency services director or county commission to express interest in flood mitigation programs. The city or county then applies for grant money on your behalf to fund mitigation projects.

J. Transportation

Keep your automobile gas tank more than half full and oil at the proper level. Gas stations could experience a variety of electrical problems or delays in fuel delivery. Storing gasoline at home can be extremely expensive and hazardous and is not recommended.

*For more information
on Home Safety, visit
www.homesafetycouncil.org*



ready.wv.gov

3

Evacuation

One of the most important ways you can prepare your home and family is to create an emergency kit. If you need to evacuate your home, having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable. Once a disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or to search for supplies. Discuss what to do and what to take with you if you have to leave your home. Practice what you have discussed.

Assemble an emergency supply kit that can go with you. *Use the family emergency supplies kit checklist provided on page 28.* Store your evacuation kit with, but separate from, the supplies that you may need if your family is confined at home. Place the supplies you chose for the evacuation kit in an easy-to-carry container, such as a large, covered trash container, knapsacks or a duffel bag. Don't forget keys for your house, cars and safety deposit box.

Put together a first aid kit for your home and one for your evacuation kit, with one for each car in case you use a car to evacuate. Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person. Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons. You will need to plan ahead for any pets you have, because they cannot be taken to community shelters. *See page 22 for suggestions on pets.*

Monitor local news channels and emergency alert stations and follow any recommendations from your county and state emergency planning teams. *See page 17 for a list of Emergency Alert Stations in West Virginia.*

Stay or go?

Evacuating your home depends on a variety of factors.

Here are some things to consider:

Monitor your local news and Emergency Alert Stations for the most up-to-date information.

Have you been specifically told to evacuate by an Emergency Service Agency?

Do you require additional travel time or need transportation assistance?

Consider making arrangements to leave even if an evacuation has not been ordered.



LIVING TRUST AGREEMENT



4

Financial Readiness

The ability to maintain financial stability in the event of an emergency will help your family get back on its feet faster.

Operation Hope, Inc. (OHI) is America's first non-profit social investment bank and a national leader in providing financial literacy and economic empowerment programs. In partnership with Citizen Corps, Operation HOPE developed the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK). This is a simple tool designed to assist you and your family in assembling all necessary financial information in advance of an emergency. You can complete the EFFAK as an individual or as a household, but you should include information on all accounts for which you have a legal responsibility or obligation.

You may want to retain copies of the following in a water and fire-proof container:

- Bank statements and account numbers
- Mortgage or car loan
- IRAs
- Tax records
- Important phone numbers
- Wills, insurance policies, contacts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates), as well as legal papers such as divorce, immigration or citizenship records.

To complete this planning guide, visit <http://www.operationhope.org/effak>.

If you need assistance completing your EFFAK, please call 1-888-388-HOPE (4673).

JUST FOR KIDS! JOIN THE CREW!

Helping your family is fun!

You can get involved and help your family and friends be prepared.

Place check marks beside the tasks you have completed. Once you have four checkmarks from the list on the right... make it official! Have a parent help you tear out the certificate, sign it, and hang it in your room!

To learn more about the ReadyWV Kids Crew and how to prepare for emergencies of all types, check out www.ready.wv.gov.



PREPAREDNESS TASKS

- ☐ Remind your parents to change the batteries in your smoke detectors.
- ☐ Map it out! Help plan ways to get out of your house. Have a fire drill with your family to practice your plan!
- ☐ Know how and when to call 911. Be sure to remember your parents' full names, your address, and phone number.
- ☐ Go on a scavenger hunt! Help your parents build a family emergency kit with items found around your home. You can build one for your family car as well!
- ☐ If you know a thunderstorm is coming, stay indoors. Play an inside game until the storm passes.
- ☐ It's better to turn around! Never walk into floodwater. Remind your family not to drive through flooded streets.
- ☐ Play with toys, not fire. Don't touch matches, lighters or candles.



OFFICIAL MEMBER



HAS COMPLETED THE TASKS OF PREPARING OUR FAMILY FOR ANY EMERGENCY



Parent/Guardian Signature



The Mountain State

Natural Disasters

Natural events and other incidents can disrupt services and create emergency conditions, but family preparedness can reduce any impact. Listen to your local news and weather reports daily. If severe weather is predicted, stay home, if possible, until roads are clear and services are restored. Be particularly alert for fallen electrical wires and report them to the power company.

