

PART B.1

KEY MESSAGES FOR ALL-HAZARDS HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY DISASTER PREVENTION





This section sets out foundation messages that are considered common for all-hazards preparedness. Specific complementary messages related to different hazards like drought, earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, landslides, tropical cyclones, pandemics or wildfires are presented in the next section.

The better each household can plan ahead, reduce its risks (through structural, non-structural, infrastructural and environmental measures), develop response skills and store provisions, the greater its resilience will be. By following this guidance, households and families can protect themselves, recover quickly, and contribute to the rapid recovery of their community. Each household can be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. This work starts with each and every one of us.



All-hazards household and family disaster prevention in a nutshell

- Find out what could happen. Stay informed.
- Make a household disaster and emergency plan, considering everyone in the household.
- Reduce structural, non-structural and environmental risks in and around your home.
- Learn response skills and practise your plan.
- Prepare response provisions to survive for about a week. Prepare evacuation bags.
- Work together with your workplace, schools, neighbours and local community to assess the risks, plan to reduce them, and prepare to respond.

Assess and plan

Key messages	Context-specific details
Assess your risks where you live, work, study and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about potential hazards, local emergency plans and communications and warning systems in your community. • Identify hazards and vulnerabilities in your home and surroundings. • Learn about the contact information, roles and responsibilities of government agencies in assessing and reducing risks, issuing early warnings and planning for response. • Learn who is likely to be most exposed to different hazards, where and why. • Expect the unexpected.
Make a plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include all household and extended family members in the planning process. • Meet with household and family members to discuss vulnerabilities and plan for the specific risks you face. • Determine what actions are needed to reduce risks and identify what resources and help you will need. • Plan the steps you will take to protect yourselves, to communicate, reunite and recover. • Decide who will do what, when and how it will get it done. • Practise and update the plan regularly, to reduce risks and to prepare for those you cannot eliminate.
Assess individual capabilities and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify each person's individual needs and capacities. Consider all ages and functional needs – especially those related to communication and mobility. • Being prepared is everyone's responsibility. You can make the difference.
Consider access and functional needs and create and prepare a support network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the access and functional needs of each member of the household during a disaster. If anyone will need help, for any reason, plan and identify neighbours, friends, and/or co-workers who will provide assistance during an emergency. • Use imagination and your network to solve problems. • Make sure your network knows how to operate any personal equipment that you may need in case of emergency.
Make plans to reunite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on safe meeting places inside the house, outside the house and outside the neighbourhood. • Pre-authorize emergency contacts for school and childcare pick-ups. • Decide on primary and back-up out-of-area contacts to act as an information centre for your household or family.
Keep emergency contact and health information available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make emergency contact and health information cards for each household member, to be carried at all times (especially for children when they are away from home or school, and for anyone with particular access or functional needs). • Put a copy where it can easily be found in the event of a disaster or emergency, and share it with your support network.
Know your building exit routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify your exits, and consider the safest exit routes in case of different types of hazards. • Keep exit pathways clear. • Identify a safe place away from your building (at home, at work, at school).

Make hazard-specific plans about whether to stay or go and where to shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For different hazards and circumstances, you may have early warning ranging from several days to no warning at all. Discuss the various possible scenarios, and decide on your safe spaces – the best shelter and/or evacuation options – for each circumstance. Prepare those safe spaces, whether in your home, outside or away from home.
Learn and participate in your community's early warning systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn your community's early warning systems. If your community does not have one, help to develop one, taking care that the messages will be received and understood by everyone – especially the most vulnerable. Take warnings seriously, even if they are frequent. Be alert for changes in circumstances, as risks may increase after the early warning information is initially issued. Follow evacuation instructions without hesitation. Do not return home until local authorities say it is safe to do so.
Make an evacuation plan: know your shelter destination, evacuation route and transportation method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify safe places where you can go if you need shelter or must evacuate. Everyone in the household should know where to go, and where to meet if they have to leave. Plan alternate evacuation routes and methods, and practise your routes. Work with your network to determine the transportation method if evacuation is necessary. Ask the local emergency manager about community plans for directed evacuation and transportation options.
Learn the location of shelter, <i>safe havens</i> or temporary housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange for temporary housing with relatives or friends away from the area at risk. Learn the locations of shelters or <i>safe havens</i> for your community, and check to see if any special needs should be met. If these are not known in advance, find out how you will locate a shelter. Plan ahead to reunite at the identified location, without detour or delay.
Keep copies of important personal documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep copies of important personal documents in your evacuation bag, with your out-of-area-contact, in a safe deposit box, and electronically (for example, on a cloud, hard disk or memory stick).
Include pets, service animals and livestock in your planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan how to take care of your animals. Use collar tags, microchips or tattoos to identify animals if they are lost. Take a picture with your pet. Keep vaccinations and records up-to-date, and take these details with you when evacuating. Identify in advance how and where you can arrange for temporary shelters.
Pool your financial risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, buy insurance or set up a self-insurance pool with a large group. Check that coverage includes all types of hazards you are likely to face, and make a complete inventory of your property. Keep this in a safe, out-of-area location.
Expand your circles. Continue your planning and plan with your neighbours and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know your neighbours. Learn about the emergency and disaster plans at school and at work. Get involved with workplace, school and community organizations, teams or projects to support ongoing assessment of vulnerabilities and capacities, planning, risk reduction and response-preparedness activities. Share what you have learned.

