

# City of Richmond

## Citizens' Emergency Preparedness Guide



# Your Guide To Emergency Preparedness

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*The original source of this information is [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).*





Dear City of Richmond Residents:

It is the responsibility of government to ensure the safety, health and well-being of the residents it serves in any given situation.

Whether dealing with an isolated incident or wide-spread disaster, residents need to know what to do, where to go and how to work in conjunction with authorities and emergency service professionals. In response to this need, we have created this *Citizens' Emergency Preparedness Guide* to direct you in the event of an emergency.

I encourage you to thoroughly read this guide and keep it as a resource. By preparing and practicing in advance, we can make informed decisions and have confidence in our ability to safely recover from events that impact our area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dwight C. Jones".

Dwight C. Jones  
Mayor



# Notes

# Are You Ready?

*Following a disaster it may take **72 hours** for outside assistance to reach your community.*

Local officials, first responders, and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. Help may reach you in hours, or it may take several days. Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, and telephones may be cut off for anywhere from several hours to a week or longer. Remember, it is every resident's responsibility to do their part and prepare for these possibilities.

Ensure you are prepared with these three easy steps:

1. Get a Kit
2. Make a Plan
3. Stay Informed

# Notes

## Get a Kit

The first step is to consider how an emergency might affect your individual and family needs. Plan to make it on your own, for at least three days. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies stored in an easy-to-carry container located in a convenient location.

Check the supplies, change stored water and rotate food supplies every six months. To help remember, make a plan to check your kit as daylight savings time begins and ends. Consult your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.



*Use the checklist on the following pages to help you put together an emergency supply kit.*

## **Basic Emergency Supply Kit:**

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food (food should require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little to no water)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers

## **Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:**

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks and money in coin form
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape

# Notes

# Make a Plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance: how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations.

## Emergency Plan

- Identify an **out-of town contact**. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call, so an **out-of-town contact** may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- Be sure every member of your family **knows the phone number** and has a cell phone, **coins**, or a **prepaid phone card** to call the emergency contact. If you have a cell phone, program that person(s) as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Make sure to tell your family and friends that you've listed them as emergency contacts.
- Teach family members how to use text messaging as text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.
- Subscribe to **alert services**.

## **Planning to Stay or Go**

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you stay where you are or evacuate. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information, to determine if there is an immediate danger.

In any emergency, local authorities may or may not be able to immediately provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for information or official instruction as it becomes available.

## **Emergency Plans**

You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: **work, daycare and school**. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together in the event of an emergency. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance.

*Use the information on the following pages to develop your own emergency plan.*

# Emergency Plan

Identify an out-of-town contact person(s).

**Out-of-town contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Out-of-town contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Decide on a meeting place in case you cannot return to your home, and know where you would go if you had to evacuate your area. Practice, practice, practice! Take the entire family to the designated meeting place so everyone knows exactly where to go.

## Neighborhood

**Meeting place:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Out-of-town

**Meeting place:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out the following information for each family member and keep it up to date.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Medicine/Dosage:** \_\_\_\_\_

Collect information about the location(s) where your family spends the most time:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workplace (1):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workplace (2):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School (1):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School (2):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Collect information from others you may need to contact in an emergency.

**Doctor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pharmacist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Veterinarian:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Insurance:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Policy Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Homeowners/Rental**

**Insurance:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Policy Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Stay Informed

Knowing what to do during an emergency is an important part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as making an emergency supply kit and developing an emergency plan, are the same for both a natural or man-made emergency.

It is important to know the difference between a watch and a warning. Stay tuned to your local radio or TV for weather reports, or listen to a NOAA weather radio for more detailed information about weather conditions.

- A **WATCH** means that conditions are favorable for hazardous weather to develop.
- A **WARNING** means that hazard weather conditions are imminent.

For additional information about what you can do to prepare visit the Office of Emergency Management website:

[www.richmondgov.com/fire/EmergencyManagement](http://www.richmondgov.com/fire/EmergencyManagement)

# Notes

# Evacuating

There may be conditions under which you will decide to get away, or there may be situations when you are ordered to leave. Plan how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency.

