

# **Family EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS Guide**

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Department of Local Affairs  
Division of Local

**COLORADO Office of EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

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## **EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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Fire Department \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance \_\_\_\_\_

Police \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Red Cross \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Management \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Company \_\_\_\_\_

Electric Service Company \_\_\_\_\_

Water Service Company \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Service \_\_\_\_\_

Relatives \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

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## Introduction

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Cities and counties in all parts of Colorado, with the assistance of the federal and state government, have developed and are continuing to develop comprehensive emergency preparedness programs to reduce loss of life and protect property from disasters. Many lives are being saved by these programs. People are being warned of impending emergencies/disasters, evacuated from danger areas, treated for injury, and helped to resume their normal lives after disaster strikes.

The primary purpose of this guide is to save lives, reduce injuries, and protect property. It is designed to present information and guidance on action to take to enhance survival in the event of natural and human caused disasters.

You can give yourself and your family a much better chance of surviving and recovering from major disasters if you will take time now to:

- Understand the dangers you would face in an emergency.
- Make your own preparations.
- Learn what actions you should take at the time of the emergency.

This guide discusses preparation and emergency actions that will help people cope with major natural disasters. It also provides information on emergency care for the sick and injured.

## Warnings

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**M**any communities have siren systems. The standard signal that has been adopted nation-wide, is the **Attention or Alert Signal**. This is used to get the attention of citizens in times of threatened or impending natural disasters such as a tornado, flood, or other emergency. The signal itself is a 3-5 minute **STEADY BLAST** on the sirens. The Attention or Alert Signal means to turn on your radio or television for important information concerning a disaster. If regular programming is continuing, the signal is most likely a test of the siren system.

**What to Do When The Signal Sounds.** If you hear the Attention or Alert Signal, turn on the radio or TV, tune to any local station, and follow the official instructions being broadcast.

**Don't Use The Telephone.** Don't use the telephone to obtain further information or advice about the emergency. Depend on the radio or television set, since the government agencies will be broadcasting all available information. The telephone lines will be needed for official calls and must be kept open.

**Warning Methods.** There are several different ways to notify the citizens during times of threatened or impending emergencies or disasters such as a tornado, flood or other hazard. These include, but are not limited to:

- NOAA Weather Radios - tone-activated radios which provide an alert tone

- Emergency Alert System - the emergency system utilized by radio and television stations to alert citizens of impending danger. This utilizes a brief tone followed by an emergency message on the radio or a crawler which includes a tone on television.
- Cable audio override system provides an audible message over all television cable stations giving emergency information.
- Computer ring-down system utilizes a computer programmed to call and/or page both citizens and emergency responders with an emergency message.
- Emergency response personnel in the field may notify the public by either doing door-to-door with an emergency message or utilizing a PA system on automobiles.
- In some areas colored flags are used as a means of notification - green indicates that everything is clear; yellow indicates a watch and red indicates a warning. Citizens are educated to what each flag signifies and when they observe either a yellow or red flag, they are to turn on their radios for specific information.

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office**

## National Weather Service Information

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**Y**ou can obtain the most comprehensive weather information by listening to a NOAA Weather Radio. NOAA stands for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Weather Radio is operated by National Weather Service offices across the country and broadcasts frequently updated recordings containing current weather conditions, local forecasts, recreational and climatological data. During threatening weather, live broadcasts are made of warnings for high winds, large hail, tornadoes, flash floods and winter storms. Specially built receivers can be set to audibly warn when one of these weather warnings is broadcast. You can purchase a tone-alert NOAA Weather Radio at many electronic stores.

### NOAA Weather Radio Stations in and near Colorado

Alamosa	162.475 MHz	Pueblo	162.400 MHz
Colorado Springs	162.475 MHz	Sterling	162.400 MHz
Denver	162.550 MHz	Cheyenne, Wy.	162.475 MHz
Fort Collins	162.450 MHz	Goodland/Colby, KS	162.475 MHz
Grand Junction	162.550 MHz	Bethune, Co.	162.525 MHz
Greeley	162.400 MHz	La Junta	162.500 MHz
Longmont	162.475 MHz	Glenwood Springs	162.500 MHz

## General Guidance

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**T**here are certain things you can do that will help you prepare for and cope with almost any type of emergency.

The most basic thing to remember is to **KEEP CALM**. This may mean the difference between life and death. In many disasters, people have been killed or injured needlessly because they took thoughtless actions.

In time of emergency, taking proper action may save your life. **TAKE TIME TO THINK**, and then take the considered action that the situation calls for. Usually, this will be the action you have planned in advance, or the action you are instructed to take by responsible authorities.

### What to do When There is an Emergency Alert.

If you hear an emergency notification message, listen to the radio for further emergency information and follow the official instructions being broadcast.

### If You Have to Evacuate...

Listen to a battery-powered radio for further information and location of emergency shelters. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes. Take your disaster supplies kit. Lock your home. Use travel routes specified by local officials.

