

Emergency Preparedness For The Residents Of Collingwood

Collingwood, like every municipality, regardless of size and location, can be seriously disrupted by an emergency. This could take the form of a severe storm, flood, fire, chemical spill, or similar disaster.

All capable adults are responsible to be prepared for unforeseen emergencies. While nobody can predict an emergency, it is important to plan for a variety of possibilities. Your personal plan can make a significant difference to you and your family's well-being. Emergencies can and do occur without warning. Think now about getting prepared.

Here are "Essential Steps to Emergency Preparedness":

The following are the essential steps to follow in developing an emergency preparedness plan for yourself and your family.

Step 1: Create an emergency communications plan

Choose an out-of-town contact that your family or household will call or e-mail to check in with should an emergency occur. Choose someone who lives far enough away that the individual is unlikely to be directly affected by the same event, and be sure to tell that person that he or she is your designated contact.

Make a list of your designated contact's telephone numbers (home, work, cellular, or pager) and e-mail addresses for everyone in the family or household. Make sure everyone, including the designated contact, has a copy of this list. If you have children, provide the emergency contact numbers to your children's schools. Provide this same information to your workplace.

Limit telephone use and keep conversations short during an emergency to help free up lines for those that need help. Your family should be advised that if telephones are not working, they need to be patient and try again later or they can try to e-mail a message. People overload the telephone lines when emergencies happen, but e-mail can sometimes get through.

Step 2: Establish a meeting place

Having a predetermined meeting place away from your home will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected by an emergency, or if your neighbourhood or community is evacuated. You may even want to make arrangements to stay with a family member or friend in case of an emergency.

Be sure to include arrangements for any pets in these plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters and some hotels will not accept them.

Step 3: Assemble an emergency preparedness kit

If you are asked to evacuate your home or to temporarily shelter in place inside your home for a period of time, having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable.

Prepare an emergency preparedness kit in an easy-to-carry container such as a duffel bag or small plastic trash can and store it in an easily accessible location, such as a closet shelf on the main floor.

Aim to have an emergency preparedness kit that will keep you and your family self-sufficient in your home for at least three days. You probably have most of the items for the kit handy already.

Step 4: Learn about your community emergency plans, arrangements, and authorities

In virtually every emergency situation, you will need to know who to call and what you might be asked to do.

Contact your local community offices to learn about their emergency plans. Find out whether there are designated emergency routes.

Identify the closest emergency services offices (fire, police, ambulance, gas and electrical utilities, public works), record the telephone numbers and post them near the telephone.

Keep a list of all emergency and non-emergency numbers, including police, fire and paramedic services, your personal physician, and hospitals.

If you live in an apartment building or retirement residence, or attend a school, these institutions should have an emergency plan. Find out what that plan is, and what your part is in it.

Your workplace may also have an emergency plan. Determine what your role is in the plan, what to do if an alarm sounds and how to safely evacuate the building.

Step 5: Check on the emergency plan of children's school or day-care centre

You need to know if your children will be kept at school until you or a designated adult can pick them up, or whether they will be sent home on their own.

Be sure that the school has updated information about how to reach parents and responsible caregivers to arrange for pick up. Keep in mind that during times of emergency the school telephones may be overwhelmed with calls.

Find out ahead of time what type of authorization the school requires to release a child to someone you trust should you not be able to collect your child yourself.

Step 6: Learn some basic first aid techniques

Knowing how to render first aid and CPR is another crucial preparedness measure. In an emergency, remember that you should always tend to your own well being first. First aid training will help you to help yourself and those around you.

Step 7: Know how and when to evacuate if you live in a high-rise building

Know the evacuation plan for your building and what to do in the event of an alarm. This means understanding the various alarms that may sound in your building and the proper response for each.

Know the location of each exit stairwell on your floor, and identify them as primary (closest) and secondary exits.

Keep the corridors and hallways leading to these exits free and clear of obstruction.

In case of a power outage, have extra drinking water stored, especially if you live on higher floors.

