

Boone County



Emergency Preparedness Guide

The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States have left each one of us asking the question, “How can our families and our community better prepare for emergencies?”

The Boone County Emergency Management staff has designed this Emergency Preparedness Guide for Boone County residents and businesses. This guide will help you and your family to better prepare for all types of emergencies ranging from severe weather to terrorism events. It offers advice on how to make an emergency plan, put together an emergency preparedness kit, and gives basic information on what to do before, during and after a public emergency.

Although we cannot always prevent emergencies, there are many things we can do to be better prepared as individuals, families and as a community. Please take a few moments to read this guide. You are also encouraged to assist others, such as senior citizens, the disabled and others in need, to help them to be better prepared for an emergency. We hope you find this Emergency Preparedness Guide helpful.

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This guide contains some basic information about disasters and tips on emergency preparedness. It will help you and your family to develop an Emergency Plan, put together an Emergency Kit and learn what to do before, during and after a disaster.

General Instructions

If an emergency or disaster happens there are a few things you should do right away:

- **Stay Calm** - Try not to panic; take time to understand what has happened and to think about what you can do to stay safe or avoid injury. Stay off the telephone unless you are injured or in danger.
- **Check the scene** - Pay attention to your surroundings to see whether you are safe where you are, and whether anyone around you needs help; if you think you are in danger, move to a safer location as soon as you can.
- **Give and get help** - If you or others are injured or still in danger, call 911; explain what has happened, where you are, what injuries people have, and whether the danger still exists.
- **Listen for official emergency announcements** – Local radio and television stations will give emergency updates and instructions and will be your best source of information.
- **Get prepared to evacuate if ordered by local authorities** – If told to leave your home or work, do so right away, follow exact evacuation routes and go to the specified shelter or safe area. If you can, bring your Emergency Kit with you, and get in touch with your family's emergency contact person as soon as you can to let them know how and where you are.

Getting Ready

An emergency often happens without warning, leaving little or no time for you and your family to plan what to do next. So, it is important for you to learn about the things you can do to be ready —before an emergency happens. Two key things you can do are to develop an Emergency Plan and put together an Emergency Kit.

Develop an Emergency Plan

Talk with your family about why and how you need to prepare for disasters and emergencies:

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen and what to do in each case. Some of these are described in the next section.

- Teach your children how and when to dial 911.
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, children's school or child care center, and other places where your family spends time away from home; make sure your child's school or child care center has your current emergency contact number.
- Pick two places to meet if something happens: one that is right outside your home in case of sudden emergency, like a fire; and a second one outside of your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Ask a friend or relative to be your emergency contact person. Make sure everyone has this person's address and phone number. If your family members get separated, they should call this person to tell where they are.
- Think about the special safety needs of small children, elderly or disabled relatives, neighbors, and pets.
- Get an Emergency Kit ready (see checklist that follows).

Put Together an Emergency Kit

Preparing an Emergency Kit ahead of time can save you time in case you must leave home quickly or go without power or water for a while. Put your Emergency Kit together with items you may need after a disaster, and if you can, try to keep enough supplies on hand to meet your needs for at least three days. Store them in sturdy, waterproof, and easy to carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or plastic totes.

Things you might try to include or have on hand:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) for drinking and cooking.
- Food that won't spoil or need much cooking (i.e. canned fruits and vegetables, ready to eat meats, cereals, peanut butter, crackers, granola bars). Consider foods for infants, elderly or persons with special diets. Use or replace food every 6 months or before they expire.
- One complete change of clothes and footwear for each person, raingear, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- Wrench to turn off gas and water, battery powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries, utility pocket knife, mess kits or plastic cups, bowls and plates, silverware, non-electric can opener, lighter or matches.
- Sanitation supplies such as toilet paper, wet wipes, sanitary pads or tampons, diapers, plastic trash bags, soap, shampoo.
- Basic First Aid Kit that includes: latex gloves, CPR mask, sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, gauze pads in assorted sizes, roller bandages, hypoallergenic adhesive tape, scissors, tweezers, sewing needle, alcohol wipes, thermometer,

triangular bandages, safety pins, non-aspirin pain reliever, antacid, sunscreen, your prescription medications.

- Extra sets of keys, copies of important documents (i.e. birth certificates, wills, insurance, etc.), bank and credit card account numbers, cash or traveler's checks.

When a Disaster or Emergency Happens

The next section will give you some tips on how to know when there is an emergency, information about different types of disasters that could happen in Boone County and advice on how you can stay safe if and when they do.

