

Family Emergency Plan

When faced with an emergency, it is important to have a family emergency plan in place. Here are some tips to help you get started:

1. Choose an out-of-area contact - someone each member of the family can call or e-mail in case of an emergency. This person can help family members stay in touch and get back together if they are separated. Be sure to pick someone who is far enough away so as not to be affected by the same situation.

2. Decide on temporary accommodation - such as a friend's place or hotel, where you can stay for a few days in case you are evacuated. This may also be where you will meet if you are separated during a disaster. When choosing your shelter, remember that bridges may be out and roads may be blocked.

(Don't forget to plan for your pets - they are not always welcome in emergency shelters or hotels).

3. Use a template to prepare your own family emergency plan.

Give a copy to each member of your family, your out-of-area contact, your children's school (possibly their usual sports facilities as well -- arena, pool, etc.) Learn the procedures to follow and your role in case of an emergency.

4. Post important numbers near your telephone or program them into your cell phone.

5. Check emergency plans at your children's school or daycare.

In case of emergency, you should know if the school will keep your children until an authorized adult comes to get them or if they need to find their way home by themselves.

Determine what kind of authorization the school requires to release your child to your representative if you cannot get there yourself. Ensure that the school knows your current contact information and that of the people authorized to collect your children for you. Give them a copy of your family emergency plan. Find out about the emergency plans of your children's schools. Help your children understand all that they must do when an alarm goes off.

6. Check emergency plans at work.

Find out about the emergency plan at your workplace. Ask questions: What would be your role in case of a disaster? What are the evacuation procedures? Is there an alternate work site in case of emergency?

Keep important numbers -- including fire, police, ambulance -- near your telephone.

7. Practice your emergency plan as a family at least once a year.

Practice often helps people feel less disoriented and better organized in case of a disaster -- even in the middle of the night or the middle of winter.

Have a family exercise

- Show each member of the family where and how to turn off the water, electricity and gas in your home.
Prepare large, easy-to-read signs for water and gas shutoffs as well as the main circuit breaker.
- Each person should also know where to find the fire extinguisher and how to use it in case of fire (and the fire alarm in an apartment building).
- Put yourself physically in each room of your home and practice evacuation (don't forget your emergency kit!)

Update your family emergency plan

- Verify the telephone numbers and personal information of everyone on the plan.
- Print updated copies for all the members of your family, your children's school and other frequently-used facilities as required.

Check the contents of your kits

- Change the batteries in your flashlights and portable radio; replace spare batteries.
- Replenish your emergency kits. Replace bottled water, ensure that all food is still safe to eat and that medicines have not expired.

To create your emergency plan online, visit [GetPrepared.ca](https://www.getprepared.ca) and start planning today!