

Niagara Falls

72 Hour Emergency Preparedness Guide





Mayor Jim Diodati **Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency Preparedness is a critical part of any community's planning. It is incumbent on us to be more aware than ever of the potential for emergencies around us and to be in the best possible position to care for and protect the members of our community and the safety of our City. Not only is our City an incredible place to live and raise a family with a small-town feel, it has all of the outstanding amenities of a big City as well.

Here, we are still lucky to say we know our neighbours and have pride of community, while at the same time, we welcome more than 14 million visitors per year and have all of the attractions, sites and events that come along with that. We are unique. Our emergency preparedness guide reflects that. I'm proud of the many staff, organizations and community leaders that have come together to create a unified plan. Thank you to the many partners who have contributed to this guide and who continue to make safety and being prepared a priority.

Sincerely,
Mayor Jim Diodati,
on behalf of members of City Council



Niagara Falls 905-356-7521
www.niagarafalls.ca

Niagara Regional Police 905-688-4111
www.nrps.com

Niagara Region 905-685-1571
www.niagararegion.ca

Utilities

Bell Canada 310-2355
Enbridge Gas 1-800-461-0998
Niagara Peninsula Energy 1-877-270-3938

Other Important Numbers

Call Before You Dig! 1-800-400-2255
Environment Canada Weather Forecast 905-562-3409
Ministry of Transportation Roads Report 1-800-268-4686
Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000

Local Media

Please familiarize yourself with local radio stations and online newspapers which will carry up-to-date news during a significant event.

Newspaper:

Niagara Falls Review 905-358-5711

Radio:

CKTB 610 AM, 105.1 2day FM

Also tune into:

Cogeco 10
CHCH TV

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Be Disaster Ready – Know the risks

In Niagara, we are fortunate to live in a very safe part of Canada; however, no place is immune to the possibility of a large-scale emergency.

By being prepared for an emergency, you enable first responders to concentrate on assisting people who are the most vulnerable. If a significant emergency does happen in your neighbourhood, it may take emergency service providers some time to reach you. **You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of 72 hours.**

This guide can help you prepare to face a range of emergencies – anytime and anywhere. Use it to create your own personal emergency plan and use the checklists to prepare your own emergency kits. These basic steps will aid you in taking care of yourself and your loved ones in the event of an emergency, if circumstances force you to stay in your home or to leave.

The first step to preparedness is recognizing the risks in your community.

A 2016 hazard identification and risk assessment study conducted by Niagara Region has identified the following potential risks in our area:

- Severe storms (wind, snow, ice, thunder, lightning, hail and tornadoes)
- Extreme temperature events in both winter and summer
- Epidemic
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Industrial or transportation accidents
- Power outages
- Floods
- Tornadoes
- Earthquakes

These risks are caused by changing weather patterns, human health events and increased levels of road, rail and seaway traffic which sometimes include the transport of hazardous goods.



Make a plan

“Fortune favours the prepared”

Louis Pasteur

Every Niagara household should have an emergency plan that looks at two potential scenarios, and considers our changing seasons:

- a) If the emergency situation causes you to stay in your home, or
- b) If you have to leave

Your plan will assist you and your family in knowing what to do in an emergency. Making one is simple and does not take a lot of time.

Remember, it's possible that your family will not be together when an emergency occurs. The plan should include how and where to meet or how to contact one another, especially if there are telecommunications failures. Discuss what you would do in different situations as a family.

Use the pages at the back of this book to create your emergency plan.

**Keep this document in an easy-to-find, easy-to-remember place
(for example with your emergency kit).**

Photocopy this plan and keep it in your car and/or at work.

Household plan

Emergency exits

Use the template on page 43 to draw a floor plan of your home that shows all possible exits from each room. Plan a main exit route and an alternate exit route from each room. If you live in an apartment, plan to use the stairs instead of the elevators, which may not be available or safe to use during an emergency. Also, identify an evacuation route from your neighbourhood in case you need to leave in a hurry (and think of more than one option). Talk to your family about the plan, and make sure they're aware of the potential routes.

Meeting places

Identify safe places where everyone should meet if you cannot go home or you need to evacuate. These safe places should include locations that are different distances from your home since emergencies can occur at different scales. For example, designate a meeting location immediately outside your home, one within your neighbourhood and one within your town or city at least several blocks away from your home. If possible, designate a meeting location outside your town or city in case of an emergency that impacts a large area.

Safe home

All the fire services in Niagara remind you to make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector, smoke alarm, fire extinguisher and well-stocked first-aid kit. If you live in an apartment, or you are staying in a hotel, know where the fire pull stations and emergency exits are located.

Make sure you have a fire extinguisher on every level of your home, including in your kitchen. Everyone in your home should know where to find the fire extinguishers and adults and older children should know how to use it. Read the extinguisher manual regarding the lifetime of your fire extinguisher and check with your local fire department for more information.

Know how to turn off your home's water, electricity and gas. Make large, easy-to-see signs for water and gas shut-offs and electrical panel.

Teach children how and when to dial 9-1-1 as well as how to call the designated out-of-town contact.

