

# Emergency Resource Guide

Information to help you plan and prepare

*Personal Preparedness*

*Prevention*

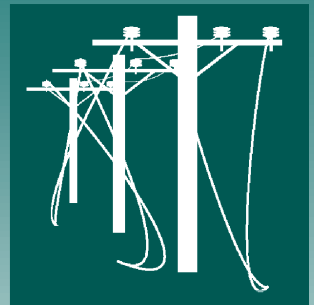
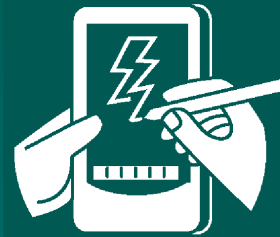
*Terrorism*

*Biological Agents*

*In the Community*

*In the Home*

*Nature and Weather*



*This publication prepared jointly by*



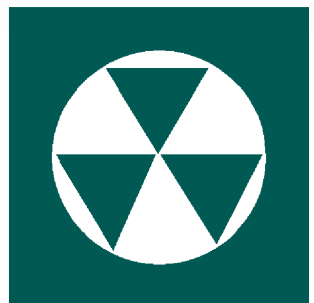
**WASHINGTON  
MILITARY  
DEPARTMENT**

*Emergency Management Division*



Washington State Department of  
**Health**

*Revised: January 2007*



This publication  
prepared jointly by



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**On the Web**

This publication is available electronically in English and Spanish on the Department of Health's Web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/factsheets](http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/factsheets)

Many of the individual fact sheets are also available in Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Russian and Vietnamese at the same Web address.

This publication also is available in English on the Emergency Management Division's Web site at [www.emd.wa.gov](http://www.emd.wa.gov).

**Other Formats**

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats: 1-800-525-0127.

DOH Pub #750-115  
(Revised January 2007)

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# Prepare Your Household for Emergencies

After a disaster, you and your family should be prepared to be on your own for at least three days. In some emergencies, such as an influenza pandemic, you may need to prepare for a week or more. Emergency response teams will be very busy and may not be able to provide immediate care to all who need it.

## Before disaster strikes

- Choose a place for your family to meet after a disaster.
- Choose a person outside the immediate area for family members to contact in case you get separated. This person should live far enough away so he or she won't be involved in the same emergency.
- Know how to contact your children at their school or daycare, and how to pick them up after a disaster. Let the school know if someone else is authorized to pick them up. Keep your child's emergency release card up to date.
- Put together an emergency supply kit for your home and workplace. If your child's school or daycare stores personal emergency kits, make one for your child to keep there.
- Know where the nearest fire and police stations are located.
- Learn your community's warning signals, what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Learn first aid and CPR. Have a first aid kit, a first aid manual and extra medicine for family members.
- Learn how to shut off your water, gas and electricity. Know where to find shut-off valves and switches.
- Keep a small amount of cash available. If the power is out, ATM machines won't work.
- If you have family members who don't speak English, prepare emergency cards in English with their names, addresses and information about medications or allergies. Make sure they can find their cards at all times.
- Conduct earthquake and fire drills every six months.

- Make copies of your vital records and store them in a safe deposit box in another city or state. Store the originals safely. Keep photos and videotapes of your home and valuables in your safe deposit box.
- Make sure family members know all the possible ways to get out of your home. Keep all exits clear.
- Make sure all family members agree on an emergency plan. Give emergency information to babysitters or other caregivers.

## During an emergency or disaster

- Keep calm and take time to think. Give assistance where needed.
- Listen to your radio or television for official information and instructions.
- Use the telephone for emergency calls only.
- If you are ordered to evacuate, take your emergency kit and follow official directions to a safe place or temporary shelter.

## After the emergency or disaster is over

- Use caution in entering damaged buildings and homes.
- Stay away from damaged electrical wires and wet appliances.
- Check food and water supplies for contamination.
- Notify your relatives that you are safe. But don't tie up phone lines, they may be needed for emergency calls.
- If government disaster assistance is available, the news media will announce where to go to apply.



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# Emergency Supplies

Government agencies will respond to community disasters, but citizens may be on their own for hours, even days, after disaster strikes. You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for at least three days. In some emergencies, such as an influenza pandemic, you may need to prepare for a week or more.

## Emergency survival kit

Store one of these at home, at work and at each child's school or daycare facility.

- Dry or canned food and drinking water for each person
- Can opener
- First aid supplies and first aid book
- Copies of important documents, such as birth certificates, licenses and insurance policies
- "Special needs" items for family members, such as infant formula, eye glasses and medications
- A change of clothing
- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Battery powered radio or television
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Whistle
- Waterproof matches
- Toys, books, puzzles, games
- Extra house keys and car keys
- List of contact names and phone numbers
- Food, water and supplies for pets

## Additional items you can store at home for use during an emergency:

### Cooking supplies

- Barbecue, camp stove
- Fuel for cooking, such as charcoal or camp stove fuel
- Plastic knives, forks, spoons
- Paper plates and cups
- Paper towels
- Heavy-duty aluminum foil

## Sanitation supplies

- Large plastic trash bags for trash, water protection
- Large trash cans
- Bar soap and liquid detergent
- Shampoo
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Feminine and infant supplies
- Toilet paper
- Household bleach with no additives, and eyedropper (for purifying drinking water)
- Newspaper — to wrap garbage and waste

## Comfort

- Sturdy shoes
- Gloves for clearing debris
- Tent

## Tools

- Ax, shovel, broom
- Crescent wrench for turning off gas
- Screwdriver, pliers, hammer
- Coil of one-half inch rope
- Plastic tape and sheeting
- Knife or razor blades
- Garden hose for siphoning and fire fighting



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# Disaster Tips for People with Visual Disabilities

## Canes

- If you use a cane, keep extras in strategic, consistent and secured locations at work, home, school and volunteer site to help you maneuver around obstacles and hazards.
- Keep a spare cane in your emergency kit.

## Alternative mobility cues

- If you have some vision, place security lights in each room to light paths of travel. These lights plug into electric wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will, depending on type, continue to operate automatically for 1 to 6 hours and can be turned off manually and used as a short-lasting flashlight.
- Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries.
- Plan for losing the auditory clues you usually rely on after a major disaster.
- Service animals may become confused, frightened or disoriented during and after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.

## Label supplies

- If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or Braille.

## Secure computers

- Anchor special equipment and large pieces of furniture such as computers and shelving. Create a computer back-up system for important data and store it off site.

## Advocacy issues

- Advocate that TV news not only post important phone numbers, but also announce them slowly and repeat them frequently for people who cannot read the screen.



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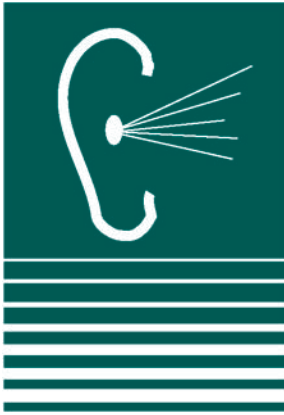
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# Disaster Tips for the Hearing Impaired

## Hearing aids

- Store hearing aid(s) in a strategic, consistent and secured location so they can be found and used after a disaster.
  - For example, consider storing them in a container by your bedside, which is attached to a nightstand or bedpost using a string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

## Batteries

- Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If available, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies.
- Maintain TTY batteries. Consult your manual for information.
- Store extra batteries for your TTY and light phone signaler. Check the owner's manual for proper battery maintenance.

## Communication

- Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you don't have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose.
- Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as: "I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter," "I do not write or read English," and "If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed."
- If possible, obtain a battery-operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.

- Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Advocate so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on-camera duty.

## Alarms

- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery operated.

## Advocacy

- Recruit interpreters to be Red Cross emergency volunteers.
- Encourage TV stations to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format.
- When you travel, ensure hotels have services for deaf and hearing-impaired persons, including visual alarms. Ask for them when you check in.



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# Disaster Tips for People with Special Medical Needs

In a disaster, people with special medical needs have extra concerns. This information will help you and your family prepare for an emergency.

## Medications

- Always have at least a three-day supply of all your medications. In some emergencies, such as an influenza pandemic, you may need to prepare for a week or more.
- Store your medications in one location in their original containers.
- Have a list of all of your medications: name of medication, dose, frequency, and the name of the prescribing doctor.

## Medical supplies

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

## Electrically powered medical equipment

- For all medical equipment requiring electrical power — beds, breathing equipment, or infusion pumps — check with your medical supply company and get information regarding a back-up power source such as a battery or generator.

## Oxygen and breathing equipment

- If you use oxygen, have an emergency supply (enough for at least a three-day period).
- Oxygen tanks should be securely braced so they do not fall over. Call your medical supply company regarding bracing instructions.
- If you use breathing equipment, have a three-day supply or more of tubing, solutions and medications.

## Intravenous (IV) and feeding tube equipment

- Know if your infusion pump has battery back-up, and how long it would last in an emergency.
- Ask your home care provider about manual infusion techniques in case of a power outage.
- Have written operating instructions attached to all equipment.

## Emergency bag

- In the event that you have to leave your home, have a bag packed at all times that contains:
  - A medication list.
  - Medical supplies for at least three days.
  - Copies of vital medical papers such as insurance cards and power of attorney.

## People who can help

- An important part of being prepared for a disaster is planning with family, friends and neighbors. Know who could walk to your home to assist you if no other means of transportation is available.
- Discuss your disaster plans with your home health care provider.
- Ask your local fire department if they keep a list of people with special medical needs; ask to be included if they do maintain a list.
- Keep a phone contact list handy of people who can help.

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# Disaster Tips for People with Mobility Disabilities

## Storage

- Store emergency supplies in a pack or backpack attached to a walker, wheelchair or scooter.
- Store needed mobility aids (canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs) close to you in a consistent, convenient and secured location. Keep extra aids in several locations, if possible.

## Emergency supply kit

- Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your supply kit to use while wheeling or making your way over glass or debris.
- If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, consider having an extra battery available. A car battery can be substituted for a wheelchair battery, but this type of battery will not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery. Check with your vendor to see if you will be able to charge batteries by either connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery or by connecting batteries to a specific type of converter that plugs into your vehicle's cigarette lighter in the event of loss of electricity.
- If your chair does not have puncture-proof tires, keep a patch kit or can of "seal-in" air product to repair flat tires, or keep an extra supply of inner tubes.
- Store a lightweight manual wheelchair, if available.
- Make sure furniture is secured so that it doesn't block the pathways you normally travel.

- If you spend time above the first floor of a building with an elevator, plan and practice using alternative methods of evacuation. If needed, enlist the help of your personal support network.
- If you cannot use stairs, discuss lifting and carrying techniques that will work for you. There will be times when wheelchair users will have to leave their chairs behind in order to safely evacuate a structure.
- Sometimes transporting someone down stairs is not a practical solution unless there are at least two or more strong people to control the chair. It is very important to discuss the safest way to transport you if you need to be carried, and alert helpers to any areas of vulnerability. For example, the traditional "firefighter's carry" may be hazardous for some people with respiratory weakness.
- Be prepared to give helpers brief instructions on the best way to move you.



