



Hamilton

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

G U I D E

A step-by-step planner to help you  
prepare for emergencies and disasters



# Personal Emergency Contact Numbers

## FAMILY CONTACT NUMBERS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work/Alt. phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work/Alt. phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work/Alt. phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work/Alt. phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## NON-EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

### Local Police Service

Local Fire Department  
 Non-Emergency

## OUT-OF-AREA CONTACT

Choose an emergency contact for family members to call if you are separated and can't reach each other.

Select a relative or family friend who lives out of the area so they won't be affected if an emergency happens here. Make sure each family member knows their contact information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work/Alt. phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEDICAL

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

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Urgent Care Clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Telehealth Ontario

1-866-797-0000 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007)

## Ontario Poison Centre

1-800-268-9017

**During an emergency, listen for information, instructions and updates on local radio and TV. The City of Hamilton will provide updates on the City website (Hamilton.ca) and twitter @cityofhamilton**

# Table of Contents

<b><u>Emergencies: Be Prepared</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
<b>Personal Emergency Contact Numbers</b> .....	2
<b>Calling 9-1-1</b> .....	3
<b>Emergencies: Are You Ready</b> .....	6
<b>Step 1: Know the Risks</b> .....	7
Weather Alerts and Flood Messages.....	8
<b>Step 2: Make a Plan</b> .....	9
Home Escape Plan.....	9
Emergency Contacts and Communication Plan.....	11
Identify a Meeting Place .....	11
Copy and Protect Important Documents .....	11
Household Inventory and Check Insurance .....	12
<b>Step 3: Prepare a Kit</b> .....	13
First Aid Kit.....	14
Create a Personal Support Network.....	15
Pet Emergency Kit .....	15
Vehicle Emergency Kit .....	16

<b>Step 4: Know what to do in an Emergency</b> .....	17
Tornadoes.....	17
Floods .....	18
Severe Storms.....	20
Extreme Temperatures .....	21
Winter Storms, Blizzards and Ice Storms.....	22
Transportation Accidents.....	23
Hazardous Materials Incidents/Spills .....	23
Shelter-in-Place.....	24
Explosions .....	24
Extended Power Outages.....	25
Telecommunications Failure .....	26
Utility Failure .....	26
Health Emergencies.....	27
If You Need to Evacuate .....	28
<b>After an Emergency</b> .....	29
<b>Coping with the Aftermath</b> .....	30
<b>City of Hamilton Non-Emergency Contact Numbers</b> .....	31
<b>Emergency Preparedness Information Resources</b> .....	33

# Calling 9-1-1

Make the right call and use 9-1-1 correctly. Non-emergency calls to 9-1-1 cause delays in sending first responders to people who urgently need their help.

## Call 9-1-1 if you need police, fire or paramedics to respond immediately to:

- a fire
- a medical emergency
- a crime in progress



A medical emergency involves a serious or life-threatening injury



## **DO NOT** call 9-1-1 to:

- find out weather information
- check road conditions or school closures
- ask when a power outage will be over

If there is no immediate danger you can call emergency services using a non-emergency contact number listed at the back of this guide.

### IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR CALLING 9-1-1

Provide the address or location you are calling from

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Make sure your house number or 9-1-1 road sign is clearly visible**

First responders need be able to see these to locate you. Don't let them become hidden behind bushes or shrubs.

### Calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone

Know your location. Look for a street address on a nearby building, or provide the nearest intersection or highway exit number. Be prepared to describe your location.

**Follow the instructions of the 9-1-1 call taker and do not hang up**

9-1-1 dispatchers are highly trained. Follow their instructions and stay on the line.



### Analog phones may still work in a power outage

If you have an old analog telephone and a landline phone service (i.e. one that is not cordless and doesn't need to be plugged into a power outlet to work), your phone will still work in power outages if the phone lines are not damaged.

# Emergencies: Are You Ready?

Every year, emergencies and disasters strike communities across Canada and around the world. They may be caused by natural disasters, transportation accidents, technology failures or human error and can occur with little warning.

Emergencies can endanger your health and safety as well as damage your home and property. The transportation systems, telecommunications, electricity and infrastructure we rely on every day may be disrupted. They can also pose a risk to the environment and economy of our community.



### IN AN EMERGENCY:

- you might need to take shelter in your home for hours or even days
- your home's electricity, heating or water supply may not work
- you could have difficulty contacting family and friends
- if you are away from home you might not be able to travel there immediately
- you may even have to evacuate and leave your home on short notice

In an emergency first responders must focus their initial efforts on helping people who need immediate, urgent assistance. Emergency services may not be able to reach you immediately or they may need to assist others first. You can take action ahead of time to help protect you and your family. Use this guide to get prepared in case disaster strikes.

## TAKE THE STEPS TO BE PREPARED:

**Know the risks** ... that can occur in your area

**Make a plan** ... so that you and family members will know what to do

**Prepare a kit** ... with supplies to be able to take care of your loved ones

**Know what to do** ... in specific emergencies



**IT'S UP TO YOU FOR 72!**  
Be prepared to take care of yourself and your family's needs for up to **72 hours** in an emergency.



# Step 1 - Know the Risks

In the City of Hamilton, we prepare for the possibility of a large scale emergency.

A Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment conducted by the City of Hamilton has identified the following potential hazards in our city:

---

## **Hazardous Materials Incident/Spills**

Transportation accidents, industrial accidents, etc., where a chemical is spilled/released.

## **Flooding**

Overflow or inundation of water from a river or other body of water, overland flooding.

## **Human Health Emergency**

Disease outbreak due to water or food contamination, human or animal-borne diseases, epidemics, influenza.

## **Energy Emergency (supply)**

Severe disruption of the supply, production and transportation of electricity, natural gas, and/or oil, power outage, gas shortage.

## **Extreme Ice Storm**

Large scale and long durations of freezing rain, accumulation of ice impacts upon transportation, buildings, power lines and communications infrastructure.

