

Toledo Police Department

Office Of

Emergency Services

Disaster Guide for Citizens



Flash floods and floods

As land is converted from fields or woodlands to roads and parking lots, it loses its ability to absorb rainfall. Urbanization increases runoff 2 to 6 times over what would occur on natural terrain. During periods of urban flooding, streets can become swift moving rivers, while basements can become death traps as they fill with water. Torrential or prolonged rains can produce flooding along rivers or other waterways or areas where water naturally drains. **Flash Floods** occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall, a dam or levee failure, or a sudden release of water held by an ice jam. **Floods** are longer in duration and could last a week or more. Most flood deaths are due to flash floods, but any flood has the potential to cause property damage, personal injury, or loss of life.

Stay informed about weather conditions by listening to NOAA weather radio, commercial radio, and television for the latest flash flood/flood **Watches, Warnings, and Advisories**. NOAA weather radio allows you to receive continuous, updated weather information from the National Weather Service.

Listen for any flood alerts that may be issued by the Weather Service:

Flash Flood or Flood Watch:

Flash flooding or flooding is possible within the designated watch area. Be alert. Be prepared to evacuate if it becomes necessary.

Flash Flood or Flood Warning:

Flash flooding or flooding has been reported or is imminent. Take necessary precautions at once.

Urban and Small Stream Advisory:

Flooding of small streams, streets, and low-lying areas, such as railroad underpasses and urban storm drains, is occurring.

Flash Flood or Flood Statement:

Follow-up information regarding a flash flood/flood event.

When a **flash flood warning** is issued for your area:

- Go to higher ground. Get out of areas subject to flooding such as dips, low spots, washes, etc. Act quickly!
- Avoid already flooded and high velocity flow areas. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams.
- If driving, be aware that the road may not be intact under floodwaters. Turn around and go another way. NEVER drive through flooded roadways!
- If the vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Rapidly rising water may engulf the vehicle and its occupants.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams or washes, particularly during threatening conditions.

When you receive a **flood warning**:

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Move to a safe area before access is cut off by floodwater.
- Continue to monitor NOAA Weather Radio, television, or an emergency broadcast station for information.

During the flood

- Remember to **avoid areas subject to sudden flooding.**
- If you come to a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, **STOP! Turn around and go another way.** Even 6 inches of fast moving water can knock you off your feet.
- **Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road.** The depth of water is not always obvious. To avoid being stranded or trapped, **STOP! Turn around and go another way.** 2 feet of water can float your car.
- Children should **never** play around high water, storm drains, viaducts, or other potentially dangerous areas.
- Stay away from downed power lines or other sources of electrical shock.

After the flood

- If food has come in contact with flood waters, throw it out.
- Boil drinking water before using. Wells should be pumped out and the water tested for purity before drinking. If in doubt, call your local public health authority.
- Seek necessary medical care at the nearest hospital. Food, clothing, shelter, and first aid are available from the Red Cross.
- Do not visit disaster areas. Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations.
- Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.
- Use flashlights, not lanterns, torches or matches, to examine buildings. Flammables may be inside.
- Report broken utility lines to appropriate authorities.

What you can do to be prepared before a flood occurs

- Know your flood risk and elevation above flood stage. Do your local streams or rivers flood easily? If so, be prepared to move to a place of safety.
- Keep your automobile fueled.
- Store drinking water in clean containers and clean bathtubs in the event that water service is interrupted.
- Keep a stock of food that requires little cooking and no refrigeration; electric power may be interrupted.
- Keep first aid supplies on hand.
- Keep a NOAA weather radio, a battery-powered portable radio, emergency cooking equipment, and flashlights in working order.
- Install check valves in building sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Secure propane gas tanks.
- Be prepared to shut off LP tanks at the source should flooding occur.
- Have a fire extinguisher available and know how to use it.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) suggests assembling a disaster supplies kit containing a first aid kit, canned food and can opener, bottled water, rubber boots, rubber gloves, NOAA weather radio, battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.