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Children who experience an initial traumatic event before they are 11 years old are three times more likely to develop psychological symptoms than those who experience their first trauma later. Children are able to cope better with a traumatic event if parents and other adults support and help them with their experiences. Help should start as soon as possible after the event.



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# Helping Children After a Disaster

It's important to remember some children may never show distress, while others may not give evidence of being upset for several weeks or even months after an emergency. Other children may not show a change in behavior, but may still need your help.

## Children may exhibit the following behaviors after a disaster:

- Be upset over the loss of a favorite toy or possession that is important to them.
- Change from being quiet, obedient and caring to loud, noisy and aggressive, or change from being outgoing to shy and afraid.
- Develop night-time fears (nightmares, fear of the dark or sleeping alone).
- Be afraid the event will reoccur.
- Become easily upset.
- Lose trust in adults. (After all, their adults were not able to control the disaster.)
- Revert to younger behavior (bed-wetting, thumb-sucking).
- Want to stay close to parents. Refuse to go to school or day care.
- Feel they caused the disaster because of something they said or did.
- Become afraid of wind, rain or sudden loud noises.
- Have symptoms of illness, such as headaches, vomiting or fever.
- Worry about where they and their family will live.
- Assure fearful children you will be there to care for them; consistently reassure them.
- Go back to former routines as soon as possible. Maintain a regular schedule for the children.
- Reassure children that the disaster was not their fault.
- Let children have some control, such as choosing clothing or what meal to have for dinner.
- Re-establish contact with extended family.
- Help your children learn to trust adults again by keeping promises you make.
- Help your children regain faith in the future by making plans.
- Get needed health care as soon as possible.
- Spend extra time with your children at bedtime.
- Make sure children eat healthy meals and get enough rest.
- Allow special privileges for a short period of time, such as leaving the light on when they go to bed.
- Find ways to emphasize to your children that you love them.
- Allow children time to grieve losses.
- Develop positive anniversary activities to commemorate the event. These may bring tears, but they are also a time to celebrate survival and the ability to get back to a normal life.

## Things parents can do to help their children:

- Talk with children about how they are feeling. Assure them that it's okay to have those feelings.
- Help children learn to use words that express their feelings, such as "happy," "sad," or "angry."
- Children should not be expected to be brave or tough. Tell them it's okay to cry.
- Don't give children more information than they can handle about the disaster.



**Exercise, eat well and get enough sleep to cope with stress.**

# **Take Care of Your Psychological and Emotional Needs**

**It is natural to be upset when you think your health or the health of your loved ones is threatened. Pay attention to your own feelings and take care of your emotional needs, then you can better help friends and family members handle their concerns.**

## **Coping with uncertainty**

Anxiety can be related to fear of the unknown. It is normal to feel anxious and worried during an emergency.

## **Everyone reacts differently to an emergency**

People often experience changes in their physical, emotional or mental state during and after emergencies. For example, they may have trouble sleeping, experience anger or depression, or have problems at work or school. These are among the many normal reactions to an emergency situation. There are things you can do to cope with these problems. However, if these reactions seem extreme or last for a long time, the person suffering the condition should seek help.

## **Here are some ways you can cope with stress and anxiety:**

- Limit your exposure to graphic news stories
- Get accurate, timely information from reliable sources
- Learn more about the specific health hazard
- Maintain your normal routine, if possible
- Avoid drugs and excessive drinking
- Exercise, eat well and get enough sleep
- Stay active physically and mentally
- Stay in touch with family and friends
- If you can, help others
- Keep a sense of humor
- Share your concerns with others

## **Stay connected**

The fear associated with a public health emergency can push people apart. People who are normally close to family and friends may avoid contact because they are afraid they might get sick. It is important to stay connected with others. Use the phone and email.

Ask for help if you need it. If your anxiety about a health risk gets in the way of your daily life, talk to someone you trust. This may be your doctor, a family member, friend, clergy member, teacher or mental health professional.

If you notice a big change in a loved one, friend or co-worker, reach out to them. Make some time to talk. Watching out for others shows you care and it can be comforting for both of you.

If you or someone you know is having a hard time managing their emotions, seek help from a medical or mental health professional.

## **Get reliable information**

When an emergency happens, it is important to keep things in perspective. Get information about the event from:

- Newspaper, radio, television
- Your health care provider
- Your local health department
- Washington State Department of Health [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)
- Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division [www.emd.wa.gov](http://www.emd.wa.gov)



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**Washington  
Poison Center**  
toll-free hotline:  
**1-800-222-1222**  
Voice and TDD/TTY

# Accidental Poisoning

Poisons can be found in everyday items located in all areas of your home – kitchen, closets, bathrooms, attic, garage, dining room, laundry room, storage areas and basements.  
To help prevent accidental poisoning, follow these poison prevention tips.

## Poison prevention tips

- Use child-resistant containers (but remember: child-resistant containers are not completely childproof).
- Keep potentially poisonous products in their original containers (see below for product list).
- Place potentially poisonous products out of reach immediately after use.
- Put **Mr. Yuk** stickers on all poisonous products in and around your home, and teach children what the stickers mean.
  - For more information on **Mr. Yuk** — or to order **Mr. Yuk** stickers — visit the Washington Poison Center's Web site at: [www.wapc.org](http://www.wapc.org)
- Keep emergency numbers (including the Washington Poison Center) next to your phone.

## Make sure these products are stored safely

- Prescription and over-the-counter medications (including aspirin and vitamins).
- Disinfectants, deodorants and air fresheners.
- All kinds of sprays.
- Polishes and cleansing powder.
- Fertilizers and weed killers.
- Insect and rodent poison; slug bait.
- Paint remover and turpentine.
- Cosmetics.
- Soaps, detergents and shampoo.
- Toilet bowl and drain cleaners.
- Lye and bleach.
- Kerosene and lighter fluids.
- Insect repellent.
- Mothballs and pesticides.

- Note: Special care should also be taken with house plants as many may be poisonous if eaten by humans or pets.

## What to do when someone is poisoned

If it is a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1. If you suspect a possible poisoning — or for more information on potential poisons — call the Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

## Be prepared to answer the following questions

- What was taken? (Exact name of the product.) Bring product container to the phone if possible.
- When was it taken?
- How much was taken?
- Who took it? Body size makes a big difference in determining a poisonous dose.
- The name, condition, age and weight of the patient.
- Address and telephone number from where you are calling.

## About the Washington Poison Center

The **Washington Poison Center** is a 24-hour telephone service providing information and emergency response for poisonings. Staffed by nurses, pharmacists and poison information specialists — and supported by a board-certified clinical toxicologist — the center handles over 70,000 calls a year.

To learn more, visit the center's Web site at [www.wapc.org](http://www.wapc.org)



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# Protect Your Pets

Consider your pets when planning for emergencies. Know where to take your pets in an emergency and remember their needs when creating your family preparedness kit.

## Before the disaster

- Find a safe place for your pets to stay. Emergency pet shelters, animal control shelters, veterinary clinics and friends and relatives out of harm's way are all possible choices. Some hotels and motels may allow you to bring pets; others may suspend their "no pet" rules during an emergency. Check ahead to make sure you can bring your pet.
- Make sure your pets wear current ID tags all the time, and that carriers for each pet are labeled with contact information.
- Make sure your pets are current on their vaccinations. Pet shelters may require proof of vaccines.

## During a disaster

- Keep pets in the house as emergency situations develop so you can locate them.
- Don't wait until the last minute to get ready. Warnings may be issued hours or days in advance.
- Pet shelters will be filled on a first-come first-serve basis. Call ahead to check availability. Bring the items in your pet's emergency supply kit.

## If you evacuate, take your pets

- If it's not safe for you to stay in the disaster area, it's not safe for your pets. Don't leave animals inside your home, chained outside or roaming loose. They can easily be injured, lost or killed.
- If you leave, take your pet even if you think you'll be able to come home in just a few hours.
- Leave early — if you wait for an evacuation order, you may be told to leave your pets behind.

## If you don't evacuate

- Keep your pets with you in a safe area of your home.
- Keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers, and make sure they are wearing identification.

- In case you're not home during a disaster, arrange well in advance for a trusted neighbor to take your pets. Be sure the person is comfortable with your pets, knows where to find them and your pet emergency supplies, and has a key to your home.

## After the disaster

- Don't allow your pets to roam loose. Pets can get lost if familiar landmarks and smells are gone.
- For a few days, keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers inside the house. If your house is damaged, they could escape and become lost.
- Be patient with your pets. Re-establish their routines as soon as possible. Be ready for behavioral problems. If problems continue, or if your pet is having health problems, talk to your veterinarian.

## Emergency supply list for pets

Have everything ready to go. Store supplies in sturdy easy-to-carry containers. Include:

- Medications and medical records stored in a waterproof container, and a first-aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes and harnesses. A secure carrier large enough for your pet to stand comfortably, turn around and lie down. Add blankets or towels for bedding.
- Photos to help identify lost pets and prove ownership.
- Food and water for at least seven days for each pet.
- Bowls, cat litter and litter box, and a manual can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian.
- Pet beds and toys, if you can easily take them.
- Newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags, grooming items and household bleach.



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# Pandemic Flu

## An influenza pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a new flu virus

An influenza — or flu — pandemic is an outbreak of a new type of flu virus that spreads rapidly from one country to another. Because the virus is new, people have no natural immunity to it and vaccine will not be available for many months. Without vaccine or immunity, the virus passes rapidly from person to person. Hundreds of thousands in our country could get sick, and many could die.

There have been three large flu pandemics in the 20th century – 1918, 1957, and 1968. No one knows where or when the next one will begin, but health officials agree that it is only a matter of time.

## What to expect if an outbreak occurs

A flu pandemic could be devastating, so everyone should be prepared for the worst. With up to one-third of the workforce sick or staying home, supplies and services could be limited or disrupted.

Extraordinary measures could be required. You may be asked to stay away from other people, large public events like concerts or sports could be canceled, and schools could be closed. Health officials may issue orders to keep people with the virus at home or in special facilities. You may be asked to wear a mask in medical facilities or other public places.

A flu pandemic could last a long time. The 1918 flu pandemic lasted 18 months.

## What to do now

- Know your neighbors. Encourage others to prepare.
- Be ready to help family and neighbors who are elderly or have special needs if services they depend on are not available.
- Know school policies about illness and absence. Make a plan for taking care of your children if schools are closed for long periods.
- Be prepared to stay home from work when you are sick. Know work policies about sick leave, absences, time off and telecommuting.

- Encourage planning. Every workplace should have a plan for doing essential tasks if large numbers of employees are absent over many months.
- Explore ways to get your work done with less personal contact, such as increased use of e-mail and phone conferences.
- Be prepared to get by for a week or more on what you have at home. Stores may not be open or may have limited supplies.
- Plan to limit the number of trips you take to shop or to run errands.