Floods: In mountainous West Virginia, floods can result from heavy rain or sudden snow melts. Floods can be very destructive in narrow valleys and river lowlands. If they happen suddenly, escape routes may be limited. In these areas, be alert and be ready to evacuate quickly, if necessary. If a flood puts you in danger, move to higher ground. Don't drive through high water. Keep children away from creeks, streams and storm drains.

Fires: Fires can be started by lightning, human carelessness or arson, and can spread very rapidly. Call 911 and get ready to evacuate before routes are cut off. If your house catches fire, leave the house immediately and then call 911. Do NOT try to put it out yourself.

Winter Storms: Pay attention to weather forecasts in your area and stay at home if possible until roads are clear, downed electric wires are cleared, and services restored. Take care when shoveling heavy snow. Pace yourself.

Hurricanes or tornadoes: West Virginia is not on a typical hurricane or tornado path. However, very high winds, sometimes with heavy rain, can create emergency conditions. If possible, stay at home until roads are clear of debris, such as fallen trees and branches, and services are restored. In case of a tornado warning, take shelter in a basement corner or in a small interior room. Don't attempt to outrun a tornado in a car. Get out and take shelter in a ditch or on low ground – not under a tree.

Manmade Disasters

Hazardous Materials

Nationwide hazardous materials are manufactured, used or stored at an estimated 4.5 million facilities. They are in widespread use in West Virginia businesses – including agriculture, coal production and the chemical industry. Hazardous materials are most often released into the environment as the result of accidents while being transported or through a chemical accident in a plant.

Most chemical accidents that injure people occur at home. Never mix household chemicals. Incompatible chemicals may react, ignite or explode. Mixing many common household cleaners can produce deadly gases. Never use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products or pesticides near an open flame (pilot light, wood burning stove, lighted candle). They may catch fire or explode. Leave the residence if there is danger of a fire or explosion. Call the fire department from a neighbor's home or use your cell phone from outside the house. To avoid toxic fumes, stay upwind and away from the home.

Act immediately if a chemical gets into the eyes. Unless authorities instruct you otherwise, flush the eyes with clear water for a minimum of 15 minutes.

Hazardous materials accidents can happen anywhere. While communities near chemical manufacturing plants are at particular risk, any area may

be vulnerable to an accident when hazardous materials are being transported by railroad, highway or barges on the nation's rivers.

Preparing for a HAZMAT incident includes many of the same steps taken to prepare for any other emergency. Learn if your community has an emergency warning system and how it works. See *"Four Steps to Ready" on page 3.*

During a HAZMAT incident, tune into the local station in the emergency system for detailed information and instructions. If possible, stay upwind, upstream and uphill from the danger zone and at least one-half mile away.

If you are in a vehicle, stop and seek shelter in a building, if possible. If you must remain in your vehicle, keep windows and vents closed and turn off the air conditioner or heater.

After a HAZMAT incident, if you have been exposed to hazardous materials, act quickly and follow decontamination instructions. Continue to listen to the emergency broadcast system. Depending on the nature of the contamination, you might be advised to take a shower or stay away from water. Keep contaminated clothing and shoes away from other materials. Seal them in containers and follow instructions from local authorities on proper disposal.

If you were directed to evacuate, do not return to the area until local officials have declared 'all clear'.

Terrorism

Terrorist attacks have left many concerned about the possibility of future incidents in the United States and their potential impact. Terrorist goals are to destabilize government and panic citizens. They try to keep us guessing about what might happen next, increasing our worries.

However, there are things you and your family can do to prepare for the unexpected. Being prepared can

reassure you and your children that you can have a measure of control even in the face of such events.

Find out what could happen to your family and neighborhood. Reading this booklet is a good start. Once you have determined the possible events and their potential to occur in your community, it is important that you discuss them with your family or household. Develop an emergency plan together.

Public Health Emergencies

The effects of a public health emergency can be less severe if you plan ahead. Get familiar with the language. Learn what infectious diseases are and what to do if you live in an area affected by an outbreak or a pandemic. Some of the possible public health emergencies are reviewed below. Visit websites and know where to get official information if an emergency should occur.