How You Will Know When a Disaster Happens

There are different ways that you will find out that an emergency or disaster is happening. Weather warnings are given by NOAA Weather Radio and will usually be given on television and radio as well. A WATCH means that conditions are favorable for the development of severe weather. A WARNING means that severe weather is imminent or already occurring.

In some situations an outdoor warning siren could sound or you may be contacted by phone. Emergency workers may drive by and give instructions over a loudspeaker, or they might even come to your door. In the meantime, you should listen to radio or television for further emergency information.

What to Do for Different Types of Disasters

Floods - Floods can occur quickly and can be dangerous because of fast moving water. If there is a flood warning or you believe flooding is occurring:

- Head for higher ground right away – save yourself, not your belongings.
- Stay away from floodwaters – moving water, even just six inches deep, can knock you off your feet.
- Never try to drive through floodwaters – if your car stalls, leave it and head for higher ground on foot.
- Once you are in a safe place, listen to a battery-powered radio for official updates or wait for emergency workers to give you instructions.

Severe Thunderstorms - All thunderstorms produce lightning that can cause death or serious injury. Lightning can strike from up to 5 to 10 miles away, even if it is not raining or is sunny where you are. If there is a severe thunderstorm warning, or if you see or hear a storm coming, follow these steps:

- Get inside a home or building right away. A vehicle is not the best shelter but is better than being outside in a thunderstorm.
- If you are stuck outside in a thunderstorm, drop to a crouching position with your feet on the ground and close together.
- Stay away from trees, metal objects, and power lines, and do not use appliances such as phones, televisions or computers that could carry the lightning current into your home or office.

Tornadoes – Tornadoes produce very high winds in funnel shaped clouds that can lift and move heavy objects such as cars and buildings. They can move extremely fast and do a lot of damage to people and property. If there is a tornado warning or if you see a tornado coming or hear the outdoor warning sirens, follow these steps:

- If you are outside try to seek shelter in a house or other building (but not in a car or trailer) right away; if there is no shelter nearby, lie flat face down in a ditch or low area and cover your head until the tornado passes.
- If you are already inside, move to the basement or to a room or hallway near the center of the building on the lowest level. Stay away from windows and doors, and listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local media for official updates.
- If you are in a vehicle, get out and lie flat face down in a ditch or low area and cover your head until the tornado passes – do not stay in your car or try to outrun a tornado.

Winter Storms – Winter storms can be dangerous because they may leave people stranded in their homes or cars and sometimes without power. If there is a winter storm warning or if you are already stranded take the following steps:

- If already inside, get out your Emergency Kit and listen for official updates.
- Do not travel unless you absolutely have to, and if you do, try to take public transportation.
- Stay indoors and dress warmly – if you must go outside, wear enough clothing to keep you warm and dry (i.e. coat, hat, boots, gloves, and extra layers).
- Eat and drink liquids on a regular basis
- Conserve heat and fuel – keep the thermostat at 65 degrees or less during the day and 55 degrees at night, close off unused rooms, stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors and cover windows at night.

- If you get stranded in your car or other vehicle, stay with your vehicle and hang a brightly colored cloth on the radio antenna. Turn on the engine for about 10 minutes each hour (or 5 minutes every half hour) to keep warm, but make sure the tailpipe is clear of snow and that you leave a window open a bit to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Fires/Explosions – Fires can cause death and serious injury because of burns and smoke inhalation. Explosions may occur on their own or as part of a larger fire, and can also do a lot of damage to people and property. If you hear a fire alarm or smoke detector, see a fire or see or smell smoke, follow these steps:

- Exit the building quickly, but safely, then call 911 from an outside phone.
- If a stove fire starts, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner. Never pour water on grease fires – this will cause the fire to spread.
- If you try to use a fire extinguisher on a small fire and the fire does not go out right away, drop the extinguisher, get out of the building and call 911.
- Be careful when opening doors – feel a closed door, cracks, and doorknob with the back of your hand before you open it. If it is cool and there is no smoke at the top or bottom, open it slowly. If it is warm or you see smoke at the cracks, you may need to find another way out.
- Stay low – if your only way out is through smoke, crawl on the floor under the smoke to get to your exit.
- If the smoke is too thick, or heat or flames block your exit, stay in a room with the door closed and window open, and hang a sheet or bright clothing out the window to assist firefighters in locating you.
- Once you are out of the building stay out!