## Prevent the spread of germs

The flu virus is spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes or touches things that others use.

To protect yourself and others:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Cough into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.
- Wash your hands. Soap and warm water are best, but alcohol-based hand gel or disposable wipes also work.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth. The flu virus is often spread when a person touches something that has the flu virus on it and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home when you're sick or have flu symptoms. Drink extra water, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.

## Learn home-care basics

- Know how to care for someone with fever, body aches and lung congestion. During a pandemic, follow health official's instructions.
- Learn about dehydration. The flu virus causes the body to lose water through fever and sweating. Watch for weakness, fainting, dry mouth, dark concentrated urine, low blood pressure or a fast pulse when lying or sitting down. These are signs of dehydration. To prevent dehydration, it is very important for a person with the flu to drink a lot of water — up to 12 glasses a day.



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# How to Use 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 only to report a life-threatening situation requiring police, medical or fire emergency assistance. Do not call 9-1-1 unnecessarily. 9-1-1 lines must be kept open for people with true emergencies.

## When to call 9-1-1

- To get help for someone who is hurt. For example:
  - If someone is seriously injured.
  - If you see someone hurt in an accident.
- If you see someone acting suspiciously, stealing, or breaking into a home or building.
- If you smell smoke or see a fire.
- If you see people fighting and hurting each other.
- If you see someone being robbed or beaten.
- If you believe emergency assistance may be needed but are not sure, call 9-1-1 and describe the situation.
- If you call 9-1-1 by accident, don't hang up. Explain what happened to the 9-1-1 operator.

## When not to call 9-1-1

In the event of a natural disaster or emergency, minimize your calls to 9-1-1 unless it is a life-threatening police, medical or fire emergency. The following guide should help you determine when it is appropriate to call 9-1-1 in a disaster.

- Never call 9-1-1 as a joke.
- Never call 9-1-1 to ask for information.
- Never call just to see if 9-1-1 is working.
- Stay off the telephone unless you have a critical need to make a telephone call.
- **Do not** call 9-1-1 unless you need emergency response from police, fire or emergency medical personnel.
- If you experience other types of problems not related to these emergency services, call the appropriate telephone number for those services.

## Other emergency phone tips

- If you pick up your telephone to make a call and do not hear a dial tone, **do not hang up**. Simply wait a few seconds, and you will get a dial tone and be able to make your call.
- Do you have an out-of-area contact? In an emergency, local phone lines could be jammed. If you have a friend or relative to call long distance, you should be able to get through. Your family can leave messages for each other and you can let people know you're okay.

## What to say when you call 9-1-1

- Tell the person what is wrong.
- Tell the person your name, address and telephone number.
- Do not hang up until they tell you that you should; they may have to ask you more questions.

## Teach your children the correct use of 9-1-1

- Parents should use the information on this sheet to talk to children about how and when to use 9-1-1. Knowing the right thing to do can save lives.

## Keep phone lines clear during emergencies

- During emergencies, telephone services become overloaded. You can help keep service available for those who need it most by making only calls that are critical. Limit fax machine and computer use as well; their use also ties up phone lines.



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# Prevent the Spread of Germs

Here are some simple tips to help keep respiratory infections and many other contagious diseases from spreading, especially during the cough, cold and “flu” season.

Respiratory infections affect the nose, throat and lungs; they include influenza (the “flu”), colds and pertussis (whooping cough). The germs (viruses and bacteria) that cause these infections are spread from person to person in droplets from the nose, throat and lungs of someone who is sick.

You can help stop the spread of these germs by practicing “respiratory etiquette,” or good health manners.

Here are some tips to help prevent spreading your germs to others, and to avoid catching someone else’s germs.

## Keep your germs to yourself

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- Discard used tissues in the trash as soon as you can.
- Always wash your hands after sneezing, blowing your nose, or coughing, or after touching used tissues or handkerchiefs. Wash hands often if you are sick.
- Use warm water and soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers to wash your hands.
- Try to stay home if you have a cough and fever.
- See your doctor as soon as you can if you have a cough and fever, and follow their instructions. Take medicine as prescribed and get lots of rest.
- If asked, use face masks provided in your doctor’s office or clinic’s waiting room. Follow office and clinic staff’s instructions to help stop the spread of germs.

## Keep the germs away

- Wash your hands before eating, or touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Wash your hands after touching anyone who is sneezing, coughing or blowing their nose.
- Don’t share things like towels, lipstick, toys, or anything else that might be contaminated with respiratory germs.
- Don’t share food, utensils or beverage containers with others.



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# Cover Your Cough



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze

or  
cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.



Put your used tissue in the waste basket.



You may be asked to put on a surgical mask to protect others.



Wash with soap and water

or  
clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.



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# Clean Your Hands

after coughing and sneezing.





More information is available from federal agencies at [www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov) and [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

# About Terrorism

Terrorists look for visible targets where they can avoid detection before or after an attack such as international airports, large cities, major public events, resorts, and high-profile landmarks. Preparing for terrorism is critical, just as for other types of disasters.

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- If you see what appears to be a dangerous situation, call 9-1-1 and explain your concerns to a 9-1-1 operator. The operator will help determine what actions should be taken.
- Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave your luggage unattended.
- Learn where emergency exits are located, and how to quickly evacuate a building, transportation corridor or congested public area.
- Stay clear of heavy or breakable objects that could move, fall or break in an explosion.
- Stay in your area so that you don't kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort — shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

## If there is a fire

- Stay low to the floor and exit the building as quickly and calmly as possible.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth, if possible.
- Test closed doors for heat with the palm of your hand and forearm on the lower and upper portions of the door. If it is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly. If it is hot or warm to the touch, do not open the door. Seek an alternate escape route.

## Prepare for building explosion

The use of explosives by terrorists can result in collapsed buildings and fires. People who live or work in a multi-level building should follow these guidelines:

- Learn the emergency evacuation procedures that are in place.
- Learn where the fire exits are located and be able to find them in the dark.
- Keep fire extinguishers in working order. Know where they are located and how to use them.
- Learn first aid and CPR.
- Businesses and organizations should keep and maintain a disaster supply kit on each floor of their buildings.

## Biological agents

- Biological agents are organisms or toxins that may harm people, livestock or crops. Because biological agents cannot necessarily be detected and may take time to grow and cause disease, it may be difficult to determine that a biological attack has occurred.
- If the government were to become aware of a biological attack through an informant or warning by terrorists, they would most likely instruct people to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises (shelter-in-place) or evacuate immediately.
- A person affected by a biological agent requires the immediate attention of professional medical personnel. Some agents are contagious and victims may need to be quarantined. Some medical facilities may not be receiving victims for fear of contaminating the hospital population.

## If an explosion occurs

- Immediately get under a sturdy table or desk if things are falling around you.
- Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling. Stay below the smoke at all times.

## If trapped in debris

- If you have a flashlight, use it to help rescuers locate you.



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# Bomb Threats

**Bomb threats are usually received by telephone, but they may also be received by note, letter or email. All bomb threats should be taken very seriously and handled as though an explosive were in the building.**

Your place of employment should have a plan in place instructing what to do when a bomb threat is received.

- If you receive a bomb threat, get as much information from the caller as possible.
- Take good notes when talking to the person on the telephone. Keep the caller on the line, and write down everything that is said. Be aware of background noise, special voice characteristics, music, machinery or other sounds.
- If you are at work, have a coworker call 9-1-1 and building security immediately. Plan how you are going to alert your coworker.
- If you receive a bomb threat, do not touch any suspicious packages.
- Clear the area around a suspicious package, and notify police immediately.
- While evacuating a building, avoid standing in front of windows or other potentially hazardous areas.
- Do not block sidewalks or other areas used by emergency officials.
- If you find a bomb, don't touch it or attempt to move it. Call for help and evacuate the area immediately.

## Bomb Threat Checklist

Exact time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Exact words of caller: \_\_\_\_\_

### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. When is the bomb going to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it look like? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of bomb is it? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What will cause it to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you place the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where are you calling from? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your address? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

### CALLER'S VOICE (circle all that apply)

- |           |         |         |         |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Calm      | Slow    | Crying  | Slurred |
| Stutter   | Deep    | Loud    | Broken  |
| Giggling  | Accent  | Angry   | Rapid   |
| Stressed  | Nasal   | Lisp    | Excited |
| Disguised | Sincere | Squeaky | Normal  |

If voice is familiar, whom did it sound like? \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any background noises? \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Person receiving call: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number call received on: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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# Radiation Exposure

One possible source of radiation exposure is a “dirty bomb.” A dirty bomb is a small explosive device packaged with radioactive materials. During any event that releases radiation, your best protection is to follow the recommendations of authorities.

## Stay inside

- Stay inside your home or office unless instructed by civil authorities to leave. Close the windows, turn off the heating or air-conditioning, and stay near the center of the building. Once the initial blast is over, radioactive materials may be spread in the smoke and debris in the air. By staying inside you will reduce any potential exposure to airborne radioactive material. If there is a basement, go there.

## Listen to the radio

- When you learn that radioactive materials have been released in an area near you—either accidentally or intentionally—tune your radio to the emergency broadcasting network for instructions. Government agencies will let you know how to protect yourself. Keep a battery-powered radio handy in case electrical power goes out in your area.

## Follow instructions

- The best way to avoid exposure to radiation is to do what experts advise. If told to evacuate, do so promptly. Take items you will need for an extended absence, such as prescription medicines and clothing. Listen for news about the location of the radioactive cloud. Even if it has already passed, radioactive contamination may have fallen on the ground and experts will recommend the best ways to safely leave the area.

## If you suspect you are contaminated

- If you believe you have been exposed to radioactive materials, you should carefully remove your outer layer of clothing and put it in a plastic bag; then take a warm shower to rinse off any radioactive materials. Place the sealed plastic bag in a room away from people.

## Seek help if needed

- Special assistance centers will be set up as soon as possible. Center locations will be made available through the media and on health department and other emergency service Web sites. If this information is not yet available, go to a police or fire station located outside of the affected area. If you were near the explosion or believe you were in the path of the cloud, tell the staff at the station or assistance center.

## Watch what you eat

- Avoid drinking fresh milk or eating fruits and vegetables grown in the affected area. Wait until the Department of Health announces that produce and dairy products are safe to eat and drink. Milk, fruit and vegetables are okay to eat if they were bought or picked before the radiation was released and were stored indoors. Food stored in cans or bags is also safe to eat. Be sure to thoroughly rinse off containers before opening.



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# Chemical Agents

Chemical warfare agents are gases, liquids or solids that can poison people, animals and plants. Chemical warfare agents can cause injuries and death. How serious the injuries are depends on the type of chemical, the amount and the length of exposure.

## What are chemical agents?

- The main chemical warfare agents are sulfur mustard (mustard gas) and nerve agents such as Sarin and VX. These agents are typically released as a vapor or liquid. During a chemical attack, the greatest danger would come from breathing the vapors. If a large amount of chemical were released as an aerosol, people's skin might be exposed to the agent as droplets.