Safe workplace

Check with your employer about workplace emergency plans, including fire alarms, emergency exits, meeting points, and designated safety personnel or floor wardens. You may want to have some basic supplies at work, such as water and food that won't spoil. It is important for you to think about a personal safety plan for you and your family outside of your home.



Emergency instructions

Call 9-1-1 to report a fire, crime, medical emergency or dangerous situation. By doing this, you may help in saving a life. When you call 9-1-1 in Niagara, you will be asked if you need police, fire or ambulance.

For non-emergency calls, use the resources listed on page 41, or your local phone book for police, fire and other health services.

When notifying emergency services of your location, be prepared to give specifics like your exact street address and nearest crossroads. Be prepared to give specifics of your location to emergency responders.

In an emergency

- Make sure you are safe before assisting others
- Follow your emergency plan
- Get your emergency kit. Keep your family and pets together.
- Listen to the radio, television or verified social media sites for information from authorities and follow their instructions
- Stay put until all is safe or until you are ordered to evacuate
- Limit phone calls to urgent messages only. Keep the lines free for emergency responders.

Staying in contact

Communicating with family, friends and emergency responders during an emergency is critical. Everyday communication devices may become overloaded by high call volumes and not work properly during an emergency. You cannot depend on a cell phone in certain emergencies. Keeping a corded phone (land line) in your home is an option (most cordless phones will not work during a power outage). Having change for and knowing the location of payphones is also an option.

- Limit phone calls to urgent messages only
- Make only essential calls and keep them short to free up the lines for others
- Use text messaging, email or social media. They use less bandwidth than voice communications and may work even when phone service has been disrupted.
- If you are unable to complete a call, wait 10 seconds before redialing to help reduce network congestion
- Keep extra batteries or a charger for your mobile device in your emergency kit. Consider getting a solar-powered, crank or vehicle phone charger.
- If you do not have a cell phone, keep a prepaid phone card in your emergency kit
- If you have been evacuated and have call-forwarding on your home phone, use it to forward calls to your cell phone
- Keep your contacts up to date on your phone, email or other channels
- Cordless phones rely on electricity and will not work during a power outage. If you have a landline, keep at least one corded phone in your home.
- Arrange for each family member to call, email or text the same out-of-town contact person in case of an emergency
- Choose an out-of-town contact who lives far enough away that he or she will unlikely to be affected by the same event
- If you are new to Canada or have recently moved to a new area, make arrangements through friends, cultural associations or community organizations



Portable radios

Portable radios may not be commonly used anymore, but receiving information is crucial during any crisis. The ability to tune in to emergency radio broadcasts via a portable AM/FM radio receiver could be essential. Like flashlights, emergency radios are available with battery, solar and wind-up power. Remember that main electricity may not be available and that you may not be able to access the internet and other services that we may take for granted.

If internet and cellular services remain available, follow verified social media sites for immediate updates.

During an emergency, listen to your radio for information and instructions from authorities. Local stations include:

CKTB 610 AM EZ Rock 105.7 Giant FM 91.7
97.7 HTZ FM 105.1 Ed FM

211 is free to call, multilingual, confidential and available 24/7. In addition to connecting citizens with services, 211 provides residents with information on emergencies occurring within the community. If you have questions about an emergency call 2-1-1 or visit www.211ontario.ca

Ontario 511 Road Information provides road closures, conditions and construction information through an interactive map at www.ontario.ca/511 or by dialing 5-1-1.

**When you don't know
where to turn.™**



Insurance

Damage from some storms, including lightning, tornadoes, wind and hail, may be covered by insurance. Also, water damage caused by water coming through storm-damaged roof and windows, broken pipes or overflowing appliances may be covered. Other water damage such as sewer backup may, or may not, be covered. It is important to know what types of damages are covered under your insurance policy. Keep a copy of your policy, contact information for your insurance provider, and your policy number with the other important documents in your emergency kit. The following are examples of damages that may, or may not, be covered by your insurance company:

- Damage from storms, including lightning, tornadoes, wind and hail
- Water damage caused by water coming through storm-damaged roof and windows
- Broken pipes or overflowing appliances
- Sewer back up

Insurance may cover more than damage to your home such as additional living expenses. If your home is unfit to live in or you have to move out while repairs are being made

For information regarding insurance, contact the Insurance Bureau of Canada's consumer information centre at 1-800-387-2880 or visit their website at www.ibc.ca

Make copies of important documents

Make copies of birth and marriage certificates, passports, licences, insurance policies, wills, land deeds and other critical documentation.

Take photos of family members in case a missing person's record needs to be created. Keep them in a safe place both inside your home and off site. You might want to put them in a safety deposit box or give them to friends and family who live out of town.



Special health needs

Establish a personal support network of friends, relatives, health care providers, co-workers and neighbours who understand your special needs

Compile an inclusive list of medical requirements, medications, allergies and other special health needs specific to your circumstance.

Keep a copy of this information in your emergency kit, and give a copy to your personal support network.

Talk to your doctor about preparing an emergency kit, if possible, with a two-week supply of medication and medical supplies. Include prescriptions and medical documents. Remember that pharmacies may be closed for some time or you may not be able to get to one, even after an emergency is over.