## Create an evacuation plan:

- **Plan places** where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- If you have a car, keep a **half tank of gas** in it at all times in case you need to evacuate.
- Become familiar with **alternate routes** and other means of transportation out of your area.
- If you **do not have a car**, plan how you will leave if you have to.
- **Take your emergency supply kit** unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- **Lock** the door behind you.
- Take your **pets** with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency.

If time allows:

- Call or email the "out-of-state" contact in your family communications plan.
- Tell them where you are going.

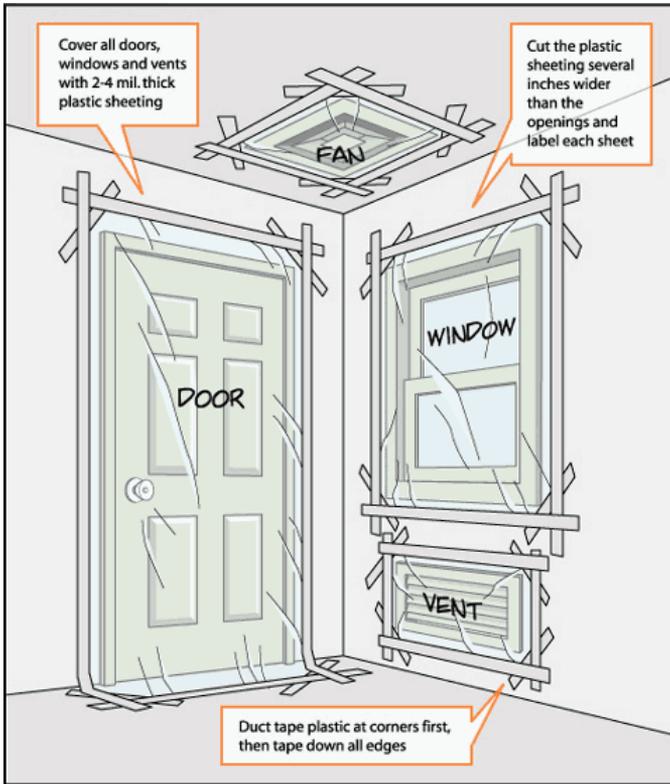
# Notes

## Staying Put

There are other circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as "sealing the room," is a matter of survival. Use available information to assess the situation. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities declare outside air to be badly contaminated, you may want to take this kind of action.

### To "Shelter in Place and Seal the Room"

- Bring your family and pets **inside**.
- **Lock** doors, **close** windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
- **Turn off** fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.
- **Take your emergency supply kit** unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- **Go into an interior room** with few windows, if possible.
- **Seal** all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting the sheeting in advance to save time.
- Be prepared to **improvise** and use what you have on hand, i.e. towels, to **seal gaps** so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.
- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should **watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news** and instructions as they become available.



## Learn how and when to turn off utilities:

If there is damage to your home or you are instructed to turn off your utilities:

- Locate the electric, gas and water shut-off valves.
- Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.
- Teach family members how to turn off utilities.
- **If you turn the gas off, a professional must turn it back on. Do not attempt to do this yourself.**

# Emergency Shelters

When conditions warrant, local authorities may instruct you to seek shelter in your home or an emergency shelter within the city. An emergency shelter is an immediate short-term accommodation for persons threatened by or displaced by an incident. Public emergency shelters provide accommodations for all population groups.

A number of emergency shelters are designated throughout the city. The type of event will determine which of the emergency shelters are opened.

- Local authorities will provide designated shelter locations at the appropriate time.
- Emergency shelters provide a place to sleep, eat, shower and charge cell phones or medical equipment.
- When possible bring a change of clothes, sanitary supplies, pre-filled prescriptions and other medical needs, special dietary supplies or requirements with you.
- Pets are not permitted within the emergency shelters; however accommodations can be made to transport your pet to Richmond Animal Care and Control's shelter until you are able to return to your residence.