**If you are sure you have time...** shut off water, gas and electricity, if instructed to do so. Let others know when you left and where you are going. Make arrangements for pets. Animals may not be allowed in public shelters.

## **Major Natural Disasters**

**D**isasters and emergencies can sometimes develop quickly. Dam failures, flash floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes, for example, can strike with little or no advance warning.

Other types of disasters and emergencies are preceded by a build-up period that provides more time for taking effective protective measures. For example, winter storms can be tracked for days, and people in affected areas can be notified well in advance. Severe thunderstorms may be tracked for hours. On larger rivers, floods can be predicted to provide considerable warning time for people in the danger area. Even in cases of tornadoes, the forecast of weather conditions may permit some warning of possible disaster.

Some of these disasters or emergencies are more likely to occur in certain parts of the country. For example, hurricanes are more common along the Gulf and Atlantic Coast States, and tornadoes are more frequent in midwestern and southern states. Yet, no area is entirely free from possible disasters of one type or another.

This section is intended to help you prepare for those disasters that may occur in this area and to tell you the proper actions to take if they do occur.

For additional information contact:  
**Your local Emergency Management Office  
or American Red Cross**

## **After a Natural Disaster...**

**Use Extreme Caution in Entering or Working in Buildings** that may have been damaged or weakened by the disaster, as they may collapse without warning. Also, there may be gas leaks or electrical short circuits.

**Don't Take Lanterns, Torches, or Lighted Cigarettes** into buildings that have been flooded or otherwise damaged, since there may be leaking gas lines or flammable material present.

**Stay Away From Fallen or Damaged Electrical Wires** which may still be dangerous. (Consider **ALL** wires to be dangerous, including telephone wires.)

**Check For Leaking Gas Pipelines in Your Home.** Do this by smell only - don't use matches or candles. If you smell gas, (1) Leave the house immediately and leave the front door open, (2) Notify the gas company or call 911 from another building, (3) **DO NOT** reenter the house until you are told it is safe to do so.

**If Any of Your Electrical Appliances Are Wet,** first turn off the main power switch. (Caution: Don't do any of these things while you are wet or standing in water.) If fuses blow when the electric power is restored, turn off the main power switch again and then inspect for short circuits in your home wiring, appliances, and equipment.

**Check Your Food And Water Supplies Before Use.** Foods that require refrigeration may be spoiled if electric power has been off for some time. Also, don't eat food that has come in contact with flood waters. Be sure to follow the instructions of local authorities concerning use of food and water supplies.

**Stay Away from Disaster Areas.** Sightseeing will interfere with first aid or rescue work and may be dangerous.

**Don't Drive Unless Necessary** and drive with caution. Watch for hazards to yourself and others and report them to local authorities.

**Notify Your Relatives** after the emergency so they will know you are safe. However, keep calls brief so as not to tie up the lines.

**Do Not Pass on Rumors** or exaggerated report of damage.

**Follow the Advice and Instructions of Local Government** on ways to help yourself and your community recover from the emergency.

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office  
or American Red Cross**

## **Floods**

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**T**he local National Weather Service Offices, along with Regional Weather Service River Forecast Centers, issue **FLOOD FORECASTS AND WARNINGS** when rainfall is enough to cause rivers to overflow their banks or when melting snow combines with rainfall to produce flooding.



**Flood Warnings** are forecasts of impending floods and are given to you by radio, television, and local government through the Office of Emergency Management and by the National Weather Service. The warning message tells the expected severity of flooding (minor, moderate or major), the affected river or stream, and when and where the flooding will begin. Careful preparation and prompt response will assure personal safety and reduce property loss.

### **Before the Flood...**

**When Moving to a New Area**, check with the local flood plain manager to see if you are in an area susceptible to flooding.

- Keep a stock of food which requires little cooking and no refrigeration. Regular gas and electric service may be disrupted.
  
- Keep a portable radio, batteries, emergency cooking equipment, and flashlights in working order with additional batteries.

## **Family Emergency Preparedness Guide**

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- Keep first aid supplies and any medicines needed by members of your family on hand.
- Keep your automobile fueled. If electric power is cut off, gasoline stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.
- If you live in an area subject to flooding, keep materials like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber handy for emergency levee construction.
- Store drinking water in closed, clean containers. Water service may be interrupted.
- If flooding is likely and time permits, move essential items and furniture to upper floors of your house. Disconnect any electrical appliances that can't be moved - but don't touch them if you are wet or standing in water.

## **Evacuation**

If you are warned to evacuate your home and move to another location temporarily, there are certain things to remember to do. Here are the most important ones:

**Follow the Instructions and Advice of Your Local Government.** If you are told to evacuate, do so promptly. If you are instructed to go to a certain location, go there - **DON'T** go anywhere else. If certain travel routes are specified or recommended, use those routes rather than trying to find short cuts of your own.

If you are advised to shut off your water, gas, or electric service before leaving home, do so. Also, find out on the radio where emergency housing and mass feeding stations are located, in case you need to use them.