Children and emergencies

Plan for your children

- Ask your children's school or day care about their emergency plans and policies. Find out how they will contact families during an emergency. As always, make sure that the school is aware of any special needs your child has and that they take that into consideration in their emergency planning.
- Find out what type of authorization the school or day care requires to release your children to a designated person if you can't pick them up
- Make sure that the school or day care has updated contact information for parents, caregivers and designated persons

Helping children prepare for emergencies

- Teach your children about natural hazards and what to do when they occur
- Make a family emergency plan and prepare an emergency kit together. Make sure that the children are aware of the location of the emergency kit.
- Teach your children what to do in case of fire
- Make sure your children know what to do at school if an emergency happens
- Ensure your children understand that they should follow directions from their teachers or other school staff
- Teach your children basic personal information so they can identify themselves if they become separated from you
- Teach your children who to call, like 9-1-1, to get help and what types of situations merit a call.





Pets and emergencies

Preparing for an emergency

- If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, their identification may be the only way to find them. Make sure each animal wears a collar and identification tag at all times.
- Have a secure carrier or way of leading them
- The best way to protect your pet in an emergency is to bring it with you, however, most evacuation shelters will only accept service animals. If possible, be prepared to take your pets with you to the home of a relative or friend, or take steps to identify pet-friendly hotels or pet boarding facilities. If you are not able to take your pet with you having a pre-plan will ensure the safety of your pet.
- Include your pet in your family emergency plan exercises
- Prepare a pet emergency kit (see page 23)

During an emergency

- Keep your pet inside during severe weather. Never leave a pet outside or tethered during a storm.
- If ordered to evacuate, take your pet with you if you are able to. If you must leave your pets in the house, do not tether or cage them. Leave a sign in the window and a note in the door indicating what type of animals are inside. Provide adequate water and food; if possible, in timed dispensers.

Evacuation

In some emergencies, such as floods or fires, it may be necessary for you to evacuate from your home and neighbourhood. Authorities will not ask you to leave your home unless they believe you are in danger.

If ordered to evacuate:

- Follow instructions from authorities
- Take your essential emergency kit, medications, wallet and personal identification for each family member, and copies of essential documents with you. Try to keep some cash on hand in case credit and debit systems are down.
- Bring a cell phone (and charger) if you have one. Only use it as necessary to preserve the battery life.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities; other routes may be unsafe, and pay attention to information on road closures
- Shut off water, electricity and gas if instructed by officials to do so
- Leave natural gas service on unless officials tell you to turn it off. If you turn off the gas, the gas company has to reconnect it. In a major emergency, it could take weeks for a professional to respond.
- If possible, leave a note in a visible location telling others when you left and where you are going
- If you have time, notify your out-of-town contact. Tell them where you are going and when you expect to arrive. Once you are safe, let them know. Tell them if any family members have become separated.
- Lock and secure your home
- In an evacuation, once you have taken care of yourself and your family, check to see if there are neighbours whom you can assist. Discuss emergency plans with neighbours ahead of time.
- Register with a local reception centre / evacuation centre even if you will be staying elsewhere

Do not return home until authorities advise it is safe

Shelter-in-place

In other cases you may be asked to shelter-in-place, meaning that you must remain inside your home, office or other building and take actions to protect yourself there. You may be instructed to shelter-in-place if a threat to your safety exists outside your home.

General shelter-in-place

- Go inside and remain inside your home, office, school or other building
- Follow instructions from emergency officials
- If possible, stay in an interior room away from windows and doors
- Remain inside until emergency officials advise it is safe

If asked to shelter-in-place due to an air quality threat (i.e. smoke from a fire):

- Go inside and remain inside your home, office, school or other building
- Follow instructions from emergency officials
- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems to avoid drawing in outside air
- Get your emergency kit, including radio
- Go to an interior room without windows, preferably above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- If no interior room is available, stay away from windows and outside doors
- If you have a fireplace, close the damper
- Use duct tape or wet cloths to seal cracks around doors, windows and vents
- Limit phone calls to urgent messages only



If asked to shelter-in-place due to a tornado or other weather-related event with the exception of flooding:

- Go inside and remain inside your home, office, school or other building
- Go to the basement or an interior room on the lowest level
- Stay away from windows and exterior doors
- If possible, avoid parts of the building that could have something fall on them such as overhanging branches
- If possible, cover your head with something such as a pillow or your arms
- Do not leave until emergency officials have advised it is safe or the weather warning has been lifted for your area



Emergency kits

In an emergency, basic services we use every day may not work. For example, your water, electricity, gas and communication services may not work. When these services are not available, an emergency kit can provide the basic necessities. Be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

You may already have many emergency kit items in your pantry or basement. Although that may be satisfactory in a shelter-in-place event, it is important to make sure your kit is prepared to be easily carried and that everyone in the household knows where it is located in the event of an emergency evacuation. Commonly referred to as a “Go Bag” keep your emergency kit in a backpack, duffle bag or suitcase with wheels, in an easy-to-reach, accessible place, such as your front hall closet. Various kits and supplies are available from retailers across Canada. Ensure that you are able to carry the kit for a significant distance. If you have many people in your household, your emergency kit could get heavy. It’s a good idea to separate some of these supplies in backpacks. That way, your kit will be more portable and each person can personalize his or her own emergency kit.