Pandemic Flu

An influenza (flu) pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of disease that occurs when a new type of flu virus appears that people have not been exposed to before (or haven't been exposed to in a long time.) A pandemic flu causes widespread illness because people do not have immunity to the new virus. Pandemics are different from the seasonal flu outbreaks that occur each year. Instead, pandemics may last longer and/or occur in waves of activity that last six to eight weeks separated by months.

Unlike the seasonal flu which does not usually cause complications in healthy adults, during a pandemic the entire population may be at risk for serious complications. Symptoms are similar to the common flu but may be more severe.

ReadyWV!

Take action! Flu shots are suggested every year for vulnerable populations.

Thorough hand washing is the single most effective way to reduce your chances of getting both the common flu and a more serious flu virus.

Here in the Mountain State, Avian flu (or the bird flu) is also a concern. Avian flu is a disease found among poultry. Chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, and guinea fowl as well as a wide variety of other birds including water fowl can be infected. Most cases of avian flu in humans have occurred when they had direct contact with infected poultry.

Keep Healthy! Here's how:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, stay away from others to protect them.
- Stay home when you are sick, don't spread your illness to school, work, or while on errands.
- Use your arm! Cover your mouth and nose with your upper sleeve, not your hand. Wash your hands after every cough or sneeze.
- Clean Hands! Wash with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching! Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth when you are sick. This is an easy way for germs to spread.
- Stay strong! Practice good health for prevention. Get lots of sleep, exercise, de-stress, and eat healthy foods.



During a potential pandemic, monitor local news, internet, and other communications systems. Public health officials will release instructions on how to reduce your chances of acquiring the pandemic virus.



West Nile Virus

West Nile virus is a potentially serious illness spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. West Nile is not spread through casual contact. Approximately 80% of people infected with West Nile will not show any symptoms at all. About 20% will experience fever, headache and body aches, nausea, vomiting and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Only a very few people will experience severe symptoms. These symptoms include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. Symptoms can last several weeks.

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Mosquitoes breed in standing water. Empty containers that are not being used.

The best way to avoid getting infected with West Nile is to reduce the number of mosquito bites you get. Always wear insect repellent when you are outside. Avoid being outside between dusk and dawn, which are prime mosquito biting hours. Make sure your window and door screens are in good condition. Do an inspection of your yard and the area around your home. Mosquitoes breed in standing water. Empty any containers that are not being used, dump water out of flower pots, and change water in bird feeders regularly.

Anthrax

Anthrax is a disease caused by bacteria that create spores. When a person comes into contact with the spores, they may become ill. The spores can infect the skin, lungs, or digestive system. Antibiotics can be used to treat all three types of anthrax infections. Some forms of anthrax bacteria exist in nature and can cause disease. It can also be spread on purpose as a powder or through the air.

After contact with the anthrax spores, symptoms of anthrax may appear within seven days. First symptoms of inhaled anthrax are like the flu, which can develop into severe breathing problems. When anthrax infects a cut in the skin, symptoms include sores or blisters. Nausea, loss of appetite and diarrhea are symptoms of anthrax that is ingested with food or beverages. If you have been near an affected area and you think you might have been exposed, begin treatment as soon as possible. Call your doctor or local public health department. Describe your symptoms and explain that you

think you might have been exposed to anthrax and what symptoms you have. Getting antibiotics or an anthrax vaccine is not recommended if you have not been exposed to anthrax.

You can protect yourself. If you see a strange package, envelope, or other container that you suspect may contain anthrax, do not open it. Leave the area and stop others from entering the area. Dial 911 or the local police for more instructions.

Botulism

Botulism is caused by a toxin made by bacteria that occur naturally in soil. The toxin restricts a person's movement and breathing by affecting the nervous system. About 110 cases occur each year in the U.S. Most cases are the result of consuming improperly preserved home canned foods. In some cases botulism can be deliberately spread through the air.

Symptoms include trouble seeing, drooping eyelids, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, slurred speech, and muscle weakness. They usually appear within 12-36 hours after exposure. If you think you have symptoms of botulism get medical attention as soon as possible to increase your chances of recovery. Recovery can take weeks or months.

To avoid getting sick, make sure food is prepared according to safe food handling guidelines. Stay away from any area where officials believe the toxin has been released. Stay informed by turning to the radio, television or internet for updated health and safety announcements.

During An Emergency

The Emergency Alert System (EAS)

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a method to notify the public. Selected radio and television stations throughout your county or area serve as EAS stations. Emergency officials can activate the system to relay warnings and vital information to the public about what emergency actions to take.

