



# Preventing and Preparing for Household Fires

*Fires in homes are most often caused by cooking accidents, smoking and unsafe use of woodstoves or space heaters. Here are some things you can do to avoid a home fire or protect yourself during a fire.*

## Protecting against fires

- Install smoke detectors in or near all sleeping areas and on every level of your home, including the basement. Check smoke detectors on a regular basis and replace the batteries twice yearly.
- Have A-B-C type fire extinguishers. Teach family members how to use them.
- Know the location of all exits including windows. If you live in an apartment, count the number of doorways between your apartment and the two nearest exits.
- Know two ways out of every room in case smoke or flames block your primary exit.
- Choose a meeting place outside the home, and be sure all family members are accounted for. If someone is missing, let the fire department know.
- Have an escape plan and practice it with your family. This will help ensure you can get out quickly when there is no time for mistakes.
- Keep folding or chain style ladders stored in each upstairs bedroom.
- Use alternative heat sources, such as woodstoves or space heaters, safely:
  - Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues, or most portable or propane heaters for indoor heating.
  - Have fire-fighting materials available: dry powder, fire extinguisher, heavy tarp or blanket, and water.
  - Before using an alternative heat source, read the manufacturer's instructions.

- Do not smoke in the bedroom, on the couch or anywhere you might fall asleep while smoking.
- Sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street and that fire trucks can reach your home.

## If fire strikes

- If there is a fire — evacuate. Do not go back inside. Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house.
- Never use water on an electrical fire.
- Smother oil and grease fires in the kitchen with baking soda or salt, or put a lid over the flame if it is burning in a pan.
- If caught in smoke — drop to your hands and knees and crawl; breathe shallowly through your nose and use your blouse, shirt or jacket as a filter.
- If you must move through flames — hold your breath, move quickly, cover your head and hair, keep your head down and close your eyes as much as possible.
- If your clothes catch fire, “stop, drop and roll” until the fire is out.
- If you are in a room and cannot escape, leave the door closed, stay low to the floor and hang a white or light-colored sheet outside the window.



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# How to Prepare for People with Medical Needs

*In a disaster, people with special medical needs have extra concerns.*

## Medications

- Always have at least a three-day supply of all your medications.
- Store your medications in one location in their original containers.
- Have a list of all of your medications: name of medication, dose, frequency, and the name of the prescribing doctor.

## Medical supplies

- Have an extra three-day supply of any medical supplies you use, such as bandages, ostomy bags, or syringes.

## Electrically powered medical equipment

- For all medical equipment requiring electrical power — beds, breathing equipment, or infusion pumps — check with your medical supply company and get information regarding a back-up power source, such as a battery or generator.

## Oxygen and breathing equipment

- If you use oxygen, have an emergency supply (enough for at least a three-day period).
- Oxygen tanks should be securely braced so they do not fall over. Call your medical supply company regarding bracing instructions.
- If you use breathing equipment, have a three-day supply or more of tubing, solutions, medications, etc.

## Emergency bag

- In the event that you have to leave your home, have a bag packed at all times that contains:
  - A medication list.
  - Medical supplies for at least three days.
  - Copies of vital medical papers such as insurance cards, power of attorney, etc.

## People who can help

- An important part of being prepared for a disaster is planning with family, friends and neighbors. Know who could walk to your home to assist you if other means of transportation are unavailable.
- Discuss your disaster plans with your home health care provider.
- Ask your local fire department if they keep a list of people with special medical needs; ask to be included if they do maintain a list.
- Keep a list handy of people who can help and their phone numbers.



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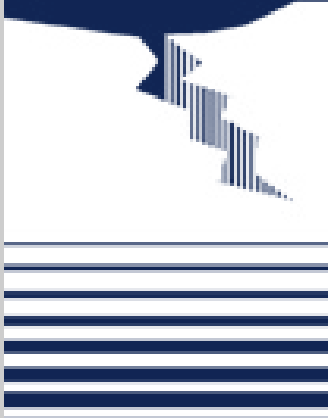


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# Preparing for Earthquakes

Washington is earthquake country. When the ground shakes, “Drop, Cover and Hold.”