## **Explosion and Fire**

Large scale structure fires at homes, multi-residential units, apartment buildings, explosions.

## **Transportation Emergency-Rail**

A crash, collision or incident, of large scale, involving any rail mode of transportation.

## **Critical Infrastructure Failure- Telecommunications**

Failures of landlines, cell phones, internet, as well as communications systems relied on by emergency responders.

---





## Weather Alerts



### WHAT'S IN AN ALERT?

Do you know the difference between an advisory, watch and warning?

#### PUBLIC WEATHER ALERTS FROM ENVIRONMENT CANADA

Environment Canada issues alerts when potentially dangerous weather conditions are in the forecast. Different alerts are used depending on the expected severity and timing of the event:

**SPECIAL WEATHER STATEMENTS** are the least urgent type of alert and are issued to let people know about unusual conditions that could cause concern.

**ADVISORIES** are issued for specific weather events (e.g. blowing snow, fog, freezing drizzle and frost) that are less severe, but could still significantly impact Canadians.

**WATCHES** alert you about weather conditions that have the potential to produce a storm or severe weather, which could cause safety concerns.

**WARNINGS** are urgent messages that severe weather is either occurring or will occur. Warnings are usually issued 6 to 24 hours in advance. However, some severe weather events such as thunderstorms and tornadoes develop rapidly and warnings for these events may be issued with less than 30 minutes notice.

For more information on Environment Canada alerts visit: [ec.gc.ca](http://ec.gc.ca)

Source: <http://ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&ndn=C9A8D735-1>

---

## Flood Messages

Conservation Authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry issue messages and alerts when flooding is possible or about to occur. There are three types of alerts that they use:

**WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENTS** are general notices of potential flooding or other conditions that pose a safety risk. These include Water Safety Statements about high flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors that could be dangerous for users such as anglers, boaters, swimmers, children or pets. A second type is Flood Outlook Statements which give early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high wind or other conditions.

**FLOOD WATCHES** indicate that the potential for flooding exists within specific watercourses. Those in flood-prone areas should take steps to keep themselves safe and protect their property.

**FLOOD WARNINGS** are issued when flooding is imminent or already occurring in specific waterways. Flood Warnings may result in road closures and evacuations.

Source: Conservation Ontario Flood Fact Sheet (2012) or [http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca/projects/floods\\_messages.html](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca/projects/floods_messages.html)





## Step 2 - Make a Plan

Make emergency plans to know what to do before, during and after an emergency. Hold a family meeting so that every family member is familiar with your plans.

### HOME ESCAPE PLAN

Create a home escape plan that includes two ways out of every room in your home. Identify a safe location outside of your home where you will meet (e.g. the end of the driveway or a neighbour's porch).

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

Compile a list of emergency contact information for all family members and an out-of-area emergency contact.

### IDENTIFY A MEETING PLACE TO REUNITE

Choose a location where family members will go to reunite if they can't go home in an emergency. It could be the home of a relative or close family friend, or a public building such as a nearby community centre.

Our family meeting place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### COPY AND PROTECT IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Make photocopies or scan electronic copies of identification cards, banking, financial accounts, insurance and medical information. Store this information in your emergency kit in a safe, secure place.

### TAKE A HOUSEHOLD INVENTORY AND CHECK INSURANCE

Create an inventory of household possessions and property. Check your insurance policy to ensure that you have adequate coverage for your home and property.

