
Government of Alberta emergency preparedness toolkit for seniors



Alberta 

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Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)

AEMA Overview

The AEMA, under the authority of the *Emergency Management Act*, leads the coordination and co-operation of all organizations involved in emergencies and disasters. This includes emergency and disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Emergency preparedness

When the people living, working, and travelling in Alberta are prepared, they can better navigate disruptions, which allows them to protect themselves and their loved ones. At a minimum, individuals should be prepared to be self-sufficient for 72 hours as it can take several hours or even days for help to arrive.

We all have a responsibility to raise awareness about being prepared for disasters, emergencies and unexpected situations; together we can strengthen the call to action and inspire Albertan's to become better prepared.

Protecting lives and livelihoods

Emergencies often happen suddenly and can leave devastating impacts long after the emergency is over. Seniors can be especially vulnerable to these types of situations.

Common factors that contribute to increased vulnerability include mobility limitations, decreased physical strength and sensory awareness as well as a reduced ability to respond to sudden change. It is essential for seniors and caregivers to have an emergency plan to ensure they are ready to respond and supports in place to assist their recovery.

Small steps every day

Preparedness is a challenge for us all, but by breaking it down into simple steps and making preparedness a habit, you can become better prepared without investing a lot of time or money.

Take action with one-step today!



Know the risks



Get informed



Create financial resiliency



Build an emergency kit and gather supplies



Start a conversation



Make community connections



Make an emergency plan

Know the risks



Understanding your risk to the hazards in your community can help you prepare for them. Each of the links below leads to a hazard specific web page with tips to assist your preparedness efforts.

Hazards

- [Wildfires](#)
- [Tornadoes and extreme winds](#)
- [Floods](#)
- [Power and water outages](#)
- [Thunderstorms, lightning, heavy rain and hail](#)
- [Blizzards, freezing rain, ice storms and extreme cold](#)
- [Pandemic influenza](#)



Extreme heat is another hazard to include in your emergency planning; heatwaves are a common occurrence during the summer months. As individuals age, their sense of thirst is reduced putting them at an increased risk of dehydration and heat stroke.

Before a heatwave occurs, ensure you have the following:

- Sufficient amount of water available to keep you and your pets hydrated
- Back up cooling devices in the event of a power outage

Emergency preparedness

- [What to do before, during and after an emergency](#)
- [Evacuation](#)
- [Emergency preparedness for your pets](#)
- [Farm animal and livestock preparedness](#)

Get informed



Information helps us to better prepare for emergencies, disasters, and unexpected situations. When we know what is happening we can make more informed and timely decisions during times of stress.

Before an emergency occurs, identify information sources that you can rely on for updates.

- Do you know where your trusted sources of information post their emergency updates?
 - Social media, television, radio, website, community bulletins, email, automated phone messages
- At the facilities where you spend your time, do you know how staff provide emergency notifications?
 - Door to door notification, email or phone notification
- Do you have dedicated emergency contacts who will provide updates?
 - Family, friends or caregivers, community groups, organizations, neighbours or facility staff
- Do you have a backup plan to ensure you receive emergency updates and can call for help?
 - Battery-powered or crank radio, landline or cellular phone, and medical alert devices

Stay informed

Download and follow along on these platforms to keep informed and up to date.

- [Alberta Emergency Alert](#) app – Alberta issues alerts to provide critical information and actions needed to stay safe
- [Wildfire](#) app – See where wildfires are burning in Alberta and how they impact you
- [WeatherCan](#) app – Receive weather alert notifications in your area and your saved locations across Canada

- Local, provincial and federal alerts through your mobile phone
- Government of Alberta social media
 - Instagram: [youralberta](#)
 - Facebook: [YourAlberta \(Government of Alberta\)](#)
 - Twitter: [@YourAlberta](#)
 - LinkedIn: [Government of Alberta](#)
 - YouTube: [@YourAlberta](#)
- Public Safety Canada social media
 - Facebook: [Emergency Ready in Canada](#)
 - Twitter: [Public Safety](#)
 - Twitter: [GetPrepared](#)
 - Youtube: [Public Safety](#)

Directions from authorities can change quickly based on the emergency.

