

EMERGENCY

Family Preparedness Guide

For City Of Weyburn
Employees and Their Families

November 2006

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Emergency Planner's Message

The City of Weyburn is providing this basic emergency preparedness handbook to assist all employees in developing emergency plans for themselves and their families.

Preparing for an emergency is like buying insurance... you hope you'll never need it, but when something happens you are glad it is there. With the dynamics of a Saskatchewan winter, households should always be prepared for power outages/interruptions during extreme winter weather conditions. Many rural and northern residents are capable of dealing with several days without heat or power as they tend to experience more outages than urban residents.

In an emergency, many of our employees may be needed to work. It would be comforting to know that the families of those called to work are taken care of.

As the emergency coordinator I encourage all employees to prepare an Emergency Plan for their families. This handbook is for you. It provides basic information on emergency preparedness to assist you in making your own individual plans.

Emergency Planning Coordinator
City of Weyburn

Family and Friends

Prior arrangements should be made with friends and family to ensure those you care about are taken care of during emergent situations. It is especially important when, as emergency or essential service providers, you may be called to work. After you make an emergency plan for your family, contact other family members and friends to ensure they have one as well. You may identify at this time that they are unable to care for themselves during an emergency situation and you may need to involve them in your family plan. For example; some may have a disability and some may have no access to a secondary heating source.

Planning for ourselves and our families is a smart choice! You may identify weaknesses in your own plan that could be filled with the help of a friend or neighbor. Once you are ready and prepared, you can help others.

Communicate your Plan

Ensure all your family members are involved in the emergency planning process. They should be aware of the items needed in the essential emergency kit and how to perform tasks such as shutting off water supply, and how to prevent fires when using candles or alternative heating sources.

When your immediate family has finished their plan you must communicate it to those members in the plan. If you use persons as emergency contact names, notify them and tell them you are using them in this capacity so they are prepared in advance.

Food/Water

Water

Have enough water on hand for 4 liters per person per day. Be prepared for at least 3 days. For example a family of four will need 48 liters of water for a 3 day emergency plan. (Remember pets need water too!)

Store water in thoroughly washed containers made of plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal. (plastic milk or pop containers are excellent)

If you need to purify water during an emergency boil it for 3-5 minutes or add 15 drops of regular household bleach to each gallon of water stir and let stand for 30 minutes.

If your only choice is to melt snow, remember a full pot of snow melts down to 1/10 of a pot of water.

Water can also be retrieved from water heaters, ice cubes and toilet tanks (not bowls!)

Extra water should be kept on hand for washing and cleansing wounds.

Food

You should have more than enough food for the whole family for at least a 3 day period. Remember... if your family plan includes other people account for them in your numbers when deciding on food and water. You may want to prepare for unexpected "guests" looking for assistance.

Food should be easy to store, high in nutrition and where possible "ready to eat". The less preparation needed the better. Your food should be stored in a dry, cool spot and should be placed in air tight containers, jars or zip-lock bags. Keep food covered at all times.

Food Checklist

Food ideas:

- Jarred food – fruit, vegetables
- Canned food – soups, stews, fish, meat
- Dried food – raisins, nuts, rice, oatmeal
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Granola bars/ pudding
- Breads, buns, bagels
- Crackers, biscuits
- Powdered milk/juices
- Chocolate/ Power Bars
- Honey, Jam, Peanut butter
- Instant coffee, sugar, tea
- Salt/pepper, ketchup
- Baby food
- Food for your pet

** Replace canned food and dry goods once a year**

Cooking ideas:

Most of the foods you will be consuming in an emergent situation will most likely be eaten cold. However cooked meals can still be prepared without electricity or gas heat. Remember your BBQ can be used for cooking meals. A BBQ should never be brought into an enclosed space ... even a garage! Be aware of Carbon Monoxide! Have a fire extinguisher handy.

Equipment:

In regard to food preparation and consumption some equipment is necessary. Here is a checklist for such equipment.

