



# Prepare

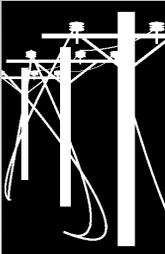
## Home emergency guide



**Make a plan**

**Store emergency supplies**

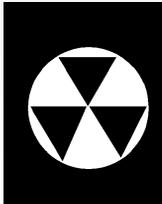
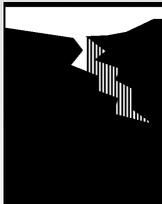
**Know what to do when the power is out**



**Be sure your water is safe to drink**

**Prevent the spread of germs**

**Learn about earthquakes, floods and more**





## **Protect Your Health During an Emergency**

Disasters such as earthquakes, floods or volcanic eruptions can cause a great deal of destruction and personal injury. These events can also damage power and water systems, leaving us without electricity or running water for many hours or days.

Without power, things we take for granted like heating our homes or cooking become much more difficult, and sometimes even dangerous. Many people die each year from carbon monoxide poisoning when they try to heat or cook in their homes with charcoal grills or gas powered devices.

Other emergencies, such as pandemic flu or disease outbreaks, also put people at risk and strain resources.

Planning ahead can help you get through any emergency, from natural disasters to disease outbreaks. The tips in this guide will help you and your family prepare.



DOH 821-076 June 2013

For persons with disabilities this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TTY/TDD 711).

This guide was developed by the Washington State Department of Health and made possible through funding from the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Portions of this guide were developed jointly with the Washington Military Department – Emergency Management Division.



## Make a Plan



Make sure all family members agree on an emergency plan, including where to meet and who to contact during an emergency. Give emergency information to caregivers.

### Things you can do now

- Choose a place for your family to meet after a disaster.
- Put together an emergency supply kit for your home and workplace. If your child's school or day care stores personal emergency kits, make one for your child to keep there.
- Know how to contact and pick up your children at their school or day care after a disaster. Let the school know if someone else is authorized to pick them up. Keep your children's emergency release cards up to date.
- 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 some cash available. If the power is out, ATMs 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.
- 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 or videotapes of your home and valuables in your safe deposit box.
- Make sure those in your home know all the possible ways to get out. Keep all exits clear.

### During an emergency or disaster

- Listen to your radio or television for official information and instructions.
- If ordered to evacuate, follow official directions to a safe place or temporary shelter. Take your emergency kit.
- Use the telephone for emergency calls only.



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## Choose Out-of-Area Contacts



Choose a person outside the immediate area for family members to contact if you get separated. The person should live far enough away so he or she won't be involved in the emergency.

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### Before disaster strikes

- Make cards with the contact person's name and phone number for all family members to carry in their wallets, purses or backpacks.
- Keep a phone that does not require electricity. Cordless phones use electricity—if the power is out, they will not work!
- Many communities have systems that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather, road closings or local emergencies. Sign up by visiting your local Office of Emergency Management website.

### Contact loved ones after disasters

- All household members should call the out-of-area contact. The contact person will collect information about each family member, where they are, and how to contact them.
- It may be difficult to make local calls because large numbers of people may be using the phone lines at the same time. However, you should be able to make long distance calls.
- You may be able to send text messages to your loved ones. Keep messages short.
- You should be able to use a pay phone if your home phone does not work. Pay phones are a priority to be restored to service. Tape coins for pay phone use to your out-of-area contact card.



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## Store Emergency Food, Water and Supplies



Be prepared to take care of yourself and those in your home for at least three days. For events such as a flu pandemic, you may need to prepare for a week or more.

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### Keep the following supplies at home

- Drinking water (one gallon per person per day)
- Dry or canned food 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, eyeglasses 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 and games
- Extra house keys and car keys
- List of contact names and phone numbers
- Food, water and supplies for pets

### More items that are useful during an emergency

#### Cooking supplies

- Barbecue and camp stove (never use these indoors!)
- Fuel for cooking, such as charcoal or camp stove fuel
- Plastic knives, forks, spoons
- Paper plates and cups
- Paper towels
- Heavy-duty aluminum foil

*continued*



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## Sanitation supplies

- Large plastic trash bags for trash and 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

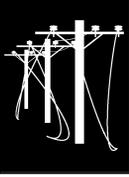
- Sturdy shoes
- Gloves for clearing debris
- Tent

## Tools

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



# Power Outages



Many disasters can include power outages that make it difficult to heat homes, store or cook food safely, and communicate. Here are some important things to know when the power goes off.