Power Outage

If a power outage occurs in your office or building:

- Remain Calm. Try to notify the service desk or Maintenance.
- If you are in an unlighted area, proceed cautiously to an area that has emergency lights or that is still with power only if you can do so safely. Planning for such situations includes having a flashlight available. Keep it in working order.
- Provide assistance to others in your immediate area who may be unfamiliar with the surroundings or who may need help for other reasons, such as a medical condition.
- If you are in an elevator, stay calm. Use the emergency button or telephone to alert the service desk or maintenance personnel.
- If you are instructed to evacuate, immediately proceed to the nearest clear exit. Use caution! Know where exits are located before you have to use them.
- Initiate power outage protocols for critical operations.

Medical Emergencies

If someone becomes ill or is injured and requires immediate assistance:

- Remain calm.
- Call 911 to contact medical personnel.
- Unless you are trained, do not attempt to render any first aid before medical personnel arrive.
- Do not attempt to move a person who has fallen and appears to be in pain.
- Limit your communication with the ill or injured person to quiet reassurances.
- Remain to assist the investigating officer or medical personnel with information about the incident. Leave the scene if the authorities request you to do so.
- Planning for such emergencies includes being trained in emergency first aid procedures and CPR.
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Explosions

Chemicals, leaking gas, faulty boilers, explosive devices, or other things could be the cause of an explosion.

- Remain calm.
- Be prepared for possible further explosions.
- Crawl under a table or desk. Protect yourself as best as possible.
- Stay away from windows, mirrors, overhead fixtures, filing cabinets, bookcases and electrical equipment.
- Follow the instructions of Police or Fire Department personnel. If you are ordered to evacuate, proceed to a designated exit.
- Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in obvious immediate danger (of fire, building collapse, etc.).
- Open doors carefully. Watch for falling objects.
- Do not use elevators.
- If requested, accompany and help persons with disabilities who appear to need direction or assistance.
- Do not use matches or lighters.
- Avoid using telephones.

Chemical Spills

If a chemical spill occurs:

- If toxic chemicals come in contact with your skin, immediately flush the affected area with clear water.
- Call 911 immediately.
- If there is any possible danger, evacuate the area.

If a chemical fire occurs:

- Remain calm.
- Call 911.
- If the fire is small and you have received training, attempt to put it out with a fire extinguisher or other available means. Do not jeopardize your personal safety.
- Never allow the fire to come between you and an exit.
- Evacuate the area if you are unable to put out the fire. Close doors and windows behind you to confine the fire. Proceed to an exit.
- Do not break windows. Oxygen feeds a fire.
- Do not attempt to save possessions at the risk of personal injury.
- Do not return to the emergency area until instructed to do so by Police or Fire Department officials.
- Planning includes training in the proper use of fire extinguishers and knowing their location.
- All chemical spills and fires should be reported to the proper authorities.

Crime Prevention

Here are a few suggestions for what you might do to prevent a crime in your area.

At home:

- Keep your doors locked. This includes the garage.
- Use outside lights at night.
- Items kept outdoors could attract thieves or even be used to break into your home. Try to keep them secured or out of sight whenever possible.
- Be suspicious of strangers who approach you on your property or come to your door. Never allow strangers into your home.
- If you plan on being away, stop mail and newspaper delivery, use timers to turn on some inside lights after dark, and have someone cut the grass. Keep the appearance that someone is home.
- Get involved in your neighborhood Blockwatch Program.
- Know your neighbors. Look out for one another.
- Never wait to report suspicious activity to the police.

When Walking:

- Avoid walking alone at night unless absolutely necessary.
- Walk purposefully and project a confident image.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Know where you are going.

Protecting Your Auto or Bicycle:

- Always lock your car.
- Lock bikes to immovable objects or bike racks.
- Do not leave valuables or property visible inside the car. Lock these items in the trunk.