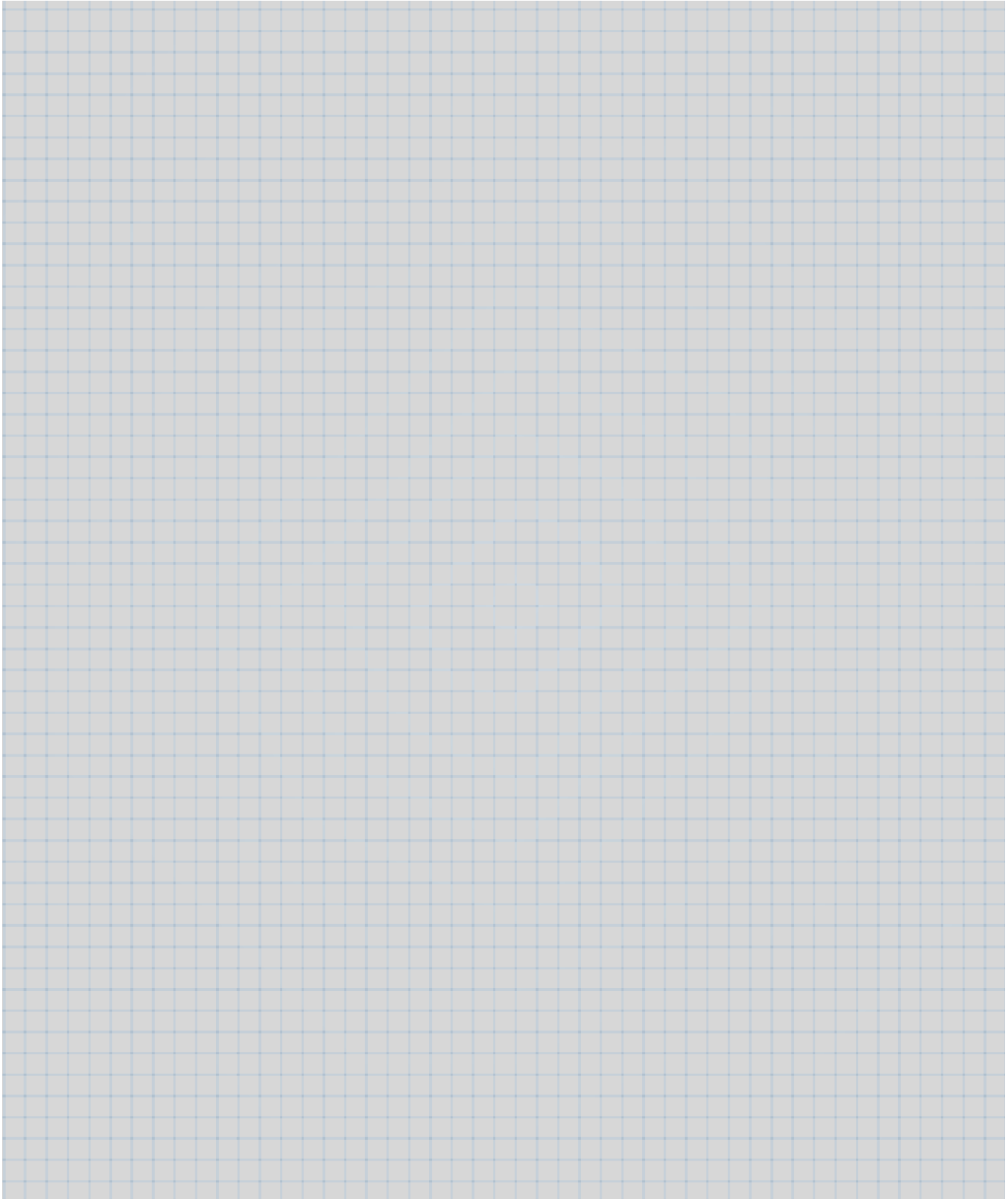
## Home Escape Plan

Make a plan to be able to leave your home quickly and safely in the event of a fire or sudden emergency. Please use page 10 to:



- Draw a floor plan map of your home showing all doors and windows
- Use arrows to mark two safe ways out of each room
- Pick a safe place to meet outside of your home
- Practice your home escape plan together

## Home Escape Plan



# Emergency Contacts and Communication Plan

Family members may be in different locations (work, school, etc.) when an emergency occurs. Ensure everyone carries the emergency contact information for family members and an out-of-area contact. The information can be carried in a mobile phone, purse, wallet card, child's backpack or school agenda. Extra copies can be kept at home, work, in your vehicle and in your emergency kit.

## Identify a Meeting Place to Reunite

Choose a location where family members will go to reunite if they can't go home in an emergency. It could be the home of a relative or close family friend, or a public space such as a nearby community centre.

We will reunite at: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_



**Do you know  
the emergency  
plans at your  
child's school?**

Make plans ahead of time about who will pick up children from school or daycare.

## Copy and Protect Important Documents

Make backup copies of important ID, financial and insurance documents. Photocopy the documents or scan them and store them electronically on a USB memory drive. Keep a copy in your emergency preparedness kit and another in a secure location away from your home (e.g. safety deposit box).

- Driver's License
- Social Insurance Number Health Card Number
- Passport
- Bank Branch and Accounts Investment Account(s)
- Vehicle Registration Number
- Insurance Company and Policy # Birth and Marriage Certificates:
- Wills, Property Deeds
- Recent photos of each family member in case you are separated



## Step 3 - Prepare a Kit

Assemble an emergency kit with the supplies your family would need to be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours. Use backpacks, duffel bags or a rolling suitcase for your kit so it is easy to take if you need to evacuate.

### 72 HOUR BASIC EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

- Water (4 litres per person per day)
- Non-perishable food
- Can-opener
- Flashlight
- AM/FM radio
- Spare batteries
- First aid kit
- Candles and matches or a lighter
- Prescription medications
- Money (in small bills)
- Soap, shampoo and hand sanitizer
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Whistle to attract attention
- Toilet paper and personal hygiene products
- Plastic garbage bags
- Warm clothing and footwear
- Blanket or sleeping bag for each person
- Spare house and car keys
- Copy of your emergency plan
- Recent photos of each family member
- Playing cards

### RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- Multi-tool or knife
- Duct tape
- Sunscreen, lip-balm and bug spray
- Work gloves
- Dust masks
- Tarps or plastic sheeting
- Small camping stove and fuel for cooking outside
- Pot for cooking
- Disposable dishes, cups, and cutlery
- Water purification tablets
- Games or small toys for children



### WATER – STORE 4 LITRES PER PERSON PER DAY

2 litres for drinking  
2 litres for washing,  
cooking and  
hygiene

### DO THE BATTERIES WORK?

Put a crank-powered radio and flashlight in your kit so that you won't have to worry about expired batteries.

### PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Keep one week supply in your kit (and a copy of the prescriptions).

### EMERGENCY CASH

ATMs, debit and credit card machines won't work in a power outage so keep some spare cash in your kit; use small bills because stores may not be able to make change.



**NEVER** use camping stoves, barbecues, propane heaters or generators indoors. The carbon monoxide gas they produce can be deadly.

*Check your kit at least once each year. Ensure all items are in working order and replace any food, water, batteries, and medications that will expire.*

# FIRST AID KIT

Include a first aid kit with enough supplies for the members of your household:

## FAMILY FIRST AID KIT

- 2 pressure bandages
- 8 gauze pads
- 20 antiseptic towelettes
- 2 abdominal pads
- 2 gauze rolls
- 1 roll of adhesive tape
- 2 triangular bandages
- Assorted adhesive bandages
- Safety pins
- Instant cold pack
- Thermometer
- Scissors

- Tweezers
- First aid gloves (nitrile, non-latex)
- 1 thermal blanket
- First aid manual

## NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS FOR YOUR FIRST AID KIT:

- Pain reliever (e.g. acetaminophen)
- Anti-inflammatory (e.g. ibuprofen)
- Allergy medication (antihistamine)
- Anti-diarrhea medication (e.g. Imodium)
- Antacid tablets
- Topical antibiotic cream for cuts and abrasions

## INCLUDE ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

Every kit will be different and based on each family's individual needs. Include supplies for infants, seniors, and individuals with disabilities or special needs if required.

