

Spotlight on Health and Safety

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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

If you or your family are caught in an emergency or disaster, are you prepared? If an emergency happens in your community it is recommended that you should be prepared to take care of yourself and family for a minimum of 72 hours. Your best defence in any emergency is having a plan and being familiar with what to do.

Know the risks – In Alberta we face a number of hazards, such as natural emergencies like forest fire and floods, service disruptions like a power failure, or even environmental disasters like a chemical spill.

You can download the Alberta Emergency Management Alert App that gives notice of threats to life, property and safety at <http://www.emergencyalert.alberta.ca/content/about/signup.html> and view the Public Safety Canada brochures on specific risks at <https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/>.

Make a plan – Every household needs an emergency plan. It will assist you and your family to know what to do in case of an emergency. Discuss what you would do in different situations as well as how to meet or contact each other if you're not together when an emergency occurs. Consider what to do if you need to stay put or if you need to leave your home. Include a list of emergency management agencies in your area.

Alberta Health Services has a planning guide created by Emergency/Disaster Management and Workplace Health & Safety at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/hi-hw-disaster-preparedness-guide.pdf>.

Make an emergency kit – In an emergency you will need some basic supplies. You may be without power or tap water. Always have items ready such as non-perishable food, water, flashlight, first aid kit and seasonally appropriate clothing. Also consider any special needs supplies such as requirements for any infants or elderly family members, remember any medications, and necessities for pets. Make sure the kit is organized and easy to find and that everyone knows where it is.

Children's fears will be lowered if they understand the dangers of hazardous situations and are comfortable with your family's plan. Create awareness by researching, talking and practicing your plan.