

Northlake Fire Protection District Emergency Preparedness Guide

March 2004

Preface

This guide is meant to give basic information on what to do in case of an emergency. Our world is changing and with these changes come complex issues and worries of all matters of disaster.

There are several excellent Government Websites available for detailed information on preparedness in the event of all types of disasters. A list of these websites will appear at the end of this guide.

Included is information on types of disasters and a guide to the development of an Emergency Plan and Kit

Please take the time to read and follow the instructions on preparedness...the time you spend now just may save your life.

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In Case of Emergency

Although emergencies come in many different forms, there are some basic rules to follow no matter what the situation.

Stay calm. Try not to panic, take a deep breath and assess the situation. Try to focus on what you need to do next to avoid making the matter worse.

Check Your Surroundings. Are you safe where you are? Is there someone nearby that could help you or someone that may need your help? Can you move to a safer place?

Call for Help. Are you hurt? Do you or others need medical assistance? Call 911, explain your situation and location to the dispatcher, if danger still exists in the area make sure that the dispatcher is aware of the entire situation.

Tune in for official emergency announcements. If you are near a radio or TV, listen for emergency updates and instructions.

If evacuation is needed: If authorities issue an evacuation order, leave immediately, follow exact evacuation routes, and do not gather belongings or personal mementos. If time allows bring your Emergency Kit and after evacuating, get in touch with your family's emergency contact person to alert them of your location and condition.

Be Prepared

An emergency is something that happens all of a sudden. Once it occurs, there is little or no time to prepare for it. If you spend a little time now to prepare, it may save you anguish later. Of course, it is our hope and yours that an Emergency Plan and Kit are never needed, but in the event it is, the steps you take now may make all the difference for your well being.

Emergency Plan

Talk with your family about why and how you need to prepare for disaster emergencies:

- ✓ Discuss with family and/or business associates the most likely sort of emergency in your area.
- ✓ Make a list of emergency phone numbers and family contacts. Place a copy of this list in a place easy to find at a moments notice.
- ✓ Teach children how and when to dial 911.
- ✓ Know the disaster plans of your children's school, daycare center or your place of business, etc.; be sure all have an emergency contact number.
- ✓ Location, location, location, plan ahead where will the family meet. Pick two locations one perhaps a neighbors home in case of a house fire, the second outside your neighborhood in case of a disaster that will not allow you to return to your home.
- ✓ Designate a friend or relative outside your neighborhood, as an emergency contact number. Make sure everyone has this person's phone number and use number to call in and relate information as to your whereabouts and condition.
- ✓ Do you know someone with special needs; think ahead about the safety needs of small children, disabled individuals, the elderly and pets.

- ✓ Important documents should be kept in a secure location. Place documents in a safe deposit box or other location that may withstand the disaster. You will not have time to gather documents at the time of the emergency; if they are in a secure location you will be able to retrieve them when needed.
- Get an Emergency Kit ready (see checklist that follows).

Emergency Kit

An Emergency Kit prepared ahead of time will be a very comforting item in your time of need. You will want to include enough supplies to allow you to withstand at least three days without food, power or water. Store these supplies in a waterproof easy to carry container, such as a backpack or duffel bag. Be sure that all items are non-perishable and the lighter the better.

Sample kit:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) for drinking and cooking
- Non-perishable foods that do not require preparation or cooking (e.g., canned fruits and vegetables, cereals etc.) Use or replace them every 6 months if possible. Make sure to include a can opener if needed.
- One change of sturdy clothes and shoes, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- Battery powered radio, flashlights (with extra batteries), utility knife, disposable dishes and silverware, a lighter and/or matches
- Personal Identification, passport, type of money (credit card, checkbook, traveler's checks), extra house and car keys
- Copies of birth certificates, medical information etc.
- Sanitation supplies such as toilet paper, hand wipes diapers, tampons or sanitary pads, plastic trash bags.
- Special items for young children, elderly or disabled family members, and pets as needed.
- A basic first aid kit that includes your prescription medications, bandages in assorted sizes, safety pins, cleanser/soap, latex gloves, gauze pads, scissors, tweezers, sewing needle, thread, alcohol wipes, burn cream, oral thermometer, non-aspirin pain reliever, antacid, cotton balls or swabs.