Critical “Go Bag” (Emergency Kit)

- Water. At least two litres of drinking water per person per day; include small bottles that can be carried easily in case of an evacuation order
- Foods that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods (replace food and water once a year)
- Manual can opener and a small folding knife or multi-tool
- Crank or battery-powered flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Crank or battery-powered radio (and extra batteries)
- First aid kit (including disposable gloves and masks)
- Extra keys to your car and house
- Some cash in smaller bills, such as \$10 bills, and change for payphones
- A copy of your emergency plan, contact information and personal documents
- If applicable, other items such as prescription medication, infant formula, equipment for people with disabilities, or food, water and medication for your pets or service animal. Personalize according to your needs.



Water availability

Your emergency water supply must be prepared prior to an emergency. In certain emergencies, water in your plumbing system would not be drinkable or available. Those on the rural system of wells or cisterns must consider accessibility without power. When in doubt, do not drink water you suspect may be contaminated.

Water purification tablets can reduce the volume of water you may need to carry.

Recommended additional items

- Two additional litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning
- Glow sticks, candles and matches/lighter (place candles in deep, sturdy containers and do not burn unattended)
- Change of clothing and sturdy footwear for each household member
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each household member
- Tent or ground sheet
- Toiletries
- Paper map
- Hand sanitizer
- Utensils
- Garbage bags
- Toilet paper
- Water purification tablets
- Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, work gloves, dust mask, pocket knife)
- A whistle (in case you need to attract attention)
- Playing cards
- Duct tape (to tape up windows, doors, air vents, etc.)

Vehicle Emergency Kit

Prepare a small kit and keep it in your vehicle. This will not only assist you in a declared emergency, but will protect your family in an unexpected breakdown.

The basic vehicle kit should include:

- Food that won't spoil quickly (such as energy bars)
- Water
- Blanket(s)
- Candle in a deep can and matches/lighter
- Extra appropriate clothing and shoes or boots
- First aid kit
- Easily accessible seat-belt cutter
- Flashlight (crank or battery-powered) and spare batteries. Replace batteries yearly.
- List of contact numbers
- Radio (crank or battery-powered). Replace batteries once a year.
- Small shovel, scraper and snowbrush
- Warning light or road flares
- Whistle
- High visibility vest

Seasonality

In Niagara it is important to consider the seasons. Extreme heat or cold and seasonal storms like snowstorms in the winter and tornadoes in the summer can become the emergency itself. It is important to adjust your emergency kit for the various seasons.



Stay visible

In a breakdown or emergency situation, visibility is always a priority and use of a high visibility vest, reflective clothing or a flashlight is recommended when outside of the vehicle.

Recommended additional items to keep in your vehicle:

- Antifreeze, oil, windshield washer fluid
- Fire extinguisher
- Road maps
- Sand, salt or cat litter (non-clumping)
- Tow rope and jumper cables
- Small tool kit
- Hand and feet warmers

Pet emergency kit

- A sturdy crate or carrier
- A strong leash or harness
- ID tag and collar
- Food and water for at least 72 hours (4L/day per average dog, 1L/day per average cat)
- Bowls and can opener for food
- Newspaper, paper towels, plastic bags, litter, and/or litter box
- Special medications, dosage and veterinarian's contact information
- Pet file (including recent photos of the animal, your emergency numbers, contact information for friends who could house your pet, copies of any licences and any vaccination records)
- A pet first-aid kit
- Blanket and toy

Money

Keep some cash on hand (small bills and change), as automated bank machines and their networks may not work during an emergency. You may have difficulty using debit or credit cards.



Stay safe

The following pages provide advice on dealing with specific emergencies.

During and following any emergency, it is important to monitor radio, television and online media for information from authorities. Your municipal and regional government will provide you with information on staying safe during the emergency and will provide advice on recovering from the emergency.

For more information on these and other emergency situations, please refer to the websites at the back of the booklet as well as others to help you best prepare to protect your family.



Power outages

Power outages can last minutes, hours, days or weeks. During a power outage, you may be left without heating/air conditioning, lighting, hot water, or even running water. If you only have a cordless phone, you may also be left without phone service. If you do not have a battery-powered or crank radio, or a charged cell phone, you may have no way of monitoring news broadcasts and emergency information.

During a power outage

- Turn off all appliances and electronic equipment, and turn the thermostat(s) for the home heating system down to a minimum to prevent damage from a power surge when power is restored. Also, power can be restored more easily when there is not a heavy load on the electrical system.
- Turn off all lights, except one inside and one outside, so that both you and hydro crews outside know that power has been restored
- Avoid opening your fridge or freezer
- Never use charcoal or gas barbecues, camping heating equipment, or home generators indoors. They give off carbon monoxide which can cause health problems and is life threatening. Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless.
- Use a battery or crank-powered flashlight as a light source
- If the power outage occurs during the winter, seal off rooms that are not in use to conserve heat
- Listen to your battery or crank-powered radio or check online for information on the outage and advice from authorities

After the power returns

- Give the electrical system a chance to stabilize before turning on appliances. Turn the heating-system thermostats up first, then wait 10 minutes before turning on any other required electronics or appliances.