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**Secure Your Home Before Leaving.** If you have time and you have not received other instructions from your local government, you should take the following actions before leaving your home:

- Bring outside possessions inside or tie them down securely. This includes outdoor furniture, garbage cans, garden tools, signs, and other movable objects that might be blown or washed away.
- Lock house doors and windows. Park your car in the garage or driveway, close the windows and lock it (unless you are driving to your new temporary location).

## **After the Flood...**

- Do not use fresh food that has come into contact with flood waters.
- Drink only water that has not been contaminated.
- Do not visit the disaster area. Your presence will only hamper rescue and other emergency operations.
- Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before use.
- Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights, not oil or gas lanterns or torches to examine buildings. Flammable materials may be present.
- Report broken utility lines to the utility company or 911-dispatch center.

- Keep tuned to your radio or television station for advice and instructions from local government on where to obtain medical care, where to get assistance for such necessities as housing, clothing, and food, and how to help yourself and the community to recover.

### **Special Advice on Flash Floods**

In many areas, unusually heavy rains or dam failure may cause quick or "flash" floods. Small creeks, gullies, dry stream beds, ravines, culverts, or even low-lying ground frequently flood quickly and endanger people, sometimes before any warning can be given. Examples: Rapid City, 1972; Big Thompson Canyon, 1976, Fort Collins, 1997; Manitou Springs and La Junta, 1999. Dam Failure: Lawn Lake Dam (Estes Park), 1982.

National Weather Service offices issue three types of flash flood products: **a Flash Flood Watch, Flash Flood Warnings, and a Small Stream and Urban Flood Advisory.**

**A Flash Flood Watch** means that heavy rains occurring or expected to occur may soon cause flash flooding in certain areas. Citizens should be alert to the possibility of a flood emergency, which will require immediate action.

**A Flash Flood Warning** means that flash flooding is occurring or imminent on certain streams or designated areas. Those in the warning area should respond immediately.

**A Small Stream and Urban Flood Advisory** is issued when minor flooding is occurring or expected.

In periods of heavy rains, be aware of the hazard of flash floods and be prepared to protect yourself against them. If you see any possibility of a flash flood occurring where you are, move immediately to a safer location (don't wait for instructions to move). Notify your local authorities of the danger so other people can be warned, especially during periods of heavy rainfall or thunderstorms. **For additional information, contact your local Emergency Management Office.**

### **During Periods of Heavy Rainfall or Thunderstorms...**

- Stay Away from Natural Stream Beds**, gullies, and other drainage channels during and after rainstorms. Water runs off the higher elevations very rapidly, causing the natural drainage system to overflow with rushing flood waters and their cargo of rocks, mud, trees and other debris.
- Campers Note:** Use your map. Know where you are, and whether you are on low ground, or below a dam. Remember that you don't have to be at the bottom of a hill to be a target for the dangers of flash flooding.
- Know Where the High Ground is** and how to get there in a hurry. Remember, many roads and trails parallel existing drainage patterns, and may be swept away by flood waters.



- Never Attempt to Outrun a Flood in Your Vehicle.**  
Abandon the vehicle and climb to safety. If you are in a canyon, attempt to reach high ground by climbing directly up the canyon sides.
  
- Abandon Stalled Vehicles in Flooded Areas** if you can do so safely. Flood waters may rise and sweep the vehicle and occupants away. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to either outrun a flood or to move a stalled vehicle.
  
- Never Try to Drive Through Flooded Areas.**  
Remember that it only takes 18 to 24 inches of moving water to move an auto. If an area is flooded, take an alternate route to reach your destination. The depth of the flood waters will be unknown, the road may be undermined and a current may exist which could sweep your vehicle away. Many deaths have occurred by people trying to drive through flooded areas.

For additional information on tornadoes, contact  
**Your local Office of Emergency Management  
or local National Weather Service Office.**

## **Tornadoes**

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**A** tornado is a violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground capable of producing tremendous damage. It appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, which extends to the ground from the base of a thunderstorm. A tornado spins like a top and may sound like the roaring of an airplane or locomotive. These short-lived storms are the most violent of all atmospheric phenomena, and over a small area, the most destructive.



**As a General Rule**, tornadoes move in an easterly direction, but they can move any direction.

**When a Tornado Watch Is Announced**, this means that tornadoes may be possible in or near the "watch" area. Keep your radio or television set tuned to a local station for information and advice from your local government and the National Weather Service.

### **When a Tornado Warning Is Issued, Take Shelter Immediately.**

The warning means that a tomado has actually been sighted, or has been indicated by radar. You must take action to protect yourself from the tornado and the debris caused by the tornado. Your best protection is an underground shelter or a substantial steel-framed or reinforced concrete building.

**If You Are at Home**, go to your basement if you have one. Take cover under the basement stairs or under a sturdy workbench or table. If your home has no basement, take cover in the center part of the house, on the lowest floor in small rooms such as a closet or bathroom, or under sturdy furniture. Stay away from windows to avoid flying debris.