Protecting Yourself When Driving:

- Look into your car before getting in. Lock the doors and roll up the windows once you're inside.
- Do not stop to help the occupants of a stranded or disabled vehicle. Instead, drive to the nearest phone and call for assistance for them.
- If your car breaks down, raise the hood, then lock yourself in the car. If you have a cell-phone, call for assistance immediately. If someone stops to offer help, stay in your locked car and ask them to phone for you if you haven't already done so. Don't worry about appearing rude.
- Position a disabled vehicle somewhere other than the traffic lane, preferably off the right side of the roadway. Activate your warning lights. A vehicle disabled in the traffic lane is considered a traffic hazard and should be towed as soon as possible.
- Know where you're going and the best route to get there. This will help you to avoid the chance of becoming lost in unfamiliar areas.
- It's a good idea to take a cell-phone with you when traveling. Also keep a few emergency flares and reflective triangles in the trunk of your car.

Thunderstorms and Lightning

No matter the size, all thunderstorms should be considered dangerous. Every thunderstorm produces lightning, which kills more people each year than tornadoes. Heavy rain from thunderstorms can lead to flash flooding. Strong winds, hail, and tornadoes are also dangers associated with thunderstorms.

Stay informed about weather conditions by listening to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, and television for the latest **thunderstorm watch** or **warning**. NOAA Weather Radio allows you to receive continuous, updated weather information from the National Weather Service.

Listen for any weather alerts that may be issued by the Weather Service:

Severe Thunderstorm Watch:

Tells you when and where severe thunderstorms are more likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to know when warnings are issued. Watches are intended to heighten public awareness and should not be confused with warnings. Watches are issued when conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning:

Issued when severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm. Also...listen for Tornado Watch or Warning and Flash Flood Watch or Warning.

What You Can Do

Before the storm:

- Know the county in which you live and the names of surrounding counties and nearby cities. Severe weather warnings are issued on a county basis.
- Check the weather forecast before leaving for extended periods outdoors.
- Watch for signs of approaching storms.
- If a storm is approaching, keep a NOAA weather radio or AM/FM radio with you.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent. This is the best way to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- Check on those who have trouble taking shelter if severe weather threatens.

When thunderstorms approach:

- Remember: if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Seek safe shelter immediately.
- Move to a sturdy building or car. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees, or in convertible automobiles.
- If lightning is occurring and a sturdy shelter is not available, get inside a hard top automobile and keep the windows up.
- Get out of boats and away from water.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances that are not necessary to obtain weather information. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances. Use phones only in an emergency.
- Do not take a bath or shower.
- Turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressors.

- Get to higher ground if flash flooding or flooding is possible. Once flooding begins, abandon cars and seek higher ground. Do not attempt to drive to safety. Most flash flood deaths occur in automobiles.

If caught outdoors and no shelter is nearby:

- Find a low spot away from trees, fences, and poles. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.
- If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.
- If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible, and minimize your contact with the ground.
- If you are boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter immediately.

Facts about lightning:

- Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.
- Rubber soled shoes and rubber tires on a car provide no protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-top vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal. Although you may still be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.
- Victims struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and should be attended to immediately.
- What is commonly referred to as “heat lightning” is actually lightning from a thunderstorm too far away for thunder to be heard. Keep in mind that the storm may be moving in your direction!
- Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors.

Winter Storms

Winter storms are considered deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. People die in traffic accidents on icy roads, from heart attacks while shoveling snow, and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. Everyone is potentially at risk. Winter storms can bring strong winds creating blizzard conditions, extreme cold, and heavy accumulations of ice and snow. Each of these elements poses a threat to life and property.

Stay informed about weather conditions **by listening to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, and television for the latest** winter storm watches, warnings, and advisories. **NOAA Weather Radio allows you to receive Continuous, updated weather information from the National Weather Service.**

Listen for any alerts that may be issued by the Weather Service:

Winter Storm Watch:

Severe winter conditions, such as heavy snow and/or ice, are possible within the next day or two. Prepare now!

Winter Storm Warning:

Severe winter conditions have begun or are about to begin in your area. Stay indoors!

Blizzard Warning:

Snow and strong winds will combine to produce a blinding snow (near zero visibility), deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill. Seek refuge immediately!