Mitigate risks: physical or environmental

Key messages	Context-specific details
Know your building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the structural type of your home (for example, wood frame, confined masonry, reinforced concrete, adobe, steel, traditional wattle and daub, or rubble fill). • Learn local regulations on land use, construction, remodelling, landscape maintenance, fire safety and disposal of debris. • Consider having your building evaluated by a professional structural design engineer, if possible. Building codes are specific to the time when your building was constructed, and modern standards may be higher. Retrofitting may be advisable. • Learn about options to make your home safe from the hazards that you are likely to face.
Construct your home in a safe place in compliance with building regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider possible hazards before selecting the site for your home. • Learn about your area's building codes before you begin construction.
Take annual home maintenance measures to keep your home safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an annual check to identify and correct conditions that make you more vulnerable to fire, ground movement, wind, water and severe weather. • Be sure that windows can be opened from the inside and that exits and emergency exits are not blocked. • Clear fire hazards. • Inspect and repair electrical systems. • Clean gutters and drains. • Service all heating appliances and chimneys. • Replace smoke alarm batteries.
Practise home fire prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not permit smoking in bed or when lying down. • Keep matches, lighters and flammable or combustible products away from children and from heat sources. • Never leave a fire or candle burning unattended. • Avoid overloading electrical circuits. • Check wiring in your home, repair broken electrical cords, frayed or exposed wires or loose plugs. Do not run electrical cords under carpets. • Check and maintain connections on devices that run on gas. • Keep stove and heaters and surrounding areas clear of flammables. • Install working smoke detectors in sleeping areas and at each level in your home. • Dispose of ashes in a metal container and soak with water. • Use heaters certified for safety and follow manufacturers' directions. • Do not use kitchen ovens for home heating. • Do not operate or refuel electrical generators indoors.
Store hazardous materials safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit, isolate, eliminate and separate hazardous materials. • Store poisons and flammable products securely in closed, latched metal cabinets to prevent accidental fires, toxic combinations and hazardous materials release.
Protect your domestic animals and livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure any outbuildings, pastures or corrals are protected in the same way as your home.

Practise good hygiene and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands well, using soap and water or sand. • Use toilets or other sanitary methods to dispose of human waste. • Do not defecate in the open air or near water sources. • Protect water and food supplies from contamination.
Protect your environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve precious environmental resources: reduce, reuse and recycle. • Monitor and reduce energy and water use.

Prepare to respond: developing skills

Key messages	Context-specific details
Learn how to turn off your utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn where, when and how to turn off utilities (water, gas and electricity). • Ensure there is a clear path to access utilities easily in case of emergency. • Where appropriate, install automatic shut-off valves. • If need be, keep a wrench or other tools available to access or shut off utilities.
In case of power outage, take fire precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a power outage for any reason, extinguish all flames and never light any flame (including cigarettes, matches or candles) after a disaster. • Use only battery-powered lanterns, torches/flashlights until you are sure there is no danger of escaping gas or spilt fuel.
Learn how to react to fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, move anyone who may be in immediate danger. • Make sure that doors and windows are closed, to confine fire and smoke. • Alert others to the fire and activate any fire alarm systems. • Call the emergency fire service for help. • Try to extinguish small fires using appropriate tools.
Extinguish small fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extinguish small fires within the first two minutes of ignition by cutting off fuel, air or heat supply. • Put a fire extinguisher (ABC), bucket of sand or fire blanket in place and learn how to use it. Remember that the fire extinguisher must be maintained. • Before you fight the fire, keep your back to your escape route and stand 1.8–2.5 meters (6–8 feet) away from the fire. If possible, have a helper immediately behind you for safety. • Practise <i>PASS: Pull the pin. Aim at the base of the flame. Squeeze the handle. Sweep at the base of the fire.</i> • In case of a stove-top fire, cover the burning pan with a fire blanket or damp (not wet) cloth and lid, take it off the burner, and leave it covered for at least an hour. • Never use water or foam extinguishers on an oil or an electrical fire.
Use the correct fire extinguisher for the situation	<p>Use the proper extinguisher:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pressurized water for Class A ordinary fires, such as burning wood, paper, cardboard, plastics and textiles. 2. Carbon dioxide for Class B flammable liquids, such as burning oil, gasoline, paint and grease and Class C energized circuits, such as electrical or computer fires. 3. Dry chemical powder for fires in Class A, B or C.