- Knives, forks, spoons
- Disposable cups and plates
- Manual can opener, bottle opener
- Fuel stove and fuel
- Waterproof matches
- Plastic garbage bags
- Food storage containers
- Paper towels
- Cleaning supplies
- Fire extinguisher

First Aid

All families should invest in a first aid kit. This kit should be filled with basic medical items. Some suggestions are:

- ___ Bandages – various sizes
- ___ Gauze – various sizes
- ___ Tweezers
- ___ Scissors
- ___ Antiseptic lotion
- ___ Topical lotion
- ___ Sterile 4x4 pads
- ___ Triangular bandages
- ___ Safety pins/tape
- ___ ASA, Tylenol and ibuprofen

Remember to keep extra bathroom products on hand such as: feminine hygiene products, soap, toilet paper etc.

Medications:

Plan in advance and obtain an extra supply of essential medications. For Example: Heart medications, ventolin for asthmatics, birth control etc. Remember to keep your whole family in mind including pets.

Heating Alternatives

Many of us have become complacent about our heating supply because gas and electricity in Saskatchewan had been quite reliable. However one must take a moment and ask yourself ...without electricity and/or gas how will I heat my home? Most Saskatchewan home-heating systems are dependant upon electric power to operate the furnace, the forced air circulation and the thermostat controls. An extended power failure during the winter months and subsequent loss of heating can result in cold, damp homes, severe living conditions and damage to walls, floors and plumbing. There are two ways to deal with prolonged power and heating failures in subzero weather:

- 1) Protect you home against frost damage before leaving
- 2) Take precautions which will permit continued occupancy – an alternative heating source.

Unfortunately not all of us have fireplaces or wood stoves. Those can be excellent heating alternatives. If you have one of these ensure you have an extra ½ cord of wood on hand. Birch firewood burns the cleanest and burns at a higher temperature. There are other heating options such as; Kerosene or butane heaters, and candles.

At – 40 degrees Celsius the average home will lose 1 degree of heat per hour. Within a 24 hour period it will be absolutely necessary to commit to the use of alternate heating sources.

Once an alternate heating source is found a number of things can be done to contain the little heat you may have. Move all persons into one room. Close all doors and bring in bedding for each person. Put towels under the doors to limit the heat loss and provide appropriate clothing to each family member.

Generators

To buy a generator... or not to buy a generator... that is the question! The answer... well Saskpower has stated that they neither support nor discourage the use of a generator for any power interruption situation. It is a personal decision as to whether or not a family wishes to incur the expense of the purchase of a generator. If you identify in your family plan that it is necessary, then be sure to research the capabilities and the dangers of having a generator in your home and the method of implementing it.

There are two methods of utilizing a generator in your home:

- 1) Stand alone - you plug appliances or alternate heating sources into it
- 2) Wire it into your existing electrical circuit

Serious accidents can result when a home generator is connected into an existing electrical circuit! If your intentions are to use a generator in this manner it is encouraged that a professional be consulted. Remember there is also a danger during the recovery stage when the electrical system restarts!

To operate a generator safely, follow these simple steps:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions
- Always ensure that the generator operates outdoors in well-ventilated areas away from doors or windows to prevent exhaust from entering the home
- Connect lights and appliances directly to the generator. If extension cords must be used to ensure they are CSA approved

Lights

No electricity... No light? There are lots of sources of light available. Flashlights – solar or battery operated, oil lamps, candles, light sticks, and camping battery operated lights. Remember fresh batteries and lots of matches or lighters!

Clothing

Not a lot of people think about what to wear when the power goes out. This is not a statement of fashion but rather one of safety. The layering of different types of clothing will actually assist in keeping you warm and dry during power interruptions.