Winter Weather Advisory:

Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening. The greatest hazard is often to motorists.

Frost/Freeze Warning:

Below freezing temperatures are expected and may cause significant damage to plants, crops, or fruit trees. In areas unaccustomed to freezing temperatures, people who have homes without heat need to take added precautions.

If you are caught in a winter storm:

Outside:

- Find shelter. Try to stay dry. Cover all exposed parts of the body.
- If there is no shelter available: Prepare a lean-to, windbreak, or snow cave for protection from the wind. Build a fire for heat and to attract attention. Place rocks around the fire to absorb and reflect heat. Do not eat snow. It will lower your body temperature. Melt it first.

In a car or truck:

- Stay in your car or truck. Disorientation occurs quickly in wind-driven snow and cold.
- Run the motor about ten minutes each hour for heat: Open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.
- Make yourself visible to rescuers: Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine. Tie a colored cloth (preferably red) to your antenna or door. Raise the hood indicating trouble if there is no snow falling.

- Exercise from time to time by vigorously moving arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

At home or in a building:

- Stay inside. When using alternative heat from a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc., always use fire safeguards. Be certain the area is properly ventilated.
- If you don't have heat, close off unneeded rooms. Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors, and cover windows at night.
- Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers as necessary to avoid overheating, perspiration, and subsequent chill.

Frostbite and Hypothermia:

Frostbite is damage to body tissue caused by that tissue being frozen. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or the tip of the nose.

- Seek medical help immediately!
- If you must wait for medical help, slowly warm the affected areas.
- If the person is showing signs of hypothermia, warm the body core before the extremities.

Hypothermia is low body temperature. Warning signs are uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion.

- Take the person's temperature. If below 95 degrees F (35 degrees C), immediately seek medical care!
- If medical care is not available, begin warming the person slowly.
- Warm the body core first!
- Do not warm the extremities (arms and legs) first! This can lead to heart failure.
- Use your own body heat if necessary.
- Get the person into dry clothes, and wrap them in a warm blanket covering the head and neck.
- Do not give alcohol, drugs, coffee, or any hot beverage or food. Warm broth is better.

Be prepared before the storm strikes!

At home and at work, have the following items available:

- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Battery operated NOAA weather radio, portable radio, and extra batteries. These may be your only link to the outside.
- Extra food and water. High energy foods, such as dried fruit or candy, and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration is best.
- Extra medicine and baby items.
- First aid supplies.
- Heating fuel.
- Emergency heating source such as a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc. Know how to use it safely and with proper ventilation.
- Fire extinguisher and smoke detector. Make sure they are working properly.

In Vehicles, plan your travel and check the latest weather reports to avoid the storm.

- Check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season.

- Carry a winter storm survival kit. Include blankets or sleeping bags, flashlight with extra batteries, first aid kit, knife, high calorie (non-perishable) food, extra clothing, a large empty can and plastic cover with tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes, a smaller can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water, sack of sand or cat litter, shovel, windshield scraper and brush, tool kit, tow rope, booster cables, water container, compass and road maps.
- Keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Try not to travel alone.
- Let someone know your timetable and primary and alternate routes.
- Dress to fit the season. A hat and gloves or mittens are essential for cold weather.

Family Disaster Plan

Families should be prepared for all hazards that affect their area and themselves. The National Weather Service, The Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the American Red Cross urge each family to develop a family disaster plan.

Follow these basic steps to develop a family disaster plan...

1. Gather information about hazards.

Know what type of disasters could occur and how you should respond. Learn your community's warning signals and evacuation plans.

2. Meet with your family to create a plan.

Discuss the information you have gathered. Pick two places to meet: a spot right outside your home for an emergency, such as fire, and a place away from your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Choose an out-of-state friend as your "family check-in contact" for everyone to call if the family gets separated. Discuss what you would do if advised to evacuate.