### INFANTS

- Baby food
- Bottle
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Pacifier
- Extra clothing
- Small blanket

### SENIORS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS

Include items based on personal requirements. This might include:

- Spare eyeglasses
- Extra hearing aid batteries
- Denture or oral care supplies
- Adult hygiene products
- Spare syringes or catheters as needed
- Special equipment and instructions
- Extra batteries for medical equipment
- A whistle, alarm or signaling device
- Supplies for service animals
- Backup battery power
- A summary of medical needs, prescriptions, medication schedules and instructions

Special items to include in my Emergency Preparedness Kit:

---



---



---

## Create a Personal Support Network

Identify two or three reliable people who could assist you in an emergency. They could be family members, friends or neighbours. Keep their contact information up to date. Provide them with a key or way to access your home so they can check on you in an emergency. Ensure they are familiar with your emergency kit and plans, your specific needs and how they can assist you.

The Province of Ontario and Public Safety Canada have detailed guides on emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities and special needs posted on their websites:

[emergencymanagementontario.ca](http://emergencymanagementontario.ca)

[getprepared.gc.ca](http://getprepared.gc.ca)



Once you are sure your family is safe after an emergency, check on neighbours to see if others need assistance

## Pet Emergency Kit

Pets need emergency plans too. In an evacuation service animals are allowed in evacuation centres but family pets cannot always be accommodated. Make plans for your pet to stay with family, friends or at a kennel. Keep the contact information for local kennels or pet-friendly hotels/motels in your emergency plan. Partner with a neighbour to check on pets if one of you is not home in an emergency. Build a pet emergency kit. Consider the following items:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food, water, bowl and can opener    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cat litter and plastic bags         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leash, collar and/or muzzle         | <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket and a small toy             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pet ID tag with your contact number | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications that your pet is taking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stoop 'n scoop bags                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph of your pet(s)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pet carrier for transportation      |  |







## Vehicle Emergency Kit

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow brush, ice scraper and shovel                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Windshield wiper fluid and gas-line antifreeze               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Booster cables  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sand, salt, cat litter or traction mats for ice              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight  | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency flares   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit   | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contact numbers<br>(including roadside assistance) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Survival candle in a deep can                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matches/lighter   | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water and emergency food supply                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Spare fuel container   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket   | <input type="checkbox"/> Road maps  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare warm clothing including a hat, mitts,<br>scarf, and boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Car charger for cell phone                                   |

Keep a seat belt cutter and window breaker tool within reach of the driver's seat.



**Keep your gas tank at least half full. Gas station pumps may not work in a power outage. If you are stranded in your vehicle in a winter storm, stay warm by running your car for 10 minutes each hour.**



## Food in Emergencies

Choose non-perishable foods that:

- Have a long shelf life
- Are ready to eat or require little preparation
- Are nutrient and calorie rich



## Step 4 - Know What to Do In an Emergency

- Remain calm
- Check for hazards in your immediate area (e.g. fallen power lines, broken glass, damage to buildings)
- Check yourself and others for injuries and provide first aid or get help if necessary
- Check on neighbours, especially the elderly, people with disabilities and children
- Stay informed – monitor radio, TV and/or social media for updates and instructions
- Get your emergency kit and follow your emergency plans

## Severe Weather

### TORNADOES

On average, there are 12 tornadoes in Ontario each year. The powerful rotating winds and blowing debris can cause fatalities, injuries and extensive damage. They strike with little warning but they usually develop out of severe thunderstorms.

#### If a tornado warning is issued or you spot a tornado

- get inside a sturdy building
- go to the basement (or ground floor if there is no basement)
- take shelter in a small interior room with strong walls and no windows
- get under a sturdy desk or table

#### If you are caught outdoors and cannot get to a building

- do not take shelter near trees or power lines
- lie flat and face-down in a ditch, ravine or low-lying depression
- cover the back of your head and neck for protection

#### If you are driving

- get out of your vehicle and take shelter inside a sturdy building
- if there is no safe building available lie face-down in a ditch or low-lying depression
- do not chase tornadoes as they are unpredictable and can rapidly change speed and direction
- do not park to take shelter under a bridge or overpass

Mobile homes, sheds and barns are not safe places to take shelter. Inside buildings, avoid gymnasiums, auditoriums or other large open rooms with wide ceilings. In a tornado, getting to safety is your first priority. Taking time to take photos or video of a tornado can put you in danger.



## Severe Weather

### FLOODS

Floods are the most common and costly natural disaster in Canada. In Hamilton, localized flooding can occur as a result of heavy rain events or during the spring thaw if there is rapid melting of the winter snow pack.

#### Preparations to reduce damage from basement flooding

- install a sump pump and test it annually
- install zero reverse flow valves in basement drains
- extend eavestrough downspouts to carry water away from your home
- grade your property to carry rainwater away
- keep downspouts, drainage grates and catch basins clear of debris

#### If flooding is imminent

- move basement furniture, electronics and valuables upstairs
- move hazardous chemicals, paints, etc. upstairs out of basement storage
- if there is time, you may be able to protect your home with sandbags or plastic barriers
- check with local officials for instructions



**Do not enter a flooded basement.  
Water combined with electrical wires  
creates a dangerous electrocution hazard.  
Leave your home and contact your electricity  
distributor and local emergency authorities.  
Do not return home until it is safe to do so.**





# Severe Weather



## FLOODS

### If you need to evacuate due to flooding

- take your emergency kit with you and lock your doors
- follow routes and instructions given by emergency officials
- do not wade through flooded areas as fast-moving shallow water can be powerful enough to sweep you away
- do not drive through a flooded roadway as water can be deeper than it appears and washed-out or damaged areas may not be visible

### After a flood

- only return home after authorities have indicated that it is safe
- if your basement was flooded do not enter your home if there is a risk of electrical shock; an electrician will need to determine if it is safe to turn the power back on
- check for structural damage to walls and supports
- watch for sewage contamination, broken glass and other dangerous flood debris.