The items listed are for a general kit, the kit should be personalized according to family needs.

When Disaster Strikes

The skies are threatening and you do not know what is coming to your area. What should you do? Turn on the radio or TV. Weather warnings will usually be given on television and radio. A “severe weather watch” means a severe storm might develop. A “severe weather warning” means that severe weather has already developed, and that you should seek shelter right away.

A siren may sound. If you hear a warning siren, seek shelter immediately as the siren will indicate that a threatening condition is imminent. (Keep in mind that warning sirens are tested on a regular basis on the first Tuesday of each month in Northlake at 10:00am).

Floods: Floods can occur quickly and can be dangerous because of fast moving waters. If there is a flood warning or you believe a flood will happen soon:

- Save yourself, not your belongings
- Stay away from floodwaters – even water just six inches deep can knock you off your feet.
- Do not let children play in or near floodwaters, flooded creeks or flood retention ponds.
- Never try to drive through floodwaters – if your car stalls, leave it and head for higher ground on foot.
- Once you are in a safe place, listen to a battery-powered radio for official updates or wait for emergency workers to give you instructions.

Thunderstorms: All thunderstorms produce lightning that can cause death or serious injury. Lightning can strike from up to 5 to 10 miles away, even if it is not raining and is sunny where you are. If there is a thunderstorm warning, or if you see or hear a storm coming in the distance, follow these steps:

- Seek shelter. Immediately, go inside a home, building or vehicle right away
- Close all windows and doors; draw the shades or blinds to reduce the risk from flying glass if window or door glass breaks due to high winds.
- If you’re outside, drop to a crouching position with your feet on the ground and close together.
- Stay away from trees, metal objects, and power lines, and do not use appliances such as phones, televisions, or computers that could carry the lightning current into your home or office.

Tornadoes: Tornadoes produce very high winds in funnel-shaped clouds that can lift and move heavy objects such as buildings and cars. They can move extremely fast and do a lot of damage to people and property. If there is a tornado warning, or if you see a tornado coming or hear a tornado siren, follow these steps:

- If you are outside, try to seek shelter in a house or other building (but not a car or trailer) right away; if there is no shelter nearby, lie flat, face down, in a ditch or low area and cover your head until the tornado passes.
- If you are already inside, move to the basement, or to a room or hallway near the center of the building. Stay away from windows and doors, and listen for official updates.

- If in a high-rise building, go to small, interior rooms or hallways on the lowest level possible.
- Avoid places with wide-span roofs, such as auditoriums, cafeterias, gymnasiums and large hallways.
- If you are in a vehicle, get out and lie flat, face down, in a ditch or low area and cover your head until the tornado passes – do not stay in your car or try to out drive a tornado!

Winter Storms: Winter storms can be dangerous because they leave people stranded in their homes or cars and sometimes without power. If there is a winter storm warning, you believe a storm is headed your way, or you are already stranded by one:

- If already inside, get your Emergency Kit and listen for official updates.
- Do not travel unless you really have to, and if you do, try to take public transportation.
- Stay indoors and dress warmly – if you must go outside, wear enough clothing to keep you warm and dry (e.g., hat, boots, mittens or gloves, extra layers).
- Eat and drink liquids on a regular basis
- Conserve heat and fuel – keep the thermostat at 65 degrees or less during the day and 55 degrees at night, close off unused rooms, stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors, and cover windows at night.
- If you get stranded in your car or other vehicle, stay with your vehicle, and hang a brightly colored cloth on the radio antenna. Turn on the engine for about 10 minutes each hour (or 5 minutes every half hour) to keep warm, but make sure the tailpipe is clear of snow and that you leave a window open a bit to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Fires/Explosions: Fires can cause death and serious injury to people because of burns and the breathing in of smoke. Explosions may occur on their own or as part of a larger fire, and can also do a lot of damage to people and property. If you hear a fire alarm or smoke detector, see a fire, or see or smell smoke, follow these steps:

- Escape the building as fast as you can, then call 911 from a phone outside of the building (cell or neighbor).
- If a stove fire starts, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner. Never pour water on grease fires – this will make the fire spread.
- If you try to use a fire extinguisher on a small fire and the fire does not go out right away, drop the extinguisher, get out of the building and call 911.
- Before opening doors – feel a closed door, cracks, and doorknob with the back of your hand before you open it. If it is cool and there is no smoke at the bottom or top, open it slowly. If it is warm or you see smoke at the cracks, you need to find another way out.
- Stay low – if your only way out is through smoke, crawl on the floor under the smoke to get to your exit.
- If the smoke is too thick, or heat or flames block your exit, stay in a room with the door closed and window open, and hang a sheet outside the window so firefighters can find you.
- Once you are out of the building, stay out!
- Meet family members at your pre-designated meeting area

Toxic/Chemical Events: Dangerous amounts of chemicals can be released into the environment from industrial accidents, or on purpose, as happened in Japan when nerve gas was released in the subway system. These events can cause fires or explosions, and can be very poisonous to people and animals.

- If you receive any threat about a toxic spill or release, or see strange activity that you believe may be part of a chemical event, call 911 right away!
- If you live or work near the scene of a chemical event that is not in your building, stay where you are, listen for emergency updates, and wait for instructions from emergency workers or police before leaving the area.
- If you are right at the scene of a chemical event, get yourself and others far away from the spill or leak, and then call 911. Try to stay upwind and wait in a safe place nearby for emergency workers to arrive. Watch for signs of toxic poisoning (e.g., trouble breathing, dizziness, irritated eyes, skin or throat, stomach cramps or diarrhea) and report conditions to emergency workers.
- Avoid breathing in fumes or smoke by covering your mouth with your hand or a cloth. Do not touch, taste, sniff or put your eyes near any real or suspected chemical substance.
- Pour cold water over yourself or others who have come in contact with chemicals. Remove any contaminated clothing. If you don't have water, brush chemicals off of skin with a glove, plastic bag or cloth.
- If you are outside, try to stay upstream, uphill, and upwind of the incident.
- If you are told by local officials to "shelter in place" (i.e., remain in your home or office), turn off all heating and air conditioning systems, get your Emergency Kit, and go to an interior room (preferably without windows). Use duct tape and/or towels to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room, and keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or that you should evacuate.

Bio-terrorism Events: Bio-terrorism involves the deliberate use of harmful viruses and bacteria to make people sick. We have seen this with anthrax in the mail. While these types of events are still rare, they can be very dangerous. If you get news that bio-terrorism has taken place where you live or work, or strongly suspect that it has, you should follow these steps:

- If you receive any threat of bio-terrorism, or see strange activity that you believe may be part of a bio-terrorism event, call 911 immediately!
- If you live or work near the scene of a bio-terrorism event that is not in your building, stay where you are, listen for emergency updates, and wait for instructions from emergency workers or police before leaving the area.
- If you are right at the scene of a bio-terrorism event, get yourself and others far away from the biological agent, and then call 911. Wait in a safe place nearby for emergency workers to arrive. If you later notice signs of biological infection (e.g. severe breathing problems, shock, nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, severe diarrhea, etc.), call 911 right away or call your doctor.
- If you see or get a suspicious looking package (e.g., bulky envelopes, unfamiliar or missing return address, heavy or oddly sealed boxes, anything leaking powder or other substance, etc.) do not open, shake, or put your face or bare skin near it. Put it down gently, get yourself and others out of the room, close off the room, and call 911 right away. Wash your hands right away with soap and water. Never touch, taste, sniff or put your eyes near any real or suspected biological agent.
- Do not purchase or stockpile drugs, there are too many safety variables and biological strains to assure effectiveness.
- Wait and listen for Public Health Department information and direction.