Know what to do if you see fire or smell smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you smell smoke or see a fire, alert others, get out quickly, assist others, and call for help. • If there is smoke in the room, follow the advice <i>get down low and go, go, go</i>. Inhaling smoke or toxic gases kills many more people than burns. Feel the doorknob and space around the door with back of your hand. Do not open the door if it feels hot. As you exit each space, close doors and windows and turn off appliances. • Use a damp cloth over your nose and mouth to reduce fume inhalation when you are evacuating or waiting for rescue. • If you are on fire <i>stop, drop and roll</i> to extinguish the flames. If someone else is on fire, make them do the same. • If you cannot get out, close the doors and stay down low, opening a window a little to signal for help. Protect your hands and face with wet cloth. Place a wet towel at the bottom of the door to prevent smoke from entering the room.
Respond to early warnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay alert for emergency warnings, and respond immediately. • Know the alarm system that will be used and practise your response. Know your emergency exit choices. • If you are advised to evacuate, leave immediately. • Take your pets or service animals with you if possible. • Do not forget your evacuation bag, with copies of personal documents. • Secure your belongings if you have time.
Learn first aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn first aid skills. Make sure that at least one member of your household is trained in first aid. • Practise and update your first aid knowledge every year.
Practise regular emergency drills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct or participate in emergency evacuation drills (including at home) at least twice a year. • Conduct or participate in other hazard drills, including full response simulation, at least once a year. • Be sure to include all members of household in practice drills.
Respond to the needs of your animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have animals, evacuate early with them or make sure any outbuildings, pastures or corrals are protected. • If you must leave animals behind, do not leave them tied or shut in buildings. Leave dry food.
Use telephones only for emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep phone use to an absolute minimum. Use them only to request outside assistance for physical injury and damage. Otherwise, leave phone lines open for emergencies. • Learn the phone numbers for reporting fire and other emergencies. Keep these by your phone or programmed into the handset. • Keep your mobile phone with you. Minimize use to conserve batteries. • Use short text messaging rather than voice, and only to convey vital emergency information rather than to satisfy curiosity. • Send just one short message via mobile phone to report your status to your out-of-area contact. Learn emergency hash tags for emergency social messaging.
Maintain communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure street signs and house numbers are clearly marked so that emergency responders can help you.
Stay informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to a portable battery-operated radio or television for emergency information and safety instructions. • Know the frequency of your local emergency-alarm radio station.

Familiarize yourself with household water-treatment methods to purify water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the water source is not clean or water is not stored properly, carry out water treatment procedures at the household level. • Strain water through fine clean cotton. This is an important first step. Follow this by disinfection, sedimentation or filtration.
After hazard impact, help those around you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, check your own security and safety, followed by that of those immediately around you, before moving or going to help others. • Check yourself and others for injuries. Do not try to move anyone who is seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury. • If you must move someone who is unconscious, first stabilize their neck and back and then get help. • If the person is not breathing, carefully position them so they are lying flat on the floor with their chin tilted slightly up, clear the airway, close their nose, wipe the mouth clean and administer rescue breaths – use protective barrier if possible. • Maintain normal body temperature (not too cold or too hot) and raise legs by about 20–30cm (7–12in), above the heart. • Stop bleeding only by using pressure and elevation, not by tourniquet.
After hazard impact, check for damage	<p>Follow the specific advice below for the situation in question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas: Check for leaks. If you smell gas, hear a blowing or hissing noise or see a broken gas line, open a window and get everyone outside and away from the area quickly. Seek professional help. Extinguish all flames. Do not light flames of any kind. Do not touch electrical switches. • Electricity: If your body or the equipment is in contact with water, do not touch electrical circuits or equipment. Do not touch damaged electrical wires or items in contact with them. If possible, turn off electricity at the main fuse box and check for damage. If the power is out, turn off and unplug major appliances to protect them from a power surge when electricity is restored. If the situation is unsafe, leave and call for help. • Sewage: If you suspect damage to the sewage system, avoid using toilets and tap water. Have septic tanks serviced regularly. • Water: If you suspect damage, turn off the main water valve. Avoid using water, except from undamaged water heaters or ice cubes made before the hazard impact. • Spills: Clean up spills carefully. Place containers in a well-ventilated area. Keep combustible liquids away from heat sources. Pay special attention to flammable liquids such as gasoline, paint thinner or lighter fluid.
After hazard impact, take care of yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep any critical health information with you – especially if you have diabetes, heart disease or need any regular life-sustaining or behaviour-controlling medications or devices. • Prevent exhaustion. Pace yourself, rest and sleep. • Drink plenty of clean water. Eat as well as circumstances allow. • Wear protective shoes, clothing and gloves. • If you are working in debris, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