## Drop, cover and hold

- When you feel an earthquake, **DROP** and **COVER** under a desk or sturdy table. Stay away from windows and objects like bookcases that could fall. **HOLD** on to the desk or table. If it moves, move with it. Do not run—stay where you are. “Drop, Cover and Hold.”

## Be prepared for an earthquake

- Anchor appliances and tall heavy furniture that might fall. Put latches on cabinet doors to keep contents from spilling out.
- Find out how you can improve your home to protect it against earthquake damage.
- Establish an “out-of-area” contact and keep the phone numbers handy. This is the person family members will call if you are separated.
- Have a place at home where emergency supplies are kept and tell others where it is.

## During an earthquake

### If you are indoors:

- Stay inside. Move next to an inside wall or get under a desk or sturdy table and hold on to it. If it moves, move with it. Stay away from windows, bookcases, refrigerators, heavy mirrors, hanging plants and other objects that could fall. Do not go outside until the shaking stops.
- If you are in a crowded store or public place, DO NOT rush for an exit. Move away from display shelves holding objects that could fall on you, and “**drop, cover and hold.**”
- If you are in a theater or stadium, get between the rows of seats, protect your head with your arms. Do not leave until the shaking stops.

### If you are outdoors:

- If you are outdoors, move to a clear area

away from trees, signs, buildings, or downed electrical wires and poles.

### If you are in a downtown area:

- If you are on a sidewalk near a tall building, get into a building, doorway or lobby to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass and other debris.

### If you are driving:

- If you are driving, slowly pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses, power lines and other hazards. Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking stops.

### If you are in a wheelchair:

- If you are in a wheelchair, stay in it. Move to safe cover if possible, lock your wheels and protect your head with your arms.

### After the earthquake:

- If you were evacuated, wait until you are told it is safe before returning home. Be careful entering buildings. Stay away from downed power lines.
- Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- Be prepared for aftershocks.
- Use the phone only to report a life-threatening emergency.
- Do not drive unnecessarily.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound—open a window and leave the building. Shut off the main gas valve outside.
- Check on neighbors, particularly elderly or disabled persons.
- Try to contact your out-of-area phone contact. Listen to your radio.



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# How To Prepare for Power Outages

Power outages can cause a number of safety concerns. Knowing the following information can help.

## Before a power outage

- Register life-sustaining and medical equipment with your utility company.
- Consider buying a generator. When installing a generator, follow the instructions carefully. Keep your generator outside and run a cord inside. **Don't connect your generator to main service panels — it's dangerous!**
- Make sure your disaster preparedness kit contains light sticks, flashlights, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries and a wind-up clock.
- Have a corded telephone available — cordless phones will not work when the power is out.
- Have an alternative heat source and supply of fuel.
- If you own an electric garage door opener, know how to open the door without power.

## During a power outage

- Turn off lights and electrical appliances except for the refrigerator and freezer. Even if it is dark, turn light switches and buttons on lamps or appliances to the "off" position.
- Unplug computers and other sensitive equipment to protect them from possible surges when the power is restored.
- Leave one lamp on so you will know when power is restored. Wait at least 15 minutes after power is restored before turning on other appliances.
- Conserve water, especially if you use well water.
- Never use gas ovens, gas ranges, barbecues or portable or propane heaters for indoor heating—they use oxygen and create carbon monoxide that can cause suffocation.

- Candles can cause a fire. It's far better to use battery-operated flashlights or glow sticks for lighting.
- Using a kerosene heater, gas lantern or stove inside the house can be dangerous. Maintain proper ventilation at all times to avoid a build up of toxic fumes.
- Stay away from downed power lines and sagging trees with broken limbs.

