



Be Ready Worthington!

Emergency Preparedness Guide

It could be a house fire, a power outage, a tornado, or a blizzard -- we cannot predict exactly what it will be, but we do know that disasters and emergencies happen. We also know that individuals make the difference in how well a community responds to emergencies. People who are well-prepared can deal with emergencies better and help friends and neighbors. The City of Worthington would like to help you be prepared when emergencies strike. Please review this Emergency Preparedness Guide and keep it for future reference. Remember it is critical to prepare for an emergency before it happens.

Make a Family Disaster Plan

Your family will cope best by preparing for disaster before it strikes. Discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and man-made disasters and explain why it is important to plan in advance.

- Discuss the types of disasters that are likely to happen.
- Pick two places to meet: 1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like fire, and 2. a location outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation.
- Pick one out-of-state friend or relative to call if separated by disaster. It is often easier to call out-of-state than within the effected area. Make sure all family members know the number.
- Plan how to take care of your pets.



Complete this checklist:

- Post emergency phone numbers by telephones.
- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1.
- Learn how and when to turn off the gas, water and electricity at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a disaster supplies kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Draw a floor plan of your home and determine the best escape routes. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.
- Practice and maintain your plan and replace supplies that expire.
- Conduct fire and emergency drills.

Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit

Once disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. There are six basics you should stock in your home: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies. Store items for evacuation in an easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or duffle bag. Include:

- A supply of water (one gallon per person per day.) Identify the storage date and replace every six months.
- A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a non-electric can opener.
- A change of clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes.
- Blankets or sleeping bags.
- A first aid kit and prescription medications.
- An extra pair of glasses.
- A battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
- Credit cards and cash.
- An extra set of car and house keys.
- A list of family physicians.
- A list of important family information; medical and insurance documents.
- Vial of Life information (see back.)
- Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

Shelter in Place

“Shelter in Place” means staying where you are and making yourself as safe as possible until the emergency passes or you are told to evacuate.

- Remain indoors (outdoors may be more dangerous.)
- If it is a chemical emergency or there is danger of an explosion:
 - Close all the windows in your home.
 - Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
 - Close the fireplace damper.
 - Go to an above ground room (not the basement) with the fewest windows and outside doors.
 - Take your Emergency Supplies with you.
 - Wet some towels and jam them in the cracks under the doors. Put tape around doors, windows, exhaust fans or vents. Use plastic bags/sheets to cover windows, outlets and registers.
 - If you are told there is danger of an explosion, close the window shades, blinds and/or curtains. To avoid injury, stay away from the windows.
 - Stay in the room and listen to the radio until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Follow local authority’s instructions.

You May be Required to Go To a Shelter if:

- Your area has no electrical power for an extended period.
- There is a chemical emergency affecting your area.
- Flood water is near your home.
- Your home has been severely damaged.
- Police or other local authorities tell you to evacuate.

If You Need to Evacuate:

- Listen to the radio for the location of emergency shelters. Follow the instructions of local officials.
- Take identification.
- Wear appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Take your Emergency Supplies Kit, including any required medications.
- Lock your house.
- Use the travel routes specified or special assistance provided by local authorities. Do not take short cuts, they may be unsafe.
- Take a cell phone if you have one.
- Car pool if possible.
- If you must have assistance for special transportation call your local officials at one of the listed phone numbers on the back.

If you have time:

- Shut off water, gas and electricity if you are instructed to do so and if you know how. Remember gas must be turned back on by a professional.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you have left.
- Make arrangements for your pets. Animals are not allowed in shelters, with the exception of service animals.

Local Emergency Shelters and Transportation in an Emergency

The City may provide temporary transportation to those residents affected by the emergency. In cases of mass evacuation, the City will inform residents of Community Collection Points (CCP’s) via its website at www.worthington.org, the Neighborhood Network and local media. The CCP’s are for residents who have had to be evacuated from their homes. This is for mass evacuation situations. CCP’s are intended for short term holding areas only and until more permanent locations for housing can be established. Emergency Housing Locations may be necessary and the City will inform residents as need arises and in collaboration with other agencies. The primary site is the Worthington Community Center.

