Emergency Preparedness

Irving residents should be prepared for an emergency. Disasters may or may not affect us directly, but each individual should be aware of what to do and where to get information. This guide has been prepared to assist residents in preparing for disasters; however, it is not a substitute for common sense, personal responsibility and preparedness.

The following pages contain information about the most threatening natural and man-made disasters in our area. By being prepared, you will be able to act with confidence and help your fellow neighbors should an emergency arise.

OUTDOOR WARNING SYSTEM

If the sirens are activated during inclement weather:
- **DO** - Take cover inside a building on the first floor, in an interior room, a closet or a bathroom that does not have any windows.
- **DO NOT** - Call 911, police or fire dispatch for information. If there is inclement weather in the area and the sirens are activated, assume there is the possibility of a tornado and take cover immediately.

Tornado Warnings - A steady tone means a tornado warning. Sirens will be activated when there is a threat of a tornado in the area.

Siren Testing - The sirens will be tested on the first Wednesday of every month at 1 p.m. unless the sky is overcast or there is inclement weather in the area.
**Tornadoes**

Although tornadoes can strike anywhere, at any time, they are most frequent between March and September, with more than half reported during April, May, and June. Tornadoes are more likely to occur in late afternoon, usually after a storm.

- **Tornado Watch** - A tornado, severe thunderstorm, and/or flooding is possible. There is no immediate danger. Remain alert.
- **Tornado Warning** - A tornado or severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by radar. Take shelter immediately or in the case of floods, seek higher ground.

**What to do:**

- **Take Cover** - Most tornado deaths are caused by head injuries from flying debris.
- **In Homes or a Small Building** - Take cover in the center of the home, on the lowest floor, in a small room such as a closet or bathroom that has no windows, or go under sturdy furniture. Stay away from windows.
- **In Schools, Shopping Centers or Public Buildings** - Stay away from windows and large unsupported areas such as auditoriums and gymnasiums. Move to a designated shelter area.
- **In a Car, Mobile Home or Outside** - Seek cover in a substantial shelter or get into the nearest ditch or depression until the tornado passes. Cover your head with your hands. Never try to outrun a tornado.

**Floods**

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural hazards—except fire. Most communities experience flooding after spring rains, heavy thunderstorms or spring thaws. Floods can be slow or fast rising, but generally develop over a period of days. Flash flooding is a rapid rise in water levels associated with heavy rainfall.

- **Flood Insurance** - Individuals and business owners can minimize the available flood losses by purchasing flood insurance from an independent insurance agent or through the National Flood Insurance Program. Homeowners' policies do not cover flood damage.
- **Surviving a Flood** - Do not attempt to walk through shallow or deep flood waters. Instead, go directly to higher ground. Keep children and pets away from flood waters, storm drains and sewers—including water along the curb. If you are in a car, drive away from flooded areas—never try to take a shortcut through them. If your car stalls, immediately abandon it and climb to higher ground. Swift water of only six inches deep can wash cars off the road.

**Lightning**

Although lightning kills or injures hundreds of people every year, most deaths from lightning can be prevented. On the average, six people die each year in Texas from lightning strikes.

Always seek shelter indoors during a lightning storm. If you must stay outside, keep away from metal objects, find a ditch or shelter, and stay away from hilltops and open fields. Most importantly, stay away from open water and tall trees—both are great lightning conductors.

Lightning always accompanies thunderstorms, so keep an eye and ear to the sky. If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. Even if you can't hear thunder, you may still be at risk.

**CALL THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION. 972.721.2100**

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**Preparing Your Pets for Emergencies Makes Sense.**

If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household. Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected are the same for any emergency. Keep in mind what’s best for you is typically what’s best for your animals.

If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives.

Make a backup emergency plan in case you cannot care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so.

1. **Prepare a Pet Emergency Supply Kit**
   - Create two kits. One that has everything your pet will need, and a smaller version you can take with you if you and your pets have to leave your home. Review your kits regularly to ensure their contents are fresh.
   - Three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container.
   - Three days of water for your pets.
   - Medicines and medical records in a waterproof container.
   - First aid kit.
   - Collar with ID tag, harness or leash.
   - Crate or other pet carrier.

2. **Plan What You Will Do in an Emergency**
   - Be prepared to assess the situation. Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you shelter in place or leave your home. You should have a plan for both possibilities.
   - Create a plan to leave your home. Plan how you will assemble your pets and anticipate where you will go. Consider family or friends willing to take you and your pets during an emergency. Other options may include a hotel or motel that accepts pets or a boarding facility near an evacuation facility or your family's meeting place.
   - Develop a buddy system. Plan with neighbors, friends or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Talk with your pet care buddy about your evacuation plans and show them where you keep your pet's emergency supply kit. Also designate specific locations where you will meet in an emergency.

3. **Stay Informed of the Types of Emergencies**
   - It's important to stay informed about what might happen and what types of emergencies are likely to affect your region. For more information about how to prepare, visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY.

This information was developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in consultation with: American Kennel Club, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), American Veterinary Medical Association, and the Humane Society of the U.S.