



# EMERGENCIES

## INFORMATION & QUICK TIPS

Bleeding Control • Disabilities & Emergency Preparedness • Disaster Kits • Donating & Volunteering • Communication Plans  
• Event Planning • Event Safety • Hazardous Materials • Household Preparedness • Make a Plan • Radiation



# BLEEDING CONTROL

*Stop the Bleed* is a national campaign launched by the White House in 2015 with two main goals:

- Inform and empower the general public to become trained on basic trauma care in order to stop or slow bleeding during emergencies.
- Increase bystander access to bleeding control kits.

As part of the agency's training and preparedness goals, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) is working to make Bleeding Control Basic courses more readily available throughout Indiana.

## QUICK TIPS

- Alert first responders to the situation by calling 911.
- Find the area of bleeding.
- Compress the wound to stop the bleeding.

---

## BLEEDING CONTROL TIPS

### BLEEDING CONTROL COURSES

Bleeding Control Basic courses, part of the Stop the Bleed initiative, are free, last approximately 90 minutes and can be taken by anyone, including those with little or no medical training. These classes teach basic awareness and understanding for bystanders to recognize and respond to life-threatening bleeding during emergency events such as car accidents, home- or work-related injuries, bombings and mass shootings.

Hoosiers wishing to take a Bleeding Control Basic course should reach out to their local fire department or medical organizations to express interest and receive additional information on course scheduling. IDHS works closely with these organizations to establish training and deliver equipment to those interested in learning these life-saving techniques.

### *Businesses and Organizations*

IDHS partners with local first responders and public safety personnel to administer train-the-trainer classes for qualified individuals wishing to teach the Bleeding Control Basic course. This initiative complements the training and certification programs within the EMS Section of IDHS.

Businesses or organizations interested in scheduling a train-the-trainer class should contact the EMS program manager for their district.

## **ACTION STEPS**

Bleeding injuries can happen anywhere. Whether you are the one injured and need someone to help you, or you are the person in position to save a life, follow these basic steps to stop the bleeding.

- Call 911: Have someone nearby call 911 while you begin to work on the individual. First responders are trained to control bleeding injuries and can help when they arrive.
- Find the source of the bleeding and remove clothing over it if it is in the way.
- Focus on the bleeding that is life-threatening.
- Pack or stuff the wound with gauze, a clean cloth, clothing, newspaper or even your hands. Then apply pressure to the wound with both your hands. Keep holding the pressure for at least 5 minutes before checking the wound.
- Add more bandages on top of the existing bandage if blood soaks through.
- If a tourniquet is available, apply it. Tell first responders how long the tourniquet has been in place when they arrive.
- Wash your hands after helping the injured person.





# DISABILITIES AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In emergencies, it is important to have a plan to keep everyone safe. By being prepared and informed, you can respond effectively. Here, you will find information, tips, and resources tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

## QUICK TIPS

- **Create an Emergency Plan:** Make a personalized plan that considers your specific needs. Include important contact information, medical details and necessary supplies.
- **Build an Emergency Kit:** Prepare a kit with essential supplies like medications, medical equipment, non-perishable food, water, a flashlight, batteries and a communication device.
- **Stay Informed:** Stay updated on local emergency alerts, weather forecasts and evacuation notices. Sign up for notifications and keep a battery-powered radio handy.
- **Establish Communication:** Develop a communication plan with caregivers, family and friends. Keep a list of emergency contacts easily accessible.
- **Practice Evacuation Drills:** Regularly practice evacuations with caregivers. Familiarize yourself with routes, exits and equipment like wheelchairs or walkers.

---

## DISABILITIES AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TIPS

### GENERAL

- Wear a medical ID bracelet or necklace if applicable.
- Keep backup medication and essential equipment. Pack extra batteries.
- Maintain a list of emergency contacts.
- Have multiple ways to communicate with people who can help you, such as pen and paper, signs with phrases or pictures, emergency whistle, flags or lights.
- If you rely on life-sustaining medical treatments, know about multiple facilities that can help you if your regular location cannot.

## FIRES

- Install accessible smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.
- Create a fire escape plan and share it with caregivers and family.
- Practice low crawling to escape smoke-filled rooms.

## EARTHQUAKES

- Secure heavy objects that could cause harm or block exits if they were to fall over.
- Identify safe places to take cover and hold on.
- Keep emergency supplies near your bed, including a phone.

## TORNADOES

- Find a safe shelter away from windows.
- Stay informed about tornado warnings. Consider buying an all-hazards radio that can notify you with visual and tactile features, like vibrations and text readouts of alerts, if you have hearing impairments.

## FLOODS

- Know flood-prone areas and evacuate if needed.
- Keep important documents in waterproof containers.
- Consider portable wheelchair ramps.
- Charge your devices in case electricity becomes unavailable or you have to move away from a power source.

## EVACUATIONS

- Plan multiple evacuation routes. Some may be unavailable.
- If you are in an apartment building, office or even your home, consider how you will be able to exit the building. Keep in mind the electricity may be out and elevators might be unavailable.
- Keep supplies and documents in an accessible "go bag" so you can leave immediately. Remember to include the necessary documentation for your service animal so that you can keep the animal with you if you use an emergency public shelter.
- Notify local authorities about specific needs.