### Contaminated water and mould

- flood water can be contaminated with untreated sewage and other pollutants; protect your health when cleaning up after a flood by wearing gloves, rubber boots and a mask
- if your water may have been contaminated have it tested before using it for drinking or washing
- mould can grow rapidly in damp basements which can lead to serious health problems; if mould is present find out how to safely remove it and wear gloves and a mask for protection or have it removed by professionals

# Severe Weather

## SEVERE STORMS

Severe storms can produce lightning strikes, damaging winds, large hail and heavy localized rainfall. Lightning strikes kill an average of ten people in Canada each year and injure numerous others.

### Preparing for severe thunderstorms and high winds

- cut down dead trees and branches ahead of time so they won't fall and cause damage
- put away or secure lawn furniture, umbrellas, etc.
- if a thunderstorm approaches unplug computers, televisions and electronic equipment, which could be damaged by surges
- if you are out on the water, get to land and take shelter

### When the storm hits

- take shelter inside a building
- stay away from doors, windows, fireplaces, tubs, showers or items that conduct electricity
- stay inside until 30 minutes after the storm passes

### If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm

- get inside a safe building or vehicle as quickly as possible
- don't take shelter under a tree or tall structure, which could be hit by lightning



**The 30/30 rule for lightning safety:** If you count 30 seconds or less between seeing a lightning flash and hearing thunder, take shelter immediately. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder.



# Extreme Temperatures

Extremely hot or cold temperatures puts extra stress on the body. Environment Canada issues extreme heat or cold warnings when there are temperatures that can put health at risk.



Everyone is affected by extreme temperatures but some individuals are more at risk

- infants and young children
- seniors
- the homeless
- pregnant women
- people with chronic medical conditions
- people who work outside or engage in outdoor recreational activities

## Stay safe in extreme heat

- drink plenty of water and fluids to prevent dehydration
- avoid strenuous outdoor activity and exercise
- take a cool shower or bath to cool off
- if you go out wear a hat and light, loose-fitting clothing
- keep your home cool – close curtains to block direct sunlight and use fans or an air conditioner
- do not leave children or pets unattended in a vehicle
- if you do not have air-conditioning, visit local public buildings or shopping malls to cool off
- learn to recognize the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke

The City of Hamilton's Heat Alert and Response System, also known as H.A.R.S., includes seasonal monitoring and three response stages. From May to September, the City monitors weather forecasts, including the humidex for conditions that can increase health risks. During a Heat Event various City of Hamilton and community sites are open for residents to go to cool off.

## Stay safe in extreme cold

- stay inside and avoid going outdoors if possible during extreme cold
- if you must go out wear warm clothing including boots, mitts and warm headwear
- learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia
- if outdoors, go inside frequently to warm up
- keep pets indoors during extreme cold





## Winter Storms, Blizzards and Ice Storms

Winter storms, blizzards, and ice storms can produce heavy snowfall, hazardous driving conditions and power outages. Be prepared ahead of time to reduce your risk of harm.

### Preparing for winter storms

- listen to weather reports to be aware of approaching storms
- prepare your vehicle for winter driving conditions with winter tires, windshield wipers and perform regular maintenance
- keep your gas tank at least half full at all times
- carry an emergency kit in your vehicle

### When a storm hits

- postpone travel unless absolutely necessary
- drive with caution: slow down, leave extra following distance, turn on your vehicle lights
- if caught in a blizzard while driving, pull well off to the side of the road and turn on your flashing hazard lights
- if your car becomes stuck in snow and you can't get it out, stay in the vehicle to stay warm
- to stay warm in a vehicle, you can run the engine for ten minutes every hour (check that the vehicle tailpipe is not blocked by snow to prevent carbon monoxide fumes from entering the car)
- if you must go outside, dress for the weather and wear warm boots, mitts and a hat or toque
- at home keep snow and ice from building up around your gas meter, and gas appliance vents

### Ice Storms

- ice storms and freezing rain create particularly dangerous driving conditions; avoid driving and wait until road conditions improve
- there is an increased risk of power outages when freezing rain accumulates on power lines and trees
- if you encounter fallen power lines, stay at least 30 m away and contact the electricity distributor or call 9-1-1



# Major Accidents

## TRANSPORTATION ACCIDENTS

The City of Hamilton is home to a number of major transportation routes that carry passengers and freight within and across our municipality. Train derailments, plane crashes, and marine accidents are all risks in Hamilton, however the most common transportation accidents are vehicle collisions on our highways and roads. They can produce tragic injuries and fatalities as well as costly damage and lengthy traffic delays.

### Be prepared

- have your vehicle serviced regularly
- keep your gas tank at least half full at all times
- carry an emergency kit in your vehicle
- check the weather before you head out and adjust driving behaviour to road and traffic conditions



### If roads are slippery, or snow covered or there is reduced visibility due to rain, fog or blowing snow

- reduce speed
- leave extra following distance
- turn on vehicle lights to see and be seen

---

## HAZARDOUS MATERIAL INCIDENTS

Hazardous materials are chemicals or substances that can harm people, animals and the environment. The transportation, storage and use of hazardous materials is governed by regulations and safeguards. However accidents, spills and leaks do occasionally happen.

If there is a spill or release in your area emergency services will provide information on what to do to reduce your exposure and stay safe. They will use emergency alerts on radio, TV and/or social media or they may go door-to-door if necessary to notify residents.

You may be instructed to shelter-in-place or to evacuate. If emergency personnel advise you to evacuate, take your kit and leave the area immediately. Do not return home until authorities inform you that it is safe.



**On July 9, 1997 the Plastimet fire at a waste disposal site involved partial building collapses and burning polyvinyl chloride. Firefighters extinguished the blaze on July 12th after using 22 million gallons of water.**

# Major Accidents

## SHELTER-IN-PLACE

If emergency services instruct you to shelter-in-place during a chemical spill then it is safer to stay indoors rather than going outside where you may be exposed to the chemical. There are steps you can take to minimize exposure.