## Keep food safe

- Use and store food carefully to prevent food-borne illness when power outages make refrigeration unavailable.
- Use foods first that can spoil most rapidly.
- Keep doors to refrigerators and freezers closed. Your refrigerator's freezer will keep food frozen for up to a day. A separate fully-loaded freezer will keep food frozen for two days.
- Use an ice chest packed with ice or snow to keep food cold. Buy dry ice to save frozen food. Do not handle dry ice with your bare hands. Use blocks or bags of ice to save refrigerator foods.
- Use caution if storing food outside during winter to keep it cold. The outside temperature varies, especially in the sun. Frozen food may thaw and refrigerator food may become warm enough to grow bacteria. Food stored outside must be secured from contamination by animals.
- **If in doubt, throw it out.** Throw out meat, seafood, dairy products and cooked food that does not feel cold.
- Never taste suspect food. Even if food looks and smells fine, illness-causing bacteria may be present.



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# How to Handle Bomb Threats

**Bomb threats are usually received by telephone, but may also be received by note, letter or e-mail. All bomb threats should be taken seriously and handled as though an explosive were in the building.**

Your place of employment should have a plan in place instructing what to do when a bomb threat is received.

- If you receive a bomb threat, get as much information from the caller as possible.
- Take good notes when talking to the person on the telephone. Keep the caller on the line, and write down everything that is said.
- Be aware of background noise, special voice characteristics, music, machinery, etc.
- If you are at work, have a coworker call 9-1-1 and building security immediately. Plan how you are going to alert your coworker.
- If you receive a bomb threat, do not touch any suspicious packages.
- Clear the area around the suspicious package, and notify police immediately.
- While evacuating a building, avoid standing in front of windows or other potentially hazardous areas.
- Do not restrict sidewalks or other areas used by emergency officials.
- If you find a bomb, don't touch it or attempt to move it. Call for help and evacuate the area immediately.

## Bomb Threat Checklist

Exact time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Exact words of caller: \_\_\_\_\_

### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. When is the bomb going to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it look like? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of bomb is it? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What will cause it to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you place the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where are you calling from? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your address? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

### CALLER'S VOICE (circle all that apply)

Calm    Slow    Crying    Slurred    If voice is familiar, whom does it sound like?  
 Stutter    Deep    Loud    Broken  
 Giggling    Accent    Angry    Rapid    Were there any background noises?  
 Stressed    Nasal    Lisp    Excited  
 Disguised    Sincere    Squeaky    Normal  
 Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Person receiving call/Date/Number called: \_\_\_\_\_



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#### Other Web Sites:

- Centers for Disease Control:  
[www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency:  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)



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# Preparing for Terrorism

*Terrorists look for visible targets where they can avoid detection before or after an attack, such as international airports, large cities, major public events, resorts, and high-profile landmarks. Preparing for terrorism is critical, just as for other types of disasters.*

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- If you see what appears to be a dangerous situation, call 9-1-1 and explain your concerns to a call-taker. The call-taker will help determine what actions should be taken.
- Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave your luggage unattended.
- Learn where emergency exits are located, and how to quickly evacuate a building, transportation corridor, or congested public area.
- Stay clear of heavy or breakable objects that could move, fall or break in an explosion.
- Stay in your area so that you don't kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort—shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

#### If there is a fire, observe these procedures

- Stay low to the floor and exit the building as quickly and calmly as possible.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth, if possible.
- Test closed doors for heat with the palm of your hand and forearm on the lower and upper portions of the door. If it is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly. If it is hot or warm to the touch, do not open the door. Seek an alternate route.

#### Biological agents

- Biological agents are organisms or toxins that may harm people, livestock or crops. Because biological agents cannot necessarily be detected and may take time to grow and cause disease, it is almost impossible to know that a biological attack has occurred.

- If the government were to become aware of a biological attack through an informant or warning by terrorists, they would most likely instruct people to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises (shelter-in-place), or evacuate immediately.

- A person affected by a biological agent requires the immediate attention of professional medical personnel. Some agents are contagious, and victims may need to be quarantined. Also, some medical facilities may not be receiving victims for fear of contaminating the hospital

- Prepare for building explosion

The use of explosives by terrorists can result in collapsed buildings and fires. People who live or work in a multi-level building should follow these guidelines.

