

Every Season to Prepare



Prepare for Emergencies Before They Happen

An Emergency Preparedness Guide
for Burleigh County

Purpose

To provide Burleigh County citizens information regarding actions that can be taken to save lives, reduce injury and protect property in the event of an emergency or disaster.

If a destructive storm cut off your power, phone and other basic services for several days, or if a chemical spill forced you to stay in your home, what would you do?

Your family will cope best by preparing for disaster before it strikes.

This publication is funded through the
Burleigh County Local Emergency Planning Committee

NOTICE: The information presented in this booklet is believed to be accurate and of practical value in preparing for a disaster; however, no guarantee can be given that the guidance presented will provide protection. The City of Bismarck and Burleigh County Offices assume no legal liability for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product, or process disclosed herein, or for any injuries or damages arising from any disaster or occurrence giving rise to the use or application of the information, products or processes described or disclosed herein.

Special thanks to Cass County and their partners for allowing adaptation of their
“Are You Prepared?” booklet for use in our area.

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Information Resources

If you need assistance in an emergency, dial 911. The resources below are provided to assist you in your emergency planning which includes information for older Americans, people with disabilities, pet owners, businesses, and kids.

FEDERAL

Ready.gov

www.Ready.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.FEMA.gov

US Department of Homeland Security

www.DHS.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.CDC.gov

LOCAL

American Red Cross 223-6700

www.redcross.org

Bismarck Emergency Management 222-6727

www.bismarck.org

Bismarck/Burleigh Public Health 355-1540

www.bismarck.org

Burleigh County Emergency Management..... 222-6727

www.co.burleigh.nd.us

National Weather Service - Bismarck 223-4582

www.weather.gov/bis

ND Department of Emergency Services 328-8100

www.nd.gov/des

ND Department of Health 328-2372

www.health.state.nd.us

Build an Emergency Preparedness Kit

Disasters can occur quickly and without warning. Prepare now by assembling a kit designed to help you cope with a variety of emergency situations.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit with pocket knife
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contamination air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps



In addition to the items previously listed, recommended items for a **vehicle kit include:**

- a shovel
- windshield scraper and small broom
- snack food
- matches
- extra hats, socks and mittens
- necessary medications
- blanket(s)
- tow chain or rope
- road salt and sand
- booster cables
- emergency flares
- fluorescent distress flag



Watches and Warnings

Watch: Forecast issued well in advance to alert the public of the possibility of a particular weather related hazard (e.g. tornado watch, flash flood watch). The occurrence, location and timing may still be uncertain.

Warning: Forecast issued when a particular weather or flood hazard is “imminent” or already occurring (e.g., tornado warning, flash flood warning). A warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property.

Alert and Warning Systems

Emergency Alert System: The Emergency Alert System (EAS) allows officials to quickly send out important emergency information targeted to a specific area. Television and radio will be interrupted to provide the emergency information.

NOAA All-Hazards Radio: A NOAA all-hazards radio provides direct warnings to the public for severe weather and natural and manmade hazards... everything from floods and wildfires, to chemical spills. NOAA all-hazards radios can be purchased at department stores, electronic retailers and Web sites.

Sirens: Outdoor warning sirens alert us to chemical spills, severe weather and other outdoor emergencies. When sirens sound, go indoors and turn on a local TV or radio station to find out what the threat is and how to protect yourself.

Do not assume there is no emergency because skies are clear.



Testing of sirens occurs on the last Friday of every month at 9:30 a.m.

Automatic Notification System: Locally, we have a notification system that can contact a group of numbers or facilities in a geographic area to warn of emergency or disaster situations directly in the vicinity.

Evacuation

Local government officials may recommend evacuation as a protective measure. Listen to local media for instructions. If local officials ask you to leave, do so immediately!

