

What to do During an emergency

Overview

Emergencies have the potential to cause serious harm to people, property, the economy, and the environment. Make sure you know who to call and what to do during an emergency or disaster.

Protect yourself

How to protect yourself and your loved ones during an emergency or disaster will depend on the hazard.

Shelter-in-place

Authorities may direct you to shelter-in-place. If this happens, you should stay where you are and follow their instructions.

Community

When unexpected situations occur, the people around you, like your neighbours, co-workers, and friends are often the first ones on-scene. If something happens in your neighbourhood, ask yourself these questions:

- Who might need extra assistance?
- Who can you ask to check on your pets?
- Who is first aid-certified?

Getting to know the people in your community can help everyone. If you aren't already familiar with your neighbours, consider reaching out and making those connections.

Stay informed

- Ensure you are monitoring the Alberta Emergency Alert app so you are always up-to-date with the latest information.

- If you're able to, check your community's website or social media channels for updated information.

Evacuation alerts and orders

Some emergencies lead authorities to issue an evacuation alert or an evacuation order.

- **Evacuation alerts** warn the public of a potential or current threat. An evacuation alert can lead to an evacuation order. If an alert is issued, you should prepare to evacuate.
- **Evacuation orders** are used when the public must leave the area for their own safety.

Directions from authorities can vary based on the emergency, they can also change very quickly. Staying informed on what is happening in your community could save your life.

Protect your pets

Have a phone list of animal shelters, veterinarians, and kennel facilities that could house your pets if needed. It also helps to create a buddy system with a neighbour in case one of you are unable to return home to pick up your pet.

A pet carrier stocked with supplies for a quick grab-and-go ensures that your pet will have what it needs. Make sure to include a collar, leash, 2 weeks supply of food and water, and medications if required.

In the case of an evacuation, never leave your pet behind. More information on pet preparedness can be found on [Alberta.ca](https://open.alberta.ca/publications/what-to-do-during-an-emergency).

If there is time...

Consider the following:

- Protect your home, in some cases authorities will give instructions depending on the emergency or disaster. They could ask you to shut off water, electricity or gas. Do not shut off your utilities unless directed to.
- Update your out-of-town contact on the situation in case you are separated from family and friends. They can assist with reconnecting you.
- Leave a note in your mailbox letting authorities know where you are going and how you can be reached.

The role of your local government

Your local government is responsible for public safety, situational awareness, and providing resources to combat the emergency. Special privileges and duties may be given to specific people, such as police, fire, medical, and your director of emergency management, so they can do their job effectively.

The role of the provincial government

In Alberta, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) is the coordinating agency for emergency management activities in the province.

During a major emergency or disaster, AEMA supports communities by leading the coordination of the response with all levels of government. This may include:

- additional response resources, such as personnel or equipment
- reception centers
- health services
- emergency relief funds

We are all in this together

There are a number of industry, mutual aid, and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners that play vital roles during disasters and emergencies.

NGOs work with community members, local, and provincial governments to help. A few of the services offered include:

- Emergency food, clothing, and shelter
- Emotional and spiritual support
- Health care services at reception centres

As of 2019, the partners of the NGO Council of Alberta are:

- [Canadian Red Cross](#)
- [St. John Ambulance](#)
- [The Salvation Army](#)
- [Adventist Disaster Relief Agency](#)
- [Billy Graham Rapid Response Team](#)
- [Chaplaincy](#)
- [Canadian Global Response](#)
- [Mennonite Disaster Service](#)
- [Samaritan's Purse Canada](#)
- [Team Rubicon Canada](#)
- [World Renew](#)
- [Alberta SPCA](#)

Financial preparedness

- If you are evacuated, keep all receipts for additional expenses.
- Prepare a [detailed list](#) of all your belongings.
- Know the [7 steps](#) for making a home insurance claim.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada is ready to answer your questions. Connect with them by email at askibcwest@ibc.ca or by telephone 1-844-227-5422.

For more information on insurance preparedness visit [ibc.ca](https://open.alberta.ca/publications/what-to-do-during-an-emergency).

For more information

Read our other fact sheets on:

- Before an emergency
- After an emergency

You can find more information about preparedness through [Alberta.ca](https://open.alberta.ca/publications/what-to-do-during-an-emergency), or by contacting your community's Director of Emergency Management.