- Know the emergency evacuation procedures that are in place.
- Know where the fire exits are located, and be able to find them in the dark.
- Keep fire extinguishers in working order. Know where they are located and know how to use them.
- Learn first aid and CPR.
- Keep and maintain a disaster supply kit on each floor of the building.

#### If an explosion occurs

- Immediately get under a sturdy table or desk if things are falling around you.
- Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling. Stay below the smoke at all times.

#### If trapped in debris

- If you have a flashlight, use it to help rescuers locate you.



# How to Prepare for Floods

**Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters. If you live in an area where floods occur, you should know the following.**

## **What to do before a flood**

- Plan for evacuation. Know where you are going and how to get there.
- Prepare your home for a flood. Call your local building department or office of emergency management for information.
- Purchase flood insurance.
- Keep all insurance policies and a list of valuable items in a safe place.
- Take photos or a videotape of the valuables you keep in your home.
- Listen to your radio or television for reports of flood danger.
- Keep your car filled with gas.

## **What to do during a flood**

- Do NOT try to walk or drive through flooded areas. Water can be deeper than it appears and water levels rise quickly. Follow official emergency evacuation routes. If your car stalls in floodwater, get out quickly and move to higher ground.
- Stay away from moving water; moving water six inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Cars are easily swept away in just two feet of water.
- Stay away from disaster areas unless authorities ask for volunteers.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- If your home is flooded, turn the utilities off until emergency officials tell you it is safe to turn them on. Do not pump the basement out until floodwater recedes. Avoid weakened floors, walls and rooftops.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and clean water if you come in contact with floodwaters.

## **What to do after a flood**

- Wear gloves and boots when cleaning up.
- Open all doors and windows. Use fans if possible to air out the building.
- Wash all clothes and linens in hot water.
- Discard mattresses and stuffed furniture. They can't be adequately cleaned.
- Wash dirt and mud from walls, counters and hard surfaced floors with soap and water. Then disinfect by wiping surfaces with a solution of one cup bleach per gallon of water.
- Discard all food that has come into contact with floodwater. Canned food is alright, but thoroughly wash the can before opening.
- If your well is flooded, your tap water is probably unsafe. If you have public water, the health department will let you know—through radio and television—if your water is not safe to drink. Until your water is safe, use clean bottled water.
- Learn how to purify water. If you have a well, learn how to decontaminate it.
- When floodwaters have receded watch out for weakened road surfaces.



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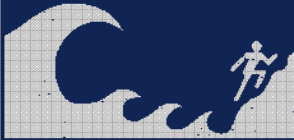
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## TSUNAMI HAZARD ZONE



IN CASE OF EARTHQUAKE GO  
TO HIGH GROUND OR INLAND

# How to Prepare for Tsunamis

*A tsunami is a series of destructive waves affecting shorelines. Tsunamis are usually generated by earthquakes. Tsunamis may also be caused by underwater landslides or underwater volcanic eruptions. Tsunami waves are destructive and could rise as high as 100 feet or more. Tsunamis are a threat to the coast of Washington.*

## The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA has warning centers located in Hawaii and Alaska that can issue a tsunami warning within 15 minutes after an earthquake. This provides an effective warning for distant-source tsunamis.

### A tsunami watch

A watch reports on conditions that may generate a tsunami.

Turn on your radio.

Listen to your radio, NOAA Weather Radio, or TV for updates on the watch.

Know well in advance what your safest evacuation route will be.

### A tsunami warning

A warning reports that a tsunami has been generated.

Keep your radio on.

Evacuate coastal areas immediately.

Evacuate to higher ground or to upper levels of reinforced buildings.

Continue to monitor your local radio or NOAA Weather Radio for further information and instructions.

Wait for the "All Clear" before you return to the beach or to your home.

## Coastal evacuation signs

Tsunami evacuation routes were developed to assist coastal residents and visitors find safer locations in case of an earthquake and tsunami. Evacuation signs have been placed along coastal roadways to indicate the direction inland or to higher ground. In some places, there may be more than one direction available to reach safer areas. These routes may be marked with several signs showing additional options for evacuation. You will need to know the evacuation routes for your area.