How to wear it:

1. The first layer of clothing closest to your skin should be a thin layer made of polypropylene. This material pulls the moisture away from your body which helps eliminate the chilly feeling. Some types of polyester blends will accomplish the same thing.
2. The second layer of clothing should be a thick layer of polyester or fleece or even wool to further pull the moisture away from your skin and provide a thick insulation. You can use several of the fleece linings if necessary.
3. Finally a protective shell should be worn to keep out the wind and the rain/moisture.

All family members should have layered clothing to ensure their warmth and comfort; your feet should be layered with polypropylene and fleece or wool as well.

Family Needs

When preparing your family plan do not forget the individual needs of each family member.

Kids:

Do you have what you need to ensure the kids are taken care of? Make sure you have diapers for infants or toddlers as well as children's medication in your first aid kit. Make sure they are dressed properly and have the food they need. You may need some formula or bottled/canned milk. How do you intend on warming it up?

To ease the situation a little you may want to pretend you are on a camping trip and that everyone can sleep in sleeping bags by the fireplace and dress up in warm clothes. In the event of a power outage, entertainment items of crayons, paper and manually operated toys/games will have to replace the computerized world of Nintendo and video.

Make sure your children are involved in the planning process. This will empower them to be part of the process rather than a victim of it. Perhaps older children can be given a "real" task to do, something that helps the family back on its feet! Comfort and reassure them and encourage them to ask questions.

Pets:

Remember your pets are part of the family too! Ensure you have enough food and water for them. If they need medication or other items make sure you have extra on hand. Remember pets such as fish can be fatally affected by a power outage and cold temperatures. Try to bring pets into the area in which you are utilizing your secondary source of heat.

Property Preparedness

The maintenance of your property during an emergent situation is always something that must be considered. Families will most likely want to stay in their own home rather than evacuate. In the event of a long term power outage with the availability of a secondary heating source this can be possible. Safety items in your home should be maintained such as battery operated smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Ensure your fire extinguisher and your fireplace/wood stove has been checked and are operational.

Water Lines:

As indicated earlier, in – 40 degrees weather your home will lose 1 degree of heat per hour. Within 24-36 hours you should be thinking of draining your water lines to avoid permanent damage to them. To do this you must shut off you main water valve, protect the valve inlet pipe and meter with blankets or other insulating material. Open all your water taps until the flow of water stops and flush toilets several times. Empty your hot water tank and place antifreeze in your toilets. Check the operating manuals of your dishwasher, washing machine, and other appliances for instructions on draining and frost protection.

Insurance:

Know who your insurance company is and where you keep the policy. Have your local insurance agent's phone number handy so you can contact them for information about a loss or protecting your property. Also, be aware of any limitations to your policy.

Communications

A good home preparedness plan always has a “who to contact” component to it. Numbers should be posted for all the family to see.

Hospital –	842-8400
Police -	848-3250
Fire -	848-3240
Public Works -	848-3290
City Hall -	848-3200
SaskPower -	310-2220
SaskEnergy -	1-888-700-0427
SaskTel -	611
Poison Control Centre -	1-866-454-1212
Health Help Line -	1-877-800-0002
Highways Hotline -	1-888-335-7623

Radio:

Make sure your plan includes a portable radio and lots of fresh batteries. If communications are lost, the radio stations will report all updates, news from the Crown Corporations, the City of Weyburn and Fire and Police services. This will be your communications medium. There are also hand cranked radios available that do not use batteries and can operate for over an hour at a time.

Miscellaneous

What else may be needed in an emergency? Here is a checklist of items that may be over looked:

- ___ Extra pair of glasses
- ___ Long burning candles
- ___ Battery operated tools/equipment
- ___ Keep car gas tank full – there is a heater in there!
- ___ Personal alarm or whistle
- ___ Extra set of house and car keys
- ___ Small amount of cash – Credit cards and bank cards probably won't work
- ___ Important papers/identification on hand
- ___ If you must evacuate – leave a note and tell someone
- ___ Don't use elevators in apartments
- ___ Axe or hatchet to cut wood

**** Check your neighbors they may need your help!****