<p>After hazard impact, support response, clean-up and recovery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help speed up recovery by showing solidarity with your neighbours and working together in an organized way. • Volunteer in local disaster response, assisting with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opening blocked emergency transportation routes • checking for damage to water, sewage, gas and electrical lines and reporting these • first aid • fire suppression (for example, through bucket forming line to pass water buckets) • logistics support to professional responders (for example, cutting wood for search and rescue in building collapse) • creating shelter • preparing and distributing water and food • supervising children • attending to escaped pets • creating sanitary and private pit toilets • making sure that shelter, water, sanitation, and food distribution is accessible to people with various access and functional needs.
<p>After hazard impact, support each other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When in distress, sadness, grief, anger and a range of other unusual behaviours are considered normal. Try to be flexible and to understand that everyone has different needs and ways of coping. • Reduce stress by spending time with loved ones, talking and taking care of yourself. • Be aware of children's behaviour changes and needs. • Return children to normal recreational and educational activities as soon as possible. • Work together to return to normal routines, roles and responsibilities. • Organize or participate in memorials, if this is helpful. • Continue to practise preparedness together.



Prepare to respond: storing provisions

Key messages	Context-specific details
Check your phones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you have at least one non-electric, non-cordless landline phone in case of power outage. For mobile phones, keep an extra battery or manual or solar charger available.
Store water and food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store enough clean water and non-perishable food to survive for about a week – 25 to 30 litres (7 gallons) for each household member. About half of this is for drinking or cooking and half for sanitation. Keep the water in clean, closed containers.
Store response provisions at home, work and school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the following provisions in a secure place – outside your home, where possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emergency contact information and copies of vital records Between 25 to 30 litres (7 gallons) water per person. This is sufficient for survival for one person for one week based on an estimated two litres (half a gallon) for drinking and another two for sanitation. Include allocations for pets and service animals. Replace every six months. Enough non-perishable food to last for at least seven days. Remember infant and other special dietary needs of family members and pets or service animals. (Check expiry dates every six months) first aid kit and prescription medications dust mask to filter contaminated air torch/flashlight – either solar or wind-up, or with extra batteries plastic bags and ties for personal sanitation liquid bleach for water purification plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal windows and doors for hazardous materials release paper and markers multi-purpose pocket knife tool matches a whistle, to signal for help a telephone with extra battery or power storage clothing and toiletries, including rain gear, a change of underclothing, sturdy shoes and work gloves bedding and towels personal items to meet the needs of each household member including assistive devices such as spectacles.

Prepare a 'go-bag' for evacuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack evacuation bags containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency water and high-energy food • communication equipment such as a portable radio (solar wind up, or with extra batteries) • first aid supplies and prescription medications • tools including a torch/flashlight (solar, wind up or with extra batteries) multi-purpose tool, matches • clothing, including rain gear, a change of underclothing, sturdy shoes and work gloves • emergency blanket • personal toiletries and items such as assistive devices • emergency contact information and copies of vital records • cash. • Take this bag with you when you evacuate.
After power outage throw away contaminated food and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check refrigerated food for spoilage. If in doubt, throw it out. • Avoid drinking or preparing food using water that may be contaminated.
Purify water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if water looks clean, it may be contaminated. If it is of questionable purity, carry out the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove solids by filtering the water through a cloth or letting it settle and pour it into a clean container • boil the water for at least one minute or until large bubbles appear, then let it cool • add bleach, mix well, and let stand for 30 minutes (one drop of bleach per litre of water, eight drops per gallon, or one capful per 20-litre jerry can). • Alternatively, place water in a clean, transparent plastic or glass bottle and lay it in direct sunlight for six hours. • In all cases, store water in a clean and closed container.

This section is complemented by the hazard-specific messages. Please refer to section B.2.