**Do Not Remain in a Trailer or Mobile Home If a Tornado Is Approaching. Take Cover Somewhere Else.**

**If You Are at Work** in a building, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor, or to a designated shelter area. **Stay Away from Windows.**

**If You Are at School**, follow the instructions of school authorities. The designated shelter is usually the interior hallway on the lowest floor. **STAY OUT** of structures with wide, free-span roofs, such as auditoriums and gymnasiums.

**Outside in Open Country**, if you are driving, get out of your car. Take cover and lie flat in the nearest depression, such as a ditch but beware of the possibility of rising water. You can also take cover under highway overpasses, but beware of the possibility of rising water. If you are walking or working outside, follow the same instructions.

For additional information, contact  
**Your Local National Weather Service or  
Office of Emergency Management**

## **Lightning**

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### **Lightning Safety**

**A**ll Thunderstorms Produce Lightning. Many People Ignore the Dangers of Lightning.



#### **Consider These Facts:**

- Most people struck by lightning are not in the rain. Lightning can strike 5 to 10 miles in advance of the storm.
  
- You can tell how far away the lightning is, by using the Flash-to-Bang method. When you see lightning, count how many seconds until you hear thunder. If the time is 5 seconds, the lightning was one mile away; if it is 10 seconds, the lightning was two miles away. Seek shelter if the lightning moves to within 4 miles of your location.

#### **Protect Yourself and Everyone in Your Group**

When a thunderstorm threatens, get inside a home or large building, or inside an all-metal (not convertible) vehicle.

Set up safety procedures for outdoor operating events such as youth soccer and little league.

Inside a home, avoid using the telephone except for emergencies and unplug unnecessary appliances before the thunderstorm approaches.

If outside with no time to reach a safe building or an automobile, follow these rules:

- Do not stand underneath a natural lightning rod such as a tall isolated tree in an open area.
- In open areas, do not be the tallest object as you would be if you were standing on a hilltop, in an open field, on the beach, or fishing from a small boat.
- Get out of and away from open water.
- Get away from tractors and other metal farm equipment.
- Get off of and away from motorcycles, scooters, golf carts and bicycles. Put down golf clubs, bags or metal framed backpacks.
- Stay away from wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes, rails, downed power lines and other metallic paths which could carry the electrical current to you from some distance away.
- Avoid standing in small isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
- In a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of trees. In open areas, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.
- If you are in a level field or prairie in an active thunderstorm and cannot get to shelter **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND**. Minimize your risk to lightning by dropping to a crouching position with your feet on the ground and close together.

### **First Aid for a Lightning Victim**

**CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.** If the victim is not breathing and/or has no pulse, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) should be administered by a person with proper training.

Many people apparently "killed" by lightning can be revived if quick action is taken. When a group is affected, those not breathing should be treated first.

Medical attention also should be given to victims who appear only temporarily stunned or otherwise unhurt, since there may be hidden effects.

For more information on lightning, contact  
**Your local Office of Emergency Management  
or the National Weather Service Office**

## Winter Storms

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**H**ere is advice that will help protect you and your family against the hazards of winter storms/blizzards, heavy snows, ice storms, freezing rain and/or sleet.



### Keep Posted on Weather Conditions.

Use your radio, television, and newspapers to keep informed of current weather conditions and forecasts in your area. Even with a few hours warning you may be able to avoid being caught in it, or at least be better prepared to cope with it. You should also understand the terms commonly used in weather forecasts:

- A Blizzard** is the most dangerous of all winter storms. It combines cold air, heavy snow, and strong winds. These strong winds will cause considerable blowing snow, which may reduce visibility to only a few yards. A Blizzard Warning is issued when the National Weather Service expects considerable snow, temperatures below freezing, and winds of 35 miles per hour or more.
  
- A Winter Storm Warning** for the lower elevations of Colorado usually means an expected snowfall of 6 inches or more in a 12 -hour period, or 8 inches or more in a 24- hour period. A Heavy Snow Warning or Winter Storm Warning for the MOUNTAINS means an expected snowfall of 8 inches or more in a 12-hour period.

- Freezing Rain or Freezing Drizzle** occurs when rain is likely to freeze on the ground, depositing a coating of ice or glaze on roads and everything that is exposed. If a substantial layer of ice is expected to accumulate from the freezing rain, a Winter Storm Warning is issued addressing the problems expected to be caused by the accumulation of ice.

### **Be Prepared for Isolation at Home in a Winter Storm**

- Stock an emergency supply of food and water, as well as emergency cooking equipment such as a camp stove. Some of this food should be of the type that does not require refrigeration or cooking.
  
- Make sure you have a battery-operated radio and extra batteries on hand so that if your electric power is cut off you can still hear weather forecasts, information, and advice broadcast by local authorities. Also, flashlights and lanterns will be needed. Portable propane-type heaters could prove valuable in these types of situations, but use with proper precautions.
  