Hazardous materials

Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE) Incident

Hazardous materials, or CBRNE substances, are a health risk if they are inhaled, ingested or come into contact with skin.

In all cases consider the following:

- Time: minimize exposure to a CBRNE substance
- Distance: remain as far away as possible
- Shielding: protect yourself from the substance

In all situations, monitor radio, television and online sources for information from authorities. They will tell you whether you need to shelter-in-place (see page) or evacuate (see page).

If you are in an enclosed affected area:

- Immediately contact emergency services
- Cover exposed skin and protect your airways (e.g. by using a damp cloth) and minimize contact with the substance
- Turn off or move away from air conditioning or heating vents
- If you experience symptoms of exposure to CBRNE substances (e.g. dizziness, perspiration, vomiting, change in breathing, heart rate, or skin tone), seek immediate medical attention
- You are reminded in a CBRNE situation, to ensure your own safety as the danger may still be present without any signs

If you are in an open affected area:

- Follow the same steps as for an enclosed area
- Move away from the release site as quickly as possible

If you are in your vehicle:

- Keep vehicle vents and windows closed
- Do not use vehicle heating or air conditioning
- Turn on radio and follow instructions from emergency official
- Drive away from the release site



Human-caused events

Terrorism, active shooters and suspicious packages

Canada is a fundamentally safe and peaceful country, but it is important to plan for and discuss these unlikely events with your family. Canada's strategy for terrorism is to prevent, detect, deny, stop and respond. Your role is to be aware and play a vital role in preventing terrorism and other criminal activity by noticing what is around you, and recognizing when something is out of the ordinary. If it is suspicious, report it. For more details and information, go to the resources listed at the back of this booklet.

Although these events remain very improbable, "Run, Hide, Fight" is the standard protocol for active threat (assailant) or any human caused life threatening event. It requires being aware of your surroundings and having previously thought about your responses. In these kinds of events, when exposed to danger:

- Run. Evacuation if possible is always the first choice.
- Hide. Get silently out of view of the threat.
- Fight only as a last resort. Take action to disrupt or incapacitate the threat if your life is in imminent danger.

Suspicious packages could be delivered to your home, workplace or simply placed in a public area. It is good practice to be vigilant and aware of what to do. You know what kind of mail and packages you usually receive. Look for things that are out of the ordinary, such as unexpected mail from a foreign country. The following might help in identifying a suspicious package:

- Unexpected or unfamiliar return address
- Strange odour or noise
- Protruding wires or leaking
- Presence of a powder or a liquid
- Presence of a threatening note
- Excessive wrapping, tape, string or postage
- Misspelled words
- Addressed to a business title only (e.g. Owner)
- Restrictive markings (e.g. Do not X-ray)
- Badly typed or written
- Rigid, lopsided or uneven or bulky letters
- Oily stains, discolouration or crystallization on wrapping

Suspicious packages

If you are worried, leave the package where it is and do not disturb it. Alert others around you to stay away from the area that the package is in.

Call 9-1-1, and wait in a safe place at a safe distance until the police or firefighters arrive. If you have touched suspicious liquid or powder, wash your hand as soon as possible.



Floods

Floods are the most frequent natural hazards in Canada, and the most costly in terms of property damage.

To reduce the likelihood of flood damage

- Consider installing a sump pump and zero reverse flow valves in basement floor drains
- Do not store your important documents in the basement. Keep them at a higher level, protected from flood damage.
- Do not keep valuables including electronics in the basement

If flooding is imminent

- Turn off basement furnaces and outside gas valve if instructed to do so by authorities
- Shut off the electricity only if flooding has not yet begun and the area around the fuse box is completely dry. Have a flashlight with you.
- Do NOT attempt to shut off electricity if any water is present. Water and live electrical wires can be lethal. Leave your home immediately and do not return until authorities indicate it is safe to do so.
- Move furniture, electrical appliances and other belongings to floors above ground level
- Remove toxic substances such as household cleaners, pesticides and insecticides from the flood area to prevent pollution and contamination

During a flood

- Listen to the radio to find out what areas are affected, what roads are safe, where to go and what to do if officials ask you to leave your home
- Keep your emergency kit close at hand, in a portable container
- Do not enter a flooded basement that may contain live wires or appliances
- Never cross a flooded area. If you are on foot, fast water could sweep you away or the ground underneath could have been swept away.
- If you are in a car, do not drive through flood waters or underpasses. The water may be deeper than it looks and your car could get stuck or swept away by fast water.
- Avoid crossing bridges if the water is high and flowing quickly

If you are caught in fast-rising waters and your car stalls, leave it and save yourself and your passengers.

After a flood

- Do not return home until authorities have advised that it is safe to do so
- If the main power switch was not turned off prior to flooding, do not re-enter your home until a qualified electrician has determined it is safe to do so
- Throw out food that has been contaminated or expired if the power was out
- Be aware of the risk of mold
- Use extreme caution when returning to your home after a flood

Blizzards and winter storms

Blizzards are winter weather hazards in which strong winds and falling snow and/or blowing snow are expected to cause widespread visibility reductions to 400 metres or less for a period of at least four hours.