If you only have moments to evacuate, grab the following:

- Emergency preparedness kit
- Medical supplies and prescription medications.
- Eyeglasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution
- Clothing and bedding
- Cash/Credit Cards (wallet/purse)
- Car keys



If local officials haven't advised an immediate evacuation, take these steps to protect your home before you leave:

- Bring things indoors—lawn furniture, garbage cans, etc.
- Turn off electricity at the main fuse or breaker and turn off water at the main valve.
- Leave natural gas on unless local officials advise otherwise.
- If high winds are expected, cover the exterior of all windows.
- If flooding is expected, consider using sand bags to keep water away.
- Make a visual and/or written record of all your household possessions—record model and serial numbers.
- Take important documents with you—driver's license, social security card, insurance policies, birth and marriage certificates, stocks, wills, etc.



Shelter In Place

One of the instructions you may receive when hazardous materials may have been released into the air is to “shelter in place”. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining indoors. **Shelter in place means selecting a small interior room, above ground level, with no or few windows and taking refuge there.** It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building.

If you are asked to shelter in place, local authorities will provide information through local media to help you protect yourself and your family.



To “Shelter in Place and Seal the Room”

- Bring your family and pets **inside**.
- **Lock** doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
- **Turn off** fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.
- **Take your emergency supply kit** unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- Go to a small interior room, above ground level, with no or few windows. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- **Seal** all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting the sheeting in advance to save time.
- Be prepared to **improvise** and use what you have on hand to seal gaps so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.

Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should **watch TV, listen to the radio or check the internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.**

Blackouts

Before the blackout...

- If you have an electric garage door opener, locate the manual release lever and learn how to operate it.
- Have an alternative power source available (i.e. extra batteries) for electrical and battery-operated medical equipment.
- Follow the manufacturer instructions when utilizing alternative heating and power sources.
- Cordless phones may not work when the power goes out; be sure to have a standard telephone in your home. Cellular phones may not operate properly during a blackout because cellular networks may lose power to the towers that transmit your call.



During the blackout...

- Only use a flashlight for emergency lighting—candles increase your risk of a house fire.
- Turn off electrical equipment you were using when the power went out. Leave one light on so you'll know when power returns.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer. Most medication that requires refrigeration can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours.
- Don't run a generator inside a home or garage or connect it to a home's electrical system. If you use a generator, connect the equipment you want to power directly to outlets on the generator.
- Listen to local media for the latest information.





Chemical Emergencies

Under certain conditions, chemicals can be poisonous or have a harmful effect on your health. Some chemicals, which are safe and even helpful in small amounts, can be harmful in larger quantities or under certain conditions. Chemical accidents do happen—at home and in the community and may involve fire and/or explosion. You may be unable to see or smell anything, and still be in danger of exposure.

You may be exposed to a chemical in three ways:

- Breathing the chemical
- Swallowing contaminated food, water or medication
- Touching the chemical, or coming into contact with clothing or things that have touched the chemical

If you are outdoors during a large-scale hazardous material release, stay upwind or upstream of the release and find shelter immediately. Listen to local media for information. If advised, follow instructions to evacuate or shelter-in-place.

The most common home chemical emergencies involve children eating medicines. Keep all medicines, cosmetics, cleaning products and other household chemicals out of sight and reach of children. If your child eats or drinks a non-food substance, find any containers immediately and take them to the phone. Call 911 immediately.



Chemical accidents can be prevented:

- Always read the directions before using a new product.
- Do not mix household chemicals.
- Never smoke while using household chemicals.
- If you spill a chemical, ventilate the area and clean it up immediately; always protect your nose, mouth, eyes, and skin.
- Dispose of products properly to preserve our environment and protect wildlife.
- Never store hazardous chemicals in food containers.

Downed Power Lines

If you come across a downed power line, leave the area immediately and seek help by calling 911. Consider all wires energized and dangerous—**STAY CLEAR!** **If you are in a vehicle when a power line falls onto it,** wait inside the vehicle until help arrives.