- Keep on hand the simple tools and equipment needed to fight a fire. Also, be certain that all family members know how to take precautions that would prevent fire at such a time, when the help of the fire department might not be available immediately.

### **In a Winter Storm, Travel Only If Necessary.**

Avoid all unnecessary trips. If you must travel, use public transportation if possible. However, if you are forced to use your automobile for a trip of any distance, take these precautions:

**Dress for the Season.** If you spend a lot of time outdoors, wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than a single layer of thick clothing. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Use a stocking cap to protect your head and a facemask that covers your mouth to protect your lungs from extremely cold air.

- Make sure your car is in good condition, properly serviced, and equipped with chains or snow tires.
- Take another person with you if possible.
- Make sure someone knows where you are going, your approximate schedule, and your estimated time of arrival at your destination.
- If you see downed power lines - **KEEP AWAY.**
- It is recommended that you have a full tank of gasoline in your vehicle, along with emergency winter storm supplies, such as a container of sand, shovel, windshield scraper, tow chain or rope, and flashlight. It is also good to have heavy gloves or mittens, overshoes; extra woolen socks, winter headgear to cover your head and face; battery-operated radio and food.
- Travel by daylight and use major highways if you can. Keep the vehicle radio tuned for weather information and advice.

- Drive with caution. Don't try to save time by traveling faster than weather conditions permit. Stay off closed roads.
- Don't be daring or foolhardy. Stop, turn back, or seek help if conditions exist that may test your ability or endurance, rather than risk being stalled, lost, or isolated. Don't risk becoming stranded in a **BLIZZARD.**

**Keep Calm If You Get in Trouble.** If your vehicle breaks down during a storm or if you become stalled or lost, don't panic. Think the problem through, decide what's the safest thing to do, and do it slowly and carefully. If you are on a well-traveled road, show a trouble (flasher) signal. Set your directional lights to flashing, raise the hood of your vehicle, or hang a cloth from the radio antenna or vehicle window. Then stay in your vehicle and wait for help to arrive. If you run the engine to keep warm, remember to open a window enough to provide ventilation and make sure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow to protect you from carbon monoxide poisoning. Run your engine for only brief intervals. Keep a dome light on; you can help keep yourself warm by performing simple exercises while sitting in your automobile.

Wherever you are, if there is no house or other source of help in sight, do not leave your vehicle to search for assistance as you may become confused and get lost.

**Avoid Overexertion.** Every winter many unnecessary deaths occur because people - especially the elderly, but younger ones as well - engage in more strenuous physical activity than their bodies can stand. Cold itself, **WITHOUT** any physical exertion, puts an extra strain on your heart.

If you add to this physical exertion, especially exercise that you are not accustomed to -- such as shoveling snow, pushing an automobile, or even walking fast or far -- you are risking a heart attack, a stroke, or damage to your body. In winter weather, and especially in winter storms, be aware of this danger and avoid overexertion.

**Hypothermia.** Hypothermia can occur in an exposure to severely cold weather. Symptoms can range from frost bite, a white or waxy appearance of the skin with pain or numbness, to severe hypothermia, where the victim may have an altered level of consciousness, slurred speech, staggering gait, or breathing problems. If this occurs, remove the person from the cold. Remove wet clothing and replace with dry clothing or a blanket. Warm the patient gradually with blankets or chemical warming packs. Do **NOT** rub the body. Treat gently. Rough or excessive handling could cause the condition to worsen. Do **NOT** give coffee or alcohol. Warm fluids can be given **after** re-warming has taken place.

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office  
or American Red Cross.**

## **Earthquakes**

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**E**arthquakes are caused by underground volcanic forces or by breaking and shifting of rock beneath the surface. This causes ground shaking that affects people and buildings. Although considerable progress has been made toward developing the science of earthquake prediction, techniques for making precise predictions of earthquakes do not yet exist. Therefore, family preparedness before an earthquake, knowing what to do when earthquake strikes, and planning what you will do after an earthquake will contribute to saving lives, reducing injuries, and minimizing damage.



The actual earth movement of an earthquake, disconcerting as it is, seldom is a direct cause of death or injury. The earth movement, however, can cause buildings and other structures to shake or collapse. Most casualties result from building damage and falling objects and debris, splintering glass, and fires.

### **Before an Earthquake...**

- Conduct a review of possible structural or non-structural hazards in your home and undertake actions to lessen injuries and damages.
- Store water and non-perishable food ahead of time and in a safe place.
- Be sure to have flashlights and extra batteries stored and easily accessible.

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- Establish evacuation and communication plans for your family at home, school, or work when the earthquake strikes.
- Establish an emergency contact person outside your state as a means of being able to reunite your family.
- Become familiar with those persons in your immediate neighborhood who may have special needs, are physically challenged, have hearing or vision impairments so that you may notify them of impending disaster or offer assistance in the aftermath.