Weather Emergencies

Tornadoes

Tornado season is in the spring and summer, but the deadly storms can happen any time of year. Here’s what you can do to prepare:

- Develop a plan for you and your family for home, work, school and when outdoors.
- Identify the place where the family could gather if a tornado is coming
- Have frequent drills.
- Have a NOAA weather radio with a warning alarm tone and battery back-up to receive warning information.
- When the alarm tone sounds, turn on your radio and television for the latest tornado watches and warning update information.

What To Listen For:

Tornado Watch: Tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar, within the county or area covered by the emergency broadcast system. Sirens will sound for 3 minutes with a steady tone. If a tornado warning is issued for your area and the sky becomes threatening, move to your pre-designated place of safety.

What To Do When Threatening Weather Approaches:

- Move to a pre-designated shelter, preferably a basement. If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, and get under a sturdy piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows.
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car; instead, leave the car immediately.
- If caught outside, lie flat on the ground, preferably in a ditch or depression.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms can often lead to wind, hail and flood damage. Here’s what you can do to be prepared:

- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light or increasing wind. Listen for the sound of thunder.

Weather Emergencies

- If you can hear thunder you are close enough to be struck by lightning. Go to a safe shelter immediately!
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for the latest forecasts.

When a Storm Approaches:

- Find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.
- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances.
- Avoid taking a bath or shower or running water for any other purposes.
- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor.
- Draw blinds and shades over windows. If windows break due to objects blown by the wind, the shades will prevent glass from shattering into your home.

Winter Storms

Whether it's snow, ice or freezing temperatures, here are some ideas to keep you safe and warm during winter storms.

- In extremely cold temperatures, try to stay indoors.
- If you must go outside dress warmly in several layers of loose clothing. Gloves and a hat will prevent loss of body heat.
- Stay dry. Wet clothing rapidly cools the body.
- Shovel snow with caution. Take frequent breaks and drink plenty of water.
- Make sure your Disaster Supply Kit is well-stocked.
- Avoid unnecessary travel.
- If you must drive, make sure your gas tank is full and you have emergency supplies in the trunk.
- Use a fireplace, wood stove or other combustion heater only if properly vented to the outside.



In Case of a Power Outage:

- Call American Electric Power at 1-877-237-2886 to report the outage.
- Use a flashlight or battery-operated lantern. Be cautious using candles.
- Turn off all major appliances.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- Any food that has been left unrefrigerated for more than 8 hours should be thrown away.
- Food must be kept at 41 degrees or lower to be safe to eat.
- Use portable generators cautiously. Make sure they are operated only outside in well-ventilated areas. Do not connect a generator to your home's electrical system except through an approved transfer switch.
- Stay away from downed power lines. Treat all downed lines as if they were hot.
- When driving, treat all unlit intersections as a 4-way stop.

Debris Removal

- Yard Waste drop off takes place the last Saturday of every month in March through October at the Public Service yard at 380 Highland Avenue.
- Normal yard waste pick up from Rumpke on Fridays. Please follow the existing guidelines for placing debris in yard waste containers and follow bundling requirements.
- If debris is widespread in the City, the Department of Public Service may make arrangements to bring a chipper through the neighborhoods to dispose of debris. Call 431-2425 if you have any questions.

Fire Safety

Before a Fire

- Plan two escape routes out of each room. NEVER use elevators.
- Sleep with the bedroom door closed. This gives you extra minutes of protection from toxic fumes and fire.
- If you do not have a smoke detector, install one immediately. Test it regularly. Make sure you change the batteries twice a year. Vacuum it occasionally to remove any dust.
- Keep a small fire extinguisher near your kitchen area. Have it checked periodically.