- close and lock all exterior doors and windows
- turn off heating and air-conditioning systems that circulate air through your home and turn off all fans (e.g. kitchen range hood and bathroom ventilation fan)
- retrieve your 72-hour emergency kit and turn on your radio
- move to an above-ground interior room, without windows, to take shelter
- use duct tape to seal air vents and cracks around the door
- monitor radio or television stations for information updates; you will be notified when it is safe or you may be instructed to evacuate



### STAY ABOVE GROUND

some chemicals are heavier than air and can seep into basements and accumulate

If you suspect that you have been exposed to a hazardous material, call 9-1-1 immediately and seek medical care. Monitor any symptoms that you experience. Pay attention to dizziness, changes in heart rate, breathing, skin tone and level of consciousness. Tell medical personnel about these and any other symptoms that you notice.

## EXPLOSIONS

Fuels such as natural gas and propane are explosive hazards. They have a distinctive smell and if you smell gas take action immediately.



### If you smell gas

- open windows and doors to let fresh air in, leave the building and call 9-1-1
- do not turn electrical switches or appliances on or off and do not use lighters or matches
- if you hear a hissing sound get to a safe distance immediately and call 9-1-1

### Propane safety

- use care when transporting, storing and connecting propane tanks
- do not store propane tanks indoors
- if you have a large capacity propane tank at home or a cottage for indoor gas fireplaces and appliances have it inspected regularly for safety

# Technology Failures

## EXTENDED POWER OUTAGES

Most power failures are short in duration but during severe storms or other emergencies they can last for hours, days or in some cases even weeks. Power outages combined with extreme hot or cold weather can put you at further risk.

### Before a power outage

- ensure you have working flashlights and batteries in your kit
- install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (with battery backup power) on every floor and test them regularly
- keep a fire extinguisher in your home
- if you choose to have a backup generator, have it installed by professionals, check and maintain it regularly, and store enough spare fuel in approved containers

### During a power outage

If your power goes out, first check the circuit breakers and fuses in your electrical panel. If neighbouring homes are affected as well, call your electricity distributor to report an outage.

- check that stove elements and the oven are turned off and that nothing is sitting on the stove elements
- flashlights, battery-powered lanterns or glow sticks are safe lighting options to use
- be extremely careful if using candles or oil lanterns
- candles must be in secure holders
- keep flames away from curtains and other combustible materials
- never leave candles or lanterns unattended, put them out if you leave the room
- unplug appliances and electronic equipment to protect them from surges when power returns.
- turn off all lights except for one or two to let you know when power is restored
- keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to prevent food from spoiling
- use a crank or battery-powered radio to stay informed during an outage

### When power is restored

- once power has been restored, only turn on essential appliances at first and wait 15-20 minutes to turn on other appliances
- check that your refrigerator and freezer are working properly
- after power is restored, check that food is safe



# Technology Failures

## TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM FAILURES

In an emergency situation, telecommunications can be disrupted or even fail completely. You may not be able to get in touch with family members, friends or emergency services if phone lines are down.

### Steps you can take

- an analog telephone on a traditional land line may still operate during a power outage
- for cellular phones, send text messages instead of calling; texting uses less bandwidth when phone lines are overloaded
- contact your out-of-area contact if you cannot get in touch with family members

---

## UTILITIES FAILURES

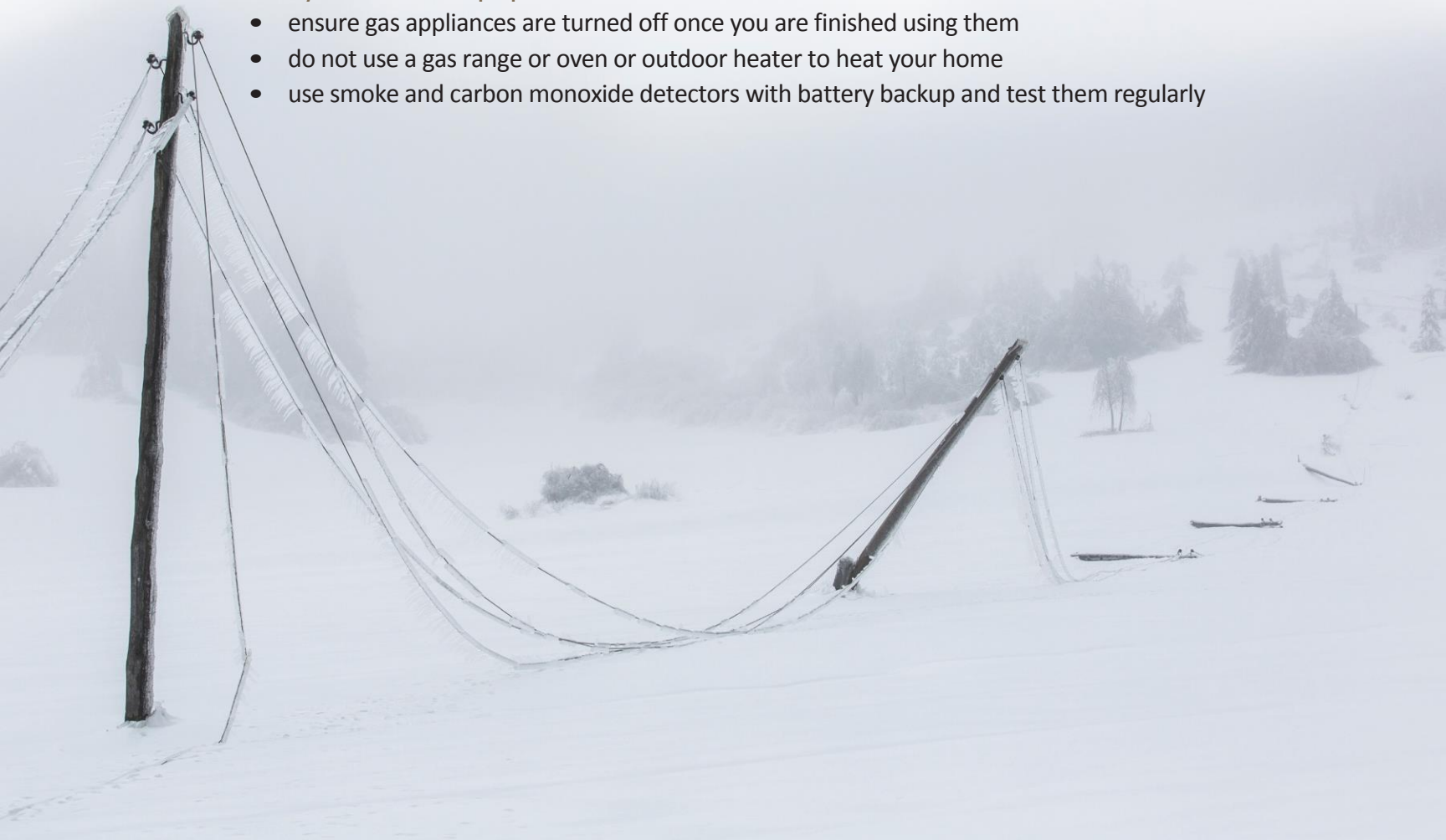
Utilities such as electricity, water and gas are essential to the operation of your home. In emergencies, these services may be disrupted.