**GET PREPARED**[getprepared.in.gov](http://getprepared.in.gov)

# DISASTER KITS

You need a family disaster kit. This is a supply kit that will help you and your family survive until emergency personnel are able to reach you. Disaster kits are tailored to your family.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security wants you prepared for any disaster that might take place. Take action now to help yourself and your family be more prepared for any emergency. It may take emergency personnel up to three days to reach you; therefore, create disaster kits that are designed for three days. Each kit should include basic items like water, food, a flashlight, a battery-powered radio and a first aid kit.

## QUICK TIPS

- Have at least three gallons of water stored for each person in the household.
- Pack at least three days' worth of non-perishable food.
- Create a first aid kit.
- Include tools, supplies and clothing to last for several days.
- Keep in mind that there may be no electricity during an emergency or disaster, so assemble items that do not require electricity.

## DISASTER KIT TIPS

### FOOD AND WATER

#### *Water*

One gallon of water per person per day. This is both for drinking and sanitary purposes.

- For three days, one person needs at least three gallons of water.
- Store in clean plastic containers.
- The hotter the weather is, the more water you may need.
- Children, nursing mothers and people who are sick or injured may need more water.

## Food

Three-day supply of non-perishable food. Make sure to store foods that require no preparation, no refrigeration and very little water, if any.

### Examples

- Protein bars
- Canned meats
- Dry cereal
- Dry milk
- Peanut butter
- Baby formula (if applicable)
- Crackers

## FIRST AID KIT

Include the following:

- Latex gloves
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Petroleum jelly
- Sterile dressings
- Adhesive bandages
- Thermometer
- Soap or hydrogen peroxide
- Antibiotic ointment
- Sunscreen
- Prescription medication and supplies
- Over-the-counter pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid
- Laxatives

## OTHER

Consider adding the following items to your disaster kit. Remember that there may be no electricity during disasters, so prepare supplies that can work when no electricity is available.

- Wrench to shut off gas and water
- Can opener (manual, not powered)
- Eating utensils
- Paper cups, plates and towels
- Flashlight and extra batteries (no candles: open flames could cause an explosion if there is a gas leak)
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA weather radio preferably)
- Local maps
- Dust mask
- Plastic sheeting
- Duct tape

- Garbage bags
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof case
- Blanket
- Important documents in waterproof container (birth certificates, Social Security card, deed, bonds, etc.)
- Cash (keep small bills because no power means there will be no ATM availability or credit card use)
- Clothes (strong shoes, long-sleeve shirt, jeans, extra socks)
- Entertainment for kids (if applicable)
- Extra baby supplies (if applicable)





# DONATING AND VOLUNTEERING

Giving USA reports about \$557 billion was donated to charities by Americans in 2023. Volunteering or sending donations such as clothes, water and other household items is a common reaction following a disaster. However, this actually can cause more problems for responders and individuals impacted by a disaster.

## QUICK TIPS

- Check on the legitimacy of a charitable organization before donating.
- Ask questions of people or organizations asking for donations.
- Train how to be a volunteer before a disaster strikes so you are prepared when the time comes.
- Volunteer through experienced organizations that work together with first responders.
- Remember to take care of yourself after disasters. Let your supervisors know that you need time for self-care.

---

## DONATING AND VOLUNTEERING TIPS

### DONATING

Providing funding or cash donations through a relief organization is the most efficient way to help affected areas. For the best donation practices, follow some safety tips before sending money.

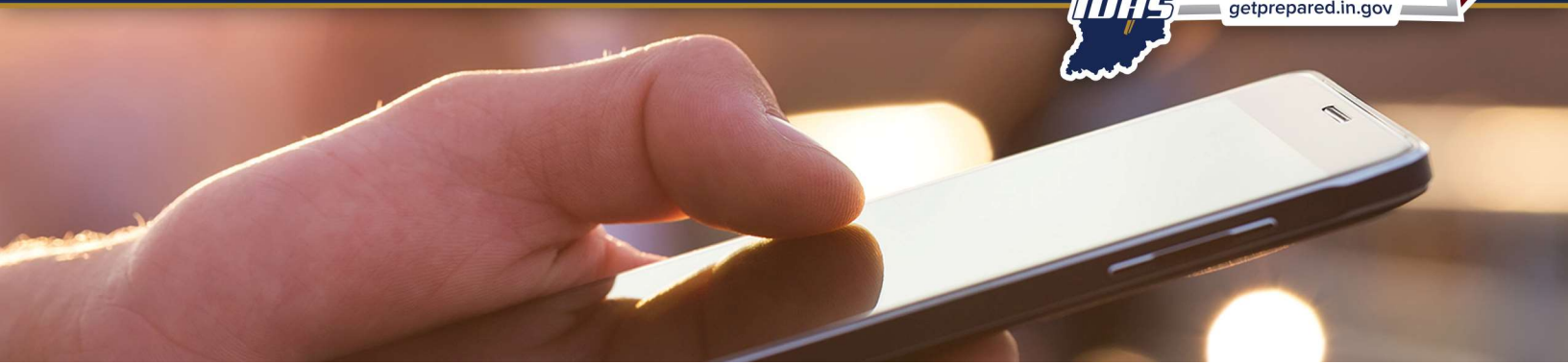
- Always perform a thorough check on a charitable organization before any money is donated. A few items to check for include: program information, a detailed organization mission and fiscal reports.
- Common scam attempts include using names similar to well-known charities. One word may be the only difference, so always double-check the name before sending money.
- If a charitable organization calls asking for donations, never hesitate to ask the caller questions about the charity, where the money is going and why the money is being raised. Hesitance in answering these questions could be cause of concern.
- Be cautious of crowdfunding and social media donation requests. Ask questions about where the money is going, why the money is being requested and always ask for a transaction invoice.