## Before a power outage

- Register life-sustaining and medical equipment with your utility company.
- Stock your disaster preparedness kit with light sticks, flashlights and a battery-powered radio with extra batteries.
- Have a corded telephone available—cordless phones will not work when the power is out.
- 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 a 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 a well.
- Candles can cause a fire. Use battery-operated flashlights or glow sticks for lighting.
- Stay away from downed power lines and sagging trees with broken limbs.
- **ONLY** use a generator outdoors and far from open windows and vents.
- **NEVER** cook or heat inside on a charcoal or gas grill.





## Beware of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning When Cooking and Heating



Hundreds of people die accidentally every year from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by appliances that are not used properly or that are malfunctioning. Learn how to protect yourself and your family.

**NEVER use a generator indoors, in garages or carports.**  
**NEVER cook or heat inside on a charcoal or gas grill.**

### What is carbon monoxide?

- Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that cannot be seen or smelled and can kill a person in minutes.
- Carbon monoxide is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal is burned.
- Carbon monoxide can build up so quickly that victims are overcome before they can get help.

**If inhaled, carbon monoxide** can cause chest pain, heart attacks in people with heart disease, or permanent brain damage.

### Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning

Headache	Weakness	Dizziness
Confusion	Fatigue	Nausea

### Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

- Never burn charcoal inside homes, tents, campers, vans, trucks, garages or mobile homes.
- Do not burn charcoal in your fireplace.
- Never use gasoline-powered equipment indoors.
- Never use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Never idle a car in a garage, even when the garage door is open.
- Never sleep in a room while using an unvented gas or kerosene heater.
- Make sure that chimneys and flues are in good condition and are not blocked.
- Carbon monoxide warning devices may help protect you, but should not replace other prevention steps.



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## **If you suspect someone has been poisoned by carbon monoxide**

- Move the person to fresh air immediately.
- Take the person to an emergency room and tell emergency room staff that you've brought a potential victim of carbon monoxide poisoning.

## **Use your generator safely**

- Never use a generator in your home, garage, carport or any enclosed or partially enclosed area. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide buildup in the home.
- Keep your generator away from your home's windows, doors and vents.
- Follow the directions supplied with the generator.
- If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air right away!
- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms in your home.
- Never plug the generator into a wall outlet—it's dangerous. Plug appliances into the generator using an outdoor extension cord.



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## Keep Food Safe When Power Is Out



When the power is out, your refrigerator, stove or microwave won't work. When food is not kept cold or is not fully cooked, bacteria can grow and make you sick. Be very careful with food such as meat, milk, eggs or seafood. Keep these foods cold and cook them to help prevent foodborne illness.

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### Use foods first that can spoil fast

Use meat, milk, eggs, fish or shellfish before you use foods that do not require refrigeration or cooking.

### Keep food cold

If the power outage is expected to last more than a day, it is most important to keep meat, seafood and dairy products cold.

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Freezers that are part of a refrigerator-freezer combination will keep food frozen for up to a day. A free-standing freezer will keep food frozen solid for two days if it is fully loaded. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for a day, especially if the food is grouped together.
- Buy an ice chest.
- Find out where you can buy ice blocks or dry ice to keep your freezer or refrigerator cold.
  - Never touch dry ice with bare hands. Never taste it or put it in your mouth.
  - Ventilate well before placing dry ice in freezer and don't inhale the gas vapors.
  - Don't place dry ice directly on food or glass shelves and don't use in an operating freezer.

### If you can't fit everything into the ice chest

In cold weather, items such as the following can be stored in a cardboard box in a garage or shed:

- Jams and jellies
- Ketchup, mustard, pickles, other condiments
- Butter and margarine
- Fresh uncut fruit and vegetables





## **Don't store food outside during winter**

Storing food outside during winter isn't recommended because outdoor temperatures change throughout the day. The sun may thaw frozen foods or warm cold foods so that they grow bacteria.

## **Know what food to keep and what to throw out**

If food is cold to the touch and you know it has not been above 45 degrees Fahrenheit for more than an hour or two, it is probably safe to keep, use or refreeze. Throw away all meat, seafood, dairy products or cooked foods that don't feel cold to the touch. Even when refrigerated, many raw foods should be kept only three or four days before they are cooked, frozen or thrown away.