## Sulfur mustard: symptoms and treatment

- Sulfur mustard can cause skin to become red and irritated. Larger amounts will make the skin blister.
- Sulfur mustard can damage your eyes causing irritation, redness and swelling of the lids.
- Breathing in sulfur mustard can cause throat irritation, sinus pain and coughing. Breathing in large amounts will damage the lungs.
- If you are exposed to sulfur mustard, it may take four to eight hours before you feel symptoms. However, after a relatively small exposure, symptoms may take up to 24 hours to develop.
- Medical staff can treat you with soothing lotions, eye drops and pain medication. If infections develop, you may be given antibiotics.

## Nerve agents: symptoms and treatment

- A small amount of vapor can make pupils smaller, dim or blur vision, and cause eye pain, a runny nose or shortness of breath.
- Moderate amounts of vapor can cause muscle weakness, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Exposure to large amounts of vapor can cause interruption of breathing, muscle weakness, loss of consciousness, convulsions and death.

- Effects usually appear seconds to minutes after breathing the vapor of a nerve agent.
- Exposure to small amounts of vapor may cause only smaller than normal pupils and may take an hour to appear.
- If you are exposed to a large amount of a nerve agent and have a runny nose, difficulty breathing, or nausea and vomiting, you may be treated with the medicines *atropine* or *pralidoxime*.

## What you should do if there is a chemical attack

- If there is a chemical attack, authorities will tell you either to evacuate the area immediately or to seek shelter.
- If you have symptoms of exposure, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- If you were outside before taking shelter and think you may have been exposed to a chemical agent:
  - Take off your outer clothes, put them in a plastic bag and seal the bag. Tell emergency staff about the sealed bag so they can remove it safely.
  - Wash or take a cool shower (do not use hot water). Use lots of soap. Do not put soap in your eyes.
  - If you leave the area, tell emergency or medical staff at your new location that you may have been exposed.



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# Shelter-in-Place

If a chemical agent attack happens, authorities will instruct people to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises (shelter-in-place), or evacuate immediately. If ordered to remain in your home, office or school, follow these directions to “shelter-in-place.”



■ Go inside.



■ Close all windows and doors.



■ Turn off ventilation systems (heating and air-conditioning, and fireplace dampers).



■ Go into a room with the fewest doors and windows and seal the room.



■ Stay in the room until told by the authorities that it is safe to come out.

## How to shelter-in-place

- Dampen towels and place over the cracks under doors.
- Cut plastic sheeting to fit over the windows and vents. Secure the plastic with duct tape.
- Tape around the door.
- Turn on the radio.
- Don't air out or leave your sealed shelter until you are told to do so.

## Remember

- If ordered to evacuate, do so immediately and carefully follow directions. Do not wander about; know where you are going and how to get there.
- Avoiding chemical exposure should be your primary goal. Leaving your sheltered area to rescue or assist victims can be a deadly decision.

- In a chemical emergency, there is very little an untrained volunteer can do to help victims. Stay in your sheltered area until authorities determine it is safe to come out.
- If you were outside before taking shelter and think you may have been exposed to a chemical agent, there are several things you can do. If you are in a sealed shelter, take off at least your outer clothes, put them in a plastic bag and seal the bag. If water is available, wash or take a cool to warm (not hot) shower, using lots of soap and water. Do not put the soap in your eyes, just lots of water. If you leave the area, tell emergency responders or medical staff at your destination you may have been exposed. Tell the emergency responders about the sealed bag so that they can arrange for its safe removal after the emergency.
- If you have symptoms of exposure, call 9-1-1 immediately and follow their instructions.



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*Illustrations courtesy of ExxonMobil*

# Anthrax



## What is anthrax?

Anthrax is a bacterial disease that most commonly affects animals such as cattle, pigs, sheep and goats. Anthrax bacteria form spores that can survive in the environment for long periods of time. Humans seldom get anthrax but when they do it is through handling infected animals or other materials containing anthrax spores, eating infected meat or breathing in spores. Anthrax cannot be spread from person to person.

## Types of anthrax and the symptoms

There are three types of anthrax and symptoms vary according to the how the infection occurred. Symptoms usually occur within one to seven days of exposure, but can take as long as 60 days to develop. Types of anthrax and their symptoms are:

- **Inhalational anthrax** — the most serious type of anthrax; caused by inhaling anthrax bacteria into the lungs. Early symptoms may resemble those of flu or a common cold: fever, cough, headache, chills, weakness, difficulty breathing and chest discomfort. After several days, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock. This type of anthrax infection is often fatal if not treated promptly. In an intentional exposure, such as a bioterrorism event, breathing in the spores is the most likely route of exposure.
- **Cutaneous anthrax** — caused when anthrax bacteria make contact with cut or damaged skin. Early symptoms include an itchy bump. Later symptoms include a small blister, which becomes a painless sore with a black center. Lymph glands in the infected area may also swell.
- **Gastrointestinal anthrax** — caused by swallowing anthrax bacteria. It results in damage to the intestinal tract. Early symptoms include nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, and fever, followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood, and severe diarrhea.

## Recognizing possible anthrax contamination

- If you have symptoms, consult a health care provider. If you believe you have been intentionally exposed to anthrax, you should contact law enforcement officials immediately.
- If you receive a letter or package that may contain anthrax:
  - Set the package down gently and leave it undisturbed to avoid release of spores into the air.
  - Immediately wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
  - Call 9-1-1 to report the incident. Follow the instructions of the 9-1-1 operators until help arrives.
  - Remember: Do not handle the package further unless necessary.

## Treatment for anthrax

- Antibiotics should be used to prevent or treat anthrax only under the direction of your health care provider or local health department. All forms of the disease need to be treated promptly. Since anthrax is not spread from person to person, there is no need to immunize or treat contacts of persons ill with anthrax, such as household members, friends, or coworkers, unless they were exposed to the same source of infection.



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# Botulism



## What is botulism?

- Botulism is a rare, muscle-paralyzing disease caused by a toxin made by *Clostridium botulinum* (*C. botulinum*), a bacteria found naturally in the soil. There are three main types of botulism: *foodborne*, *infant*, and *wound*. Botulism toxin could be used as a biological weapon because it can be breathed in or swallowed.

## How is botulism spread?

### What are the symptoms?

- You can get botulism from eating contaminated food or when a wound is contaminated by the bacteria. The disease is **not** spread from person to person. The amount of exposure to the toxin determines how quickly symptoms appear — from a few hours to several days.
- Regardless of how the toxin enters the body, the results are the same. As the disease progresses, symptoms may include double or blurred vision, drooping eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, and muscle weakness (starts with shoulders and descends through the body). Finally, breathing muscles may be paralyzed causing death unless mechanical breathing assistance is available.

- **Foodborne botulism** occurs when a person eats food contaminated with the toxin-producing bacteria. This usually results from poor home-canning techniques. The first symptoms may include nausea and vomiting. Foodborne botulism can occur in all age groups. The source of the contaminated food must be identified as quickly as possible to prevent others from becoming ill.

- **Infant botulism** occurs in a small number of infants each year who have *C. botulinum* bacteria in their intestinal tracts.

- **Wound botulism** occurs when wounds are infected with *C. botulinum*, for example, when a wound is contaminated during an outdoor injury by contact with contaminated soil. The bacteria can only infect damaged skin.

## Preventive measures

- If you have symptoms, please consult a healthcare provider as soon as possible. If you believe you have been intentionally exposed to botulism, you should contact law enforcement officials immediately.
- There is no vaccine to prevent botulism. You can reduce risk of exposure by following safe food handling and cooking practices and by keeping wounds or cuts clean and properly bandaged.

## Treatment for botulism

- Immediate treatment is essential. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintains a supply of antitoxin to treat botulism. This antitoxin can only be obtained by healthcare providers from health departments when botulism is suspected or confirmed. The antitoxin reduces the severity of symptoms if it is given early. Most patients eventually recover.



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# Pneumonic Plague

## What is plague?

Plague is an uncommon infectious disease of animals and humans caused by *Yersinia pestis* (*Y. pestis*) bacteria. *Y. pestis* is present in wild rodents and their fleas in many areas around the world, including most of the western United States.

## Types of plague

Plague can be transmitted and cause illness in one or more of these forms:

- When the *Y. pestis* bacteria enters the body through the bite of an infected flea or through a cut or break in the skin, the resulting disease is called **bubonic plague**. “Buboes” are swollen painful lymph nodes. Bubonic plague is the most common form of the disease and untreated it may progress to *septicemic* plague (see below).
- When *Y. pestis* bacteria accumulate in the bloodstream, septic shock occurs and the resulting disease is called **septicemic plague**.
- When *Y. pestis* bacteria are inhaled, they lodge in the lungs and the resulting disease is called **pneumonic plague**. Pneumonic plague is of particular concern because it can be spread from person to person.

## How is pneumonic plague spread?

### What are the symptoms?

Pneumonic plague occurs when the *Y. pestis* bacterium is inhaled. The disease may be spread through face-to-face contact when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Because it enters the body by being inhaled, pneumonic plague could be spread intentionally if the bacteria were put into aerosol form.

The symptoms of pneumonic plague begin one to four days after exposure to the bacteria. The symptoms include fever, headache, weakness and a bloody or watery cough due to infection of the lungs (pneumonia). The pneumonia rapidly becomes worse and — without early treatment — it can be fatal.

## Preventive measures

If you have symptoms, consult a health care provider as soon as possible. If you believe you have been intentionally exposed to pneumonic plague, you should contact law enforcement officials immediately.

There is no vaccine against pneumonic plague. Antibiotics are used to prevent illness in those who have been exposed to pneumonic plague.

## Treatment for pneumonic plague

Early treatment with appropriate antibiotics is essential because untreated plague — especially the pneumonic form — is almost always fatal. You should use antibiotics to prevent or treat plague only under the direction of your health care provider or local health department.



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# Smallpox



## What is smallpox?

- Smallpox is a severe viral infection caused by the variola virus. Smallpox infection was eliminated from the world in the late 1970s. However, because the security of the virus is uncertain, there is a remote risk that smallpox could be used as a weapon.
- Routine vaccination against smallpox in the United States ended in 1972, because the risk associated with the vaccine was greater than the risk of getting the disease. However, in 2003, some members of the military, public health and health care workforce were vaccinated against smallpox as part of bioterrorism preparedness.

## How is smallpox spread? What are the symptoms?

- Smallpox is extremely infectious and is spread from one person to another by infected saliva droplets. Exposure may come from face-to-face contact, airborne spread (coughing or sneezing) or through direct contact with contaminated materials. People with smallpox are most infectious during the first week of illness because that is when the largest amount of virus is present in saliva. However, some risk of transmission lasts until all scabs have fallen off.
- The incubation period for the disease ranges from about seven to 17 days following exposure. Initial symptoms include high fever, fatigue, headache and backache. A rash — most prominent on the face, arms and legs — follows in two to three days. The rash starts with flat red lesions that evolve at the same rate. Lesions become pus-filled and begin to crust early in the second week. Scabs develop, and then separate and fall off after about three to four weeks. The majority of patients with smallpox recover, but death occurs in up to 30 percent of cases.