- Charitable donations payments should be completed on a bank card, credit card or a check. These payment methods are recorded on a bank statement balance, which will provide proof a transaction was completed.

## VOLUNTEERING

The Corporation for National and Community Service reports more than 75 million Americans volunteered for 4.99 billion hours in 2023. Helping those affected by volunteering is a natural response to a disaster. However, if safety precautions are not followed, volunteers can create more trouble than assistance.

- The best time to become a volunteer is before a disaster occurs. This allows individuals to be properly trained. Look online to learn more about Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.
  - Some organizations may have non-disaster opportunities to help too, such as installing smoke alarms or providing event assistance.
- Work through an organization that is familiar and works in tandem with first responders.
- Obtain an assignment from a volunteer organization prior to arriving on scene. This ensures that volunteers are documented and helps maintain a safe scene.
- When on-scene of the disaster, wear appropriate clothing based on assigned duties. In most cases, fully covered arms and legs, closed-toe shoes and clothing that allows for easy mobility is recommended.
- Always follow safety guidelines, procedures and rules. Organizations create these standards to provide optimal assistance and to keep everyone involved safe.
- Stay aware of the surroundings. If there are signs of potential safety dangers, immediately notify the proper authorities.
- Regularly monitor physical, mental and emotional health. If there are any symptoms of fatigue, emotional distress or illness, immediately notify the on-duty supervisors and request to be relieved.



# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLANS

Flooding, tornadoes, snowstorms and severe thunderstorms are just a few of the most common disasters Indiana faces. Knowing how to communicate during a natural disaster or other crisis is a vital step in being prepared before one of these events.

## QUICK TIPS

- Learn about disasters and how they may affect your ability to communicate with members of your household.
- Decide where your household members should meet if separated.
- Create paper copies of emergency contact information.
- During a disaster, try texting or using internet communication instead of phone calls.

---

## EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN TIPS

### WHAT TO INCLUDE

Communicating during an emergency situation can be difficult. Communication can be cut off completely or be severely limited. Consider the following information when making a household emergency communication plan:

- Understand how each disaster could impact forms of communication.
- Designate an out-of-state contact person.
- Choose a place for household members to meet if separated during a disaster.
- Make sure every household member understands who to call and where to meet.
- Regularly practice the communication plan.
- Create a copy of emergency contact numbers for every household member and disaster kit.
- Share information about emergency preparation so everyone can be ready.

When communicating during a disaster:

- Stay on the line: Do not hang up if a busy signal is heard. Stay on the line until a dial tone is heard, then place the call as normal.

- Try cell phones and landlines: If a loved one cannot be reached by a cell phone, try using a landline.
- Try texting: If a cell tower is damaged and not functioning properly, text messages may get through even though a call cannot.
- Internet options: If possible, communicating through email or social networking sites may prove effective. Also, try finding someone through the American Red Cross Safe and Well program.

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

With access to current technology, many individuals no longer have phone numbers memorized. Consider compiling a paper list including the following phone numbers, to access in the event that those saved in a phone are unavailable.

- Loved ones
- Neighbors
- Out-of-state contact
- Doctor
- Veterinarian
- Poison control
- Police department, fire department, ambulance service
- Utility companies
- Insurance companies



# EVENT PLANNING

Indiana communities hold numerous popular and successful events regularly throughout the year. This guidance is intended to assist organizers in identifying and planning for potentially preventable incidents at public events, to mitigate injury, suffering or death.

## QUICK TIPS

- Contact the local Emergency Management Agency director and discuss possible support needs.
- Notify local first responders of the event date and location.
- Develop a plan for vehicle flow into and out of the event location. Consider how responding emergency vehicles may need access.
- Work with medical partners to choose a location for at least one first aid station for event attendees.
- Instruct security staff to immediately report suspicious activities, people and objects.

---

## EVENT PLANNING SAFETY TIPS

### LEADING UP TO AN EVENT

- Contact the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center (866-400-4432 or [iifc@iifc.in.gov](mailto:iifc@iifc.in.gov)) to understand the local threats and develop a comprehensive emergency management policy.
- Contact the local Emergency Management Agency director prior to the event. Discuss the support that the event might need, and the best way to obtain that support.
- Notify local first responders (police, fire and EMS) of the event date and location.
- Ensure that local law enforcement is invited to and has a presence at the event.
- Enlist public/private partnerships to reinforce areas that are vulnerable to forced vehicle entry with substantial barricades (e.g., bollards, retractable wedges, anti-ram fences, large trucks or buses, Jersey barriers, reinforced concrete decorative planters, etc.).