Steps to Take While Waiting for Assistance

If someone with you is sick or hurt, follow these basic first aid steps – *Check* – *Call* – *Care*:

- **Check** the scene. Make sure it is safe for you to get closer, and then check the injured person to see if she/he has any life-threatening conditions (i.e., constant or sudden chest pain, trouble breathing, heavy bleeding, lack of consciousness, or severe injuries from falls, head wounds, or burns).
- **Call** for help. If the injured person has any of the life-threatening conditions listed above, call 911 right away, or have someone else call while you stay with the person.
- **Care**. Comfort the sick person and prevent further injury until emergency workers arrive. Here are some ways you can help:

Control Bleeding

- Cover wounds with a pad, bandage, or cloth and press firmly.
- If there are no broken bones, lift and keep the injured area above the level of the heart.
- If the bleeding does not stop, put on extra bandages, and squeeze the artery against the bone at a point between the injury and the heart (usually inner legs or inner arms).

Shock

- Keep the injured person from getting either too cold or too hot.
- Lift and keep the legs about 12 inches above the floor or ground (if no broken bones).
- Do not let the injured person eat or drink anything.

Tend Burns

- Cool the burned area with lots of cool water.
- Cover the burn with a dry, clean bandage or cloth. Care for Injuries to Muscles, Bones and Joints
- Apply ice or a cold pack to control swelling and lessen pain.
- Avoid movement or activity that causes the injured person any pain.
- If you must move the victim because the area is unsafe, try to keep the injured part still.

Reduce Personal Risk

The risk of getting a disease while giving first aid is rare. However, to lower the risk:

- Avoid direct contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Use rubber gloves if you have them.
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water right away after giving first aid.

Basic Survival Tips

If Your Power Goes Out Remain calm, call ComEd at (800) EDISON1 to report the power outage, and follow these steps:

- Do not call 911.
- Use a flashlight for emergency lighting instead of candles
- Turn off electrical appliances you were using when the power went out.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer so they will stay cold.
- Listen to your battery-powered radio for updated information
- Assist family or neighbors who may become ill from extreme heat or cold
- If you need to cook, use a grill or camp stove outdoors, or use your fireplace. Canned food can be heated up and eaten right out of the can (be sure to open the can and remove the label before you heat it).
- Never run a generator, grill or kerosene heater inside a home or garage as these can cause house fires or release poisonous fumes.

If Food Supplies Are Low: Healthy people can survive for a long time on half of what they would usually eat, and without any food at all for many days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely. Children and pregnant women will require more food than a healthy adult. Follow these tips if your food supply is limited during an emergency:

- Eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content rather than high fat, high protein or salty foods that make you thirsty
- If at home, use up foods from your refrigerator and freezer first, then use the canned foods, dry mixes, and other things you already have on your cupboard shelves.
- Do continue to drink water and other liquids as normal, if you can.

Coping with Trauma after the Disaster

Recovery continues days or months after a disaster as you and your family face the emotional and psychological effects of the event. Reactions vary from person to person, but may include: restless sleep or nightmares, anger, fear, or wanting revenge, lack of emotion, needing to keep active, loss of appetite, weight loss or gain, headaches, and mood swings. All of these are normal reactions to stressful events. It is important to let yourself and others react in their own way. It may be helpful to:

- Talk with your family and friends about what happened and how you feel about it.
- Volunteer at a local shelter, blood bank, or food pantry to help with emergency efforts
- Talk to your minister, spiritual advisor or other counselor
- Encourage your children to share their feelings, even if you must listen to their stories many times – this is a normal way for children to make sense of traumatic experiences.
- You may also want to share your feelings about the event with your children.
- Donate blood

If these strategies are not helping to lower your stress, or you find that you or your family members are using drugs/alcohol or resorting to other unhealthy behaviors in order to cope, you may wish to seek outside or professional help.

