

Evacuation

Overview

An emergency evacuation is the act of moving people from a dangerous location to somewhere safe.

Your local authority is the community, municipality, settlement, town or village responsible for providing you with services and facilities including emergency management and evacuation.

Before an evacuation

Evacuation communications

Your local authority will issue an evacuation message such as an alert or order when they have reason to believe you are in danger. Instructions will depend on the threat and the channels used to deliver information will differ across communities. Contact your local Emergency Management Office to learn how your community will share critical information with you.

Evacuation alert

Evacuation alerts help you prepare to leave on short notice. Take the actions directed, be prepared to go quickly and monitor trusted sources of information for updates.

Evacuation order

Evacuation orders are issued when you are in danger. If you are located inside an order's boundaries and directed to evacuate, leave the area immediately. Follow all directions from authorities, stay tuned to local news and trusted sources of information for updates.

In serious situations, an evacuation order will be issued without an evacuation alert.

Evacuation rescind

An evacuation alert or order is withdrawn or cancelled when your local authority determines it is safe for you to return. It is important that you only return when permitted and that you understand the details of the return process.

We all have a role to play

If you receive an evacuation message with instructions to take action, sometimes it can be difficult to accept the danger is real. Choosing to ignore it can put your life, and the life of others, at risk. Acting quickly reduces the risk of evacuation routes becoming blocked or too dangerous to travel. Being ready and acting quickly allows emergency responders to focus on the threat and help those who may need it, it also reduces the risk of outages to utilities and services like power, water, telecommunications, food, banking and fuel.

When you are prepared to respond to an emergency, it gives you time to protect your home and reduces the stress of leaving.

Take preparedness actions

- Know the [hazards](#) in your community and plan for them. Avoid buying, renting, or developing property in high-risk areas like [floodways](#). Find out if a property has received [disaster financial assistance](#) in the past and if you are adequately [insured](#).
- Stay informed by identifying your trusted sources of information. Local news and community websites are great places to start. If social media is your preferred source for information, make sure the channel is a trusted source. Do not trust everything you see on social media.
- Get informed by downloading [alerting apps](#) like [WeatherCAN](#) or [signing up](#) for local and provincial communications. When you know what is happening, it allows you to make informed and timely decisions.
- Start a conversation with others around you. Use the Alberta Emergency Alert system [test](#) as a reminder to get prepared. Talking about what you would do if the test had been real, often leads to the start of your emergency plan.
- Pack [supplies](#) to last a minimum of a week or more for each member of your household (including pets). Consider individual needs and start with items you cannot live without like medications, food and toiletries. Pack documents like identification, insurance policies and banking information.
- [Financially](#) prepare by talking to your insurance provider about what your policy covers, and what it does not cover.

Most policies provide financial assistance or short-term housing if you are evacuated.

- Create [connections](#) with community members before an emergency, so it is easier to ask for and offer help when it is needed. Create a buddy system. A buddy can help if you cannot return home for essential items, pets, etc.

Make an emergency Plan

Build a household [emergency plan](#). When everyone is involved, it helps ensure all needs are considered.

- Keep vehicle(s) fuel tanks half full, and electric vehicles half charged. If you do not have a vehicle, plan with friends, or contact your local emergency management office for support.
- Identify different places to stay, include places in and out of your local area. Ensure they can accommodate any disabilities, special needs, pets or other needs.
- Talk about how you would reconnect if an emergency happened while separated. Consider the emergency response plans at places you visit, like school or work.
- Decide on a shared meeting place outside of your community, consider somewhere out-of-town too.
- Identify an out-of-town and out-of-province contact that everyone can use to check-in with.
- Plan for unique needs like power for medical devices and assistive technology, as well as supports to safely evacuate if mobility is a factor.

Review, practice and update your emergency plan with your household yearly so everyone knows what to do in a real emergency.

Build emotional preparedness by taking care of your mental health. Coping and wellness actions help you think clearer, make informed decisions and recognize when it is time to ask for help. To get started, visit [211 Alberta](#) to find information, resources and support near you.

Alberta.ca account and MyAlberta Emergency Registration System (MAERS)

Create and verify your free [Alberta.ca account](#) before an emergency so you can quickly access information on support and services during times of uncertainty.

Once you have a verified Alberta.ca account, you can create an online [MAERS](#) profile for your household, including your pets. The information in your MAERS profile helps local emergency social services prepare to meet the needs of their community members in the event of an evacuation. If evacuated, your profile lets you virtually register at a reception centre.

During an evacuation

If your community is at risk, local authorities will issue communications. They could include information about the threat, the safest evacuation route including where to go to register and receive support and services.

If evacuated, immediately follow directions and listen for updates. Acting quickly saves lives.

Time to go

- Grab essentials such as medications, water, weather appropriate clothing, cash, important documents, device chargers and load your vehicle(s). Consider comfort items too. When possible, carpool to help traffic flow more freely.
- Follow routes directed by authorities. Do not take shortcuts as they can lead to blocked or dangerous areas.
- Turn devices to power saving mode, and tune into local news channels like radio. If possible, monitor your community's website and social media for updates and ask unaffected friends and family to update you via text.
- Be alert for road hazards such as washed-out roads, bridges and downed power lines or trees.
- Drive carefully with your headlights on and make way for pedestrians and emergency vehicles.
- Go directly to the identified registration centre as instructed by your local authority. Do not leave without checking out.
- Do not return to the evacuated area until permitted.

If time permits

- If water is a threat, move important and cherished items to an above ground location.
- Secure documents and external hard drives.
- Check on community members who may need help. Make sure they are aware of the current situation.
- Only if directed to do so, turn off utilities.
 - Electrical: in the main electrical circuit box, switch all circuits off before turning the main circuit off.
 - Water: locate the main shut off valve and turn the knob or handle clockwise until it is completely closed.
 - Gas: on the gas meter, use a wrench to turn the valve a quarter turn in either direction. When the valve is perpendicular to the pipe, the valve is closed.

Do not turn utilities back on until you know it is safe. Only a registered gas contractor can safely turn gas back on. In large disasters, gas companies will be busy; it may take weeks before a professional can reconnect the gas service.

For more information

Visit [alberta.ca/BePrepared](#) or scan the QR code for the Be Prepared program.



Be prepared: [Alberta.ca/BePrepared](#)

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