Preparing for a storm

Blizzards can often be forecast several days in advance. Plan ahead and ensure you are prepared for a storm.

- Check that your emergency kit is ready and stocked appropriately for the potential event and the season
- Secure everything that might be blown around or torn loose – indoors and outdoors

Loose objects such as garbage cans and lawn furniture can injure people and damage property if they become airborne.

- Check your roof and keep gutters, downpipes and drains clear
- Ensure you have adequate and appropriate supplies for the storm including shovels and safety salt
- Plan ahead and avoid travel in potential storm events
- Keep pets indoors

If you are inside

- When a winter storm hits, stay indoors if possible
- During the storm, stay away from windows, doors and fireplaces
- Minimize your use of electrical power

If you must go outside

- Be aware that you can become quickly disoriented and may get frostbite and hypothermia
- Dress for the weather. Wear a hooded jacket, hat, mittens and warm footwear.
- Do not try to walk to another building in low visibility without something to guide you

If at all possible avoid driving in potential storm events and ensure your vehicle is properly maintain and equipped, including emergency kit.

If your vehicle becomes stuck

- If it is safe to do so, it is always best to stay in your vehicle
- Alert emergency services

- Allow fresh air in your car by opening the window slightly on the sheltered side—away from the wind
- Use hand and foot warmers as directed. If you run the car engine, you are reminded to limit it to approximately 10 minutes every half-hour if the exhaust system is not blocked with snow. Check the exhaust pipe periodically to make sure it is not blocked. Remember: you can't smell potentially fatal carbon monoxide fumes.
- The candle and metal container from your emergency kit will warm a vehicle interior adequately. When using the candle, remember that the window does need to be slightly open. Please ensure fire safety precautions are used.
- To keep your hands and feet warm, exercise them periodically. In general, it is a good idea to keep moving to avoid falling asleep.
- If you do try to shovel the snow from around your car, avoid overexerting yourself. Overexertion in the bitter cold can cause death as a result of hypothermia from sweating or a heart attack.

Ice storms

Freezing rain is common in Ontario and may result in power outages. Ice, branches or power lines can continue to break and fall for several hours after the end of the precipitation.

What to do

- Stay indoors avoiding parts of the building that objects such as overhanging branches may fall on
- If you must go outside, pay attention to high branches or wires that could break and fall
- Stay well away from power lines, as hanging wires be charged (live). Stay back at least 10 metres (33 feet) from wires and anything in contact with them. Call 9-1-1.
- If it is safe to do so, check on vulnerable neighbours who may need help
- Avoid driving! Wait until roads are safe.





Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms and lightning are common in Niagara. Thunderstorms are often accompanied by high winds, hail, lightning, heavy rain and in rare cases can produce tornadoes.

If you are inside

- Stay indoors
- Listen to weather warnings and advice from authorities on a battery-powered or crank radio
- Unplug radios, televisions and appliances
- Stay away from windows, glass doors, and skylights
- Do not go outside to cover plants, garden furniture or to collect laundry once severe weather begins
- Stay indoors until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last rumble of thunder

If you are outside

- Move indoors immediately
- If shelter is not available, a hard top vehicle will provide the next best shelter, but do not touch any metal surfaces
- In a worst case scenario, if, you are caught in the open during a severe storm, do not lie flat. Crouch down with your feet close together and your head down (the “leap-frog” position). Minimize your contact with the ground and make yourself a smaller target. This reduces the risk of being electrocuted by a ground charge.
- A tree is not a safe shelter as it may be struck by lightning or you may be injured by falling branches
- Avoid water and wet surfaces since water conducts electricity

Tornadoes

Tornadoes are rotating columns of high wind. Canada gets more tornadoes than any other country with the exception of the United States, averaging about 50 tornadoes per year.

Monitor watches and warnings and stay alert for the warning signs of a potential tornado:

- A severe thunderstorm
- An extremely dark sky sometimes with a green or yellow tint
- Hail, particularly large hail
- A roaring, rumbling or whistling sound often described as sounding like a freight train
- Low rotating clouds
- A funnel cloud at the rear base of a thundercloud, often behind a curtain of heavy rain or hail

Points to remember

- A tornado is deceptive. It may appear to be standing still but may in fact be moving toward you.
- Not all tornadoes can be easily seen before it is too late to take shelter. Many of the tornadoes that occur in Southern Ontario may be hidden behind heavy rain and not immediately visible.
- Not all tornadoes have a clearly visible funnel cloud

Inside a building

- Go to the basement. If the building does not have a basement, take shelter in an interior room on the lowest level, such as a bathroom, closet or hallway. You want to avoid exterior walls.
- Stay away from windows, outside walls, fireplaces and doors
- Take shelter under a heavy table or desk if possible
- Crouch down and cover your head with a pillow, blanket, or something similar. If nothing is available, cover your head with your arms.
- Do not leave your shelter until the warning has been lifted for your area
- If you are in a building such as a mobile home or a portable, seek shelter in a sturdy building

Earthquakes

Earthquakes can occur in any Canadian region, and Niagara is no exception. No one can predict with certainty when an earthquake will occur.

