



# 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.



# HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

If hazardous chemical substances are released or misused, they can pose a threat to the environment and your health. Hazardous materials come in the form of explosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons, and radioactive materials. These substances are most often released as a result of transportation accidents or because of chemical accidents in plants.

## What to Do During a Home Chemical Emergency

- If your child should eat or drink a non-food substance, find the container(s) immediately.
- Call the poison control center, emergency medical services, 911 or the operator.
- Follow the emergency operator's or dispatcher's instructions carefully.
- Take immediate action if a hazardous substance comes into contact with an eye.
- If there is danger of a fire or explosion, get out of the house immediately.
- If there is a fire or explosion, call the fire department from outside.
- Stay away from the house to avoid the possibility of breathing toxic fumes.
- Wash hands, arms or other parts of the body that may have been exposed to the chemical.
- Discard any clothing that may have been contaminated.

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

# DISASTER PLAN

## Create a Family Disaster Plan

- Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster.
- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet.
- Develop an emergency communication plan.
- Ask an out-of-town relative or friend to be your "family contact."
- Discuss what to do if authorities ask you to evacuate.
- Be familiar with escape routes.
- Plan how to take care of your pets.

## Preparation

### A. Disaster Kit

Your kit should include enough supplies to meet your needs for at least three days. Store supplies in a sturdy, easy to carry, water-resistant container. Keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car. Your disaster supply kit should include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person, per day) and food that will not spoil.
- One change of clothing and footwear per person.
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- A first aid kit, including prescription medicines.
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys.
- Cash.
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- An extra pair of glasses.
- If you take medicine, you will need enough on hand to make it on your own for at least a week. Keep a copy of your prescriptions and dosage information. If a weeklong supply is not possible, keep as much as you can on hand and talk to your doctor about what else you should do to prepare.

- Auto emergency kits should contain at a minimum: blankets and warm clothing, booster cables and tools, bottled water, canned fruits and nuts, first aid kit, flashlight and batteries, traction mats or chains, a shovel, and emergency prescription medication.

### B. Safe Room

When severe weather threatens, individuals and families need protection from the dangerous forces of extreme winds. Specific guidance is available from FEMA by calling the Office of Emergency Management at (972) 721-2100. Ask for information on the construction of a residential safe room.

### C. Evacuation Plans

Plan how to escape from your home in the event of an emergency. Identify at least two exits from each room. Clear doors, hallways and stairs of obstructions. Conduct emergency drills.

### D. Driving Tips

Disaster driving is one part preparedness, one part common sense, and one part learning from experience—our own and others. For example:

- Be aware of your changed environment, and stay away from downed power poles.
- Don't attempt to drive through water.
- If possible, avoid driving in severe winter storms, but if you are caught in a storm and your car becomes immobilized, stay in the vehicle and wait for rescue.

## Learn More

To learn more about how to prepare for severe weather conditions, visit any Irving library and check out the free DVD produced by the Emergency Management Office. The English and Spanish subtitled DVD has information on tornadoes, lightning, floods, severe thunderstorms, winter storms and terrorism, plus valuable tips on disaster driving, first aid, family disaster planning, and pets and disasters.

For other emergency preparedness materials, call the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at (800) 480-2520, or visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or [www.knowwhat2do.com](http://www.knowwhat2do.com).

# HEAT

A heat wave can be a very dangerous situation. People living in urban areas may be at greater risk from the effects of a prolonged heat wave than those in rural regions. An increased health problem can occur when stagnant atmospheric conditions trap pollutants in urban areas, adding unhealthy air to excessively hot temperatures. Also, asphalt and concrete store heat longer and gradually release the heat at night, which produces significantly higher nighttime temperatures known as the "urban heat island effect."

## What to Do to Avoid Extreme Heat

- Slow down and avoid strenuous activity.
- Postpone outdoor games and activities.
- Stay indoors. If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor, out of the sun.
- Vacuum or replace air conditioner filters regularly during periods of high use.
- Go to a public building with air conditioning if your home does not have air conditioning.
- Dress appropriately. Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing that will cover as much skin as possible. Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Take frequent breaks if you must work outdoors.
- Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often.
- Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them.
- Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles.

## Watch for Signals:

- Heat exhaustion – Cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness and exhaustion.
- Heat stroke – Hot, red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing.

