

Ontario Seniors: How to Be Prepared for an Emergency

The people of Ontario have faced all kinds of emergencies, from ice storms and power outages to tornadoes and industrial accidents. We will face more in the future.

Emergencies can strike at any time, and being prepared is critical since it can take time for help to arrive. Everyone should have an emergency plan and a kit to take care of themselves for at least three days.

Your emergency plan should reflect your personal circumstances and unique needs.

How to Use This Guide

This part of the guide contains information to help you prepare an emergency plan and a three-day survival kit. The second part is a form you can fill out with important information for an emergency.

Step 1 – Make a Plan

In an emergency, you may not have access to everyday conveniences, and you may be asked to evacuate your home. Thinking about what you would do is the first step to being prepared.

Your Plan Should Include

- **Two safe locations** in case you have to leave your home. One should be nearby, such as a local library or community centre. The other one should be farther away, outside your neighbourhood, in case the emergency affects a large area.
- **A family communication plan.** During an emergency, local telephone lines and networks may not work. Identify one or two out-of-town contacts you and your loved ones can call to connect and share information.
- A list of the people in **your personal support network.** This includes all the people who will be able to help when you need it. Consider including family members, neighbours, and health-care and personal support workers.

Step 1 – Make a Plan



Planning Tips

Contact service providers. If someone in your home gets routine treatment outside the home or support services at home, work with the service provider on a back-up plan.

Have a buddy. Consider giving an extra set of keys to someone you trust and let them know where you keep your emergency kit. Arrange for that person to check on you during an emergency.

Be ready to evacuate. Plan how you would travel to a safe location if evacuation was advised. Have an emergency survival kit ready (see Step 2).

Plan for your pet(s). Often, only service animals are allowed at reception centres. If possible, identify someone who can take your pet(s) if you have to leave your home.

Consider your living situation. Do you live in an isolated community? In a high-rise? Do you or someone you live with have limited mobility? Be familiar with evacuation plans, and talk to your building manager or neighbours to make special arrangements, if necessary.

When Your Plan Is Ready

- **Discuss your plan with family and friends** so they know what you would do.
- **Teach others about any special needs**, such as how to use medical equipment or administer medicine.
- **Practice your plan** with those who have agreed to be part of your personal support network.
- **Be aware and follow instructions.** Stay tuned to the news before and during an emergency. Follow the advice of first responders and officials.

Other Tips

- **Contact your local municipal office** to find out what phone number to use to get more information during an emergency (211, 311 or other). Also ask if they have a registry for “vulnerable persons” and whether you should sign up. Use 911 *only* when someone needs help right away to protect their health, safety or property.
- **Sign up for alerts.** You can sign up online for free emergency alerts sent by email or text message. Visit [Ontario.ca/beprepared](https://ontario.ca/beprepared) and follow the links.

Step 2 – Build an Emergency Kit

Your emergency survival kit should have everything you need to be safe and take care of yourself for at least three days. These checklists outline all the essentials, items to meet your unique needs, and items to have ready in case you have to leave your home.

What to Put in Your Survival Kit

Essentials

- Food (non-perishable and easy-to-prepare items, enough for 3 days) and can opener
- Water (4 litres per person for each day)
- Medication(s)
- Flashlight
- Radio (crank or battery-run)
- Extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Hand sanitizer or moist towelettes
- Important papers (identification, contact lists, copies of prescriptions, etc.)
- Extra car keys and cash
- Whistle (to attract attention if needed)

Special Considerations

- Medical supplies and equipment (cane, walker, hearing aid and batteries, breathing device, etc.)
- Prescription eyewear and footwear
- Dentures and supplies
- Pet food and supplies

Extra Supplies for Evacuation

- Clothes, shoes
- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Personal items (soap, toothpaste, other toiletries)
- Playing cards or travel game

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