## BEFORE AN EVENT

- Develop a detailed plan for vehicle flow into and out of the event location, including entry/exit of responding emergency vehicles.
- When possible, arrange to have marked police vehicles parked in high visibility locations.
- Identify locations acceptable for severe weather shelter, and develop a plan for notifying attendees of severe weather, as well as the locations of shelters.
- Work with medical partners to choose a location for at least one first aid station that is accessible to event attendees.
- Develop information packets for first responders and event personnel that provide information on severe weather shelters, emergency vehicle plans and other information.
- Create signage encouraging attendees to “See Something, Say Something” in the case of suspicious activities, persons, unattended parcels, etc.

## DURING AN EVENT

- Establish a first aid station (or multiple stations) staffed by EMS or medical professionals.
- Prohibit vehicle movement or use inside the event venue.
- Instruct security staff to immediately report suspicious activities, persons, unattended parcels, bags, etc., to event management, law enforcement, fire or EMS personnel.
- Monitor weather conditions and provide notification of severe weather in the area, if needed.
- Enlist first responders and personnel to notify and direct attendees via public address systems to pre-determined evacuation routes and shelter areas in severe conditions or emergency.

# EVENTS

Large events are a lot of fun, yet threats such as pickpockets, hazardous weather, crowd surges and violence continue to be valid concerns for those attending public events. Personal awareness and simple planning can further enhance safety should danger arise at a large event.

## QUICK TIPS

- Find out what the event's emergency and safety information and procedures are.
- Discuss with children what they should do in case they are separated or there is another type of emergency.
- Make sure someone who is not at the event is aware of who is attending the event with you.
- Pay attention to your surroundings at the event and what you may need to do if there is an emergency.
- Follow the instructions of event officials and first responders.

---

## EVENT SAFETY TIPS

### RESEARCH THE EVENT

One of the best ways to stay safe at any event is to be prepared. Researching the venue ahead of a large event can help individuals plan their emergency responses. Scenarios to consider include:

- How many people are expected at the event?
- Where are the venue's exits?
- What are the emergency evacuation protocols for the venue?
- What is the contact information for security, first aid and lost property?
- What items are allowed, and what is prohibited?
- How might the day's weather (heat, cold, wind, storms) affect people at the event or driving to/from the event?
- What safety or security issues have been reported at similar events?

## TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT SAFETY

If there are young children in the family, explain to them the necessity of safety. While it is best not to scare them, let them know how important it is for them to stick close to the family and stay away from strangers. Also consider snapping a digital photo of children just before leaving home so there is a current description on hand in the event they are separated from the family.

## HAVE AN OUTSIDE CONTACT

At least one person not attending the event should be aware of family or friends who are attending.

- Ensure that the outside contact knows who is attending the event (family members, a group of friends, a couple, an individual, etc.).
- Share cell phone numbers among everyone attending and the contact.
- Provide the contact with estimated times of departure, event attendance and return.

## SCAN THE AREA

After arriving at the event, do an awareness scan of the surroundings.

- Take note of emergency exits, restrooms and exit routes. Take note of secondary exit points that may be less crowded. Remember that it may be difficult to take advantage of the main exit if an emergency occurs.
- Plan evacuation routes that make the most sense for the physical abilities of those in the group. Stairs, ramps and uneven ground can be especially challenging for some people during an evacuation.
- Become familiar with the venue's layout. Pay attention to the location of medical tents or first-aid stations.
- Establish a meeting location where group members will gather if separated.

## REMAIN AWARE OF OTHERS

Should anyone get the slightest feeling that something may be wrong, it is best to listen to instincts and act fast.

- Keep an eye on the crowd for signs of trouble. When seeing something of this nature, it could be a good time to change locations, and let security know about any concerns. Scenarios to look for include:
  - An abnormal increase in the number of people pouring into the area.
  - A loner who doesn't seem to belong in the area.
  - Performers or audience members encouraging hazardous behavior.
- If the crowd is getting too dense for comfort, change locations before it gets worse.
- Be vigilant about theft possibilities when others may be close enough to reach purses, wallets, cell phones or cameras. Ensure such items are always as secure as possible.
- Travel with a companion when venturing anywhere inside or outside of the venue. This will reduce the likelihood of getting lost or being targeted for theft.

## EVACUATION TIPS

When an evacuation is necessary, it is important to stay calm. Try following some of these key tips:

- If an emergency does happen, stay calm, head for the nearest exit and listen for official instructions.
- In a crowd, keep feet firmly placed and well-spread, and keep arms close to the chest.
- Do not resist the force of the crowd.
- Do not stop to pick up personal items in dense and moving crowds.
- Avoid falling and keep those nearby from falling too.



# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hoosiers use and live around many hazardous chemicals and materials every day, whether they are household items or found at the workplace. These substances can have toxic effects and deserve special attention. Prepare now and follow the tips below so you know how to handle a hazardous substance incident in your area.

For a list of toxic substances and health effects, visit the Toxic Substances Portal on the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry website.

## QUICK TIPS

- Build an emergency kit.
- Know how to turn off your home's heating and cooling systems.
- Have multiple ways to receive guidance from local officials and public safety personnel.