### Steps you can take

- you smell gas in the area
- your carbon monoxide detector alarm activates
- there is a fire that involves natural gas

### What you can do to be prepared

- ensure gas appliances are turned off once you are finished using them
- do not use a gas range or oven or outdoor heater to heat your home
- use smoke and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup and test them regularly





# Health Emergencies

Health emergencies can arise through the spread of infectious diseases or due to food and water contamination.

If you or a family member develops symptoms and you have questions, call Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000. If symptoms are severe or develop suddenly, contact your family doctor or health care professional immediately.

## FOOD AND WATER CONTAMINATION

- do not consume food if you suspect that it may not be safe and watch the media for food recalls
- if your water comes from a private well, the Health Unit recommends testing it at least three times each year
- if the Health Unit issues a boil water advisory, water needs to be brought to a full boil for 1 minute to kill disease-causing organisms

---

## INFLUENZA AND DISEASE OUTBREAK

Influenza is a respiratory infection of the lungs and airways that is spread by a virus. Flu season usually runs from November until May and peaks in December. You can protect yourself and keep it from spreading by taking some precautions.

### Prevention tips for seasonal influenza and disease outbreaks

- get the flu shot (for influenza)
- wash hands frequently with soap and water
- use alcohol-based hand-sanitizers
- cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing
- avoid rubbing your eyes, nose and mouth
- regularly clean and disinfect high-use surfaces at home and work
- if you are sick, stay home to prevent spreading the disease to others



**Keep your  
immunizations  
up-to-date**



# If You Need to Evacuate

In some situations you may need to evacuate. Authorities will not ask you to leave your home unless you are in danger.

## If you are advised to evacuate

- follow the instructions from emergency services personnel on when to leave, where to go and what routes to follow
- take your emergency kit, contacts, emergency plan, phone and phone charger with you
- when you leave, lock your house and leave a note that indicates where you are going and a phone number where you can be reached
- contact your out-of-area contact - let them know where you are going, your planned route and when you expect to arrive.
- if you are directed to a reception or evacuation centre, follow the designated route
- on arriving at a reception centre, register with the centre staff and call your out-of-area contact to give them an update
- do not attempt to return to an area that has been evacuated until you are informed it is safe

## MAKE AN EVACUATION PLAN

Where would you stay if you had to evacuate and leave your home for a few days?

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

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

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Two travel routes to this location:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME

- close and lock all windows and doors
- locate the shut-off switches and valves for water, electricity, gas, heating and ventilating systems in your home and label switches and valves to clearly mark the on/off position
- do not shut off your natural gas, water or electricity unless you are advised to do so by emergency officials (if you turn off your gas line a qualified technician will have to reconnect it; after an emergency it could take weeks for a technician to respond, leaving you without gas for heating and cooking)

## After an Emergency

- check yourself and family members for injuries
- help injured individuals and provide first aid – call 9-1-1 if you need emergency services
- check for fire hazards and gas leaks; if there are any hazards present, leave your house and call 9-1-1
- when you and family members are safe, check on your neighbours
- monitor local radio, television stations and social media for information from emergency officials
- use telephones and cell phones as little as possible; keep the lines free for those who need them most
- stay away from disaster areas to avoid interfering with rescue work
- check your home and property for damage – if there are signs of major damage do not enter the building until it has been determined to be safe
- after extended power outages, dispose of food that may not be safe
- contact family members to let them know that you are safe
- contact your insurance company
- if your drinking water may be contaminated, do not use it until it has been checked