Knowing what is happening in your community could save your life.

Create financial resiliency



Being financially prepared is about more than just having money in the bank. To help you create financial resiliency, consider the tips below.

- Ensure you have adequate insurance and keep a detailed list, including photographs of all your valuables
- Keep cash on hand, as ATMs and debit services may become unavailable
- Keep receipts for all expenses incurred during an emergency or disaster
- Know the [7 steps](#) for making a property claim
- If possible, create an emergency savings account to cover expenses during an emergency

Understanding [insurable vs. non-insurable](#) disaster financial assistance can also help protect your property. The Government of Alberta's Disaster Recovery Program offers information and resources that can help.



Security threats

Seniors are at an increased risk of financial scams during emergencies and disasters. Through awareness that fraudulent activity increases at this time, you can reduce your fraud risk.

Do not provide any personal information over the phone, through email or to door-to-door visitors that you are not able to verify as legitimate organizations. If you are unsure of the authenticity of the request, ask a loved one, neighbour or caregiver to verify the information. Service Alberta is also available to assist at 1-877-427-4088. Being cautious is crucial to avoid becoming a victim of scams.

Build an emergency kit and gather supplies



There are many ways you can become more prepared. You can build emergency kits that you can grab and go during an evacuation, or you can make sure you have enough supplies at home in case you have to take shelter. In either case, your goal will be to have enough supplies to keep you safe, warm, and comfortable.

Below you will find links to printable emergency checklists to help get you started. Ensure your kit is specific to your needs.

- [Gather supplies](#) - Having the supplies you need on hand can help keep you, your household, and pets safe
- [Emergency kit checklist](#) - When an unexpected situation occurs, it is easier to prioritize your safety and well-being if you have an emergency kit you can grab and go at a moment's notice
- [Emergency kit checklist for your pets](#) - reduce the stress of making important decisions in urgent situations
- [Emergency kit checklist for your vehicle](#) - Situations such as a vehicle breakdown, poor weather, and traffic accidents are easier to manage when you are prepared

Additional items to consider:

- A spare set of dentures and contact lenses
- Incontinence undergarments
- Extra medical supplies, including catheters, syringes for insulin, and feeding tubes
- List of medications taken – to provide to pharmacy for emergency refill if required
- Ice packs or a cooler for refrigerated medications
- Entertainment items such as books, playing cards, or cross-word puzzles
- Spare set of keys for your car and house
- Batteries for hearing aids or other devices such as wheelchairs
- Equipment such as oxygen tanks or walkers – label all items with your contact information
- Medical ID bracelet (includes your name, allergies, serious medical conditions, your caregiver's name and phone number)
- Copies of important documents stored in a waterproof bag, including copies of your Green Sleeve contents, contact information for utility providers, a list of allergies and dietary items, and instructions for medical devices



Start a conversation



Talk to loved ones, neighbours, and caregivers about what you can do to manage disruptions before they occur. Talking often leads to action and can be the first step to making your emergency plan.

Senior centres, Family and Community Support Services, and community organizations provide opportunities to have coffee and chat sessions where emergency preparedness can be a topic of discussion. In many cases, you can ask your local seniors organization to host information sessions to facilitate conversations and provide support.

Current events are also a great way to start a conversation, ask: "What would you do if that happened to you?" or "Do you have a plan for that?"

- Create [community resilience](#) – This 60-Second Emergency Tip video is a reminder that neighbours are often the first around when an emergency, disaster or unexpected situation occurs
- [Raise awareness in your community](#) – This web page provides tools and materials to assist community efforts in raising awareness, such as #PrepareYourSelfie campaign and the [Get Prepared: 60-second Emergency Tip](#) video library

When starting the conversation consider asking a neighbour to be your buddy. The buddy system can help when you might need someone to check on your property or pets if you are away or unable to return home.

Make community connections



Community connections contribute to the development of healthy support networks and can improve your health and emotional well-being.

Take steps to get to know the people around you by waving a friendly hello, or joining a local community association, committee or group program.