3. Implement your plan.

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones.
- Install safety features in your house, such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Inspect your home for potential hazards:
 - Keep heavy or breakable items low. Secure hanging items.
 - Secure propane gas tanks.
 - Keep exit routes clear.
 - Avoid excess clutter and trash in and near the house.
 - Secure mobile home foundations.
 - Safely store poisonous or hazardous items.
 - Ensure utility connections are in good shape.
 - Check for fire hazards.
- Have your family learn basic safety measures, such as CPR and first aid; how to use a fire extinguisher; and how and when to turn off water, gas, and electricity in your home.
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number.
- Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Assemble a disaster supplies kit with items you may need in case of an evacuation. Store them in sturdy containers that are easy to carry, such as backpacks or duffel bags.
- Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller disaster supplies kit in the trunk of your car.

4. Practice and maintain your plan.

Ask questions to make sure your family remembers meeting places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct drills. Test smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries every six months. Test and recharge fire extinguishers according to the manufacturer's instructions. Replace stored water and food every six months.

A Disaster supplies kit should include:

- A three day supply of drinking water (one gallon per person per day) and a three day supply of food that won't spoil. (Canned meats, fruits, vegetables, soups, juices, milk; peanut butter, crackers, granola bars, trail mix, etc.).
- One change of clothing and footwear per person.
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- A first aid kit, including prescription medicines.
- Emergency tools including a battery powered NOAA weather radio, portable radio, flashlight, extra batteries, hand can opener, ABC type fire extinguisher, wrench, signal flare, and duct tape.
- An extra set of car keys and cash or travelers checks.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- Sanitation items such as those needed for personal hygiene, plastic garbage bags and ties, bucket with lid, disinfectant, and bleach.

Bomb Threat Procedures

Instructions: Remain calm, be courteous, listen and do not interrupt the caller. Notify your supervisor or another individual by prearranged signal while the caller is on the line.

Pretend difficulty with your hearing. Keep the caller talking. Use any means, even humor, to prolong the conversation.

Ask these questions:

- When will the bomb go off? _____
- How much time remaining until it goes off? _____
- What kind of bomb is it? _____
- How do you know so much about this bomb? _____
- What is your name and address? _____

Write this information down and also note the time.

Attempt to determine the following:

- Caller identity: Male ___ Female ___ Adult ___ Juvenile ___ Age ___
- Origin of call: Local ___ Long distance ___ Pay Phone/Booth ___ Internal ___
- Voice characteristics: Loud ___ Soft ___ High pitch ___ Deep ___
Raspy ___ Pleasant ___ Intoxicated ___ Other ___
- Speech: Fast ___ Slow ___ Distinct ___ Distorted ___
Stutter ___ Nasal ___ Slurred ___ Lisp ___
- Language: Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor ___ Foul ___ Other ___
- Manner: Calm ___ Angry ___ Emotional ___ Rational ___ Irrational ___
Coherent ___ Incoherent ___ Deliberate ___ Righteous ___ Laughing ___
- Accent: Caucasian ___ Black ___ Hispanic ___ Oriental ___ Other ___
- Background noise: Factory machines ___ Office Machines ___ Bedlam ___
Mixed ___ Street traffic ___ Trains ___ Animals ___ Quiet ___
Voices ___ Airplanes ___ Party noises ___ Music ___
Any other _____

Be sure to listen carefully so that you can record important information about the characteristics of the caller, what the caller is saying, and anything else you are hearing. Notify the police as soon as possible.

Do not use any portable radio equipment or cell phones until the proper authorities determine it safe to do so.

Written threats, suspicious parcels, and suspicious objects

- Remain calm. Never discuss a threat with others.
- Keep others from handling or going near anything suspicious.
- Do not use portable radio equipment within 100 feet of the item.
- Call 911 immediately.
- Promptly write down everything you can remember about receiving the letter or parcel or finding the object and give the information to the police.
- Follow the instructions of the police.
- Planning includes being familiar with the appearance of suspicious packages or objects. Whenever possible, deny or limit access to areas by keeping them locked and secured. This will help to reduce potential hiding places.