In Case of a Fire

- Remain calm.
- If your smoke detector goes off, do not waste time getting dressed or collecting valuables or pets. Get out of the house and stay out. Go to a neighbor's house to call 9-1-1.
- Feel any door before you open it. If it is hot, use the alternate exit.
- If you are in a smoke filled room, drop to the floor and crawl. Stay close to the floor and head for the nearest exit.
- If your clothes catch fire, drop to the floor and roll to suffocate the fire. Keep rolling until the fire goes out.
- If you are in a wheel chair, or cannot get out of your house, stay by a window near the floor. If you are able, signal for help or try to get someone's attention by hanging a towel or sheet out a window.
- Have an established meeting place outside the home.

Fire Prevention

- Have the chimney flu cleaned yearly.
- Never use a gas stove for heating.
- Portable heaters should be used with extreme caution.
- Make sure that all electrical appliances are properly grounded.
- Properly dispose of all old paints and oily rags that might be a fire hazard.
- Never store gasoline or household and flammable cleaning liquids or solvents in the house.
- Call the Worthington Department of Public Service for information on disposal of hazardous materials.

How You May be Notified in Case of Emergency

Information concerning evacuations, community collection points, emergency housing, emergency transportation and any health or safety notices is disseminated to the community via the City’s assigned information officer. The following are possible communication methods.

- NOAA Weather Radio
- Local radio and television stations
- Newspapers
- Door-to-Door if possible
- Telephone, Reverse 911
- Vehicle Sirens
- Vehicle Public Address System
- Franklin County Outdoor Siren Warning System
- Emergency Alert System
- www.worthington.org
- Neighborhood Network e-mail alert

(To sign up for the Neighborhood Network email brown@ci.worthington.oh.us)

The City also works with the American Red Cross and other agencies with short-term public assistance: transportation, medical, housing, food and water and clothing.

City of Worthington Emergency Operations Plan

The City of Worthington has an Emergency Operations Plan that is reviewed and revised regularly and in concert with the National Incident Management System as developed by the Federal Department of Homeland Security. The Plan serves as a guide to mobilize, supervise and coordinate resources to effectively deal with emergencies, as they occur. The City’s emergency response procedures are activated by the City Manager. The primary Emergency Operation Center is established at the Worthington Fire Station.

Citizens as First Responders

You can get involved in helping prepare for a community disaster by participating in the Worthington Citizen Action Team and the Worthington Police Citizen Academy. Call the Divisions of Police and Fire at the numbers listed below for more information.

Services and Programs Provided or Supported by the City Of Worthington

- Worthington Citizen Action Team
- Worthington Police Citizen Academy
- CPR & First Aid Instruction
- Fire Inspection
- Emergency lock box via EMS
- Home Emergency system for EMS for persons living alone
- Hazardous Waste Disposal
- Emergency Preparedness Booklets
- North Community Counseling Center
- Northwest Counseling Service
- Net Care (Crisis Care)
- Neighborhood Network Communication

Vial of Life

The Vial of Life program is a means to communicate vital information between special needs individuals and emergency personnel or caregivers, in case of emergency. Individuals should complete the forms with applicable patient information and information on health conditions and medications. Forms can be obtained by contacting the Worthington Division of Fire or can be downloaded at www.worthington.org/services/emergency

Important Contact Information

Personal Contacts & Notes

City of Worthington online	www.worthington.org
Division of Fire & EMS (non emergency)	(614) 885-7640
Division of Police (non emergency)	(614) 885-4463
Worthington Administration & Finance	(614) 436-3100
Worthington Department of Public Service	(614) 431-2425
Rumpke Solid Waste and Recycling	(800) 828-8171
SWACO - Hazardous Materials	SWACO.org
American Electric Power	(877) 237-2886 AEPOhio.com
Columbia Gas of Ohio	(800) 282-0157 columbiagasohio.com
AT&T Telephone	(800) 572-4545
Columbus Division of Water	(614) 645-8270
Columbus Health Department	(614) 645-7417
Poison Center of Central Ohio	(800) 682-7625
Franklin County Animal Control	(614) 462-3400
Parks & Recreation/Community Center	(614) 436-2743
Worthington Engineering Department	(614) 431-2424
Worthington Law Department	(614) 436-7429
Worthington Griswold Senior Center	(614) 842-6320
Worthington Schools	(614) 883-3000
Worthington Libraries	(614) 807-2626