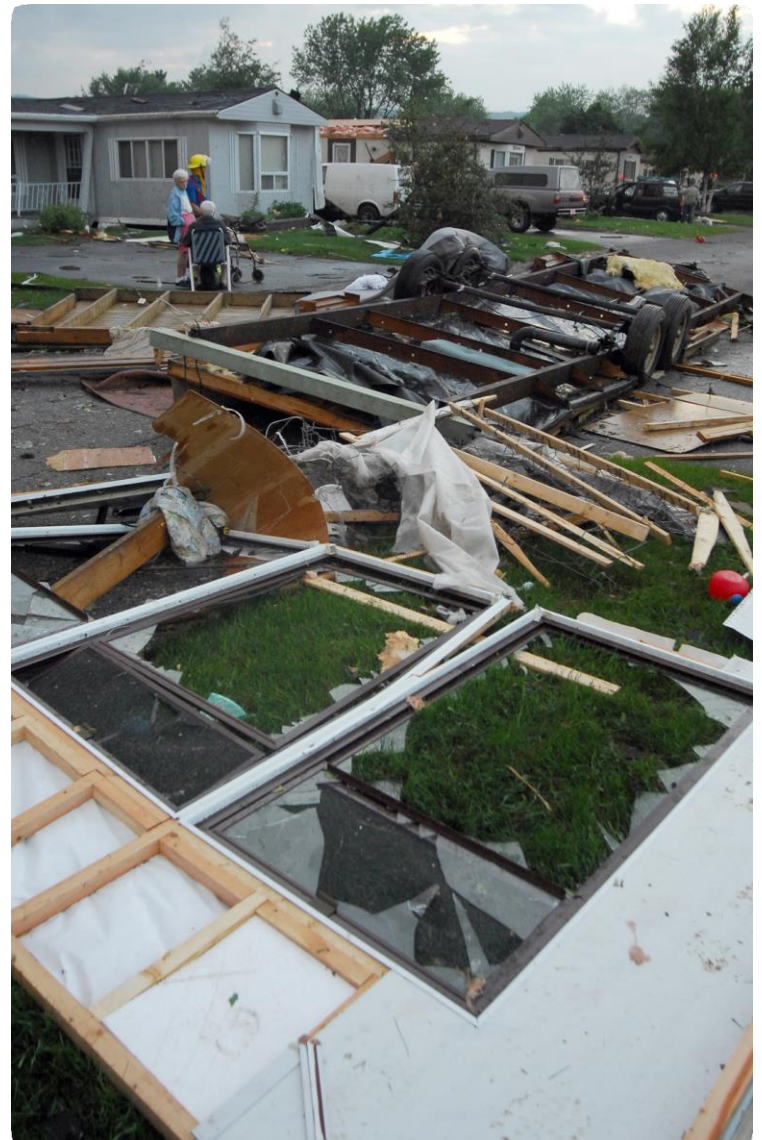
## Insurance and Emergencies

Check your insurance policy before a disaster strikes to determine if you have enough coverage and exactly what types of damage will be covered. For example, damage from overland flooding is not usually covered by insurance policies. Understanding what coverage you have will help you to recover after an emergency.

Note that insurance can also help to pay for additional living expenses after an emergency. Insurance may cover accommodations if you are required to move out of your home while repairs are being made.

Keep an up-to-date inventory of your home contents. Take photographs, record serial numbers and keep copies of receipts to know the value of your belongings. If an emergency damages your home or possessions, take immediate steps to protect your property from further damage and contact your insurance company as soon as possible.

More information on emergencies and insurance can be found on the Insurance Bureau of Canada website: [www.ibc.ca](http://www.ibc.ca)





# Coping with the Aftermath

## CHILDREN AND EMERGENCIES

Children may experience some anxiety and fear after an emergency and parents can help them to cope by taking steps to reassure them and keep them safe.

- some children may feel fear and worry that it will happen again
- listen to their fears and concerns and encourage them to talk about it
- reassure them about what is being done to return life back to normal
- provide children with information at an age-appropriate level
- keep routines as consistent as possible and make time for recreation and play
- children may require extra time, support and comfort from parents and caregivers

## WHAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY MIGHT EXPERIENCE

- emergencies are stressful events and individuals react to them in different ways
- recognize that it is normal to feel upset, worried or anxious after an incident
- talk to family members and friends and be there to listen to others as well
- there may be extra work to do after an event but it is still important to balance activity and rest
- if distressing feelings or reactions continue to persist after the event or if you have experienced particularly traumatic losses, it is important to seek help through your employer, community services, or talk to your family doctor



# City of Hamilton Non-Emergency Contact Numbers

## CITY OF HAMILTON

905-546-2489 (city)

## HAMILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

905-546-3333

## POLICE SERVICES

Hamilton Police Service

Central Station – 905-546-4772

East End Station – 905-546-2929

Mountain Station – 905-546-4930

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)

1-888-310-1122 (24 hour toll free #)

Crime Stoppers

1-800-222-8477

Victim Services

905-546-4904

## HOSPITALS

Hamilton Health Sciences

905-521-2100

St. Josephs Healthcare Hamilton

905-522-1155

## HYDRO

Horizon Utilities

905-522-9200

Hydro One

1-888-664-9376

## TRANSIT

Hamilton HSR

905-528-4200

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Canadian Red Cross – Hamilton

905-522-8485

Hamilton Crisis Line (COAST)

905-972-8338

The Salvation Army - Ontario Great Lakes Divisional

Headquarters

519-433-6106

St. John Ambulance – Hamilton

905-387-1880

Road Conditions and Construction Info

1-800-268-4686 (511)

Ministry of the Environment Spills Action Center

1-800-268-6060

City of Hamilton Spills Reporting Line

905-540-5188

Rescue Coordination Centre (Air and Marine Emergencies)

1-800-267-7270

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6888

Youth Wellness Centre Mental Health Services

St. Joseph's Healthcare Centre

905-522-1155 x31725

Open 24 hours

Community Psychiatry Clinic

St. Joseph's Healthcare Centre

905-522-1155 x36040









## Partners in Preparedness

### CITY OF HAMILTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Carrying out an effective response to an emergency results from planning, coordination and preparedness before an emergency arises. The City of Hamilton emergency management program takes an “all hazards” approach and includes emergency response and recovery planning.

Large-scale community emergencies require an integrated response from a variety of organizations from both the public and private sectors. The City of Hamilton created the Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee to promote partnerships in emergency management across our City. It includes representatives from City departments, emergency services agencies, hospitals, utility providers, private industry, the education sector, and community partner agencies.

More information about the City of Hamilton’s emergency management program can be found at [www.hamilton.ca/emergency](http://www.hamilton.ca/emergency)

## Emergency Preparedness Information Resources

Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management, Ontario

[www.emergencymanagementontario.ca](http://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca)

Public Safety Canada

[www.getprepared.gc.ca](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca)

Public Health Agency of Canada

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

The City of Hamilton gratefully acknowledges the County of Simcoe’s assistance with producing this guide.

The Canadian Red Cross

[www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)

Hamilton Conservation Authority

<https://conservationhamilton.ca/>

To access this guide in alternate formats, please contact the City of Hamilton.



# Hamilton

---

**Hamilton.ca**



**Follow us on Twitter**  
[@cityofhamilton](https://twitter.com/cityofhamilton)