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# Volcanoes

**Volcanic dangers include not only an eruption of a mountain and associated lava flows, but also ashfall and debris flows. If you are near a mountain range, be familiar with the following:**

## Before a volcanic eruption:

- Plan ahead. Have emergency supplies, food and water stored.
- Plan an evacuation route away from rivers or streams that may carry mud or debris flow.
- Keep a battery-operated radio available at all times.
- If there is an eruption predicted, monitor the radio or TV for evacuation information. Follow the advice given by authorities.

## After a volcanic eruption:

- Do not approach the eruption area.
- Be prepared to stay indoors and avoid downwind areas if ashfall is predicted.
- Evacuate if advised to do so by authorities.
- Be aware of stream and river channels when evacuating.
- Move toward higher ground if mudflows are approaching.
- Follow the evacuation signs posted along roads and highways.



## If there is ashfall in your area:

- Protect your lungs. Infants and the elderly, and those who have respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema or other chronic lung and heart diseases should be particularly careful to avoid breathing ash. If ash is present:
  - Stay inside. Close doors, windows and dampers. Place damp towels at door thresholds and other draft sources.
  - When outside, wear a single-use (disposable) facemask. Remember that these masks may not fit small children properly. (Note: Masks may make breathing more difficult for people with respiratory conditions.)
  - Those most at risk should limit outdoor activities. Keep children and pets indoors.
  - If you have asthma or another respiratory condition – or have a child with asthma – pay attention to symptoms such as wheezing and coughing, or more severe symptoms such as chest pain or tightness, shortness of breath and severe fatigue. Stay indoors and follow your asthma management plan. Contact your doctor if you have trouble breathing.
  - Replace disposable furnace filters or clean permanent furnace filters frequently.
- If you wear contact lenses, protect your eyes by wearing glasses or protective goggles or by removing your contacts.
- If you find ash in your drinking water, use an alternate source of drinking water such as purchased bottled water.
- Put stoppers in the tops of your drainpipes.
- Protect dust-sensitive electronics.
- Keep roofs free of ash in excess of 4 inches.
- Remove outdoor clothing before entering a building.
- Wash vegetables from the garden before eating.
- Minimize travel — ash may be harmful to your vehicle.
- Frequently change oil and air filters in your automobile.



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# How to Prepare for Windstorms

*Each fall and winter season, several low pressure systems impact the Pacific Northwest, producing strong winds to 60 mph. On Columbus Day, October 12, 1962, the strongest non-tropical windstorm ever to hit the lower 48 states struck the Pacific coast. It claimed 46 lives, injured hundreds more, and knocked power out for several million people. By taking action now, you can save lives and reduce the damage caused by windstorms and other weather-related hazards.*

## What to do before a windstorm

- ☐ Contact your local emergency management office or the National Weather Service to find out what types of storms are most likely to occur in your community.
- ☐ Assemble a disaster supply kit.
- ☐ Contact vendors to know the proper use of home generators.
- ☐ Find out who in your area might need special assistance, specifically the elderly, disabled, and non-English speaking neighbors.
- ☐ Check with your veterinarian for animal care instructions in an emergency situation.
- ☐ If you live on a coastal or inland shoreline, be familiar with evacuation routes.
- ☐ Know what emergency plans are in place at your workplace, school and daycare center.
- ☐ Conduct a home safety evaluation, including the garage door, and nearby trees.
- ☐ If you have an electric garage door opener, locate the manual override.

## What to do during a windstorm

- ☐ Don't panic. Take quick action to protect yourself and help others.
- ☐ Turn off the stove if you're cooking when the power goes out, and turn off natural gas appliances.
- ☐ If you are indoors, move away from windows or objects that could fall. Go to lower floors in multi-story homes.