Emergency information will be repeated over these stations until the “all clear” message has been given. The EAS will explain the emergency response level and will tell you what you should do (shelter in place, evacuate, etc.)

The Emergency Alert System can address the entire nation on short notice in case of a serious threat or national emergency. Emergency Alert Stations in West Virginia include:

STATION	PHONE	COUNTIES
WVAF-FM 99.9	304-342-8131	Boone, Calhoun, Clay, Jackson, Kanawha, Putnam, Roane
WRVC-AM 930	304-523-8401	Cabell, Lincoln, Mason, Wayne
WJLS-AM 560	304-253-7311	Fayette, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming
WCWV-FM 92.9	304-872-5202	Braxton, Nicholas, Webster
WHAJ-FM 104.5	304-327-7114	McDowell, Mercer
WRON-FM 97.7	304-645-1400	Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas
WVOW-AM 1290	304-752-5080	Logan, Mingo
WXIL-FM 95	304-485-4565	Pleasants, Ritchie, Wirt, Wood
WWLW-FM 106.5	304-623-6546	Barbour, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Taylor, Upshur
WVAQ-101.9	304-296-0029	Marion, Monongalia, Preston
WDNE-FM 98.9	304-636-1300	Randolph, Pendleton, Tucker
WWVA-AM 1170	304-233-1170	Brooke, Hancock, Ohio, Marshall, Tyler, Wetzel
WQZK-FM 94.1	304-759-1005	Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral
WEPM-AM 1340	304-263-8868	Berkeley, Jefferson, Morgan



Emergency Shelters

If local authorities ask you to leave your home, they have a good reason to make this request, and you should follow their instructions. Your life and those of your family are more important than property. Keep these simple tips in mind:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sturdy shoes so you can be protected as much as possible. Dress warmly in winter.
- Lock your home. Take your Family Emergency Supplies Kit.
- Use travel routes that local authorities tell you to use. Don't take shortcuts, because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- Continue to listen to the Emergency Alert System radio station.

If you're sure you have time, shut off water and electricity before leaving if instructed to do so. Leave natural gas services ON unless local officials advise you otherwise. You may need gas for

heating and cooking later, and only a professional can restore gas service in your home once it has been turned off. In an emergency situation it could take weeks for a professional to respond.

Post a note telling others when you left, who is with you and where you are going. Call your family contact to tell them where you are going, when you expect to arrive and who is with you.

Remember to evacuate your pets too.

Check on your neighbors according to prearranged plans, especially those living alone, the elderly or disabled persons.

Shelter in Place

If you are advised by local officials to "shelter in place," they mean for you to remain inside your home, workplace or school and protect yourself there. This would most likely happen in case of tornado, flood conditions, chemical or radiation accident or attack. Depending on the reason for sheltering:

- Go inside your home or the nearest building.
- Close all windows and doors, and turn off all ventilation systems.
- Get your Emergency Supplies Kit, and make sure your radio works.
- In case of a tornado, take refuge below ground, if possible.
- In the case of a chemical or radiation threat, if possible, take shelter in an interior room without windows that is above ground level. An above ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into

basements even if the windows are closed. Using duct tape, plastic sheeting or damp towels, seal all cracks around the door, any windows and any vents into the room.

- Don't use the phone, except for emergency messages.
- Turn on your radio or television to an emergency alert station. Keep listening until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas that are at greatest risk in your community.
- Bring pets inside.



At Home Emergency

During an emergency, you might be cut off from food, water and electricity for several days or more. If power is out, food stores may be closed and your water supply may not work. Here are some suggestions:

Water: If a disaster catches you without a supply of clean water, you can use ice cubes and the water in your hot-water tank or pipes. You can also use clean water from the reservoir (back) tank of your toilet (not the bowl). If it is safe to go outside, you can also purify water from streams or rivers, rainwater, ponds and lakes, natural springs and snow by boiling (for 5 minutes), distilling or disinfection. To purify water with bleach, use 10 drops of bleach per gallon of water. Use only regular household liquid bleach containing only 5.25% sodium hypochlorite.

Food: During and right after an emergency, it will be important to keep up your strength by eating at least one well-balanced meal each day. Take vitamin, mineral and/or protein supplements.