Hazardous Materials Events – Dangerous amounts of chemicals can be released into the environment from transportation or industrial accidents, or intentionally, as happened in Japan when a nerve gas was released into the subway system. These events can cause fires or explosions, and can be very toxic to people.

- If you receive any threat about a toxic spill or release, or see strange activity that you believe may involve hazardous materials, call 911 immediately.
- If you live or work near the scene of a hazardous materials event that is not in your building, stay where you are, listen for emergency updates, and wait for instructions from emergency personnel before leaving the area.
- If you are at the scene of a hazardous materials event, get yourself and others far away from the spill or leak, and then call 911. Wait in a safe place for emergency personnel to arrive. Watch for signs of toxic affects (i.e. trouble breathing, dizziness, irritation to the eyes, skin or throat, stomach cramps or diarrhea) and report any of these symptoms to emergency personnel right away.

- Try to avoid breathing in gas fumes or smoke by covering your mouth and nose with a cloth. Never touch, taste, sniff or put your eyes near any real or suspected chemical substance.
- Pour large amounts of water over yourself or others if you come in contact with chemicals, and remove any contaminated clothing. If you do not have water, brush chemicals off with a glove, plastic bag or cloth.
- If you are outside, try to stay uphill, upwind and upstream of the hazardous materials event.
- If you are told by local officials to “shelter in place” (i.e. remain in your home or office), turn off all heating and air conditioning systems, get your Emergency Kit, and go to an interior room preferably without windows). Use plastic and duct tape to seal all cracks around the door, any windows, and any vents into the room. Keep listening to your radio or television for updates. If necessary, children in affected schools will be sheltered there. Parents should not go to the schools unless advised to do so. Do not go outdoors unless absolutely necessary. Stay inside until you are told all is safe or that you should evacuate.

Bioterrorism Events – Bioterrorism involves the deliberate use of harmful viruses and bacteria to make people sick. We have seen this with anthrax letters in the mail. While these types of events are rare, they can be very dangerous. Although we cannot always prevent them from happening, we can help by reporting strange activity to local officials. If you become aware that bioterrorism has taken place where you live or work, or strongly suspect that it has, you should follow these steps:

- If you receive any threat of bioterrorism, or see strange activity that you believe may be part of a bioterrorism event, call 911 right away.
- If you live or work near the scene of a bioterrorism event that is not in your building, stay where you are, listen for emergency updates, and wait for instructions from emergency personnel before leaving the area.
- If you are at the scene of a bioterrorism event get yourself and others far away from the biological agent, and then call 911. Wait in a safe place for emergency personnel to arrive. If you later notice signs of biological infection (i.e. severe breathing problems, shock, nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, severe diarrhea, etc.), call 911 or your doctor right away.
- If you see or receive a suspicious package (i.e. bulky envelopes, unfamiliar or no return address, heavy or oddly sealed boxes, anything leaking powder or other substance, etc.) do not open, shake or put your face or bare skin near it. Put it down and cover it gently with a small trash can or clothing, get yourself and others out of the room, close off the room and call 911 right away. Wash your hands with soap and water. Never touch, taste, sniff or put your eyes near any real or suspected biological agent.

What to Do Until Help Arrives

If someone with you is injured or ill follow these basic first aid steps:

Check – Call – Care

- **Check** the scene. Make sure it is safe for you to get closer, then check the injured person to see if they have any life threatening conditions (i.e. constant or sudden chest pain, trouble breathing, severe bleeding, loss of consciousness, or severe injuries from falls, head injury or burns).
- **Call** for help. If the injured person has any life threatening conditions listed above, call 911 right away, or have someone else call while you stay with the person.
- **Care.** Do your best to care for and comfort the injured or sick person and prevent further injury until emergency personnel arrive. Here are some ways you can help:

Control Bleeding

- Cover wounds with a gauze pad or cloth and press firmly.
- If there are no broken bones lift and keep the injured area above the level of the heart.
- If the bleeding does not stop put on extra bandages and apply pressure at a point between the injury and the heart (usually inner legs or inner arms).

Care for Shock

- Keep the injured person from getting either too cold or too hot.
- Lift and keep the legs about 12 inches above the ground (if no broken leg bones).
- Do not let the injured person eat or drink anything.

Tend Burns

- Stop the burning – remove the heat source if possible and cool with water if necessary.
- Do not apply anything (i.e. gel, salve or cream) to the burn.
- Cover the burn with dry, clean bandages or cloth.

Care for Injuries to Muscles, Bones and Joints

- Apply ice or cold pack to control swelling and reduce pain.
- Avoid movement or activity that causes the injured person any pain.