## Preventive measures

- If you have symptoms, consult a health care provider as soon as possible. There is no evidence of increased risk of smallpox outbreak or bioterrorism attack using smallpox, but the United States does maintain an emergency supply of smallpox vaccine. The vaccine is not currently available to the public because it can have severe side effects.

## Treatment for smallpox

- There is no proven treatment for smallpox, but research to evaluate new antiviral agents is ongoing. Patients with smallpox can benefit from supportive therapy, such as intravenous fluids and medicine to control fever or pain, and antibiotics for any secondary bacterial infections.
- If the vaccine is given to a person within four days of exposure to smallpox, it may lessen the severity of — or possibly prevent — illness. Vaccine against smallpox contains a live virus called vaccinia; it does not contain the smallpox virus.
- The vaccine is stored and distributed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Strategic National Stockpile of pharmaceutical supplies. In the event smallpox is used as a weapon, the distribution of vaccine would be coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with state and local health departments.



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# Tularemia



## What is tularemia?

- Tularemia is an infection caused by the bacteria *Francisella tularensis* that can affect animals and humans. About 200 cases of human tularemia are reported each year in the United States. Bites from infected ticks and the handling of infected rabbits are responsible for most tularemia cases in the United States. If tularemia were to be released intentionally, as in a bioterror event, the bacteria would most likely be released into the air to be breathed in.

## How is tularemia spread?

### What are the symptoms?

- You can get tularemia by handling infected animals, by eating or drinking contaminated food or water or by inhaling contaminated dusts or sprays. Tularemia is **not** spread from person to person.
- Depending on the type of exposure tularemia can occur in several forms:
  - *Infection of the lungs (pneumonic)* — is the most common form and is caused by inhaling the bacteria through contaminated dusts or aerosols.
  - *Enlargement of lymph glands in the neck and inflammation of the throat* — occurs most commonly after ingesting contaminated food or water.
  - *Swollen lymph glands with or without a skin ulcer* — can occur after handling contaminated materials or being bitten by infected ticks or other biting insects such as deer flies.

- All forms of the disease are accompanied by flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, headaches, body aches and weakness that usually occur three to five days after exposure to the bacteria. A person with pneumonia can develop chest pain, difficulty breathing and respiratory failure.

## Preventive measures

- If you have symptoms, please consult a healthcare provider as soon as possible. If you believe you have been intentionally exposed to tularemia, you should contact law enforcement officials immediately.
- In the event of exposure to tularemia, antibiotic treatment to prevent infection may be recommended. Currently there is no vaccine available for general use.

## Treatment for tularemia

- Early treatment of tularemia with appropriate antibiotics is essential. Antibiotics should be used to prevent or treat tularemia only under the direction of your health care provider or local health department.



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# Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers

## What are viral hemorrhagic fevers?

Viral hemorrhagic fevers (VHFs) are diseases caused by groups of viruses such as the Ebola virus and Marburg virus. In general, infection with these viruses may cause serious illness with fever and damage to blood vessels affecting many organ systems. Damage to the blood vessels can disrupt blood flow and cause severe bleeding. Although some VHFs are mild illnesses, many can be fatal. Other VHFs include Lassa fever, yellow fever, Crimean-Congo and New World hemorrhagic fever viruses.

## What are the symptoms of viral hemorrhagic fever illnesses?

Although symptoms vary for each specific virus, initial signs of VHF often include fever, rashes, body aches, headache and fatigue. Severely ill patients may also show signs of shock, bleeding and damage to the blood vessels in major organs including the liver, lungs, nervous system and, occasionally, the kidneys. Typically, symptoms develop within days but may not appear until several weeks after exposure.

## How are hemorrhagic fever viruses spread?

Humans can be infected in several ways:

- Contact with urine, fecal matter, saliva or other body excretions from infected rodents.
- Contact with the bodies of dead infected animals.
- Being bitten by infected mosquitoes or ticks.
- Contact with animals that have been bitten by infected mosquitoes or ticks.
- Close contact with infected people or their body fluids. Ebola, Marburg, Lassa fever, New World hemorrhagic fever, and Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever viruses can be spread from person to person. People can also be infected by touching objects such as syringes and needles that have been contaminated with infected body fluids.

## Where do cases of viral hemorrhagic fever occur naturally?

Hemorrhagic fever viruses are found around the world, but none of the VHF viruses are native to the United States. Because VHF viruses need an animal or insect host to survive, VHFs are rare outside of the areas where the host for the specific virus lives.

Rats and mice often carry VHF viruses, but the viruses may also be carried by ticks and mosquitoes. Occasionally, an infected traveler may carry a hemorrhagic fever virus from an area where the virus occurs naturally. If the virus is a type that can be transmitted by person-to-person contact, the traveler can infect other people.

## How can cases of viral hemorrhagic fever be prevented and treated?

The most effective way to prevent VHFs from being transmitted from person to person is medical isolation of infected patients and use of caution to prevent exposure of health care workers and others to the virus. Special care must be taken to properly dispose of medical wastes and tissues from infected patients.

There is no specific drug for treatment of VHF—patients receive supportive care. Patients infected with Lassa fever virus may respond to the antiviral drug *ribavirin*, if treated early in the course of infection.

The only licensed, approved vaccine for VHFs is for yellow fever; however, the vaccine must be taken prior to yellow fever exposure. Experimental vaccines for several other VHFs are being studied, but are not yet licensed or approved for general use.

## VHFs and bioterrorism?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies hemorrhagic fever viruses as agents that could be used as biological weapons because some are highly infectious, can be easily spread through the air and have the potential to cause great numbers of illnesses and deaths. They are also known to have been the subject of biological weapons research.



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# Methamphetamine Labs

**Methamphetamine (meth) is a powerful, addictive drug that is illegally manufactured or “cooked” in makeshift labs. Meth labs are toxic sites containing chemicals that can cause serious health problems for anyone who comes in contact with them. Meth is also called crank, speed, crystal or ice.**

More information and educational resources concerning methamphetamine and meth labs can be found on the Washington State Department of Health’s Clandestine Drug Lab Web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/cdl](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/cdl)

## Health risks

People who enter a drug lab before it has been properly cleaned and ventilated may feel headaches, nausea, dizziness and fatigue. These symptoms usually go away after several hours. Greater exposure can result in shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, lack of coordination, burns or death.

## How to recognize a meth lab

Meth labs may be set up at campgrounds, rest areas, rental homes, motel rooms, abandoned cars, garages, storage sheds, barns and vacant buildings.

A typical meth lab is a collection of chemical bottles, hoses and pressurized cylinders. The cylinders can be modified propane tanks, fire extinguishers, scuba tanks or soda dispensers among other things. The tanks contain anhydrous ammonia or hydrochloric acid — both highly poisonous and corrosive.

Labs are frequently abandoned, and potentially explosive and very toxic chemicals are left behind. Chemicals may also be burned or dumped in wooded areas or along roads.

## Warning signs of living near a meth lab

- Strong odor of solvents
- Residences with windows blacked out
- Iodine- or chemical-stained bathroom or kitchen fixtures
- Increased activity, especially at night
- Excessive trash

## Do not enter a site that you think may be used for cooking meth

- Labs present extreme dangers from explosions and exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- Breathing the fumes and handling substances can cause injury or death.
- Drug labs are considered hazardous waste sites and should only be entered by trained and equipped professionals.

## Never handle materials you suspect were used for making meth, such as contaminated glassware and needles

- Skin contact may result in burns or poisoning.
- Some of the chemicals can explode on contact with water or air.

Consider that when professionals respond to a drug lab, they do not enter the building until they have put on chemically resistant suits and boots, special gloves and respirators.

## Who to call

### To report a suspected lab:

- Contact NW HIDTA (Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area), 1-888-609-6384.

### General questions, concerns about health effects of meth labs:

- Washington State Department of Health, 1-888-586-9427.



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# Getting Medicine During a Public Health Emergency

The Strategic National Stockpile is a federal government program that provides medication and medical supplies to states during an emergency.

## When help is needed fast

If a disease outbreak, bioterrorism attack or natural disaster happens in Washington State, thousands, possibly millions, of people will need medical attention to treat or prevent the spread of disease. Local medical supplies and medications will be used up quickly during such a public health emergency.

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) helps meet the need for additional supplies by quickly delivering large quantities of critical emergency medicines and supplies to states that request them.

## Assistance for Washington and your community

In the event of a disaster, outbreak or attack, our Governor will ask the federal government to send SNS shipments to Washington. Once help is approved, the SNS will fill the request from storage facilities strategically located around the country. Supplies can be delivered to any state within 12 hours of the request.

Depending on the type of emergency, the SNS will deliver antibiotics, chemical antidotes, antitoxins or other medical or surgical items. Additional drugs and/or medical supplies can be supplied within the following 24 to 36 hours.

When SNS shipments are received, Washington State emergency response workers will immediately deliver the supplies and medications directly to the communities that need them.

## Finding medication during an emergency

Cities and towns in Washington State will set up emergency medication centers (also known as points of dispensing sites or PODS) where people can pick up the emergency medications or receive vaccinations. Medication centers will be located in large public buildings such as schools, arenas or churches in several geographic areas to minimize the amount of

time people need to travel to reach them. Local public health agencies will announce when medication centers will open, where to find them, how to get there, what to bring and what to expect. You will be able to get this important information from sources that include:

- Television and radio news; newspapers
- State and local public health and emergency management Web sites
- Community, civic and religious organizations.

Local governments are responsible for determining the location of medication centers in their areas. In many cases these sites will not be made public until an emergency occurs. Not all medication center sites will be used for every emergency, so it will be important to check the resources listed above for current information in the event of an emergency.

## At the medication center

- If medication centers are opened to distribute medicine from the Strategic National Stockpile in an emergency, there will be no charge to the public.
- Trained staff will be available to assist you at the medication center.
- The process will be simple.
- Depending on the type of emergency, one person may be able to pick up medications for a household or group.
- Check the resources listed above for current information in the event of an emergency.



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# Household Fires

Fires in homes are most often caused by cooking accidents, smoking or unsafe use of woodstoves or space heaters. Here are some things you can do to avoid a home fire or protect yourself during a fire.