If the electricity goes off: First, check to see if your neighbors have power. The problem may be in your home. If they also have lost power, check with the power company to see when power might come back on. Turn off or unplug all major appliances. When appliances, such as refrigerators are left on, they could overload electric lines when power is turned back on, causing a second outage. Use the phone only when absolutely necessary. If the only problem is downed lines, your cell phone or car phone will work.

Frozen plumbing: Plumbing can freeze when power is lost during cold weather periods. You can turn off the water supply at the main intake pipe, drain your system and leave a faucet open to avoid air lock. Be ready to go to a shelter if warmth and protection are needed during a long power outage.

Basic First Aid

It is important in preparing for any emergency to know how to give first aid. If medical help is not immediately available, use the first aid booklet in your first aid kit (available from the Red Cross or at stores). If you do not have a first aid booklet, the information below may be helpful.

If you encounter someone who is injured, apply these emergency Check-Call-Care action steps:

- Check the scene to make sure it is safe for you to approach. Be alert for fallen power lines. Then check the victim for unconsciousness and life-threatening conditions. Someone who has a life threatening condition, such as not breathing or severe bleeding, requires immediate care by trained responders and may require treatment by medical professionals.
- Call for help.
- Care for someone who is hurt.

Control Bleeding

Cover the wound with a dressing, and press firmly against the wound (direct pressure). Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart if you do not suspect that the victim has a broken bone. Cover the dressing with a bandage. If the bleeding does not stop, apply additional dressings and bandages, and use a pressure point to squeeze the artery against the bone. Provide care for shock.

Care for Shock

Keep the victim from getting chilled or overheated. Elevate the legs about 12 inches (if broken bones are not suspected). Do not give food or drink to the victim.



Burns

Reduce pain by gently cooling the burn. Pour large amounts of water over the burned area. Cover the burn with dry, clean dressings or cloth.

Muscle, Bone and Joint Injuries

Rest the injured part. Apply ice or a cold pack to control swelling and reduce pain. Avoid any movement or activity that causes pain. If you must move the victim because the scene is becoming unsafe, try to immobilize the injured part to keep it from shifting.

Poisoning

Call the Poison Control Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222 and communicate what was swallowed and how much. Follow the directions given exactly.

Reduce Any Care Risks

The risk of getting a disease while giving first aid is extremely rare. However, to reduce the risk even further:

- Avoid direct contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Use protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and breathing barriers like cloth handkerchiefs.
- Whenever possible, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately after giving care.



Talking to Your Kids

Traumatic events can have a powerful impact on children. Graphic images of natural disasters and terrorist activities can result in children feeling that their safety is threatened. When there is an interruption in the natural flow of life, a child can experience anxiety and fear. These are normal reactions.

Be calm and reassure children that they are safe. Explain that the firefighters, police, doctors, and the military are helping people who are hurt and are working to ensure that no future tragedies occur.

Let children know it's normal to feel upset. Listen to what children tell you about their thoughts and feelings and don't dismiss their fears. Encourage the children to talk about these feelings and help put them into perspective.

Observe a child's emotional state. Children who at first hold back fear or grief may experience delayed stress symptoms later, such as reverting to outgrown childish behavior, sleeplessness, anxiety, nightmares, or even depression. Children respond to praise, and parents should make a deliberate effort not to focus on the child's immature behavior.

Tell children the truth. Don't try to pretend the event has not occurred or that it is not serious. Fantasized danger can be as real and threatening as actual danger to them. Be patient and do not belittle their fears, but listen with understanding, love and factual explanations.

Keep explanations appropriate for the child's age. Elementary school-age children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that the daily structures of their lives will not change. Upper middle school and high school-age students will be more committed to doing something to help the victims and the affected community. Encourage all children to speak about their thoughts and feelings. Be a good listener!



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Have the family spend more time together. Your physical presence will be reassuring and provide the opportunity to look for any reactions. Explain that when people know what to do and practice in advance, everyone can handle emergencies better. That's why you created a family emergency plan together.

It is very important that you make a deliberate effort to get back to a routine. Engaging in "normal" activities of life,

i.e., eating, sleeping, chores, school and work, provides stability at a time when events make life seem very confusing. If the family is evacuated, there will be a delay in a return to normal life. Participate in activities planned at the shelters or plan family activities at home. This will increase the morale of all. Try to treat shelter-at-home or evacuation as a positive thing or even a temporary adventure!