During an earthquake

Wherever you are when an earthquake starts, take cover immediately. Stay there until the shaking stops.

If you are indoors: “DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON”

- Drop under heavy furniture, such as a table, desk, bed or any solid furniture.
- Cover your head to prevent being hit by falling objects
- Hold on to the object that you are under to stay covered
- If you are in a hallway or can't get under something strong, crouch or flatten yourself against an interior wall
- Seek shelter by following drop, cover and hold immediately when the shaking starts. Do not attempt to run outside as you are more likely to be injured by falling debris from the exterior of the building.

If you are outside

- Stay outside
- Stay away from power lines and buildings
- Go to an open area

If you are in a vehicle

- Safely stop and park the car. Stay inside.
- Avoid bridges, overpasses, underpasses, buildings or anything that could collapse
- Listen to your car radio for instructions from emergency official

AVOID the following in an earthquake

- Doorways. Doors may slam shut and cause injuries.
- Windows, bookcases, tall furniture and light fixtures. You could be hurt by shattered glass or heavy objects.
- Elevators. If you are in an elevator during an earthquake, press the button for every floor and get out as soon as you can.
- Downed power lines. Stay at least 10 metres (33 feet) away to avoid injury.



After an earthquake

Stay calm. Help others if you are able to do so safely

Be prepared for aftershocks

- Do not light any matches or turn on light switches. Any flame or spark can cause an explosion if there is a gas leak.
- Exit your home and check for damage. If you suspect the structure is unsafe, or there is a gas leak, evacuate your home.
- If you feel it is safe to stay where you are, monitor radio, television and online sources for instructions from authorities.
- If tap water is available, fill the bathtub or containers in case the supply gets cut off

Recovering from an emergency

After an emergency

- Stay calm
- Help others if you are able to do so safely. Check on neighbours, especially the elderly or people with disabilities.
- Use a battery-powered or crank radio or a cell phone with data to listen for information and instructions
- Keep phone lines free for urgent calls
- If you are inside, check the building for structural damage. If you suspect it is unsafe, leave and do not re-enter.
- Use a flashlight to inspect your house for damage. Do not turn on light switches or light matches until you are sure that there aren't any gas leaks.
- Check for damaged utilities. If you suspect damage, contact your utility company.

Your Emergency Plan

Safe home

Location of emergency kit:

Locations of fire extinguishers:

Water valve location:

Water company phone number:

Instructions to turn water off:

Electrical panel location:

Utility company phone number:

Instructions to turn electricity off:

Gas valve location:

Utility company phone number:

(Shut off gas only when authorities tell you to do so)

Instructions to turn gas off:

Floor drain location:

(Always make sure the drain area is clear of boxes, furniture, etc., in case of flooding).

Meeting places

Safe meeting places near home:

Safe meeting place outside immediate neighbourhood:

Evacuation routes from neighbourhood:

Children

School contact information:

Emergency contact person 1:

Phone:

Emergency contact person 2:

Phone:

Plan for pets

Pet-friendly locations:

Important health information

Health card #:

Private medical insurance:

Policy #

Family doctor

Phone number:

Address:

Allergies:

Details:

Medical equipment /assistive devices:

Update your emergency plan

Write yourself a reminder to update your emergency plan one year from now. On this date next year, review your contact information, practice your emergency evacuation plans, change the batteries in your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector, and restock your kit. Change the batteries, food and water in your emergency kits once a year.

Family member: _____
Prescription # _____
Name of medication: _____
Dosage: _____
Purpose: _____

Family member: _____
Prescription # _____
Name of medication: _____
Dosage: _____
Purpose: _____

Family member: _____
Prescription # _____
Name of medication: _____
Dosage: _____
Purpose: _____

Family member: _____
Prescription # _____
Name of medication: _____
Dosage: _____
Purpose: _____

Family member: _____
Prescription # _____
Name of medication: _____
Dosage: _____
Purpose: _____

Emergency contact information

Photocopy this list. Put a copy close to your telephone. If possible, program these phone numbers into your home phone and cell phone.

Emergency numbers

Police, Fire, Ambulance: 9-1-1

Non-emergency numbers

Police: For non-emergency calls or for general information, do not dial 9-1-1. Use the Niagara Regional Police Service number for your area and follow the instructions given by the automated attendant:

- St. Catharines, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls, and Thorold, call 905-688-4111
- Fort Erie, call 905-871-2300
- Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln, call 905-945-2211
- For Welland, Wainfleet, Pelham and Port Colborne, call 905-735-7811

Police (Other): _____

Fire: For non-emergency calls to Fire Services Dispatch for St. Catharines, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thorold, Welland, Wainfleet, Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Pelham, Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln, call 905-684-4311.

For non-emergency calls to Fire Services Dispatch for Niagara Falls call 905-356-1321.