### **During an Earthquake...**

- Keep calm. Don't run or panic. If you take proper precautions, the chances of you being injured may be reduced.
- Stay where you are. If outdoors, stay outdoors and move away from buildings and utility wires. If indoors, stay indoors and seek cover. Most injuries occur as people are entering or leaving buildings.
- If the earthquake occurs when you are indoors, take cover under a desk, table, bench, or against inside walls or doorways. Stay away from glass, windows, and outside doors.
- DO NOT use candles, matches, or other open flames either during or after a tremor. Use flashlights. Douse all fires.

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- Don't run through or near buildings. The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside doorways and close to outer walls.
- If you are in a moving vehicle, stop as quickly as safety permits, but stay in the vehicle. A vehicle may jiggle on its springs during an earthquake, but it is a good place to stay until the shaking stops. When you drive, watch for hazards created by the earthquake, such as fallen or falling objects, downed electric or telephone wires, or broken or undermined roadways.

### **After an Earthquake...**

- Check for injuries. Don't attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of future injury.
- Check utility lines and appliances for damage. If electric wiring is shorting out, shut off the current at the main meter box.
- If water pipes are damaged shut off the supply at the main valve. Emergency water may be obtained from such sources as hot water heaters, toilet tanks, and melted ice cubes. However, storing emergency supplies of water beforehand is suggested.
- Check to see that sewage lines are intact before permitting continued flushing of toilets.
- Check chimneys for cracks and damage. Unnoticed damage could lead to a fire. The initial check should be made from a distance. Approach chimneys with great caution.

- Stay out of severely damaged buildings. Aftershocks can shake buildings down and cause death or injury.
- Do not heed or spread rumors. They often do great harm following disasters. Stay off the telephone, except to report an emergency. Turn on your radio or television to get the latest emergency information.
- Don't go sightseeing. Respond to requests for assistance from police, fire fighting and relief organizations, but do not go into damaged areas unless your assistance has been requested. Cooperate fully with authorities.
- Be prepared for additional earthquake aftershocks.
- Earthquakes pose a special threat to those who live downstream of dams. A severe tremor could result in dam collapse and flooding.
- Assist your neighbors in need if you can do so without jeopardizing your own safety.

For more information on earthquakes, contact

**The Colorado Earthquake Hazard  
Reduction Program  
(CEHRP)**

Dept. of Earth Resources, Natural Resources Building  
Colorado State University  
Ft. Collins, CO 80523  
1-800-842-9414

## **Fire Hazards**

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**N**ormal fire prevention rules are of special importance in an emergency. To keep fires from starting: Don't let "junk" accumulate. Clean out attics, basements, closets and garages frequently.



**Check Electrical Wiring and Appliances.** Replace worn or frayed cords. Don't operate too many appliances on one circuit. Don't string extension wires all over the house, and never under rugs. Use irons and other heating appliances with caution.

**Store Explosive or Flammable Materials Carefully Outside.** Never use gasoline, benzine, naphtha, and similar fluids indoors or near flame: they will ignite readily from any kind of a spark. Rags soaked with oil or turpentine sometimes catch fire by themselves (this is called spontaneous ignition), and therefore should never be left lying around.

**Check Heating Devices.** Many home fires are started by faulty furnaces and stoves, cracked or rusted furnace pipes, and sooty chimneys.

**Don't Place Papers or Magazines on Radiators** or near stoves or fireplaces. Don't allow lampshades to touch electric bulbs.



**Be prepared before a fire occurs in your home by developing a safe route for your family and conducting regular fire drills.**

**First**, decide upon two different exit paths. If the first exit you try is blocked by fire and smoke, you are more likely to remember to try the other exit if you've already planned two ways of escape.

**Second**, select a specific place outside where everyone will meet. Firefighters need to know who is safe and who may not be. If your family meets in one place, you can quickly tell firefighters if anyone is missing.

### **Fire Safety**

Having regular **fire drills** can help teach your family to remember what to do in case of a fire. Follow these steps during a fire and in case of a fire:

1. Stay low. Don't stand up. If you are in bed, roll out and crawl low on the floor under the smoke.
2. Crawl to the door, using the wall as a guide. Check the door for heat with the back of your hand before opening.
3. If a door is cool when you touch it, open it only a crack so it can be shut quickly if there are flames or smoke on the other side.
4. If the door is hot or smoke is seeping underneath, **Do Not Open the Door**. Push a blanket, towel, robe or other heavy clothing in the crack.

5. Using the wall as a guide, crawl to a window and open it. Take a sheet or any large piece of fabric, wave it out the window and shout for help. Or, if the window is low to the ground, climb out of it.
6. When you escape a burning building, **Never** return for something you forgot or to look for other people or a pet. Go to the meeting place and stay there. Let a firefighter know immediately if anyone is missing.
7. If firefighters are not at the fire scene yet, call or tell someone to call 911. **Do Not** call from within your house. **Escape First**.