## Protecting against fires

- Install smoke detectors in or near all sleeping areas and on every level of your home, including the basement. Check smoke detectors on a regular basis and replace the batteries twice yearly.
- Have A-B-C type fire extinguishers. Teach family members how to use them.
- Know the location of all exits including windows. If you live in an apartment, count the number of doorways between your apartment and the two nearest exits.
- Know two ways out of every room in case smoke or flames block your primary exit.
- Choose a meeting place outside the home.
- Have an escape plan and practice it with your family. This will help ensure you can get out quickly when there is no time for mistakes.
- Keep folding or chain style ladders stored in each upstairs bedroom.
- Use alternative heat sources, such as woodstoves or space heaters, safely:
  - Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues, or most portable or propane heaters for indoor heating.
  - Before using an alternative heat source, read the manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not smoke in the bedroom, on the couch or anywhere you might fall asleep while smoking.
- Sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street and that fire trucks can reach your home.
- Have fire-fighting materials available: dry powder, fire extinguisher, heavy tarp or blanket, and water.

## If fire strikes

- If there is a fire — evacuate. Do not go back inside. Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house.
- Never use water on an electrical fire.
- Smother oil and grease fires in the kitchen with baking soda or salt, or put a lid over the flame if it is burning in a pan.
- If caught in smoke — drop to your hands and knees and crawl; breathe shallowly through your nose and use your blouse, shirt or jacket as a filter.
- If you must move through flames — hold your breath, move quickly, cover your head and hair, keep your head down and close your eyes as much as possible.
- If your clothes catch fire, “stop, drop and roll” until the fire is out.
- If you are in a room and cannot escape, leave the door closed, stay low to the floor and hang a white or light-colored sheet outside the window.
- Be sure all family members are accounted for. If someone is missing, let the fire department know.



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# Power Outages

Power outages can cause a number of safety concerns.  
Knowing the following information can help.

## Before a power outage

- Register life-sustaining and medical equipment with your utility company.
- Consider buying a generator. When installing a generator, follow the instructions carefully. Keep your generator outside and run a cord inside. Don't connect your generator to main service panels — it's dangerous!
- Make sure your disaster preparedness kit contains light sticks, flashlights, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries and a wind-up clock.
- Have a corded telephone available — cordless phones will not work when the power is out.
- Have an alternative heat source and supply of fuel.
- If you own an electric garage door opener, know how to open the door without power.

## During a power outage

- Turn off lights and electrical appliances except for the refrigerator and freezer. Even if it is dark, turn light switches and buttons on lamps or appliances to the "off" position.
- Unplug computers and other sensitive equipment to protect them from possible surges when the power is restored.
- Leave one lamp on so you will know when power is restored. Wait at least 15 minutes after power is restored before turning on other appliances.
- Conserve water, especially if you use well water.
- Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues or portable or propane heaters for indoor heating—they use oxygen and create carbon monoxide that can cause suffocation.
- Candles can cause a fire. It's far better to use battery-operated flashlights or glow sticks for lighting.

- Using a kerosene heater, gas lantern or stove inside the house can be dangerous. Maintain proper ventilation at all times to avoid a build up of toxic fumes.
- Stay away from downed power lines and sagging trees with broken limbs.

## Keep food safe

- Use and store food carefully to prevent food-borne illness when power outages make refrigeration unavailable.
- Use foods first that can spoil most rapidly.
- Keep doors to refrigerators and freezers closed. Your refrigerator's freezer will keep food frozen for up to a day. A separate fully-loaded freezer will keep food frozen for two days.
- Use an ice chest packed with ice or snow to keep food cold. Buy dry ice to save frozen food. Do not handle dry ice with your bare hands. Use blocks or bags of ice to save refrigerator foods.
- Use caution if storing food outside during winter to keep it cold. The outside temperature varies, especially in the sun. Frozen food may thaw and refrigerator food may become warm enough to grow bacteria. Food stored outside must be secured from contamination by animals.
- **If in doubt, throw it out.** Throw out meat, seafood, dairy products and cooked food that does not feel cold.
- Never taste suspect food. Even if food looks and smells fine, illness-causing bacteria may be present.



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# Purifying Household Water

The treatments described below work only in situations where the water is unsafe because of the presence of bacteria or viruses. If you suspect the water is unsafe because of chemicals, oils, poisonous substances, sewage, or other contaminants, do not use the water for drinking.

## Storing water safely

- Store one gallon of water per person per day.
- Store at least a three-day supply of water per person.
- Collect the water from a safe supply.
- Thoroughly washed plastic containers such as soft drink bottles are best. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums.
- Seal water containers tightly, label with date, and store in a cool, dark place.
- Replace water every six months.
- Never reuse a container that contained toxic materials such as pesticides, solvents, chemicals, oil or antifreeze.

## Water purification

There are two primary ways to treat water: boiling and adding bleach. If tap water is unsafe because of surface water contamination (from floods, streams or lakes), boiling is the best method.

- Cloudy water should be filtered before boiling or adding bleach.
- Filter water using coffee filters, paper towels, cheese cloth or a cotton plug in a funnel.

## Boiling

- Boiling is the safest way to purify water.
- Bring the water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes.
- Let the water cool before drinking.

## Purifying by adding liquid chlorine bleach

- If boiling is not possible, treat water by adding liquid household bleach, such as Clorox™ or Purex™. Household bleach is typically between 5 percent and 6 percent chlorine. Avoid using bleaches that contain perfumes, dyes and other additives. Be sure to read the label.
- Place the water (filtered, if necessary) in a clean container. Add the amount of bleach according to the table below.
- Mix thoroughly and allow to stand for at least 30 minutes before using (60 minutes if the water is cloudy or very cold).

Treating Water with a 5-6 Percent Liquid Chlorine Bleach Solution		
Volume of Water to be Treated	Treating Clear/Cloudy Water: Bleach Solution to Add	Treating Very Cold, or Surface Water: Bleach Solution to Add
1 quart/1 liter	3 drops	5 drops
1/2 gallon/2 quarts/2 liters	5 drops	10 drops
1 gallon	1/8 tsp	1/4 tsp
5 gallons	1/2 tsp	1 tsp
10 gallons	1 tsp	2 tsp



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Secure your water heater to minimize damage during a disaster.

# Securing Your Water Heater

Fresh water after a disaster may be as close as your water heater — provided, of course, it remains standing upright. You can protect this valuable resource by securing your water heater to the wall studs.

## First, check for plumbers' tape

Experts modified the procedure for strapping water heaters following the 1989 Loma Prieta and 1994 Northridge earthquake. Prior to this, a single strap of plumbers' tape was commonly used. Because so many tanks burst through this strapping, experts now recommend:

1. Secure both the top and the bottom, rather than just the top or just the middle, of the tank.
2. Use heavy-gauge metal strapping rather than plumbers' tape.
3. Replace all copper and metal piping with flexible natural gas and water line connectors.



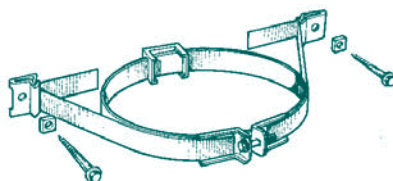
This is PLUMBERS' TAPE — it is **not** strong enough to prevent water heaters from tipping over.

## Second, secure tank with heavy-gauge metal straps, top and bottom

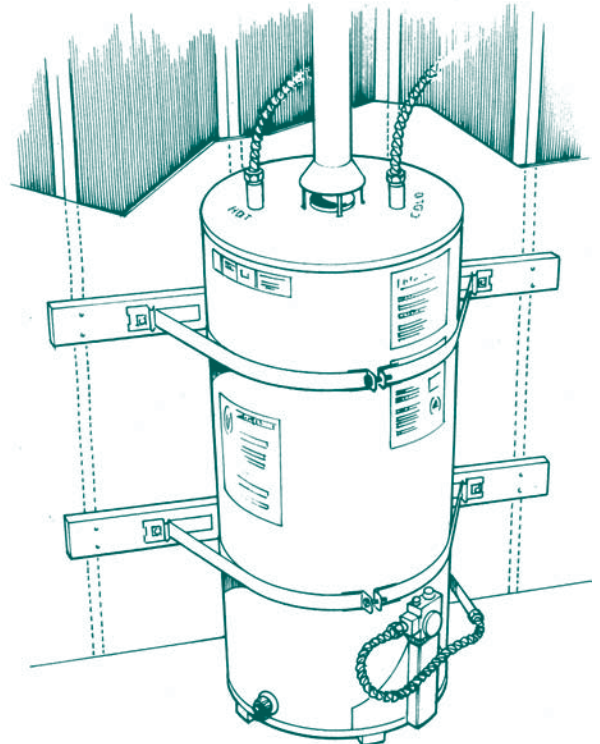
- Commercially available strapping kits make this a relatively easy process. These can be found in many hardware stores on the aisle displaying the water heaters.

These kits come complete with the strapping, lag screws, washers, spacers and tension bolts.

- You can also choose to assemble the strapping materials yourself using heavy-gauge metal straps and 3-inch lag screws.
- To prevent the tank from tipping backwards, there should be very little space between it and the wall. If there is more than 1 or 2 inches, attach a wooden block to the wall with long lag screws.



- Wrap the heavy-gauge metal strapping 1-1/2 times around the tank. Start by placing the strapping at the back of the tank. Bring it to the front and then take it back to the wall.



- Secure this strapping to the wall studs or the wood block using several 1/4-inch x 3-inch or longer lag screws with oversized washers.
- If you are securing it directly into concrete, use 1/4-inch expansion bolts in place of the screws.

## An emergency source of water

- Water can easily be accessed by connecting a garden hose to the drain spout, and by opening a faucet somewhere in the house.
- Make sure the electricity or natural gas is off before opening the drain.



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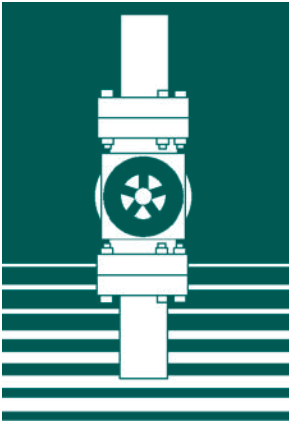
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It is best to learn how to turn off household utilities before disaster strikes.

# Turning Off Utilities

When disaster strikes, it often affects one or more of the utilities in your home. It is important to know where the main controls are located, and when and how to turn them off.

## Electricity

- Locate your main electrical switch or fuse panel, and learn how to turn off the electrical power system.
- If a generator is used as a backup power supply, remember to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Connect lights and appliances directly to the generator and not to the electrical system.

## Water

- Turn off water at the main meter or at the water main leading into the house. This will prevent contaminated water from entering your water heater and plumbing.
- Turn off the valve — turn to the right. This will require a special valve wrench, available from a hardware store. Make sure you have the tool readily available.