Taking Care of Pets

Emergency planning should include pets. Be aware that Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. If your family must go to a shelter or other site away from home, do not leave your pets at home. Instead, create a pet emergency plan in advance.

You may not be home when an evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be and have a key to your home.

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number and size. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Or, ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. However, animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other emergency information and supplies.



Keep a pet emergency supplies kit with your emergency evacuation kit. Include a carrier box, immunization record, muzzles or leashes, pet food and supplies. Have an ID photo available in case they stray. Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative.

After An Emergency

Returning Home

Before entering your home, walk carefully around the outside. Check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage. If you are concerned about safety, call an inspector or structural engineer to have your residence tested.

When you return home, check for damage. Watch for loose boards, slippery floors, broken glass and other hazards. Use a flashlight. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches if you suspect damage. Check for fires, fire hazards and other household dangers. Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows and get everyone outside quickly. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately.

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In the first days after a disaster leash your pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet could become confused.

It may appear that your home is damaged beyond repair. Don't lose hope. You may save many of your belongings. It may be possible to clean out and dry out your home. Many faith-based and volunteer organizations around the state help families in need after a disaster.

Home Safety Check

Roof, Foundation and Chimney

Look for cracks and other signs of structural damage.

Natural Gas

If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve outside, but remember that you will need a professional to turn it back on. Call the gas company from a neighbor's house.

Sparks, Broken or Frayed Wires

Check the electrical system, but don't touch anything electric if you are wet, standing in water, or unsure of your safety. Don't turn on the lights unless you are sure they are safe. If possible, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker.

Appliances

Don't use electrical or gas appliances that have been wet. Unplug them and let them dry out. Have them checked by a professional before using them again.

Water and Sewage Systems

Damaged sewer systems can create a serious health hazard. Check with local authorities before using any water, including for drinking, cooking, or personal hygiene. Avoid using the toilets. Have septic tanks, and other systems serviced as soon as possible.

Smoke Detector

Run a test to make sure your smoke detector is working properly. Get a fire extinguisher and learn how to use it.

*To find out more, visit
www.wvvoad.org*



Cleaning Up

During an emergency, household chemicals can spill or leak creating potentially serious hazards. Take precautions to keep children and pets away. Be careful cleaning up hazardous substances. Don't combine chemicals or dump them down drains or toilets.

If your basement is flooded you will undoubtedly feel a sense of urgency to get the water out fast. If the ground outside is still waterlogged, emptying the basement quickly can lead to structural damage, collapsed walls or a buckled floor. Instead, gradually pump the water out over a period of several days.

Germs and mold become major hazards after a flood. Keep lots of bleach handy to sterilize water and hard surfaces. Remember to protect yourself, wear rubber boots and gloves, keep a window open and use unscented bleach. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners, the chemical reaction

is toxic. Bleach can be used to clean mold off hard surfaces, however, mold laden cloth and other hard-to-clean items (like carpet) will need to be removed.

Personal Items

Many of your personal items may be damaged. To save damaged items utilize the resources provided at the following websites:

Photographs

www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/spixs.shtm

Books

www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/fldbks.shtm

Heirlooms/Valuables

www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/care.shtm

Textiles

www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/textils.shtm

Currency

www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/fixdrls.shtm

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Watching or reading news about the disaster over and over will only increase your stress. Healthy activities can help you get your mind off the disaster and keep the stress in check.



Coping

After a disaster you and your family will experience physical and emotional stress. Look after yourself and your loved ones as you refocus and repair.

Here are some tips for coping with disaster related stress:

- Get plenty of rest, water and healthy food.
- Don't be afraid to ask for support.
- Talk to someone about your feelings. We each have different ways of dealing with stress.
- Establish a family emergency plan. Feeling that there is something you can do to prevent damage in the future can be comforting.



Your Finances

Recovering from a disaster can seem financially overwhelming. Take things one step at a time.

Call your insurance agent right away to file a claim. Take pictures or video of any damage and water in your house. Save damaged items. This will make filing your claim easier. If you are required to dispose of a damaged item, document it on a list and keep a swatch of material or other sample of the item. This will help show the insurance adjuster what has been lost.

Notify your creditors, bank and employer. Be sure they have updated contact information in case you cannot stay in your home. Explain your situation and try to negotiate a payment arrangement that does not create an undue burden.