- ☐ If you are outdoors, move into a building. Avoid downed electric power lines, utility poles and trees.
- ☐ If you are driving, pull off the road and stop away from trees. If possible, walk into a safe building. Avoid overpasses, power lines and other hazards.
- ☐ Listen to your radio for emergency instructions.

## What to do after a windstorm

- ☐ Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- ☐ Evacuate damaged buildings. Do not re-enter until declared safe by authorities.
- ☐ Call 9-1-1 only to report a life threatening emergency.
- ☐ If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound indoors — open windows and leave the building. Turn off the gas source and call your gas company. Do not use matches, candles, open flames or electric switches indoors.
- ☐ If the power goes out, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep food frozen for up to two days.
- ☐ Provide assistance to your neighbors, especially the elderly or disabled.
- ☐ Try to make contact with your out-of-area phone contact, but avoid making local telephone calls.
- ☐ Monitor your portable or weather radio for instructions or an official "all clear" notice. Radio stations will broadcast what to do, the location of emergency shelters and medical aid stations, and the extent of damage.



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# Winter Storms

Winter storms can range from moderate snow over a few hours to blizzard conditions with blinding, wind-driven snow or freezing rain that lasts several days. The time to prepare is before the snow falls or ice forms.

## Preparing for winter storms

- Listen to your radio or television for winter storm forecasts and other information.
- Prepare your home for cold weather. Install storm windows. Insulate outside walls, attics and crawl spaces. Wrap pipes, especially those near cold outer walls or in attics or crawl spaces. Repair leaks in the roof, around the doors and in the windows.
- Have appropriate cold weather clothing available.
- If you have a kerosene heater, refuel your heater outside and remember to keep it at least three feet from flammable objects.
- Make sure your fireplace functions properly.
- Have rock salt and sand on hand for traction on ice.
- Fill your gas tank before the snow starts falling.

## During a winter storm

- Wear several layers of loose fitting, light weight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens rather than gloves. Wear a warm, woolen cap.
- Do not drive unnecessarily.
- Reduce the temperature in your home to conserve fuel.
- Heat only the areas of your home you are using. Close doors and curtains or cover windows and doors with blankets.
- Use alternative heat methods safely. Never use a gas or charcoal grill, hibachi or portable propane heater to cook indoors or heat your home.
- Be careful when shoveling snow. Do not overexert yourself.

- Be sure to eat regularly. Food provides calories that maintain body heat.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia — slurred speech, disorientation, uncontrollable shivering, stumbling, drowsiness and body temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit or less.
- If you become trapped outside, get out of the wind and stay dry. Build a lean-to or snow cave if nothing else is available. Do not eat snow; it will make you too cold.

## If in your vehicle

- Make sure someone knows where you are going. Stay on the main roads.
- If you must stop, remain inside the vehicle. Use a bright distress flag or your hazard lights to draw attention to your vehicle.
- If trapped in a blizzard, clear your tail pipe and run your engine and heater for 10 minutes every hour. Open your window slightly.
- During night hours, keep the dome light on in the car so rescue crews can see your vehicle.
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle. Include a three-day supply of water and non-perishable food that can be eaten without being cooked. Include a blanket or sleeping bag for each passenger, a flashlight, cell phone, shovel, sack of sand or kitty litter, booster cables, flare, coffee can with lid and toilet paper.



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# Pandemic Flu



## Other Web Sites:

- King County Public Health:  
[www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices)
- World Health Organization  
[www.who.int/en](http://www.who.int/en)



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## An influenza pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a new flu virus

An influenza — or flu — pandemic is an outbreak of a new type of flu virus that spreads rapidly from one country to another. Because the virus is new, people have no natural immunity to it and vaccine will not be available for many months. Without vaccine or immunity, the virus passes rapidly from person to person. Hundreds of thousands in our country could get sick, and many could die.

There have been three large flu pandemics in the 20th century — 1918, 1957, and 1968. No one knows where or when the next one will begin, but health officials agree that it is only a matter of time.

## What to expect if an outbreak occurs

A flu pandemic could be devastating, so everyone should be prepared for the worst. With up to one-third of the workforce sick or staying home, supplies and services could be limited or disrupted.