Halloween Safety

October 31, 2002 is Halloween. Door-to-door “trick or treat” hours this year will be from 6 to 8 P.M. Parents and guardians can help make this a safe and enjoyable evening for the children by following some basic guidelines:

- Choose a bright colored flame- retardant costume with reflective material or reflective strips for high visibility. It should be short enough to prevent falls.
- If your child wears a mask, make sure it fits securely and eyeholes are large enough to allow full vision. Consider the use of make-up instead.
- Costume accessories (swords, wands, etc.) should never be sharp or in any other way present a safety hazard. They should be made of soft, pliable material.
- Parents should mark the child’s name, address, and phone number on the inside of their costume, or have them wear an identification bracelet.
- Children should carry flashlights to help them see as well as aiding others to see them.
- Young children of any age should be accompanied by an adult. They should never go out alone. Chaperones should watch them carefully.
- Older children, such as teenagers, who may be going out without an adult need to know what time they are expected home. Make sure they have a watch and some quarters to call home if they need to. Know where they are going.
- Although tampering is rare, always inspect everything your children have been given before they are allowed to consume it or use it. Toss out anything in question. Obvious tampering should be kept for inspection by the police.

Instruct children to:

- Walk, don’t run.
- Stay on sidewalks. If there are none, walk on the left side of the road facing traffic.
- Obey traffic signals. Use crosswalks.
- Avoid cutting across yards and driveways.
- Approach only those houses that are lit.
- Stay away from and don’t pet animals.
- Never eat candy or treats until it is inspected by an adult.
- Be cautious of strangers.
- Accept treats only in the doorway. Never go inside a house.
- Stay away from any open flame source such as jack-o-lanterns.
- “Trick or treat” only during the approved time.

Homeowners can help by doing these things:

- Make sure your yard is clear of such things as ladders, hoses, dog leashes, flower pots, and anything else that can trip the young ones.
- Keep pets contained to protect them and to avoid the possibility of an inadvertent bite. Remember that pets can become frightened.
- It is best to avoid real flame. If you do use candles, place the pumpkin well away from where trick-or-treaters will be walking or standing.
- Make sure decorations are away from flames, and that they cannot be blown into them.
- Don’t give homemade treats. Give sealed, pre-packaged items.

Halloween is meant to be a fun time for all. Following a few simple rules can also help to make it a safe time for all.

Toledo Police Department

Protecting Your Family from Terrorism

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon have heightened concern about the possibility of future incidents. Uncertainty about what might happen next has left many people dealing with additional stress. Preparing for an emergency can be an effective way to reduce stress and exert a measure of control even in the face of such events.

The first step in preparing for the unexpected is to determine what might happen. Additionally, what would be the potential consequences in your community? Discuss these things with your family or household and develop a disaster plan together.

The suggestions listed below have been made by the American Red Cross:

Create an emergency communications plan.

- Choose an out-of-town contact your family can call or e-mail in order to check on each other should a disaster occur.
- The contact should live far enough away that it would be unlikely for them to be directly affected by the same event, and they should know they are the chosen contact.
- Make sure that every household member has the contact's, and each other's, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers (home, work, pager, and cell). Leave these numbers at your children's school and at your workplace.

Establish a meeting place.

- Having a predetermined meeting place away from your home will save time and minimize confusion if your home is affected or the area is evacuated.
- You may want to consider making arrangements to stay with a family member or friend.
- Include pets in these plans, since pets are not permitted in shelters and some hotels will not accept them.

Assemble a disaster supplies kit.

- Having essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable.
- Include "special needs" items for any household member (infant formula or items for people with disabilities or elderly people), first aid supplies (including prescription medications), a change of clothing for each person, a sleeping bag or bedroll for each, a battery powered radio or television, and extra batteries, food, bottled water, and tools.
 - It is also good to include some cash and copies of important family documents (birth certificates, passports and licenses) in your kit. Copies of other essential documents should also be kept in a safe location outside your home. For more complete instructions, ask your local Red Cross chapter for the brochure titled "Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit" (stock number A4463).