**If in doubt, throw it out.** Never taste suspicious food. It may look and smell fine, but the bacteria that cause foodborne illness may have grown on the food and will make you sick.



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## Be Sure Your Water is Safe to Drink



The treatments described below work only to remove bacteria or viruses from water. If you suspect the water is unsafe because of chemicals, oils, poisonous substances, sewage or other contaminants, do not drink the water. Don't drink water that is dark colored, has an odor or contains solid materials.

### Storing water safely

The best source of drinking water during an emergency is water you have stored with your emergency supplies.

- Store one gallon of water per person per day—enough for at least three days.
- Store-bought, factory-sealed bottled water is best. Check for an expiration date and replace the supply as needed.
- If you choose to fill your own water containers:
  - Collect the water from a safe supply.
  - Store water in thoroughly washed plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums.
  - Add two drops of household bleach per gallon to maintain water quality while in storage.
  - Seal water containers tightly, label with date and store in a cool, dark place.
  - Replace water every six months.
  - Never reuse a container that held toxic substances such as pesticides, chemicals or oil.

### Purifying by boiling

If your tap water is unsafe, boiling is the best method to kill disease-causing organisms. If tap water is unavailable, the following may be considered as potential water sources. Water taken from these sources should be boiled before drinking:

- Rainwater
- Lakes
- Rivers and streams
- Natural springs
- Ponds

**CAUTION:** Many chemical pollutants will not be removed by boiling.





Cloudy water should be filtered before boiling. Filter cloudy water using coffee filters, paper towels, cheesecloth or a cotton plug in a funnel.

- Bring the water to a rolling boil for at least one full minute.
- Let the water cool before drinking.
- Add two drops of household bleach per gallon to maintain water quality while in storage.

### **Purifying by adding liquid chlorine bleach**

Boiling is the preferred method of treating water taken from lakes, rivers, ponds, rainwater and other surface water sources. If surface water or unsafe tap water is the only source of water available in an emergency and boiling is not possible, the next best alternative is to treat the water with chlorine bleach.

- Treat water by adding liquid household bleach such as Clorox® or Purex®.
- Household bleach is typically between 5.25 percent and 8.25 percent chlorine. Read the label.
- Avoid using bleach that contains perfumes, dyes or other additives. Be sure to read the label.
- Cloudy water should be filtered before adding bleach.
- Place the water in a clean container. Add the amount of bleach according to the table below.
- Mix thoroughly and let stand for at least 60 minutes before drinking.

### **Treating water with household bleach containing 5.25 – 8.25 percent chlorine**

<b>Volume of Water to be Treated</b>	<b>Bleach Solution to Add</b>
1 quart/1 liter .....	5 drops
1/2 gallon/2 quarts/2 liters.....	10 drops
1 gallon.....	1/4 teaspoon
5 gallons.....	1 teaspoon
10 gallons .....	2 teaspoons

**CAUTION:** Bleach will not kill some disease-causing organisms commonly found in surface water. Bleach will not remove chemical pollutants.





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## Places to Find Water in an Emergency



In an emergency, when tap water and bottled water are unavailable, you can find water in some unexpected places. Some of these places are listed below.

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### What are some alternative sources of water *inside* your home?

- Water can be drained from the drain spout of a water heater. Be sure the electricity and/or gas are off before opening the drain. Drain the water into a clean container.
- Water can be drained from the pipes inside your home. Open a faucet on the top floor of your home. Next, go to the faucet at the lowest point in your home. Open the faucet and drain out the water you need into a clean container.
- Water from your toilet storage or reserve tank can be used if no chemicals have been used in this tank. Do not use this water if you have added chemicals to your toilet.
- Water that has been placed in ice cube trays in the freezer can be used.

### What are some alternative sources of water *outside* your home?

- Rainwater
- Lakes
- Rivers and streams
- Natural springs
- Ponds

Water taken from these outside sources should be boiled before drinking. If boiling is not possible, the next best alternative is to treat the water with chlorine bleach. See the previous page “Be sure Your Water is Safe to Drink” for information about boiling or adding bleach to your water.



## Prevent the Spread of Germs



Conditions during emergencies often make it easier for germs and disease to spread. Here are some simple tips to help keep respiratory infections and many other contagious diseases from spreading at any time.