---

## HAZMAT PREPAREDNESS TIPS

### BEFORE AN INCIDENT (PREPARE)

**Make a plan:** Think about and discuss what you and members of your household will do in case there is an incident. If toxic chemicals are released in your area, you may need to "shelter in place" or evacuate, depending on what local officials advise. Write down your plans using one of the forms on the [Make a Plan](#) page.

**Build an emergency kit:** The kit should include duct tape, scissors and thick plastic sheeting that can be used to seal windows, doors and vents to block potential contaminants from outside. Learn what else should be in your kit on the [Disaster Kit](#) page. Keep in mind you may have to shelter in place for an extended period of time and will need certain supplies on hand, or you may need to evacuate in a short period of time and will need important items ready to go.

**Know your home:** Be familiar with your home's heating and cooling (ventilation) system. Know how to turn off fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.

**Know where to go:** Locate a room in your home that is above ground and has as few openings as possible, to avoid as much potential exposure to chemicals from outside as you can.



## DURING AN INCIDENT (RESPOND)

Listen for instructions: Local officials and public safety personnel will advise the public of actions to take. Depending on the type of chemical and risks of exposure, the guidance could be to stay inside or leave the area. Be sure to have multiple ways to receive this information: radio, television or a device with internet access.

Act quickly:

- Evacuate immediately if told to do so, and avoid going in the direction of the chemical if possible, whether the chemical is in a building you are in or nearby.
- If directed to stay indoors and shelter in place, go to an interior room, turn off and close all heating, cooling and ventilation systems and seal gaps where chemical gas or vapors can enter.
- When outdoors during an incident, find the fastest way to get to clean air and away from the incident (go upwind of the source, if known). Find a building to shelter in place. If inside a vehicle, turn off the heater and air conditioner, and keep the vents and windows closed.
- If you are being affected by chemicals, get help by calling the poison control center at 800-222-1222, calling 911 or going to the nearest hospital. If you cannot get medical help right away, decontaminate yourself:
  - Remove all clothing and other items on your body. Avoid it contacting your eyes, nose and mouth. Put all contaminated clothing and items in plastic bags, then seal the bags. Remove contact lenses. Decontaminate glasses in household bleach, then rinse and dry them.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water.
  - Flush your eyes with water.
  - Gently wash your face and hair with soap and water, then rinse thoroughly with water.

## AFTER AN INCIDENT (RECOVER)

Wait: Listen for instructions from local officials. Do not leave your shelter, go outside or return to the area until they say it is safe. Follow their guidance on decontamination procedures.

Seek medical help: If you were affected by chemicals and were not able to get medical help immediately, go to a medical facility to be treated by professionals.

## SPECIAL CASE: ANHYDROUS AMMONIA SAFETY

### *Common Use*

Anhydrous ammonia (dry or pure, undiluted ammonia) is frequently used by farmers for use as fertilizer. It is a colorless gas ordinarily but becomes a liquid when in pressurized tanks. This is the form that most farmers use it in when applying to their fields.

### *Dangers*

Anhydrous ammonia takes water from anything it comes into contact with, including your body. It can damage the skin, lungs and eyes severely in only a matter of seconds. It causes painful burns and can cause suffocation, blindness and death.

### *How to Stay Safe*

- "The Nose Knows": Ammonia has a distinct odor that irritates the nose, so you will smell it.
- Inspect hoses and valves, and make sure there are no loose connections. Replace old or damaged parts instead of repairing them.

- Follow instructions and do not overfill tanks, keeping in mind possible expansion. White paint helps keep tank temperature down, so keep the tanks painted white. Remove hazards that could heat tanks and cause dangerous pressure buildups.
- Wear protective clothing and equipment, such as a rubber suit or long-sleeved shirt and coveralls, gloves and non-vented goggles.
- First Aid: Have water on hand for immediate use in case of an accident. Immediate flushing of the eyes is critical to prevent permanent damage, so have a bottle of water with you and ready to use at a moment's notice. You may need to flush your eyes until you can reach the emergency water tank mounted on the farm vehicle.



# HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS

During a disaster, no individual is left unaffected. The Federal Emergency Management Agency National Household Survey indicates many Americans say they would not be ready in the event of an emergency. Spending time to prepare, even a little, before an emergency arises can help save lives.

## QUICK TIPS

- Become familiar with the types of disasters that occur in your area.
- Inform yourself about disaster plans and procedures by your employer, school and municipality.
- Create an emergency plan and practice it.
- Develop a disaster kit that has many items you will need during an emergency, which could last several days.

---

## HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS TIPS

### BE INFORMED

Knowing what to expect and plan for can help individuals stay calm when an emergency occurs.

- Be aware of all possible disasters that occur in local areas.
- Learn the difference between weather watches and warnings.
- Learn about disaster preparedness programs offered in local communities.
- If applicable, understand emergency plans of local schools.
- Study emergency plans created by employers.

### MAKE A PLAN

- Emergency plans need to be tailored to the specific needs of the household.
- Create a list of meeting locations and emergency phone numbers.
- Make a map of potential neighborhood escape routes.
- Complete the IDHS online form to help create an emergency plan.