Know the school emergency plan for any of your school-age children.

- Know if the school will keep children until they are picked up or send them home on their own.
- Be sure the school has current information about how to reach you or another responsible person to arrange for your children to be picked up.
- Ask what type of authorization is required by the school to release your child to another designated person if you are unavailable.

(To obtain more information on disaster plans, request a copy of the brochure “Your Family Disaster Plan” (A4466) from your local Red Cross chapter.)

In the event that a disaster happens:

- Remain calm and be patient.
- Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- Listen to the radio or television for news and instructions.
- If the disaster occurs near you, check for injuries. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- If the disaster occurs near your home while you are there, check for damage using a flashlight. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches. Check for fires, fire hazards and other household hazards. Smell for the odor of gas, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside immediately.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Confine or secure pets.
- Call your family contact. Do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled.

Evacuation guidelines:

If authorities ask you to leave your home, they have a good reason to make this request. Heed the advice immediately. Listen to your radio or television and follow the instructions of local emergency officials. Keep these simple tips in mind:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sturdy shoes for added protection.
- Take your disaster supplies kit.
- Take pets with you; do not leave them behind. Because pets are not allowed in public shelters, follow your plan to go to a relative or friend’s home, or to a hotel that is “pet friendly”.
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by the local authorities. Avoid shortcuts or other routes because they may be dangerous or impassable.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Listen to local authorities. Your safest choice is to follow their instructions.

If you are sure you have time, and you are not advised otherwise:

- Call your family contact to tell them where you are going and when you expect to arrive.
- Shut off water and electricity before leaving, if you are instructed to do so. Leave natural gas service ON unless local officials advise you otherwise. You may need gas

for heating and cooking, and only a professional can restore gas service in your home once it has been turned off. In a disaster situation it could take weeks for a professional to respond.

Shelter in place:

If local officials advise you to “shelter in place”, you are to remain inside your home or office. Close and lock all windows and exterior doors. Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Close the fireplace damper. Get your disaster supplies kit, and make sure the radio is working. Go to an interior room without windows that’s above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed. Use duct tape to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room. Keep listening to the radio or television until you are told that all is safe or that you should evacuate.

First Aid Primer:

If you encounter someone who is injured, apply the emergency action steps: **Check-Call-Care.**

1. **Check** the scene to make sure it is safe for you to approach. Then **check** the victim for unconsciousness and life-threatening conditions.
 - Someone who has a life-threatening condition, such as not breathing or who is bleeding severely, requires immediate care by trained responders or medical professionals.
2. **Call** out for help.
3. **Care** for someone who is hurt, but whose injuries are not life-threatening.
 - a.) **Control the bleeding:**
 - Cover the wound with a dressing, and press firmly against the wound (direct pressure).
 - Elevate the injured area above the level of the heart if you do not suspect that the victim has a broken bone.
 - Cover the dressing with a roller bandage.
 - If the bleeding does not stop, apply additional dressings and bandages. Use a pressure point to squeeze the artery against the bone.
 - b.) **Provide care for shock:**
 - Keep the victim from getting chilled or overheated.
 - Elevate the legs about 12 inches (if broken bones are not suspected).
 - Do not give food or drink to the victim.
 - c.) **Tend burns:**
 - Stop the burning by cooling the burn with large amounts of water.
 - Cover the burn with dry, clean dressings or cloth.
 - d.) **Care for injuries to muscles, bones, and joints:**
 - Rest the injured part.
 - Apply ice or a cold pack to control swelling and reduce pain.
 - Avoid any movement or activity that causes pain.
 - If you must move the victim because the scene is becoming unsafe, try to immobilize the injured part to keep it from moving.

The risk of getting a disease while giving first aid is extremely rare. However, to reduce the risk even further:

- Avoid direct contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Use protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and breathing barriers.
- Whenever possible, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water immediately after giving care.

You may also want to consider registering for a first aid and CPR course by contacting your local American Red Cross chapter. You can find it in the telephone directory under "American Red Cross" or through their web site at www.redcross.org under "your local chapter".