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 good health manners:

### 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.
- Use warm water and soap to wash your hands. If you don't have soap and water, use alcohol-based hand gel or disposable wipes.
- 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 or clinic staff 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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# What to Do During a Disaster



## Earthquake

- **If you are indoors**, Drop, Cover and Hold when you feel the earth shake. Get under a desk or table away from windows and objects like bookcases that could fall. Hold on to the desk or table. Stay until the shaking stops.
- **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** outside of a tall building, get into a building's doorway or lobby to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass or debris.



## Tsunami

- If you are near the shore, move to higher ground or inland as far as you can go immediately if:
  - You hear a siren.
  - You feel the earth shake.
  - The ocean recedes dramatically from the shoreline.
  - A tsunami warning is issued for your area.
- Follow established tsunami evacuation routes. If no higher ground is near, go to upper levels of reinforced buildings.
- A tsunami can cause a series of waves that arrive over several hours.



## Flood

- **Do not** try to walk or drive through flooded areas. Water can be deeper than it appears and water levels rise quickly. Moving water six inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Cars can be swept away in just two feet of water.
- 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.



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## What to Do During a Disaster continued



### Volcano

- Be prepared to stay indoors and avoid downwind areas if ashfall is predicted.
- Be prepared to evacuate when instructed by officials if ashfall is very heavy or mud and debris flows could reach your area.
- Avoid rivers and streams that could carry mud or debris.



### Disease outbreak or pandemic

- **To protect yourself and others, cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze, wash your hands often and don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- Stay home from work when you are sick. Know work policies about sick leave, absences, time off and telecommuting. Make a plan for taking care of your children if schools are closed.
- Be prepared to get by for a week or more with the food and supplies you have at home. Stores may not be open or may have limited supplies.



### Extreme cold weather

- Do not drive unnecessarily.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens rather than gloves. Wear a warm hat.
- Reduce the temperature in your home to conserve fuel. Heat only the areas of your home you are using. Close doors or curtains, or cover doors and windows with blankets.



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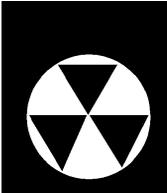


## What to Do During a Disaster continued



### Extreme hot weather

- Stay indoors and in an air-conditioned area as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids but avoid beverages that contain alcohol, caffeine or a lot of sugar.
- Cover windows that receive direct sunlight.
- If it is too hot to remain in your home, your local government may provide emergency cooling shelters. Listen to radio and television or read the newspaper to find out where they are located.



### Radiation release

- Stay inside your home or office unless otherwise instructed by authorities. Close the windows, turn off the heating or air conditioning and stay near the center of the building. By staying inside, you will reduce any potential exposure to airborne radioactive material. Go to the basement if one is available.
- If told to evacuate, do so promptly. Take items you will need for an extended absence. Take prescription medicines, clothing, food, water and money. Experts will recommend the best ways to safely leave the area.
- Avoid drinking fresh milk or eating fruits and vegetables grown in the affected area. Wait until the Department of Health declares food and water safe to consume. Food stored in cans or bags is safe to eat. Fresh food harvested before the radiation release and stored inside is safe. Thoroughly rinse off containers before opening.
- If you suspect you are contaminated, carefully remove your outer layer of clothing and put it in a plastic bag. Take a warm shower. Use soap and shampoo to wash off any radioactive materials. Place the sealed plastic bag in a room away from people.



## Resources on the Web

### Washington State Department of Health

Over 50 fact sheets and other resources devoted to emergency preparedness: [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)

### Washington State Emergency Management Division

Emergency preparedness information for schools, businesses and individuals, including how-to videos: [www.emd.wa.gov](http://www.emd.wa.gov)

### Ready.gov

Personal, community and business preparedness information featuring an online tool you can use to create a preparedness plan: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)



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# P R I N T I N G   S P E C I F I C A T I O N S

**Title:**    **Prepare – Home Emergency Guide**

**Size:**    11 x 8.5" flat (20 pages self-cover)

**Paper stock:**    70# text, white, smooth

**Ink color:**    PMS 287

**Special instructions:**    2-sided printing. Saddle-stitch. Finished booklet folds to 5.5 x 8.5

**DOH Pub #:**    821-076