- Practice the plan frequently.
- Share information about emergency preparation so everyone can be ready.
- Create a waterproof disaster kit.

## BUILD A DISASTER KIT

In severe emergencies, it can take up to three days for assistance to arrive. Disaster kits should be able to support the household during that time. Consider some of the following as part of the household disaster kit:

- Non-perishable food and water for three days, including one gallon of water per person, per day
- Battery or hand-crank weather radio
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Extra clothing, sturdy shoes, blankets and personal hygiene items
- List of emergency phone numbers
- Copies of important documents (photo ID, social security card, etc.)
- Cash in small bills (power outages can limit use of ATMs and credit cards)
- Special items based on specific needs (baby formula, pet supplies, extra medication, etc.)



# MAKE A PLAN

Preparation and communication are crucial during a disaster situation. Talk with friends, family and other community members about creating communication and safety plans for before, during and after all of Indiana's disasters.

## QUICK TIPS

- Choose a location for household members to meet if separated during a disaster.
- Learn how to shelter in place and other types of sheltering methods.
- Develop a plan for when you must evacuate.
- Meet with your family and work on the plans together.
- Remember to plan for pets too.

---

## DISASTER PLANNING TIPS

### COMMUNICATION

Communicating during a disaster can be difficult, as communication channels can be limited or completely cut off depending on the situation. Having an established emergency communications plan will enable families to maintain contact with one another even if they become separated. Consider the following information when making a household emergency communications plan:

- Identify different ways to receive weather alerts.
- Understand how each disaster could impact forms of communication.
- Choose a location for household members to meet if separated during a disaster.
- Create a copy of emergency contact numbers for every household member.

### SHELTER

Sheltering is important when disaster conditions require individuals to seek protection at home, work or in other locations. The three different types of sheltering include:



- Stay-at-Home
- Mass Care
- Sheltering in Place

Learn more about the different sheltering types at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

## EVACUATION

Sometimes a disaster might require evacuation from home or the community. In some situations, a day or two to prepare will be available, while other situations might call for an immediate evacuation. Regardless of the time frame, establishing a proper evacuation plan is important for keeping every member of the family safe.

For guidance on what to include in your evacuation plan, visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

## STEPS TO MAKE A PLAN

Making a plan for you and your family is very important. It will keep all members of your family on the same page and allow everyone to be as safe as possible.

### *Step 1: Meet With Your Family*

First, sit down with your family and discuss the possible events that could take place for which your family needs a disaster plan. Each possible disaster should be explained in detail along with discussion about actions that should be taken before and after any such event.

- Carbon Monoxide
- Earthquake
- Extreme Cold
- Extreme Heat
- Fire
- Flooding
- Nuclear Explosion or Nuclear Power Plant Incident
- Thunderstorm
- Tornado
- Winter Storm

### *Step 2: Decide Your Meeting Location and list Contact Information*

Now it's time to decide on an out-of-state contact and set a family meeting location. You need an out-of-state contact because during a disaster everyone within the same local area as you could be affected too. Your out-of-state contact should be out of the disaster zone. This contact may be a loved one, family member or a friend, as long as it is someone everyone can contact when separated to see if all members of the family are OK. Out-of-state calls might be easier to make if local circuits are overwhelmed and busy. Local phones and cell phones may not be working, so be patient.

During a disaster, there should be a mutual meeting location for your family members if they are separated. This meeting location should be different for each type of disaster. For example, for a natural disaster such as an earthquake, you might meet at the house. However, during a man-made disaster such as a nuclear incident, your meeting location might be out of state. It is also useful to call each other as soon as possible to ensure safety and make sure everyone is on the same page. Discuss each disaster with your family and come up with meeting locations.

### *Step 3: Plan What To Do With Your Pets*

Pets are very special to owners. In a disaster they need to be taken care of as well. If you evacuate, take your pet(s) with you because you may not be able to return. If it's not safe for you to be there, then it's not safe for them to be either. Also, most shelters do not allow pets, so plan accordingly. For more information, visit the [Pet Preparedness](#) page.

### *Step 4: Describe Your Evacuation Route*

Come up with an escape route and make sure everyone has knowledge of the surrounding roads and highways. Have a backup plan if the main route is cut off. Plan to relocate to an area that is out of the danger zone. Keep a detailed map of the area in your car at all times. Also, keep one in your house in case you have to travel on foot.



# POWER OUTAGES

Power outages can be caused by severe weather, human-caused incidents or technological failure. Extended power outages not only can disrupt communications, public infrastructure and daily life, but also may present health and safety hazards if you are not prepared.

## QUICK TIPS

- Create a disaster kit with water, non-perishable food, flashlights and extra batteries.
- Identify and plan for personal and medical electrical needs.
- Know places to go for an extended power outage if it is safe to leave.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers closed to preserve perishable food as long as possible.
- Prevent power overloads and fire hazards by unplugging appliances and electronics.
- Only use a generator outside and at least 20 feet away from windows, doors or vents.

---

## POWER OUTAGE SAFETY TIPS

### BEFORE AN OUTAGE

Plan ahead of time to ensure you and your family have an action plan when the power goes out.