## How to Treat a Heat Emergency

- Heat stroke: This is a life-threatening situation. Call 911 or your local emergency number. Move the person to a cooler place. Immerse victim in a cool bath, or wrap wet sheets around the body and fan. Watch for signals of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body. If the victim refuses water, is vomiting, or there are changes in the level of consciousness, do not give them anything to eat or drink.
- Heat cramps: Get the person to a cooler place. Lightly stretch the affected muscle and replenish fluids. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.
- Heat exhaustion: Get the person out of the heat and into a cooler place. Apply cool, wet cloths, such as towels or sheets. If the person is conscious, give him or her a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Let the victim rest and watch carefully for changes in his or her condition.

# FIRE

Be aware of special fire hazards near wooded areas, and remember that geographic location may create longer response times for fire and rescue services.

## Protect Your Home

- Use fire resistant, protective roofing and materials such as stone, brick and metal to protect your home. Avoid using wood materials.
- Cover all exterior vents, attics and eaves with metal mesh screens no larger than 6 millimeters.
- Install multi-pane windows, tempered safety glass or fireproof shutters to protect large windows from radiant heat.
- Use fire-resistant draperies for added window protection.
- Have chimneys, wood stoves and all home heating systems inspected and cleaned annually by a certified specialist.

## Prepare Your Family

- Know how to contact fire emergency services in your area.
- Plan ahead.
- Develop and practice escape and evacuation plans.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and test them every month.

## Things to Check for Fire Prevention

### A. Electrical Hazards

- Replace frayed or cracked extension and appliance cords, loose prongs and plugs.
- Make sure there is only one plug per outlet.
- Remove electrical cords that run under rugs or over nails, heaters or pipes.
- Cover exposed outlets and wiring.
- Repair or replace appliances that overheat, short out, smoke or spark.

### B. Chemical Hazards

- Store flammable liquids such as gasoline, acetone, benzene and lacquer thinner in approved safety cans, away from the home.
- If flammable materials must be stored, use a storage can with an Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM) approved label. Keep away from heat sources.
- Keep combustible liquids away from heat sources.
- Store oily waste and polishing rags in covered metal cans.
- Instruct family members not to use gasoline, benzene or other flammable fluids for starting fires or cleaning indoors.

### C. Fire Hazards

- Clear out old combustible materials.
- Move clothes, curtains, rags and paper goods away from electrical equipment, gas appliances or flammable materials.
- Remove dried grass cuttings, tree trimmings and weeds from the property.
- Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors and gas vents.
- Keep heaters and candles away from curtains and furniture.
- Place portable heaters on level surfaces, away from high traffic areas. Purchase portable heaters equipped with automatic shut-off switches and avoid the use of extension cords.

### D. Items That Can Shift or Fall

- Anchor water heater, large appliances, and tall or heavy furniture and pictures to wall studs.
- Fit water heater with a flexible gas supply line.
- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Install clips, latches or other locking devices on cabinet doors.
- Provide strong support and flexible connections on gas appliances.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Hang heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from beds and places where people sit.
- Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations.

### E. Utilities

- Locate the main electric fuse or circuit breaker box, water services shut-off and natural gas main shut-off.
- Contact local utility companies for instructions on how to turn off the utilities.
- Clear area around shut-off switches for easy access.
- Attach shut-off wrench or specialty tool to a pipe or other location close by the gas and water shut-off valves.
- Paint shut-off valves with white or fluorescent paint to increase visibility.







## 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 house, on the lowest floor, in a small room such as a closet or bathroom, or 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 protect themselves from 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.

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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 that 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 pets 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.

- Sanitation products such as pet litter, newspapers, paper towels and plastic trash bags.
- A picture of you and your pet together in case you become separated.
- Familiar items such as toys, treats or bedding.

### 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 takes 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.

- Talk to your pet's veterinarian about emergency planning. Discuss the types of things that you should include in your pet's emergency first aid kit. You also should consider talking with your veterinarian about permanent identification such as microchipping. Be sure to keep your contact information up-to-date and listed with a reliable recovery database.
- Make a list of contact information and addresses of area animal control agencies including the Humane Society or ASPCA, and emergency veterinary hospitals. Keep one copy of these phone numbers with you and one in your pet's emergency supply kit. Obtain "Pets Inside" stickers and place them on your doors or windows, including information on the number and types of pets in your home to alert firefighters and rescue workers.

### 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](http://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.