### **Remember:**

- Your job is to escape.
- Stay as low as possible.
- Take short breaths to avoid breathing in fumes and smoke.
- Do not move toward smoke or fire.
- Signal others in the house by pounding on the walls, floor and door. Shout, "**Fire**," but do this once you are outside the heavy smoke.

Besides planning an escape route and conducting fire drills, having smoke detectors in your home can save lives, too.

**Smoke detectors** can warn you that there is a fire. However, it is important to keep fire detectors in proper working order. Check and replace batteries every nine (9) to twelve (12) months. A good way to remember this might be by changing the batteries every daylight savings time change. Some units will generate a beeping sound to indicate when the batteries need to be replaced.

Make sure to clean your smoke detector at least once a year because dust can damage the unit. Also, test the detector periodically by pushing the test button. This should be done at least once every month. The National Bureau of Standards test shows untested detectors loses about half of their dependability after 10-year period.

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office.**

## Wildfire

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**W**ildfires occur as a result of lightning or man-made causes such as discarded cigarettes and campfires. A fire in your home may spread to the forest. Homes in or near forested areas are classified as being in the “Urban Interface”.



When you build or buy a home in one of the Urban Interface areas, you have accepted the fact that these areas may have poor access, native vegetation, steep slopes, and poor or no fire fighting water supplies.

In order to attempt to prevent a tragedy, you need to be aware of wildfire hazards and what to do when a wildfire occurs in your area.

### **Before a Fire...**

**When moving to a new area**, check with your local Fire Department to determine the wildfire hazard in your area, and what can be done to reduce the hazard.

- Obtain guidelines to create a “defensible space” around your home and make other improvements to increase the chances that it can survive a wildfire.
  
- Defensible space includes:
  - Reducing the hazard area of at least 30 ft. from the home by:
    - ▶ Reducing density of surrounding forest.
    - ▶ Trimming branches.
    - ▶ Thinning tree and brush cover.
    - ▶ Removing dead limbs and other litter.
    - ▶ Maintaining an irrigated greenbelt.
    - ▶ Mowing dry grasses and weeds.
    - ▶ Cleaning your roof and gutters.
    - ▶ Pruning branches to 10 ft. above the ground.
  
- Other improvements include improving driveway access and water supplies, having a fire resistive roof, enclosing overhanging eaves and decks, spark arresters on chimney, etc.

### **Develop a Fire Plan**

- Create an evacuation plan that includes all family members and animals.
- Know where your escape routes are located.
- Know where you can find a safety zone in the event it's too late to evacuate. Safety zones may be large areas where little or no vegetation or other fuels exist.
- Prearrange normal and alternate ways to stay in touch with family members who are not at home. Let relatives or friends know your fire plan and check in as soon as you are able.

### **Provide Equipment**

- Preconnect hoses to faucets.
- Provide a ladder long enough to reach the roof easily.
- Have one or more 5-pound multi-purpose extinguishers readily available.
- Have protective clothing available for anyone who is unable to evacuate before the first help arrives. This includes cotton long-sleeved shirt or jacket and trousers; leather boots; gloves; helmet or other head covering; goggles; and a handkerchief to provide minimum protection for the lungs.

### **Before the Fire Approaches Your House**

- Call 911; don't assume that someone else has already called. Describe the location of the fire, speak slowly, and answer any questions asked by the dispatcher.
- Locate valuables that you will take with you if asked to evacuate your home.
- Clear items that will burn from around the house. Move them outside of your defensible space.
- Close all windows, doors, vents, shutters, blinds, or heavy non-combustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat.
- Shut off any natural gas or propane tanks at the source.
- Back your car into the driveway and roll up the windows.
- Place valuable papers, mementoes and anything "you can't live without" into your car.

### **Evacuation**

- If asked to evacuate by fire or law enforcement personnel, or if you should decide to evacuate:
  - Turn outside lights on, and leave a light on in every room.
  - Leave all outside doors **unlocked** to allow firefighters to enter to fight a fire inside your home.
  - Open barn doors, fences, and other enclosed areas to let large animals escape as necessary.

- Leave the house as soon as possible, follow directions given by firefighters or law enforcement personnel. If you are told to go to a certain area, go there; **don't go anywhere else.**
- If you are trapped at home, stay calm. As the fire front approaches, go into your home. If your home catches fire, evacuate.

### **Survival in Your Vehicle**

- Roll up all windows and close air vents to prevent smoke from entering your vehicle.
- Turn lights on and drive slowly looking for other vehicles.
- Do not drive through heavy smoke or fire.
- If you are caught in fire, get on the floor and cover up with a blanket or coat. Do not leave your vehicle until the fire passes. Some smoke or sparks may enter vehicle, and air currents may rock the car. Gas tanks rarely explode.

### **After the Fire...**

- Do not return to your home unless advised by firefighters or law enforcement personnel.
- Check your home for any hot spots or small fires.
- Report any broken utilities to your utility company.

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office.**

## **Emergency Care & First Aid**

**D**uring any major disaster, emergency personnel may not be able to reach injured or sick persons for a considerable period of time. People will have to help each other during the emergency, and will have to depend on their knowledge of first aid and emergency care.