Once you have built a support network, identify those who would be willing and able to help you and those to whom you could offer help. When people work together, it can reduce stress and recovery time.



Make an emergency plan



Disasters often cause confusion and distress. An emergency plan can help you cope with the stress and navigate the situation better.

[Make an emergency plan](#) – Being prepared is different for everyone, create an emergency plan that works for you.

Caregivers are in a unique position to provide support to seniors in regards to physical health. They also know who may need extra assistance to prepare for potential disasters.

The sections below can help get you started with creating your own personal emergency plan.



Health

Medical passport, commonly referred to as a Green Sleeve, should be stored on or near the fridge for emergency services personnel. This folder contains advanced care planning documents and forms specific to your healthcare goals. Familiarize those involved in your emergency plan with your medications, medical supplies and devices. Ensure they know where to find your important supplies and how to use them.

If you require routine treatments at a clinic or hospital, talk to your service providers to find out how you can still receive care during an emergency. Consider all impairments and plan for them, such as:

- Sense of smell
- Vision
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Chronic conditions
- Cognitive

These factors, and others, can put you at a greater risk if not prepared for in advance.



Communication

Create a communications plan that will outline who you will contact and who will check in on you during emergencies. These contacts may be caregivers, loved ones or community-based organizations and agencies who serve seniors.

Communication systems can often become overloaded and unavailable during emergencies and disasters.

- Do you have an alternative method for contacting your family or neighbours?
- If you have communication challenges, ensure you note the best way for people to communicate with you



Power dependent

If you use medical devices, equipment, and medications that rely on power:

- Contact the medical equipment company to find out about emergency options
- Consider how you store medications that require refrigeration in a power outage
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to see what options are available during an emergency
- Consider looking into back up power supply options if your need for power is essential



Shelter in place

Consider the following to help you plan for sheltering in place:

- Have you identified safe locations to take shelter if authorities advise you to shelter in place?
- Is there room for you, your emergency supplies, and essential medical equipment?
- Will the location keep you and your pets or service animals comfortable for several hours or days?
- If you have limited reach, battery-operated touch lamps are a good alternative for light sources



Routine maintenance

Do you perform routine maintenance on your home so it can withstand severe weather?

- Check that window caulking and seals are intact, repair if necessary
- Renew insulation, if needed, to keep your home warm during winter months
- Add reflective window coverings to keep your home cool during the summer months
- Consider installing a sump pump
- Keep downspouts and gutters clean



Evacuation

Consider the following to help you plan for an evacuation:

- Do you have reliable transportation if an emergency or disaster required you to evacuate your home and neighbourhood?
- Do you have mobility limitations and require assistance to leave safely and quickly?
- Do you have a place to go, if you are unable to return home?

[Pet Preparedness](#) – this web page includes tools and resources to help keep pets safe and comfortable, before, during and after an emergency.

[Farm animals and livestock](#) – this web page includes tools and resources to help keep farm animals and livestock safe if you need to shelter in place or evacuate.

Get involved

Become a Resilience Builder

Our team, Strategic Partnerships and Public Education, shares quarterly updates with a network of people who have an interest in building resilience in their community. These updates keep you informed of what's new in our program and provide information to help you raise awareness, build resilience and contribute to disaster risk reduction behaviours.

On occasion, a Prepare to Respond email to this same network will be sent. Prepare to Respond provides timely information on ways to prepare for a potential threat. These emails include a general preparedness message that ties to current events. They can be quickly edited by you and shared with your network so you can keep them informed and motivate preparedness action. If you would like to be added to the Resilience Builder's network, please email aema.stakeholders@gov.ab.ca

Join the campaign

[Emergency Preparedness Week \(EP Week\)](#) is a national event that takes place annually during the first full week of May. The event promotes individual preparedness and encourages Canadians to learn about the risks they face in their communities and to take action to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for these risks.

Every year, Public Safety Canada coordinates this event in close collaboration with the provinces, territories, and other partners; and together, with community leaders, first responders, all levels of government and non-government organizations, we have an opportunity to create community resilience and help Albertans who face disruptions return to their lives and livelihoods sooner. Visit our web page to learn how you can participate.