Refer to the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit page 9 to help you gather important materials in advance.

To register for assistance if you are a victim of a federally declared disaster, visit www.fema.gov/assistance



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Where to Find Help

Create your family emergency communications plan and attach it here or make a list of local emergency contacts.

Emergency Phone Numbers _____

Local Emergency Services _____

Ambulance _____

Nearest Relative _____

Local Contact/Friend _____

Out of State Contact _____

Doctors _____

Local Red Cross _____

Insurance Agent _____

Utility Companies _____

Other _____

Medications List with Dosage _____

Find a template for a family emergency plan at www.ready.wv.gov

Family Emergency Supply Checklist

Consider including the items below in your home emergency kit. Prepare a smaller kit with the essentials for each family vehicle and an additional “To Go” kit for your home in case you have to evacuate.

ESSENTIALS

- ☐ One gallon of water per day for each person
- ☐ Flashlight with extra batteries
- ☐ Hand crank or battery operated radio
- ☐ Liquid bleach to purify drinking water

FOOD

- ☐ Canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Sugar, salt, pepper
- ☐ High energy foods – peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- ☐ Multi-vitamins
- ☐ Comfort foods – cookies, hard candy, cereal

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

- ☐ Sturdy shoes or work boots
- ☐ Rain gear, warm socks
- ☐ Blankets or sleeping bags
- ☐ Hats and gloves
- ☐ Thermal underwear
- ☐ Sunglasses, sunscreen, bug spray

OTHER SUPPLIES

- ☐ Mess kits, paper cups, plastic utensils
- ☐ Batteries
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Wooden matches in waterproof container
- ☐ Aluminum foil
- ☐ Plastic storage containers
- ☐ Signal flare
- ☐ Paper, pencil
- ☐ Needles, thread
- ☐ Shovel and tools
- ☐ Plastic sheeting
- ☐ Maps (state, county, city)
- ☐ Fire extinguisher
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Can opener (hand-operated)
- ☐ Utility knife
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Personal hygiene items
- ☐ Plastic bags and tie
- ☐ Plastic bucket with tight lid
- ☐ Spray disinfectant
- ☐ Towelettes or diaper wipes
- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Formula, bottles
- ☐ Canned baby food and juice
- ☐ Medications, vitamins

GENERAL NEEDS

- ☐ Prescription medications
- ☐ Insulin and kit
- ☐ Dentures
- ☐ Eye glasses and extra contacts
- ☐ Cell phone
- ☐ Important family documents



Additional Resources

West Virginia Citizens Corps

Volunteers throughout West Virginia are helping increase community preparedness by participating in Citizen Corps activities. Find out about your local Citizen Corps program through your county's Office of Emergency Services or visit www.ready.wv.gov or call (800) WV HELPS for more information.

Local Citizen Corps

At the local level, Citizen Corps Councils encourage cooperation among community leaders and provide residents with training opportunities in first aid and emergency preparedness. Local Councils also develop outreach programs for communities and organize special projects or community events such as disaster preparedness fairs or community outreach meetings.

Local Citizen Corps Programs include:

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
- Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP)
- Fire Corps

State Citizen Corps

At the state level, the West Virginia Citizen Corps Council is a network of state and local organizations, each committed to increasing citizen involvement in preparedness and response activities. The state program is run through Volunteer West Virginia, the State's Commission for National and Community Service.



For more information about Citizen Corps, contact your county emergency services director or the state Citizen Corps Program Coordinator.

Citizen Corps Program Coordinator
710 Central Avenue
Charleston, West Virginia 25302

800-WV-HELPS (800-984-3577)
www.ready.wv.gov

Emergency Phone Numbers

Poison Control	800-222-1222
Safe Schools Helpline	866-723-3982
National Weather Service.....	304-746-0180
Emergency Police/Fire/Medical.....	911
Information and Referral	211

Online Resources

www.ready.wv.gov	www.noaa.gov
www.ready.gov	www.homesafetycouncil.org
www.citizencorps.gov	www.wvdhsem.gov
www.volunteerwv.org	www.wvdmaps.gov
www.redcross.org	www.wvdhhr.gov
www.asPCA.org	www.disasterprepped.com
http://emergency.cdc.gov	www.wvoad.org
www.fema.gov	



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