Both adults and teenagers can acquire these valuable skills by taking a First Aid Course offered by the American Red Cross. These courses are given at various locations throughout the state. Call 1-800-417-0495.

### **In medical emergency situations:**

- Assess the situation.
- Immediately notify the appropriate agency.

Call 911 (or the appropriate number in your community). **Give the following information:**

- Nature of the emergency
- Exact location and cross street
- Your name
- Telephone number from which you are calling

Most 911 operators can and will give instructions on emergency first aid until help arrives.

*Remain on the line. Do not hang up before the operator tells you to, as additional information may be needed, and/or first aid instructions may be given.*

## **Family Emergency Preparedness Guide**

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Use the following symptom/situation guidelines and common sense to determine what is a true medical emergency and when to call 911:

- Persistent or sudden chest pain;
- Breathing emergencies;
- Uncontrollable bleeding;
- Changes in level of consciousness due to injury;
- Life threatening injuries, such as injuries from falling, severe head injuries, severe burns, etc.).

The above are only some potential life-threatening emergencies. Immediately call for medical assistance in emergency situations since time is of the utmost importance.

*If you are unsure about the seriousness of the situation **DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL 911***

### **General Rules for Any Medical Emergency**

The following are general guidelines, they do not and should not replace the need for first aid training.

1. **DO NO HARM.** Often well-meaning but untrained persons aggravate the injury or illness in their attempt to help. Get competent medical assistance, if possible. If there is no one available who is better qualified, then take charge. Access 911 or your community's emergency medical system.
2. Treat for shock
  - ▶ Try to keep the victim warm at normal body temperature. Keep legs slightly elevated . If there is a suspected neck or back injury, keep victim lying flat.

## **Family Emergency Preparedness Guide**

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2. Initially don't move the injured patient, unless a danger exists. They should not be moved until breathing is restored, bleeding controlled, suspected broken bones splinted, and/or rescue personnel arrive.
3. Never risk injury to yourself in an effort to assist an injured person. Death or injury to a rescuer does nothing to help the injured person and only complicates a bad situation.
4. Take a Red Cross or American Heart Association first-aid or car class so you are prepared in the event of an emergency.

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office  
or American Red Cross.**

### **Burns**

#### **To Care For A Burn:**

- Remove patient from smoky area if no hazard exist to rescuers.
- If clothing is on fire: Stop, Drop and Roll.
  - Roll victim on ground and smother flames with a blanket or other heavy material.
  - Cover the burn with dry, clean dressings.
  - Seek immediate medical care.

#### **If Caused By...**

**Chemicals:** Flush skin or eyes with large amounts of running water.

**Electricity:** Make sure power is off. Check breathing and pulse if victim is unconscious. Cover burn with a clean, dry dressing.

**A Critical** burn needs immediate medical attention.

Call for an ambulance if a burn:

- Involves breathing difficulty.
- Covers more than one body part.
- Involves the head, neck, hands, feet, or genitals.
- If a child or elderly person is the patient.
- If caused by chemicals, explosions, or electricity.

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office.**

## Emergency Preparedness Checklist

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**C**all Your Emergency Management Office or American Red Cross Office. Find out which disasters could occur in our area. Ask how to prepare for each disaster. Ask how you would be warned of an emergency. Learn our community's evacuation routes. Ask about special assistance for elderly or disabled persons. **Also**, ask your workplace about emergency plans and learn about your children's school or day care center plans.

**Create a Family Emergency Plan.** Meet with household members to discuss the dangers of fire, severe weather, earthquakes and other emergencies. Explain how to respond to each. Find the safe areas in your home for each type of disaster. Draw a floor plan of your home and mark two escape routes from each room. Show family members how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at main switches when necessary. Post emergency telephone numbers near telephones. Teach children how and when to call 911, police and fire. Instruct household members to turn on the radio for emergency information. Pick one out-of-state and one local friend or relative for family members to call if separated during a disaster (it is often easier to call out-of-state than within the affected area).

For additional information, contact  
**Your local Emergency Management Office  
or American Red Cross.**

**Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit**

Assemble supplies you might need in an evacuation. Store them in an easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or duffel bag.

**Include:**

- A supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Identify the storage date and replace every six months.
- A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a non-electric can opener.
- A change of clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes.
- Blankets or sleeping bags.
- A first aid kit and prescription medications.
- An extra pair of glasses.
- A battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
- Credit cards and cash.
- An extra set of car keys.
- A list of family physicians.
- A list of important family information, the style and serial number of medical devices such as pacemakers.
- Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

**Prepare an Emergency Car Kit**

- Battery powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Blanket
- Booster cables
- Fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type)
- First aid kit and manual
- Bottled water and non-perishable high-energy foods such as granola bars, raisins and peanut butter
- Maps, shovel and flares
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Kitty litter to use for traction on snow and ice.

**Notes:**