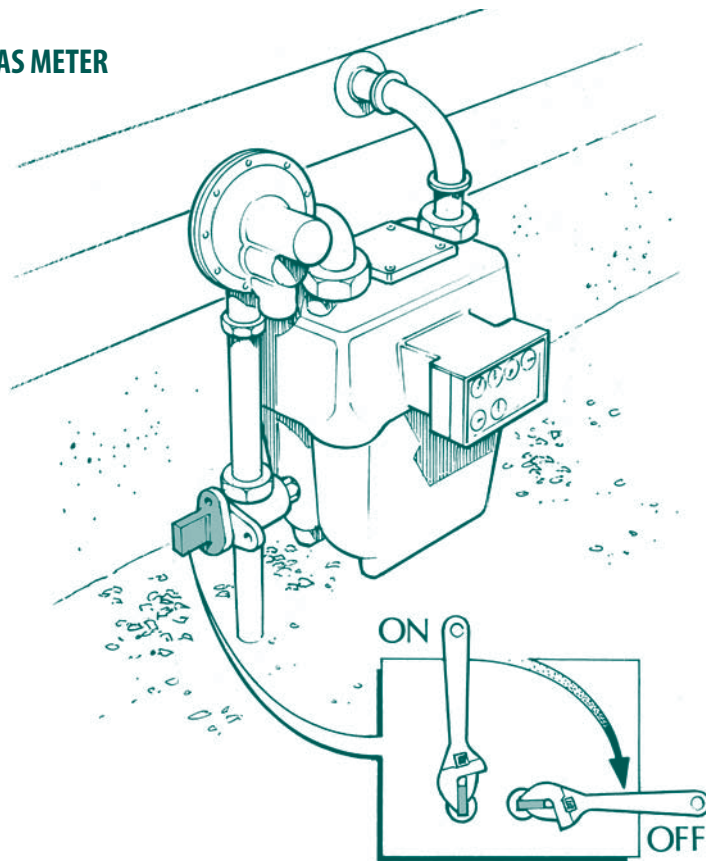
## Sewer system

- Make sure your sewer system is functioning properly before using it. This will prevent the contamination of your home, and possibly, the drinking water supply.

## Gas meter (illustration below)

- Locate your gas meter and valve.
- Have a wrench immediately available for turning off the gas supply.
- If you smell natural or propane gas, evacuate immediately and leave the area. Go to where you no longer smell gas. Do not use matches, lighters, open flame appliances or operate electrical switches. Sparks could ignite gas causing an explosion.
- Shut off gas **only** if you smell gas or hear a hissing noise. Contact the gas company to turn the gas back on.

GAS METER



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# Using a Generator During Power Outages

## Don't overload your generator

- Determine the amount of power you will need to operate those things you plan to connect to the generator.
  - Light bulb wattage indicates the power needed for lighting. Appliance and equipment labels indicate their power requirements.
- If you can't determine the amount of power you will need; ask an electrician.
- Make sure your generator produces more power than will be drawn by the things you connect to the generator including the initial surge when it is turned on. If your generator does not produce enough power to operate everything at once, stagger the use of your equipment.
- If your equipment draws more power than the generator can produce, you may blow a fuse on the generator or damage the connected equipment.

## Use your generator safely

- Incorrect generator use can lead to carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution and fire. *Follow the directions supplied with the generator.*

## Never use a portable generator indoors

- Never use a portable generator in a garage, carport, basement, crawlspace or other enclosed or partially-enclosed area, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO buildup in the home.
- If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air right away — do not delay!
- Install home CO alarms that are battery-operated or have battery back-up. Test batteries frequently and replace when needed.

## Using your generator outdoors

- Place the generator away from windows, doors, and vents that could allow CO to come indoors.

- To avoid electrocution, keep the generator dry. Do not use in rain or wet conditions. Operate it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure. Make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator.

## Use and store generator fuel safely

- Turn the generator off and let it cool before refueling. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- Store generator fuel in an approved safety can outside of living areas in a locked shed or other protected area. Local laws may restrict use or storage of fuel. Ask your local fire department for information.
- If you spill fuel or do not seal its container properly, invisible vapors can travel along the ground and be ignited by an appliance's pilot light or arcs from electric switches in the appliance.
- Use the type of fuel recommended in the generator instructions or on its label.

## Connect your generator correctly

- Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads.
- Never try to power house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a practice known as "back feeding." It can lead to the electrocution of utility workers or neighbors served by the same utility transformer.
- The only safe way to connect a generator to house wiring is to have a qualified electrician install a power transfer switch.

## The safest way to get emergency power

Permanently installed stationary generators are the best way to provide home backup power during a power outage.



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# Earthquakes

Washington is earthquake country.  
When the ground starts to shake, “Drop, Cover and Hold.”

## Drop, cover and hold

- When you feel an earthquake, **DROP** and **COVER** under a desk or sturdy table. Stay away from windows and objects like bookcases that could fall. **HOLD** on to the desk or table. If it moves, move with it. Do not run — stay where you are. “Drop, Cover and Hold.”

## Be prepared for an earthquake

- Anchor appliances and tall heavy furniture that might fall. Put latches on cabinet doors to keep contents from spilling out.
- Find out how you can improve your home to protect it against earthquake damage.
- Establish an “out-of-area” contact and keep the phone numbers handy. This is the person family members will call if you are separated.
- Have a place at home where emergency supplies are kept and tell others where it is.

## During an earthquake

### If you are indoors:

- Stay inside. Move under a desk or sturdy table and hold on to it. If it moves, move with it. Stay away from windows, bookcases, refrigerators, heavy mirrors, hanging plants and other objects that could fall. Do not go outside until the shaking stops.
- If you are in a crowded store or public place, **do not** rush for an exit. Move away from display shelves holding objects that could fall on you, and “**drop, cover and hold.**”
- If you are in a theater or stadium, stay in your seat, protect your head with your arms or get under the seat. Do not leave until the shaking stops.

### If you are outdoors:

- If you are outdoors, move to a clear area away from trees, signs, buildings or downed electrical wires and poles.

### If you are in a downtown area:

- If you are on a sidewalk near a tall building, get into a building’s doorway or lobby to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass and other debris.

### If you are driving:

- If you are driving, slowly pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses, power lines and other hazards. Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking stops.

### If you are in a wheelchair:

- If you are in a wheelchair, stay in it. Move to safe cover if possible, lock your wheels and protect your head with your arms.

## After the earthquake

- If you were evacuated, wait until you are told it is safe before returning home.
- Be careful entering buildings. Stay away from downed power lines.
- Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- Be prepared for aftershocks.
- Use the phone only to report a life-threatening emergency.
- Do not drive unnecessarily.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound — open a window and leave the building. Shut off the main gas valve outside.
- Check on neighbors, particularly elderly or disabled persons.
- Try to contact your out-of-area phone contact.
- Listen to your radio.



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# Tsunamis

A tsunami is a series of destructive waves affecting shorelines. Tsunamis are usually generated by earthquakes. Tsunamis may also be caused by underwater landslides or underwater volcanic eruptions.

## The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA has warning centers located in Hawaii and Alaska that can issue a tsunami warning within 15 minutes after an earthquake. This provides an effective warning for distant-source tsunamis.

### A tsunami watch

A *watch* reports on conditions that may generate a tsunami.

- Listen to your radio, NOAA Weather Radio, or TV for updates on the watch.
- Know well in advance what your safest evacuation route will be.

### A tsunami warning

A *warning* reports that a tsunami may have been generated.

- Move to higher ground or inland.
- If no higher ground is near, go to upper levels of reinforced buildings.
- Continue to monitor your local radio or NOAA Weather Radio for further information and instructions.
- Wait for the "All Clear" before you return to the beach or to your home.

## Coastal evacuation signs

- Tsunami evacuation routes were developed to help coastal residents and visitors find safer locations in case of an earthquake and tsunami. Evacuation signs have been placed along coastal roadways to indicate the direction inland or to higher ground.

In some places, there may be more than one direction available to reach safer areas. These routes may be marked with several signs showing additional options for evacuation. You should know the evacuation routes for your area.



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# Volcanoes

**Volcanic dangers include not only an eruption of a mountain and associated lava flows, but also ashfall and debris flows. If you are near a mountain range, be familiar with the following:**

## Before a volcanic eruption:

- Plan ahead. Have emergency supplies, food and water stored.
- Plan an evacuation route away from rivers or streams that may carry mud or debris flow.
- Keep a battery-operated radio available at all times.
- If there is an eruption predicted, monitor the radio or TV for evacuation information. Follow the advice given by authorities.

## After a volcanic eruption:

- Do not approach the eruption area.
- Be prepared to stay indoors and avoid downwind areas if ashfall is predicted.
- Evacuate if advised to do so by authorities.
- Be aware of stream and river channels when evacuating.
- Move toward higher ground if mudflows are approaching.
- Follow the evacuation signs posted along roads and highways.



## If there is ashfall in your area:

- Protect your lungs. Infants and the elderly, and those who have respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema or other chronic lung and heart diseases should be particularly careful to avoid breathing ash. If ash is present:
  - Stay inside. Close doors, windows and dampers. Place damp towels at door thresholds and other draft sources.
- When outside, wear a single-use (disposable) facemask. Remember that these masks may not fit small children properly. (*Note:* Masks may make breathing more difficult for people with respiratory conditions.)
- Those most at risk should limit outdoor activities. Keep children and pets indoors.
- If you have asthma or another respiratory condition – or have a child with asthma – pay attention to symptoms such as wheezing and coughing, or more severe symptoms such as chest pain or tightness, shortness of breath and severe fatigue. Stay indoors and follow your asthma management plan. Contact your doctor if you have trouble breathing.
- Replace disposable furnace filters or clean permanent furnace filters frequently.
- If you wear contact lenses, protect your eyes by wearing glasses or protective goggles or by removing your contacts.
- If you find ash in your drinking water, use an alternate source of drinking water such as purchased bottled water.
- Put stoppers in the tops of your drainpipes.
- Protect dust-sensitive electronics.
- Keep roofs free of ash in excess of 4 inches.
- Remove outdoor clothing before entering a building.
- Wash vegetables from the garden before eating.
- Minimize travel — ash may be harmful to your vehicle.
- Frequently change oil and air filters in your automobile.



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# Floods

**Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters. If you live in an area where floods occur, you should know the following:**

## What to do before a flood

- Plan for evacuation including where you are going to go and the route you will follow.
- Prepare your home for a flood. Call your local building department or office of emergency management for information.
- Purchase flood insurance.
- Keep all insurance policies and a list of valuable items in a safe place.
- Take photos or a videotape of the valuables you keep in your home.
- Listen to your radio or television for reports of flood danger.
- Keep your car filled with gas.

## What to do during a flood

- **Do not** try to walk or drive through flooded areas. Water can be deeper than it appears and water levels rise quickly. Follow official emergency evacuation routes. If your car stalls in floodwater, get out quickly and move to higher ground.
- Stay away from moving water; moving water six inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Cars are easily swept away in just two feet of water.
- Stay away from disaster areas unless authorities ask for volunteers.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- If your home is flooded, turn the utilities off until emergency officials tell you it is safe to turn them on. Do not pump the basement out until floodwater recedes. Avoid weakened floors, walls and rooftops.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and clean water if you come in contact with floodwaters.