Emergency Contact Information:

Emergency (Police, Fire, Rescue, Medical, Hazardous Materials): 911
Poison Control: (800) 222-1222
ComEd: (800) 334-7661

Emergency Information Sites:

American Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org>
National Weather Service <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lot>
Illinois Emergency Management Agency <http://www.state.il.us/iema>
Illinois Homeland Security <http://www.state.il.us>
Federal Emergency Management Agency <http://www.fema.gov>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>
United States Fire Administration <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/>
The Weather Channel <http://www.weather.com>
Cook County Sheriff's Police <http://www.cookcountysheriff.org>
Cook County Emergency Management Agency <http://www.ccsema@cookcountysheriff.org>
Illinois Department of Public Health <http://www.idph.state.il.us>
Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety <http://www.idns.state.il.us>
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.state.il.us>
National Domestic Preparedness Office <http://www.ndpo.gov>

Sites for Children:

United States Fire Administration <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/kids/>
Illinois Firefighter's Association <http://www.state.il.us/kids/fire/>
Federal Emergency Management Agency <http://www.fema.gov/kids/>

Emergency Contact Information: (Fill this out and make copies for family members)

Emergency Contact Person:

Emergency Contact Phone and Address:

Meeting Place #1 (near home):

Meeting Place #2 (away from home):

Cell or Home

Phone: _____

Home Address:

| Recovery Checklist for the Family | Done | Follow up | Notes |
|--|------|-----------|-------|
| Read all of the following before you exit to a safe place of refuge. | | | |
| Seek assistance & comfort with your neighbors. Help one another & share resources. | | | |
| If an emergency exists, call 911 or stop a passing police or fire vehicle. Following a large disaster or event, public safety resources may not be immediately available due to serving known true emergencies. | | | |
| If you cannot access emergency assistance by 911 or other methods, consider assisting the injured in the priority sequence of airway management (breathing), bleeding control (bandage & direct pressure) & broken bones (immobilize the break and joints either side). Consider transporting the victim in a car to a local hospital emergency room. If you suspect a back/spine/neck injury, DO NOT move the victim, wait for professional assistance. | | | |
| When you go outside from your safe place of refuge be aware of hazards such as downed electrical power lines, leaking natural gas, fast moving rain water drainage, dangerous trees/limbs, unstable structures, etc. Situational awareness is key for your safety & survival. | | | |
| Secure valuables from your house & vehicle. Safeguard them from further damage (plastic tarps/large garbage bags). | | | |
| Attempt to contact friends & relatives to let them know your status & needs. | | | |
| If your family has been separated (some at work, some at school when event occurred) consider going to your predefined gathering point or calling the pre-defined contact phone number. | | | |
| Safeguard your pets & children from outside hazards. Provide clear safe boundaries in safe zones for children & pets. | | | |
| Contact your insurance company. In large-scale disasters, place a sign in your front yard with your insurance company's name on it. Insurance adjusters from your company may report directly to damaged neighborhoods to assist clients. | | | |
| Be prepared to find temporary housing if your house has significant structural damage. | | | |

| Recovery Checklist for the Family | Done | Follow up | Notes |
|--|------|-----------|-------|
| Don't fall prey to scam artists with offers to provide immediate repairs or remedies for cash. Hire only reputable, local contractors. | | | |
| Be careful with candles, generators & chain saws. All present hazards & should not be used indoors due to fire threat, carbon monoxide fumes & accidental electrocutions. Eye & hand protection should be worn when chain saws are used. | | | |
| Pumping out basements is useless until outside ground water has drained down storm sewers & the water level on streets is eliminated. | | | |
| Do not go into a flooded basement unless the electricity and natural gas has been shut off. | | | |
| Do not use an oven for indoor heat & never bring a barbecue grill indoors to cook. Both breed deadly carbon monoxide. | | | |
| Stay away from swift moving water or water that is a whirlpool. Often street drain covers are displaced & the swift water can knock a grown person off of their feet and into an open street drain. | | | |
| Use of ladders around fallen trees or on a roof is dangerous until all power-lines are accounted for and de-energized. | | | |
| Remember sense of community. Neighbors helping neighbors, friends helping friends. We will make it through this with the help of one another. | | | |