Extraordinary measures could be required. You may be asked to stay away from other people, large public events like concerts or sports could be canceled, and schools could be closed. Health officials may issue orders to keep people with the virus at home or in special facilities. You may be asked to wear a mask in medical facilities or other public places.

A flu pandemic could last a long time. The 1918 flu pandemic lasted 18 months.

## What to do now

- Know your neighbors. encourage others to prepare.
- Be ready to help family and neighbors who are elderly or have special needs if services they depend on are not available.
- Know school policies about illness and absence. Make a plan for taking care of your children if schools are closed for long periods.
- Be prepared to stay home from work when you are sick. Know work policies about sick leave, absences, time off and telecommuting.

- Encourage planning. Every workplace should have a plan for doing essential tasks if large numbers of employees are absent over many months.
- Explore ways to get your work done with less personal contact, such as increased use of e-mail and phone conferences.
- Be prepared to get by for a week or more on what you have at home. Stores may not be open or may have limited supplies.
- Plan to limit the number of trips you take to shop or to run errands.

## Prevent the spread of germs

The flu virus is spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes or touches things that others use. To protect yourself and others:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Cough into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.
- Wash your hands. Soap and warm water are best, but alcohol-based hand gel or disposable wipes also work.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth. The flu virus is often spread when a person touches something that has the flu virus on it and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home when you're sick or have flu symptoms. Drink extra water, get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.

## Learn Home Care Basics

- Know how to care for someone with fever, body aches and lung congestion. During a pandemic, follow health official's instructions.
- Learn about dehydration. The flu virus causes the body to lose water through fever and sweating. Watch for weakness, fainting, dry mouth, dark concentrated urine, low blood pressure or a fast pulse when lying or sitting down. These are signs of dehydration. To prevent dehydration, it is very important for a person with the flu to drink a lot of water — up to 12 glasses a day.



# Radiation Exposure

One possible source of radiation exposure is a “dirty bomb”. A dirty bomb is a small explosive device packaged with radioactive materials. During any event that releases radiation, your best protection is to follow the recommendations of authorities.

## Stay inside

- Stay inside your home or office unless instructed by civil authorities to leave. Close the windows, turn off the heating or air-conditioning, and stay near the center of the building. Once the initial blast is over, radioactive materials may be spread in the smoke and debris in the air. By staying inside you will reduce any potential exposure to airborne radioactive material. If there is a basement, go there.

## Listen to the Radio

- When you learn that radioactive materials have been released in an area near you— either accidentally or intentionally—tune your radio to the emergency broadcasting network for instructions. Government agencies will let you know how to protect yourself. Keep a battery-powered radio handy in case electrical power goes out in your area.

## Follow Instructions

- The best way to avoid exposure to radiation is to do what experts advise. If told to evacuate, do so promptly. Take items you will need for an extended absence, such as prescription medicines and clothing. Listen for news about the location of the radioactive cloud. Even if it has already passed, radioactive contamination may have fallen on the ground and experts will recommend the best ways to safely leave the area.

## If you suspect that you are contaminated

- If you believe you have been exposed to radioactive materials, you should carefully remove your outer layer of clothing and put it in a plastic bag; then take a warm shower to rinse off any radioactive materials. Place the sealed plastic bag in a room away from people.

## Seek help if needed

- Special assistance centers will be set up as soon as possible. Center locations will be made available through the media and on health department and other emergency service Web sites. If this information is not yet available, go to a police or fire station located outside of the affected area. If you were near the explosion or believe you were in the path of the cloud, tell the staff at the station or assistance center.

## Watch what you eat

- Avoid drinking fresh milk or eating fruits and vegetables grown in the affected area. Wait until the Department of Health announces that produce and dairy products are safe to eat and drink. Milk, fruit and vegetables are okay to eat if they were bought or picked before the radiation was released and were stored indoors. Food stored in cans or bags is also safe to eat. Be sure to thoroughly rinse off containers before opening.



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