

Milwaukee County Department on Aging



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Aging Resource Center of Milwaukee County

FAMILY EMERGENCY PLANNING

Planning for any emergency requires considering all likely scenarios that could result when things that you rely on daily – like electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, telephone service, and transportation – are disrupted or lost for a considerable amount of time. Consequently, you should plan on having food, water, and other essentials to get you through the emergency. Most emergency management planners suggest having enough supplies to last you and your family for three to five days for weather-related events. However, many things may impact your decision, including storage space, special needs, number of people in the household, and available resources.

Evacuation

Notification to evacuate may come via radio, TV, vehicle loudspeaker, door to door by law enforcement or fire department, or outdoor siren. If you are told to evacuate, remain calm and follow all instructions. Tune to your Emergency Alert System (EAS) station (WTMJ 620 AM). If immediate evacuation is ordered, things you will need are: family disaster supply kit (which should be pre-packed); check book, cash, credit cards; car keys; medications; formula and personal needs; shut off all vents; close and lock all doors and windows; and remain calm – evacuate the house.

Shelter-In-Place

If you are told to shelter-in-place, follow these guidelines:

- Get family and pets inside.
- Close doors, windows, fireplace damper.
- Turn off air conditioning, fans, heating units, and other vents.
- Go to an upper room with the fewest windows or doors.
- Take your Shelter-In-Place kit with you.
- Wet towels and jam them in the crack under the doors.
- Use plastic (trash bags are good) to cover all windows, doors, exhaust fans, vents, electrical outlets, and heat/air registers.
- Use tape to seal the edges of the plastic.
- Close blinds, shades, drapes, and stay away from windows if told an explosion is possible.
- If fumes seep into room, breathe through wet cloths to nose and mouth.

Remain in the room and listen to your Emergency Alert System (EAS) station (WTMJ 620 AM) on your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.

Your Emergency Preparedness Kit

The six basic items that should be stored in your home are water, food, first-aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools, emergency supplies and specialty items. Keep the items that you would most likely need at home in one easy-to-carry container such as a trashcan, camping backpack, or duffel bag. Store it in a convenient place, and put a smaller version in your car.

Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Remember to change the stored water and rotate the food supplies every three to six months (place dates on containers). Check the supplies and rethink your needs every year. Consult your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications, and maintain a list of your prescription needs.

Water

Store water in plastic containers with tight fitting lids – do not use containers that held milk or meat products – or purchase bottled water, avoiding containers that will decompose or break, such as glass bottles. Plan for one gallon of water per person per day. Water should be stored in a cool, dark place with the date labeled on the container.

Food

Store a supply of **three to five days'** worth of non-perishable food per person. Foods should require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking, and little or no water. Examples include: ready to eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables; canned or boxed juices, milk and soup; condiments such as sugar, salt and pepper; high-energy food like peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars and trail mix; vitamins, foods for infants or persons on special diets, cookies, hard candy, instant coffee, and sweetened cereals. Bulk food items such as wheat, powdered milk, corn, and soybeans can be stored for long periods of time.

First-Aid Kit

Assemble a first-aid kit for your home and each vehicle. Items should include sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, gauze pads, hypo-allergenic adhesive tape, triangular bandages, sterile roller bandages, scissors, tweezers, needle, moistened towelettes, antiseptic thermometer, tongue blades, tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant, safety pins, cleansing soap, latex gloves, and sunscreen. Also, aspirin, antidiarrheal medication, Syrup of Ipecac, activated charcoal (for poisoning), and laxatives.

Tools and Supplies

Keep the following items handy for all-around use: extra batteries of assorted sizes (check shelf life before purchasing), mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, battery-operated radio, flashlight, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, cash (include change) and/or traveler's checks, non-electric can opener and utility knife, small ABC fire extinguisher, tube tent, pliers, compass, waterproof matches, plastic storage containers, signal flares, paper and pencil, needles and thread, medicine dropper, shut-off wrench for house gas and water, whistle, plastic sheeting and local map. For sanitation, pack toilet paper, soap and liquid detergent, feminine supplies, plastic garbage bags with ties, a plastic bucket and lid, disinfectant and chlorine bleach.

Clothing and Bedding

Assemble one or two complete changes of clothing per person, sturdy shoes or work boots, rain gear, blankets or sleeping bags, hat and gloves, and thermal underwear.