Go virtual

To help raise awareness all year long, here are some ideas on how you can share preparedness materials, tools, and information with your networks using social media and other communication channels.

- Share links to the printable emergency kit checklists through email
- Share information about the hazards in your community with links to the [Alberta.ca hazard pages](#) for more information
- Share the *Get Prepared: 60-second Emergency Tip* videos on your social media platforms
- Download and print the *Scan to Prepare* touchless QR code posters and post them in public areas allowing individuals to scan them with their smartphones to watch the *60-second Emergency Tips*
- Create a preparedness presentation and share it with your community members online
- Check out [GetPrepared](#) for additional tools and materials
- Listen to a subject matter expert talk about emergency preparedness with the [EPIC podcast team](#)

Of note, Factsheets and checklists are available in Arabic, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish and Tagalog. To access the translated materials, click on the “Resources and translations” link on the web pages listed throughout this toolkit. French translations are underway, but if you need French resources now refer to Get prepared federal website.

Get Prepared: 60 Second Emergency Tips



The 'Get Prepared: 60 Second Emergency Tips' video series delivers simple steps that anyone can take to become better prepared for an emergency or disaster.

Take a minute today to learn about what you can do to become better prepared and share the videos online and within your community.

Scan to Prepare QR posters

This is a touch-free way to share preparedness information with community members through their smartphones. The posters use an embedded QR code you scan with your smartphone's camera app to display content directly on the device. Download the [QR Code Posters](#) to print and display in common areas to encourage community members to take small steps towards becoming more prepared.

QR code overview

Unique QR Codes (Quick Response Coding) can be created using a third party web service. QR codes can link to pre-existing materials by connecting users with materials that are posted online, such as videos, pictures, guides or websites, but they can also be used to display documents that are not published on the web. Most smartphones have the ability to scan a QR code with their camera, but in some cases, a mobile app is required.



Who we are

Strategic Partnerships and Public Education is a team within the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, a department of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Our work involves collaboration with Ministry and community partners to develop inclusive resilience building programming to meet the diverse needs of all people living, working and travelling in Alberta. Through research and partnerships, we create public education tools and materials for anyone looking to encourage and motivate their communities to become more resilient to disasters, emergencies and disruptions.

Resources

Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-emergency-management-agency.aspx	Learn more about what the AEMA does and how it is involved in emergencies and disasters.
Emergency Preparedness https://www.alberta.ca/emergency-preparedness.aspx	Learn how you and your loved ones can prepare yourselves for an emergency or disaster.
Alberta 211 https://ab.211.ca	211 is a helpline and online database of Alberta's community and social services. Search by topic or location to find programs or services in your community.
Alberta 511 app https://511.alberta.ca/about/mobileapp	Stay informed by downloading the 511 smartphone app.
Alberta Emergency Alert app https://emergencyalert.alberta.ca/content/about/signup.html	Stay informed by downloading the AEA smartphone app.
Alberta Rivers app https://open.alberta.ca/blog/?page_id=197	Stay informed by downloading the data and advisories smartphone app.
Alberta Wildfire https://wildfire.alberta.ca/prevention/default.aspx	Wildfire prevention is a responsibility we all share and it is important to understand safe fire practices so that everyone can enjoy Alberta's forests.
Alberta Fire Bans app https://open.alberta.ca/blog/?page_id=327	The Alberta Fire Bans application will help you find the most current and reliable information on all active fire advisories, fire restrictions, fire bans, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) restrictions in Alberta
The Alberta Wildfire app https://open.alberta.ca/interact/alberta-wildfire	See where wildfires are burning in Alberta. Get up-to-date information on wildfire conditions and hazards or report a fire.
Government of Canada: Cyber Security https://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca	A web page dedicated to how older adults can protect themselves from the most common cyber security threats.
Government of Canada https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index_e.html?prov=ab	Monitor public Weather Alerts for Alberta.
Alert Ready https://www.alertready.ca/#faq	Stay informed through Canada's emergency alert system.
Government of Alberta Minimum Housing and Health Standards	The standards are used to protect and promote the health and well-being of occupants of rental housing.