- Create a disaster kit. Include water, non-perishable food, flashlights for every household member, batteries, a radio and first-aid supplies.
- Identify places to go in case of an extended power outage; check for hotels or people with whom you can stay.
- Create a communications plan so family members know how to get in contact during an outage.
- Identify and plan for personal and medical electrical needs. Do you need backup power for medical devices and refrigerated medicine? Discuss what you need to do with your primary care or medical device providers.
- If the power goes out during extreme weather, your air conditioner or furnace will not be able to operate. Have blankets or extra clothing to stay warm, or consider buying battery-powered fans.

- Consider purchasing a generator. But remember, never use a generator indoors due to the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Protect against power surges by purchasing and plugging in surge protectors for household electronics for when power surges occur.
- Keep cell phones and other equipment charged. If bad weather is expected, charge devices you may need in case power becomes unavailable for a few days.

## DURING AN OUTAGE

When the power goes out, keep calm and take these steps while you wait for it to return.

- Report the outage and monitor alerts. Power companies have websites or phone numbers to call and report an outage. You also may be able to sign up for updates from the company as it works to solve the problem.
- Contact your support network. Let someone know that your power is out and let them know if you are OK. Stay in contact in case anyone needs help.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers closed. Perishable food in refrigerators and freezers will have a better chance of staying fresh if the doors are kept closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator should keep food cold for about four hours. A freezer will keep the temperature for about 24-48 hours if the door is kept closed.
- If the power goes out during extreme heat, open windows to allow for natural ventilation using the wind.
- Prevent power overloads and fire hazards. Unplug appliances and electronics to avoid damage from a potential power surge when service is restored.
- Use flashlights before candles. Candles can pose a fire hazard and should not be used unless monitored carefully. Blow out candles before going to sleep.
- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Do not use a gas stove to heat your home. Use generators outside in a well-ventilated area, away from windows, doors and vents (at least 20 feet). Camp stoves or grills should only be used outside.
- Pay attention to water advisories from local officials. Boil water or use bottled water as directed.

## AFTER AN OUTAGE

Once power returns, take a few safety precautions before returning to normal life.

- Call 911 or the power company to report a fallen power line, then stay away! Never assume a downed power line is dead. It could still be surging with electricity. Stay at least 35 feet away from the power line and anything it is touching. Do not try to drive a vehicle across it.
- Evaluate your perishable food. Throw away any food that reaches 40 degrees or warmer, especially dairy or meat. If you are unsure, throw it out.
- Evaluate your refrigerated medicine. Contact medical professionals to get specific guidance on options if your medicine was stored at higher temperatures due to the outage.
- Check for damage. Inspect your home and devices for any damage caused by the outage or a power surge.

# RADIATION

Radiation cannot be seen, smelled, felt or tasted, but it is present in your everyday life, whether it is the small amount of radioactive elements that occur naturally in your body, the earth or air. But in a radiological emergency, such as a nuclear power plant accident or weaponized radioactive material, uncontained radioactive material can significantly increase the amount of radiation you receive to harmful levels. Plan ahead to minimize the time you are exposed to radioactive materials, maximize your distance from the source and shield yourself from both external and internal exposure.

## QUICK TIPS

- Create disaster kits and plans for your household.
- Identify possible shelter locations in areas you frequent.
- In general, during a radiation emergency, go inside, stay inside and stay tuned to guidance from safety officials and first responders.
- Follow instructions from local officials during emergencies.

---

## RADIATION EMERGENCY SAFETY TIPS

### ALWAYS BE PREPARED

Take these steps to be ready before a radiation emergency occurs:

- Create and share your emergency plans with your household.
- Build a disaster kit that is easily accessible. Check the supplies every six months to replace any expired items, such as medications, food and batteries. Also replace the water to keep it fresh.
- Have multiple ways to receive emergency alert information. A hand-crank or battery-powered radio is a great resource in case there is a power outage.



- Identify shelter locations near where you spend much of your time, including along your route to and from work each day. You may not be at work or at home when a radiation emergency occurs, so pay attention to potential shelters like the windowless center of multistory buildings, basements or tunnels. Contact your local government to find out if there are any public buildings in your area that are designated as fallout shelters.

## NUCLEAR POWER PLANT ACCIDENT

There are no operational nuclear power plants in Indiana, although there is a research and test nuclear reactor at Purdue University in West Lafayette. Even though there are no operational nuclear power plants in the state at this time, Hoosiers should still be aware and prepared for incidents that could occur at nuclear plants in Illinois and Michigan. Eleven counties in northern Indiana would be those most affected in an incident because they may be within a 50-mile radius of one of those nuclear plants.

Nuclear plants are built to withstand a variety of natural and severe events. Because of many safeguards and highly skilled individuals operating nuclear plants, it is very unlikely that a serious accident will occur. However, if there is an emergency situation with a nuclear plant, residents who live within 10 miles of a nuclear facility will be notified and may be instructed to shelter in place or evacuate. Emergency situations may take hours or days to develop, so there would be sufficient time for the public to take precautions. Those living farther away, such as in Indiana, should pay attention to local radio and TV stations but may not need to take protective actions. News reports will let the public know if actions are needed, and if there are instructions given, be sure to follow them.