# Notes

# Food Safety

*From the U.S. Food and Drug Administration*

## Be Prepared for Emergencies

- Make sure you have **appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer.**
  - Check to ensure that the freezer temperature is at or below **0 °F** and the refrigerator is at or below **40 °F**.
- **Freeze containers of water** for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator, or coolers in case the power goes out. If your normal water supply is contaminated or unavailable, the melting ice will also supply drinking water.
- **Freeze refrigerated items** such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately. This helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- **Group food together** in the freezer. This helps the food stay cold longer.
- **Have coolers on hand** to keep refrigerated food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours.
- Purchase or make **ice cubes in advance** and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Freeze **gel packs** ahead of time for use in coolers.
- **Store food on shelves** that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.
- Make sure to have a **supply of bottled water** stored where it will be as safe as possible from flooding.

## When the Power Goes Out . . .

- Keep **refrigerator and freezer doors closed** as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
  - The **refrigerator** will keep food **cold for about 4 hours** if it is unopened.
  - A **full freezer** will keep the temperature for approximately **48 hours** (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
- If you plan to eat refrigerated or frozen meat, poultry, fish or eggs while it is still at safe temperatures, it is important that each item be **thoroughly cooked to the proper temperature** to assure that any foodborne bacteria that may be present is destroyed. However, if at any point the food was above 40 °F for 2 hours or more — discard it.
- **Wash fruits and vegetables** with water from a safe source before eating.
- For infants, try to use prepared, canned baby formula that requires no added water. When using concentrated or powdered formulas, prepare with bottled water if the local water source is potentially contaminated.

## Once Power is Restored . . .

You'll need to determine the safety of your food. Here's how:

- If an appliance thermometer was kept in the freezer, **check the temperature** when the power comes back on. If the freezer thermometer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, **check each package** of food to determine its safety. You can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food **still contains ice crystals** or is 40 °F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for **no more than 4 hours** and the refrigerator door was kept shut. Discard any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers) that has been above 40°F for two hours or more.

Keep in mind that perishable food such as meat, poultry, seafood, milk, and eggs that are **not kept adequately refrigerated or frozen** may cause illness if consumed, even when they are thoroughly cooked.

# Notes

# Seniors

Each person's needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies and put plans in place. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation. A commitment to planning today will help you prepare for any emergency situation. Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.

## **Create a Support Network**

- If you anticipate needing assistance during a disaster talk to family, friends and others who will be part of your personal support network.
- Write down and share each aspect of your emergency plan with everyone in your support network.
- Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster.
- Make sure that someone in your local network has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach those who will help you how to use any lifesaving equipment, administer medicine in case of an emergency.
- Practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your network.

For additional information regarding available services within city departments call the  
**Senior Help Line at (804) 646-1082.**

## **Medications and Medical Supplies**

If you take medicine or use a medical treatment on a daily basis, be sure you have what you need to make it on your own for at least a week, maybe longer.

- Make a list of prescription medicines including dosage, treatment and allergy information.
- Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you need to prepare.
- If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital or if you receive regular services such as home health care, treatment or transportation, talk to your service provider about their emergency plans. Work with them to identify back-up service providers and incorporate them into your personal support network.
- Consider other personal needs such as eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries, and oxygen.

## **Important Documents**

Include copies of important documents in your emergency supply kit such as medical and tax records, wills, social security number, bank account, mortgage and insurance (i.e. renters) information and your Medicare cards.

- Keep a list of the style and serial number of medical devices or other life-sustaining devices. Include operating information and instructions.
- Include the names and contact information of your support network, as well as your medical providers.

# People with Disabilities and Other Access & Functional Needs

In addition to recommended items to include in a basic emergency supply kit, people with disabilities and other access and functional needs may wish to consider the following in their preparations. Now is the time to plan ahead for what you may need to stay safe, healthy, informed, mobile, and independent during a disaster. Remember that a disaster may require sheltering-in-place at home or evacuating to an emergency shelter or other form of temporary housing.

## **Plan to maintain your independence before an emergency strikes:**

As you prepare, consider all the strategies, services, devices, tools and techniques you use to live with a disability on a daily basis. Keep in mind that you may need medications, durable medical equipment, consumable medical supplies, your service animal, assistive technology, communications tools, disability service providers, accessible housing, transportation, and health-related items.