Fire Safety at Home



Install a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home. If people in your home sleep with doors closed, install smoke alarms inside sleeping areas.

Test smoke alarms once a month and replace all batteries at least once a year. Replace alarms every 10 years.

Have one or more fire extinguishers in your home.

Plan your escape routes

- Determine at least two ways to escape from every room of your home.
- Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas on the second or third floor.
- Select a location where everyone would meet after escaping.
- Practice your escape plan at least twice a year with members of your household.

Escape safely

If you see smoke or fire in your first escape route, use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit.

If you are escaping through a closed door, feel the door with the back of your hand before opening it. If it is warm, use an alternate route. If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes and you cannot escape through a window, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a brightly colored cloth at the window. If there is a phone in the room, call 911 and tell dispatchers where you are.

Once you are out, stay out!

Floods and Flash Flooding

When a **flood or flash flood watch** is issued, consider moving your furniture and valuables to higher floors in your home. Prepare for possible evacuation.

When a **flood or flash flood warning** is issued, it means flooding has been reported or is imminent. Listen to local media for information. Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains.

When an **urban and small stream advisory** is issued, flooding of small streams, streets and low-lying areas such as underpasses and urban storm drains is occurring. Avoid low-lying areas and flooded streets.

Do not drive around barricades. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and move to higher ground.

**FLOODING AHEAD
TURN AROUND
DON'T DROWN**

Gas Emergencies

Natural Gas

You can help prevent natural gas emergencies by calling 811 before you dig on your property. This will help you avoid hitting gas lines.

An odorant is added to the natural gas so leaks can be readily detected.



If you smell gas outdoors, move away from the area until you no longer smell the gas and call 911. Do not return to the area until authorities tell you it is safe to do so.

If you smell gas indoors or hear a hissing or blowing sound, get outside immediately, leaving doors open to help ventilate the building. Do not use light switches, electrical appliances, two-way radios, or phones (cell or land line) in the affected home or building. Extinguish cigarettes and do not light matches. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside if you can.

Move away from the area until you no longer smell gas and call 911. Do not return to the area until appropriate authorities tell you it is safe to do so.

If gas is turned off for any reason, only a **qualified professional** should turn it back on.

Propane Gas

Propane gas is a manufactured gas and is stored in a liquid form. It is heavier than air and will not readily dissipate. Propane gas is also colorless and odorless. As a precautionary measure, an odorant is added so that it can be readily detected if it leaks from its container.

Propane gas is flammable. Propane gas can ignite if it is released or leaked. Do not light a match, start an engine, use a cell phone, or do anything that may create a spark.

If you **smell** propane gas, there may be a leak in your building, or if you are outdoors, you may be near a pipeline system leak. An unusual **noise** like a hissing sound may be a sign of a propane gas leak. **Visible** signs of a leaking pipeline system include a dense white cloud or fog over a pipeline, discolored or dead vegetation surrounding a pipeline, flames coming from the ground or exposed piping, a slight mist of ice or frozen area on the pipeline, or continuous bubbling in a wet, flooded area.

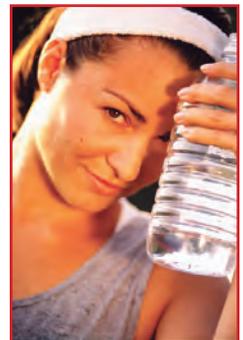
Move away from the area until you no longer smell gas and call 911. Do not return to the area until appropriate authorities tell you it is safe to do so.

Heat Waves



A heat wave is an extended period of extreme heat, and is often accompanied by high humidity. These conditions can be dangerous and even life-threatening for people who don't take the proper precautions.

- Prepare for a heat wave by checking to see if your home's cooling system is working properly.
- Make sure your home is well insulated and that you have weather stripping around your doors and window sills to keep the cool air inside.
- Plan on being inside a cool building during the hottest time of the day.
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activities.
- Make sure you remain properly hydrated by drinking plenty of water and limiting intake of alcoholic beverages.
- Eat light, well-balanced meals.
- Dress in light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Never leave children or pets alone in a closed vehicle.