Immediately following notification of an incident, Indiana public safety officials will dispatch personnel to collect samples of milk, forage, seasonal crops, processed foods, soil and water within a 50-mile radius. These samples will be analyzed to determine what areas, if any, have been contaminated and to what degree. This information will be used to determine the best course of action to protect the public and food supply.

### *What To Do*

- Listen for instructions: Tune your television or radio to your local news stations for information. Public safety and emergency response officials will share information and instructions to the public through official communication channels and news outlets. Continue to watch or listen for updates, and follow their instructions.
- Do not consume potassium iodide (KI): Do not consume potassium iodide without being instructed to do so by a public health official. It can have harmful health effects, especially if not needed or not taken properly. Potassium iodide is only helpful in specific situations for certain types of people. Do not use table salt or foods high in salt instead; they will not help with radiation poisoning and could be harmful if eaten too much.
- Do not destroy any animals, crops, milk or feed supplies: Unless directed to do so by emergency response officials, do not destroy plants, animals or food. The environmental damage caused by an incident may be short-lived, and steps can generally be taken to make a full recovery.
- Be prepared to take action: Beyond the 10-mile zone around a nuclear plant, you will most likely not be asked or required to take protective action, but be prepared if emergency response officials direct you to take action. Know your household emergency plan and have your disaster kit available. Farmers should be aware that officials might recommend that livestock be brought indoors and placed on stored feed sources.

## RADIOLOGICAL DISPERSAL DEVICE (DIRTY BOMB)

Radiological dispersal devices (RDD) spread radioactive material to harm people. This could involve placing a container of radioactive material in a public place, dispersing radioactive material from the air or combining

conventional explosives with radioactive material (dirty bomb). These devices are much smaller than nuclear weapons and do not create atomic blasts. Their deadly effects are much more limited, as not enough radioactive material may be present to cause severe illness or death.

In the case of dirty bombs, the effects may not extend much beyond the immediate area of the explosion itself. However, some radioactive materials, if they are dispersed in the air, could have the potential to affect several city blocks or a few miles with radioactive dust or smoke. Due to difficulties in designing RDDs with doses high enough to cause immediate health effects or deaths in many people, dirty bombs would likely be used for the purposes of contaminating places where people work or live and causing anxiety in those who think they are exposed to the radiation.

#### *What To Do*

- Stay away: If there is a visible plume or cloud of smoke or dust, avoid that area.
- Avoid inhalation: Prevent breathing in radiation (internal exposure) by covering your mouth and nose with materials such as tissues, filters or damp cloths.
- Go inside and stay tuned: Get inside a building with closed doors and windows, then stay inside and pay attention to guidance from public safety officials and first responders.
- Decontaminate yourself: Removing your outer layer of clothing can remove up to 90% of radioactive material, so remove contaminated clothing as soon as you get indoors, and then place it in sealed containers, like plastic bags. Take a shower to gently wash your skin and make sure no radioactive material can be ingested or transferred to your face when eating, drinking or smoking. Put on clean clothes.

## NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

Nuclear weapons use nuclear reactions to create an explosion that is much more powerful than conventional explosives and creates a blast wave, intense light, heat and radiation. These weapons may be bombs or missiles, and their explosions produce nuclear fallout, which is a collection of radioactive material that falls from the mushroom cloud and contaminates anything it lands on, like the ground, structures and buildings. Fallout can be spread hundreds of miles by the wind.

Nuclear explosions are very deadly. Severe injury, such as skin burns and blindness, and death may occur from the explosion itself. High levels of radiation near the source can cause radiation sickness (or acute radiation syndrome), which may take days or weeks to develop, depending on how much radiation is absorbed by the body.

#### *What To Do*

- Take cover immediately: If you are warned that a nuclear explosion is going to occur, pay attention to instructions from public safety officials. You may be ordered to evacuate or find shelter immediately. Shelter in place as far below ground as you can, but any protection is better than none. Seek the basement or middle of the nearest building, away from outer walls and the roof so that you can put as many surfaces between you and the explosion and fallout. Brick or concrete buildings are best.
- If you are caught outside and cannot get to a building immediately, lie flat on the ground and cover your head to avoid the blast wave and debris, which may take 30 seconds or more to hit you. Do not look at the flash or fireball because it can blind you. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask, cloth or towel to reduce inhalation of radiation. Take shelter as soon as you can afterward.
- After the explosion, you may have 10 minutes or more to find shelter before fallout arrives. Get inside a multistory building or basement within a few minutes of the explosion. Underground parking garages may provide good shelter too. To keep out radioactive particles, close doors, windows and vents, and turn off heating and cooling systems.

- Stay inside: Most fallout occurs in the first 24 hours near and downwind from the explosion. Stay inside your shelter for at least 24 hours unless told by public safety officials to do otherwise, or if there is another immediate hazard such as a fire, gas leak, building collapse or severe injury. Be prepared to stay inside for multiple days if necessary. If you may have been exposed to fallout, self-decontaminate as soon as possible.
- Stay informed: Pay attention to radio, TV and internet sources for news and instructions from public safety officials. If you were evacuated, do not return to the affected area until told by local officials that it is safe to do so.