Specialty Items

Babies – formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk, medication, and, if applicable, favorite blanket or stuffed animal.

Adults – medications, prescriptions, denture needs, eyeglasses and/or contact lenses, and related supplies.

Entertainment – games, books, and several quiet toys for children.

Important Family Documents – wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, passports, Stocks/bonds, immunization records, important phone numbers, credit card accounts, social security cards, veterinarian records, and other family records.

Public Emergency Shelters

When conditions warrant, the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department's Division of Emergency Management, along with the American Red Cross, may establish community-based shelters for local residents. Normally, shelters are setup in public schools, recreation centers, or other appropriate facilities where residents can seek refuge. The Milwaukee County Department of Human Services, assisted by the Greater Milwaukee Chapter of the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Public Health Departments, and volunteers, operate the shelters. Persons needing shelter are asked to bring blankets, pillows, a change of clothing, bathing and sanitary supplies, pre-filled prescriptions and other medical needs, denture and eye care materials, and special dietary supplies or requirements. *With the exception of service animals, pets are prohibited from shelters.*

What To Do For Pets In Emergencies

Emergency planning should include all members of the family, including pets. If your family must relocate to a shelter or other site, confine your pet (if appropriate) to a specific room in the house and provide plenty of food and water to sustain the animal while you are away.

If possible, arrange for someone to board the animal, or locate a relative or friend who can check on its well being on a regular basis. If you place a dog or cat in a kennel, make sure that the facility meets all requirements for long-term care and has an adequate disaster plan itself. If you take your pet with you, you will need:

- An airline-approved carrier for each dog or cat, or other pets, with ID, photo, vaccination records, registrations, special needs list, sufficient medicines and a muzzle or leash.
- An extra supply of pet food and water (for dogs, a lower protein dog formula will produce less stool, a benefit when kept indoors).
- Bowls (disposable containers if you must leave your residence), can opener, kitchen trash bags, bleach (disinfectant and water purification), blankets, towels, paper towels, and other waste disposal supplies.

For more information on emergency preparedness for pets, call the Humane Society of Wisconsin at 961-0310 or the Humane Society of the United States at (202) 452-1100.

What to do When Electrical Power is Lost

Disruption of electrical service can occur as a result of many things, including lightning, high winds, ice and heavy snow, and equipment failure. For the most part, service is normally restored within a short period of time. However, major power outages can happen for extended periods from time to time. When power is lost you should:

Check to see if your neighbors have power.

It may be only in your home; a blown fuse or a tripped circuit. If your neighbors are also without service, call your local power company. If you must go outside to assess the situation, take a flashlight and watch for downed power lines that could still be energized. If downed lines are located, don't go near them or touch anything that they may be in contact with. Report downed power lines immediately.

Turn off all major appliances.

Leave a couple of light switches on in the home and the front porch light. When appliances (refrigerators, electric water heaters, air conditioners, and pumps) are left on, they may overload electric lines when power's restored causing a second outage.

Refrigerators and freezers.

Food can be kept cold enough for a day or two, if the doors are kept closed. During the winter, you may be able to store some items outside in a proper container. If temperatures are below freezing, it's possible to freeze water outside in containers and place them inside your refrigerator to help keep food cold. Try to consume perishable foods first. Some partially frozen foods can be refrozen as long as they contain ice crystals or are no warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Consider purchasing a thermometer for both the refrigerator and freezer. Don't refreeze seafood, poultry, ice cream, cream sauces, or anything susceptible to spoilage.

WHEN IN DOUBT. . THROW IT OUT.

During times of prolonged outages, dry ice may be purchased.

(check in the Yellow Pages under "Ice"). Bring an ice cooler or suitable container to transport it back home. (Do not touch dry ice . . . wear heavy-duty gloves). As a rule of thumb, 25 pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer at the proper temperature (32 degrees) for three to four days.

Water systems with electric pumps will not operate when power's out.

Use alternate sources of water until the power is restored. Possible alternative water sources could be the water in your water heater, water in your pipes, or, even possibly, water in a waterbed (although this would not be drinkable water).

Gas appliances may not work if the electricity is off because the equipment may require electricity for ignition or valve operation.

Electric water heaters that are drained to prevent damage from freezing must have their power circuit shut off as well. Failure to do so could result in loss of the heating element when power is restored. Never turn on a water heater unless the tank is full.