Lightning and Thunderstorms

If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek safe shelter immediately and listen to local radio and TV stations for information. Make sure your NOAA weather radio is turned on.

Things to avoid inside: Stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity. Stay away from pools, indoor or outdoor, tubs, showers and other plumbing.

Things to avoid outside: Where outdoor activities take place, stop the activity at the first roar of thunder to ensure time to get to safety. If on open water, get to land and shelter immediately.

If you can't find shelter, go to a low-lying, open place away from trees, poles or metal objects. Squat low to the ground, and place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Do not lie flat on the ground!

After the storm passes, stay away from storm-damaged areas. Listen to local media for information. Wait 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder to go back outside.

Helping a lightning strike victim: Call 911 and get medical care immediately. He or she will not carry an electrical charge.

When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!



Public Health Emergencies



Public health emergency situations range from man-made threats such as bioterrorism to natural disasters like floods and tornadoes. Infectious disease outbreaks are another type of public health emergency that can occur naturally or due to an intentional act.

Pandemic influenza planning includes building a home disaster kit with supplies that should last 2-6 weeks. Additional information can be obtained at www.pandemicflu.gov

Bismarck/Burleigh Public Health has plans to distribute medications and give vaccinations to the general public during a public health emergency. Clinic sites and schedules will be announced at the time of the emergency.

There can be a lot of confusing information during health emergencies; it is very important to listen to local media and follow your local public health department's (Bismarck/Burleigh Public Health) recommendations.

Tornadoes

Select a place in advance where you will shelter—basements are best. If you don't have a basement, choose a center hallway, bathroom or closet on the lowest floor, or identify an alternate location (neighbor, family, friends) to shelter.

If you are outside, go to a basement, nearby sturdy building, or lie flat in a ditch or low-lying area.

If you are in a car or mobile home, get out immediately and head for safety. The ideal time to relocate is during a "Tornado Watch".

After the tornado, watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged area. Listen to the radio or watch local TV stations for information and instructions.



Winter Storms

During a storm, avoid going outside. If you must, wear several layers of lightweight clothing—this will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from cold air and debris.

You should **avoid traveling by car** in a storm, but **if you must:**

- Review road condition information by calling 511.
- Carry an emergency preparedness kit in your car. (see page 2 for contents)
- Keep your car's gas tank full.
- Let someone know your destination, route and estimated time of arrival.

If you become stranded in a vehicle...

- Stay with your car. Do not try to walk to safety.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see.
- Clear snow from your vehicle's exhaust pipe; start the car and run the heater for about 10 minutes every hour.
- Keep one window (away from the wind) slightly open to let air in.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen.
- As you sit, move your arms and legs to keep blood circulating and to stay warm.



If you shovel snow after the storm, be careful not to overexert yourself. Strenuous activity in cold weather can put a strain on your heart.



Want a speaker to talk to your group about preparing for emergencies?

**To schedule a free presentation, contact
Emergency Management: 222-6727
or the American Red Cross: 223-6700**

Want to volunteer locally?

American Red Cross 223-6700
www.redcross.org

Citizen Corps 223-3518
www.ndlc.org

Public Health Emergency Volunteer Reserve/
Medical Reserve Corps (PHEVR/MRC) 355-1540
www.bismarck.org (Public Health Dept.)

Salvation Army 223-1889
www.usc.salvationarmy.org

Emergency Communications Plan

Talk with your family and decide how you will contact each other in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Out-of-Town Contact Name:

Phone Number:

Neighborhood Meeting Place:

Phone Number:

Evacuation Location:

Phone Number:

Complete the following information for each family member.

Name: _____

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Social Security Number: _____

**Write down locations where your family members spend the most time:
work, school, daycare, etc.**

Location: _____

Location: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Location: _____

Location: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Location: _____

Location: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

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