Fire (Other): _____

Doctor: _____

Poison control: _____

Out-of-town contact

Name: _____

Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Email: _____

Home address: _____

Family

Name: _____

Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Email: _____

Home address: _____

Friend/neighbour

Name: _____

Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Cell phone: _____

Email: _____

Home address: _____

Home/auto/boat insurance

Company name: _____

Agent: _____

Phone number: _____

Policy #: _____

Home security system

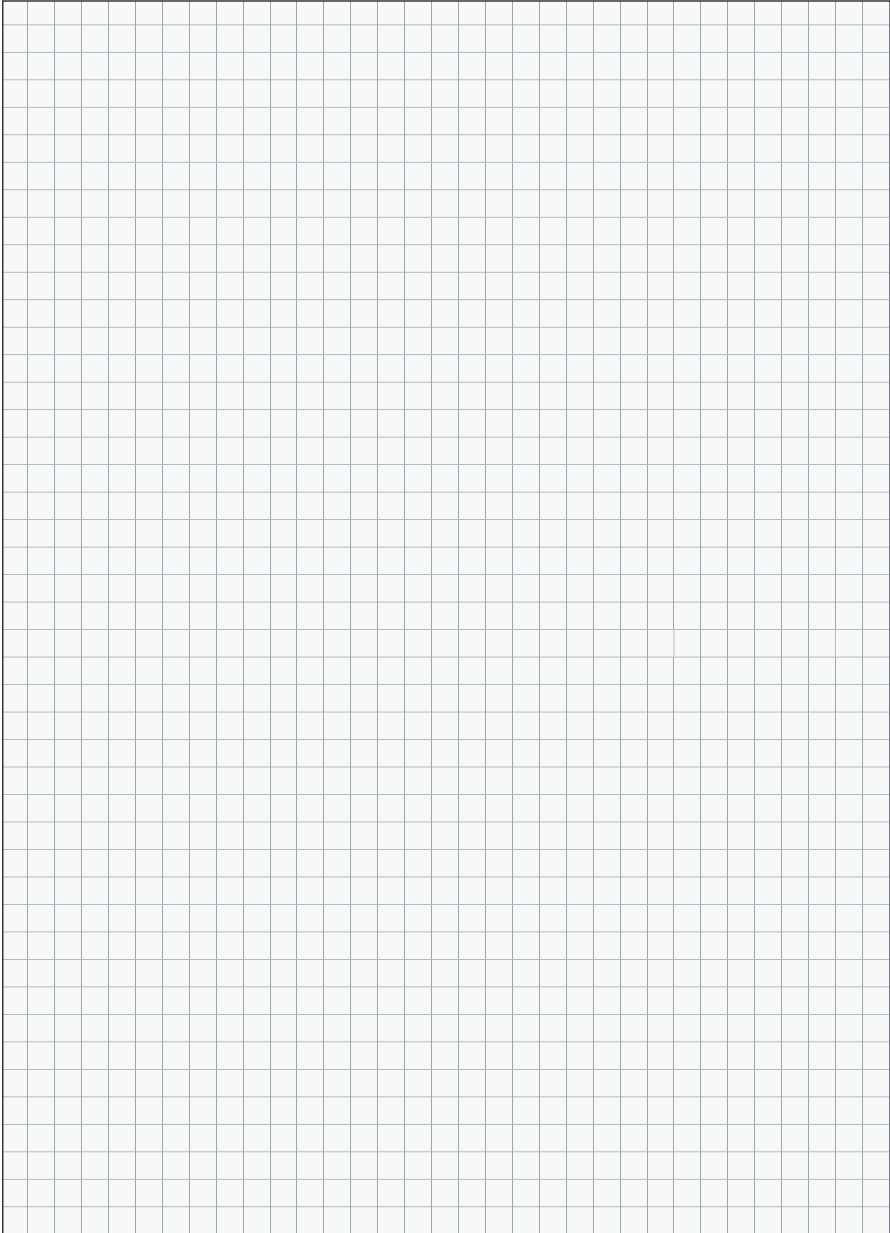
Company name: _____

Code: _____

Other _____

Home escape plan

Use this grid to create your home escape plan



Resources

To learn more about emergency preparedness, visit the following sites:

Niagara Region

Website: www.niagararegion.ca

Email: cemc@niagararegion.ca

Ontario Fire Marshal and Emergency Management

Websites: www.emergencymanagementontario.ca

www.emergencymanagementontario.ca/english/beprepared/beprepared.html

Public Safety Canada

Websites: www.getprepared.ca

www.publicsafety.gc.ca

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Website: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/qc/pub/sn-ns/sn-ns-eng.htm

National security tip line: 1-800-420-5805

Canadian Red Cross

Website: www.redcross.ca

Environment Canada Weather Office

Website: www.weatheroffice.gc.ca

Salvation Army

Website: www.salvationarmy.ca

St. John Ambulance

Website: www.sja.ca

Niagara CAER Group (Chemical Manufacturing Firms)

Website: www.niagaracaer.com

**When you don't know
where to turn.™**



Important contacts

Niagara Region	905-685-1571
2-1-1 Emergency Information.....	2-1-1
Ministry of Transportation Roads Report.....	5-1-1
Enbridge Gas	1-866-SMELGAS 1-866-763-5427

Local media

During an emergency listen to your radio and television for information and instructions from authorities.

Local radio stations include:

CKTB 610 AM	EZ Rock 105.7	Giant FM 91.7
97.7 HTZ FM	105.1EdFM	Z 101.1FM

Local television stations include:

CHCH TV

TV Cogeco Niagara

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