Plumbing can freeze when power is lost during cold weather periods.

Drain pumps supply lines, water heaters, boilers, and traps in drains of tubs, sinks, commodes, washing machines, and dishwashers. To avoid major flooding when temperatures rise, turn off supply lines to outside spigots.

Life support equipment required for family members who depend on these devices (respirators, ventilators, oxygen equipment, or other life-sustaining devices) should be listed with the power company with your doctor's approval. You should have a contingency plan that always includes an alternate power source for the device and relocating the person.

Trees are the primary cause of power outages in Milwaukee County. Power companies have regularly scheduled programs for trimming trees. When planting and/or trimming trees on your property, always seek professional help in trimming limbs or branches that are close to power lines.

Keeping Warm

Select a single room in the home in which the entire family can live, ideally a room that gets sunlight during daylight hours. Use fireplaces and wood-burning stoves with care, and always supervise them when burning. Make sure the fireplace is in proper working condition and has been inspected before use. Wear layers of clothing, including sweaters and coats, which entraps warm air and helps to maintain body heat for longer periods. For homes with natural gas heaters, keep meters and vents clear of ice and snow. Also, basements maintain a livable temperature for several hours without heat. Safety Note: Alternative heat source and power supply.

The Milwaukee County Fire Chief's Association strongly discourages the use of alternative heat and power sources.

Never use gas ovens or stovetops to heat homes; also charcoal or propane grills should not be used inside the home or garage. They pose a serious threat of fire and creation of poisonous carbon monoxide. When removing ashes from the fireplace, make sure that the ashes have been cooled, and are placed in a metal container outside and away from the home or other structures. Under no circumstances should portable generators be used indoors, including inside a garage. Many home fires and deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning have occurred from using a generator improperly.

Adequate ventilation is necessary and proper-refueling practices as described in the owner's manual must be followed. Be sure to let the generator cool down before refueling. Do not store generator fuel in a garage, basement, or anywhere inside a home, as vapors can be released that are a potential fire or explosion hazard or vapors may cause injury or illness. Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can, out of doors. Local laws may restrict the amount of fuel you may store, and the storage location. Ask your local fire department for additional information about local regulations.

Hooking up a generator to your home's electrical service is not a wise idea. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. DO NOT connect a cord from the generator to a point on the permanent home wiring system. Unless disconnect switching equipment was installed into your home's electrical service to isolate the generator from the incoming main power lines, power from a generator could "backfeed" into the electric main line. "Backfeeding" causes electrical power from a generator at the residence to go onto the electric utility lines and can endanger the building's occupants and can cause a serious hazard to electric utility workers, your neighbors, or you.

Keeping Updated During An Emergency

Getting information during an emergency situation is vital, especially at the height of the event when evacuation may be required. Radio and television stations provide the quickest means to obtain information. If you have electrical power and cable television, turn to the local stations or The Weather Channel for frequent updates. Have a batteryoperated radio tuned to a local all-news or talk-radio station.

Check on Relatives and Neighbors

During storms and other emergency events, check to see how your relatives and neighbors are coping, especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities. If possible, consider helping them use the following resources from which to obtain assistance.

Important Phone Numbers

Emergencies (Fire/Rescue, Police): **911**
American Red Cross: 342-8680
The Salvation Army (Milwaukee): 414 265 - 6360
24-hour Community Help/Crisis Hotline: 211
Poison Center: 1 – 800 – 222 - 1222
Humane Society of Milwaukee: 414 961-0310

Non-Emergency Law Enforcement Agency Telephone Numbers

Department	Non-Emergency Number	Department	Non-Emergency Number
Sheriff's Office	278-4700	Milwaukee	933-4444
Bayside	351-8808	Oak Creek	762-8200
Brown Deer	357-0127	River Hills	352-8211
Cudahy	769-2260	Shorewood	332-0595
Fox Point	351-8914	So. Milwaukee	762-1965
Franklin	425-2522	St. Francis	481-2232
Glendale	228-1753	Wauwatosa	471-8430
Greendale	23-2121	West Allis	302-8000
Greenfield	761-5300	West Milwaukee	645-2151
Hales Corners	529-6140	Whitefish Bay	962-3830

Readiness Disclosure

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