- Create a support network to help you plan for an emergency. Consider family, neighbors, friends, people who provide services to you, faith-based and community groups. Tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies. Give at least one member of your support network a key to your house or apartment.

- If you receive dialysis or other life sustaining medical treatment, identify the location and availability of more than one facility and work with your provider to develop your personal emergency plan.
- Show others how to operate your wheelchair or other assistive devices.
- Keep contact information for local independent living centers and other disability service organizations in a safe and easy-to-access place. If you provide any organizations or service providers with information about your functional needs and what you may require in an emergency, remember to keep that data up to date.
- If you use in-home support services, work with them to personalize emergency preparedness plans to meet your needs so you can keep in touch with them during and after an emergency. That contact may be your lifeline to other services in a disaster.
- Work with local transportation and disability services to plan ahead for accessible transportation if you may need that for evacuation or other reasons during a disaster.
- Develop back-up plans for personal assistance services, hospice, or other forms of in-home assistance.
- Keep in mind that during an emergency, you may need to explain to first responders and emergency officials that you need to evacuate and shelter with your family, service animal, caregiver, or personal assistance provider so they can provide the support you need to maintain your health, safety and independence.

## Pets

If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household. The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire, flood or tornado depends largely on emergency planning done today. Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling an animal emergency supply kit and developing a pet care buddy system, are the same for any emergency. Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Make shelter alternative plans in advance that will work for both you and your pets.

Make a back-up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for at least three days, maybe longer.



Just as you do with your family's emergency supply kit, think first about the basics for survival, particularly food and water. Consider two kits. In one, put everything you and your pets will need to stay where you are. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you and your pets need to evacuate. Plus, be sure to review your kits regularly to ensure their contents, especially foods and medicines, are fresh.

- Food – Keep at least three days in an airtight, waterproof container
- Water – Store at least three days of water specifically for your pets in addition to water you need for yourself and family
- Medicines and medical records
- Pet First Aid Kit
- Collar with ID Tag, harness or leash – Include a backup leash, collar and ID tag in your pet's emergency supply kit. Also, place copies of your pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents and medical records in a clean plastic bag.
- Crate or other pet carrier
- Sanitation – Include pet litter and litter box if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels and plastic trash bags

# Businesses

*Preparing makes good business sense. Get ready now.*

How quickly your company can get back to business after a disaster often depends on emergency planning done today. When you also consider that the number of declared major disasters nearly doubled in the 1990's compared to the previous decade, preparedness becomes an even more critical issue. Though each situation is unique, any organization can be better prepared if it plans carefully, puts emergency procedures in place, and practices for emergencies of all kinds.

America's businesses form the backbone of the nation's economy. If businesses are prepared to survive and recover, our economy is more secure. A commitment to planning today will help support employees, customers, the community and the local economy. It also protects your business investment and gives your company a better chance for survival.

*Ready Business* outlines commonsense measures business owners and managers can take to start getting *ready*. It provides practical steps and easy-to-use templates to help you plan for your company's future. It also provides useful links to resources providing more detailed business continuity and disaster preparedness information.

Visit [www.ready.gov/business](http://www.ready.gov/business) for more information.



## For More Information

Situation or Question	Number
To request <b>immediate</b> assistance from the police, fire department or ambulance. Examples include a fire, a crime, especially if in progress, a car crash or a medical emergency.	9-1-1
Non-emergency police number.	(804) 646-5100
To request assistance, report a downed tree, high water on roads or for information about available resources and open shelters in your area. Request assistance online at: <a href="http://www.richmondgov.com">www.richmondgov.com</a>	3-1-1
To report strong, persistent gas odors, a major water leak in your home or in the street, a sewer backup in your home, a broken sewer line or a streetlight that is broken or out.	(804) 646-7000
Senior Help Line to assist older adults in their quest for services within city departments.	(804) 646-1082
To report a power outage to Dominion Virginia Power.	1-866-366-4357
For information on how to prepare your family or business for an emergency contact: <a href="http://www.richmondgov.com/fire/emergencymanagement.aspx">www.richmondgov.com/fire/emergencymanagement.aspx</a>	(804) 646-2504



Published December 2011