- If you must move the person because the area is unsafe, try to keep the injured part still.

Reduce Any Risks to Caregiver

The risk of getting a disease while giving first aid is rare. However, to lower the risk take the following precautions:

- Wear latex or rubber gloves.
- Avoid direct contact with blood or other body fluids.
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water right away after giving first aid.

Basic Survival Tips

If your power goes out – remain calm, call your electric service provider to report the power outage, and follow these steps:

- Use battery-powered flashlights for emergency lighting rather than candles.
- Turn off electrical appliances you were using when the power went out.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator or freezer so they will stay cold.
- Listen to a battery-powered portable radio for updated information.
- Assist family or neighbors who may become ill from extreme heat or cold.
- If you need to cook, use a grill or camp stove outdoors. Canned food can be heated up and eaten right out of the can (open the can, remove the label before you heat it).
- Never run a generator, grill, or kerosene heater inside a home or garage as these can cause house fires or release deadly carbon monoxide.

If food supplies are low – Healthy people can survive for a long time on half of what they would normally eat, and without any food at all for many days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women. Follow these tips if your food supply is limited during an emergency:

- Eat salt free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content rather than high fat, high protein or salty foods that will make you thirsty.
- If at home, use up the foods from your refrigerator and freezer first, then use the canned foods, dry mixes and other things you already have in your cupboard.
- If possible, continue to drink water as you normally would. If the water supply is interrupted then use the water set-aside for your Emergency Kit.

Staying Healthy and Safe After a Disaster

Coping with Trauma

The recovery process continues even days or months after a disaster as you and your family face the emotional and psychological effects of the event. Reactions vary from person to person, but may include: restless sleep or nightmares; anger, fear or wanting revenge; lack of emotion; needing to keep active; loss of appetite, weight loss or gain; headaches and mood swings.

All of these are normal reactions to stressful events. It is important to let yourself and others react in their own way. It may be helpful to:

- Talk with family and friends about what happened and how you feel about it.
- Volunteer at an emergency shelter or donate money or blood to help with emergency efforts.
- Talk to your priest, minister, spiritual advisor or other counselor.
- Encourage your children to share their feelings, even if you must listen to their stories many times – this is a normal way for children to make sense of traumatic experiences.
- You may also want to share your feelings about the event with your children.

If these strategies are not helping to lower your stress or you find that you or your family members are abusing drugs/alcohol or resorting to other unhealthy behaviors in order to cope you may wish to seek professional help.

Ways You Can Help Others

Here are a few more basic things to keep in mind that may help you, your family or emergency personnel get through a disaster more quickly and safely:

- Call 911 only for a possible life-threatening emergency. Telephone lines are very busy in disaster situations and they need to be kept clear for emergency calls to get through.
- If you do not have an emergency do not go to or call the hospital emergency department.
- Once you know your family is safe check on your neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled who may need special assistance.
- If local officials announce the need for blood donations, contact Hoxworth Blood Center at (513) 451-0910 to make an appointment.

Emergency Contact Information

All Emergencies (law enforcement, fire, rescue, medical, hazardous materials): **911**

Boone County Emergency Management (non-emergency): 334-2279

<http://www.boonecountyky.org/EM/>

Public Safety Communications Center (non-emergency): 371-1234

Boone County Sheriff (non-emergency): 334-2175

<http://www.boonecountyky.org/sheriff/default.htm>

Florence Police (non-emergency): 647-5420

<http://www.cityofflorenceky.com/police.htm>

Boone County Water Rescue: 334-4800

<http://www.bcwr-ky.com/index.shtm>

Poison Control Center: (513) 558-5111 or 1 (800) 722-5725

Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department: 341-4264

<http://www.nkyhealth.org/index.html>

Cinergy: Electric trouble: (513) 651-4182

Gas trouble: (513) 651-4466

<http://www.cinergyulhp.com/>

Owen Electric Cooperative: 1 (800) 372-7612

<http://www.owenelectric.com/>

American Red Cross – Cincinnati Area Chapter: (513) 579-3000

<http://www.cincinnatiarearedcross.org>

Salvation Army: (513) 762-5660

Hoxworth Blood Center: (513) 451-0910

<http://www.hoxworth.org/>

Kentucky Division of Emergency Management Area 7:485-4134

<http://kyem.dma.state.ky.us/>

Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet: 292-6411

<http://www.kyenvironment.org/>

ARTIMIS (24 Hour Traffic Conditions): 511 from any touch-tone phone

<http://www.artimis.org/>