## What to do after a flood

- Wear gloves and boots when cleaning up.
- Open all doors and windows. Use fans if possible to air out the building.
- Wash all clothes and linens in hot water.
- Discard mattresses and stuffed furniture; they can't be adequately cleaned.
- Wash dirt and mud from walls, counters and hard surfaced floors with soap and water. Disinfect by wiping surfaces with a solution of one cup bleach per gallon of water.
- Discard all food that has come into contact with floodwater. Canned food is alright, but thoroughly wash the can before opening.
- If your well is flooded, your tap water is probably unsafe. If you have public water, the health department will let you know — through radio and television — if your water is not safe to drink. Until your water is safe, use clean bottled water.
- Learn how to purify water. If you have a well, learn how to decontaminate it.
- Do not use your septic system when water is standing on the ground around it. The ground below will not absorb water from sinks or toilets. When the soil has dried, it is probably safe to again use your septic system. To be sure, contact your local health department.
- When floodwaters have receded, watch out for weakened road surfaces.



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# Landslides and Mud Flows

Landslides and mudflows usually strike without warning. The force of rocks, soil or other debris moving down a slope can devastate anything in its path.

## Before a landslide

- Your county geologist or county planning department may have specific information on areas vulnerable to landslides. Consult a professional geotechnical expert for advice on corrective measures you can take.

## Insurance

- Mudflow is covered by flood insurance policies from the National Flood Insurance Program. Flood insurance can be purchased through a local insurance agency.

## Minimize home hazards

- Plant ground cover on slopes to stabilize the land, and build retaining walls.
- Build channels or deflection walls to direct the flow around buildings.
- Remember: if you build walls to divert debris flow and the flow lands on a neighbor's property, you may be liable for damages.

## Make evacuation plans

- Plan at least two evacuation routes since roads may become blocked or closed.

## Learn to recognize the landslide warning signs

- Doors or windows begin to stick or jam for the first time.
- New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick or foundations.
- Outside walls, walks or stairs begin pulling away from the building.
- Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas.
- Underground utility lines break.
- Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope.
- Water breaks through the ground surface.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles or trees tilt or move.

- You hear a faint rumbling sound that increases in volume as the landslide nears. The ground slopes downward in one specific direction and may begin shifting in that direction under your feet.

## During a landslide

### If inside a building:

- Stay inside.
- Take cover under a desk, table, or other piece of sturdy furniture.

### If outdoors:

- Run to the nearest high ground in a direction away from the path.
- If rocks and other debris are approaching, run for the nearest shelter such as a group of trees or a building.
- If escape is not possible, curl into a tight ball and protect your head.

## After a landslide

- Remember that flooding may occur after a mudflow or a landslide.
- Stay away from the slide area, there may be danger of additional slides.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide area. Give first aid.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance – infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for emergency information.
- Check for damaged utility lines. Report any damage to the utility company.
- Check the building foundation, chimney, and surrounding land for damage.
- Replant damaged ground as soon as possible. Erosion caused by loss of ground cover can lead to flash flooding.



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# Hot Weather Precautions

Severe heat may cause illness or even death. When temperatures rise to extreme highs, reduce risks by taking the following precautions:

## Hot weather precautions to reduce the risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke

- Stay indoors and in an air-conditioned environment as much as possible unless you're sure your body has a high tolerance for heat.
- Drink plenty of fluids but avoid beverages that contain alcohol, caffeine or a lot of sugar.
- Eat more frequently but make sure meals are balanced and light.
- Never leave any person or pet in a parked vehicle.
- Avoid dressing babies in heavy clothing or wrapping them in warm blankets.
- Check frequently on people who are elderly, ill or who may need help. If you might need help, arrange to have family, friends or neighbors check in with you at least twice a day throughout warm weather periods.
- Make sure pets have plenty of water.
- Salt tablets should only be taken if specified by your doctor. If you are on a salt-restrictive diet, check with a doctor before increasing salt intake.
- If you take prescription diuretics, antihistamines, mood-altering or antispasmodic drugs, check with a doctor about the effects of sun and heat exposure.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun. Awnings or louvers can reduce the heat entering a house by as much as 80 percent.

## If you go outside

- Plan strenuous outdoor activities for early or late in the day when temperatures are cooler; then gradually build up tolerance for warmer conditions.
- Take frequent breaks when working outdoors.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sun block and light-colored, loose-fitting clothes when outdoors.
- At first signs of heat illness (dizziness, nausea, headaches, muscle cramps), move to a cooler location, rest for a few minutes and slowly drink a cool beverage. Seek medical attention immediately if you do not feel better.
- Avoid sunburn: it slows the skin's ability to cool itself. Use a sunscreen lotion with a high SPF (sun protection factor) rating.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes. A cool shower immediately after coming in from hot temperatures can result in hypothermia, particularly for elderly or very young people.

## If the power goes out or air conditioning is not available

- If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine.
- Ask your doctor about any prescription medicine you keep refrigerated. (If the power goes out, most medicine will be fine to leave in a closed refrigerator for at least three hours.)
- Keep a few bottles of water in your freezer; if the power goes out, move them to your refrigerator and keep the doors shut.



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For more information on preventing West Nile Virus, including what employers and workers can do to reduce their risk, go to [www.doh.wa.gov/wnv](http://www.doh.wa.gov/wnv)

# West Nile Virus

## What is West Nile virus?

- West Nile virus can be a serious, even fatal, illness. It can affect people, horses, certain types of birds and other animals. West Nile virus first appeared in the United States in 1999. In 2002, the virus was found for the first time in birds and horses in Washington.

## How is it spread?

- West Nile virus is almost always spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected after feeding on birds that carry the virus. There is no evidence that West Nile virus can be spread by direct contact with infected people or animals.

## Who is at risk?

- The risk of getting West Nile virus is very low, but anyone can become infected. People over 50 years of age have the highest risk of serious illness.

## What are the symptoms?

- Most people who are infected with West Nile virus will not get sick. About 1 in 5 people infected will have mild symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches. Even fewer, about 1 in 150 people infected, will have more severe symptoms. Severe symptoms may include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis and coma. If you have any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

## How can I protect myself?

- There is no human vaccine for West Nile virus. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to avoid mosquito bites and reduce the places mosquitoes live and breed around your home. Take these steps:

### Avoid mosquito bites

- Make sure windows and doors are “bug tight.” Repair or replace screens.
- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are the most active.
- Wear a long sleeve shirt, long pants and a hat when going into mosquito-infested areas such as wetlands or woods.
- Use mosquito repellent when necessary. Read the label and carefully follow instructions. Take special care when using repellent on children. Mosquito repellents that contain the active ingredients DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus are the most effective for offering long-lasting protection against mosquito bites.

### Don't give mosquitoes a home

- Empty or throw away anything that holds standing water—bottles, cans, old tires, buckets, plastic covers and toys.
- Change water in your birdbaths, fountains, wading pools and animal troughs at least twice each week.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly; and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.



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# Windstorms

Each fall and winter season, several low pressure systems impact the Pacific Northwest, producing strong winds. By taking action now, you can save lives and reduce the damage caused by windstorms and other weather-related hazards.

## What to do before a windstorm

- Contact your local emergency management office or the National Weather Service to find out what types of storms are most likely to occur in your community.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit.
- Contact vendors to learn the proper use of home generators.
- Find out who in your area might need special assistance, specifically the elderly, disabled, and non-English speaking neighbors.
- Check with your veterinarian for animal care instructions in an emergency situation.
- If you live on a coastal or inland shoreline, be familiar with evacuation routes.
- Know what emergency plans are in place at your workplace, school and daycare center.
- Conduct a home safety evaluation to find out which nearby trees could fall in a windstorm.
- If you have an electric garage door opener, locate the manual override.

## What to do during a windstorm

- Don't panic. Take quick action to protect yourself and help others.
- Turn off the stove if you're cooking when the power goes out, and turn off natural gas appliances.
- If you are indoors, move away from windows or objects that could fall. Go to lower floors in multi-story homes.
- If you are outdoors, move into a building. Avoid downed electric power lines, utility poles and trees.

- If you are driving, pull off the road and stop away from trees. If possible, walk into a safe building. Avoid overpasses, power lines and other hazards.
- Listen to your radio for emergency instructions.

## What to do after a windstorm

- Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- Evacuate damaged buildings. Do not re-enter until declared safe by authorities.
- Call 9-1-1 only to report a life threatening emergency.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound indoors — open windows and leave the building. Turn off the gas source and call your gas company. Do not use matches, candles, open flames or electric switches indoors.
- If the power goes out, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep food frozen for up to two days.
- Provide assistance to your neighbors, especially the elderly or disabled.
- Try to make contact with your out-of-area phone contact, but avoid making local telephone calls.
- Monitor your portable or weather radio for instructions or an official "all clear" notice. Radio stations will broadcast what to do, the location of emergency shelters and medical aid stations, and the extent of damage.



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# Winter Storms

Winter storms can range from moderate snow over a few hours to blizzard conditions with blinding, wind-driven snow or freezing rain that lasts several days. The time to prepare is before the snow falls or ice forms.

## Preparing for winter storms

- Listen to your radio or television for winter storm forecasts and other information.
- Prepare your home for cold weather. Install storm windows. Insulate outside walls, attics and crawl spaces. Wrap pipes, especially those near cold outer walls or in attics or crawl spaces. Repair leaks in the roof, around the doors and in the windows.
- Have appropriate cold weather clothing available.
- If you have a kerosene heater, refuel your heater outside and remember to keep it at least three feet from flammable objects.
- Make sure your fireplace functions properly.
- Have rock salt and sand on hand for traction on ice.
- Fill your gas tank before the snow starts falling.

## During a winter storm

- Wear several layers of loose fitting, light weight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens rather than gloves. Wear a warm, woolen cap.
- Do not drive unnecessarily.
- Reduce the temperature in your home to conserve fuel.
- Heat only the areas of your home you are using. Close doors and curtains or cover windows and doors with blankets.
- Use alternative heat methods safely. **Never** use a gas or charcoal grill, hibachi or portable propane heater to cook indoors or heat your home.

- Be careful when shoveling snow. Do not overexert yourself.
- Be sure to eat regularly. Food provides calories that maintain body heat.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia — slurred speech, disorientation, uncontrollable shivering, stumbling, drowsiness and body temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit or less.
- If you become trapped outside, get out of the wind and stay dry. Build a lean-to or snow cave if nothing else is available. Do not eat snow; it will make you too cold.

## If in your vehicle

- Make sure someone knows where you are going. Stay on the main roads.
- If you must stop, remain inside the vehicle. Use a bright distress flag or your hazard lights to draw attention to your vehicle.
- If trapped in a blizzard, clear your tail pipe and run your engine and heater for 10 minutes every hour. Open your window slightly.
- During night hours, keep the dome light on in the car so rescue crews can see your vehicle.
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle. Include a three-day supply of water and non-perishable food that can be eaten without being cooked. Include a blanket or sleeping bag for each passenger, a flashlight, cell phone, shovel, sack of sand or kitty litter, booster cables, flare, coffee can with lid and toilet paper.



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