The most effective way to protect yourself and your home from fire is to identify and remove fire hazards. Sixty-five percent of home fire deaths occur in homes with no working smoke alarms. During a home fire, working smoke alarms and a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives.

• If a fire occurs in your home, GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL for help.
• Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Test them every month and replace the batteries at least once a year.
• Talk with all household members about a fire escape plan and practice the plan twice a year.

Steps You Can Take Now

- Keep items that can catch on fire at least three feet away from anything that gets hot, such as space heaters.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Talk to children regularly about the dangers of fire, matches and lighters and keep them out of reach.
- Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.

Cooking Safely

- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- Stay in the home while simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food. Check it regularly and use a timer to remind you that food is cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire—like pot holders, towels, plastic and clothing—away from the stove.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

Caution: Carbon Monoxide Kills

- Install carbon monoxide alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas.
- If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door.
- Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area.

Smoke Alarms

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.
- Teach children what smoke alarms sound like and what to do when they hear one.
- Once a month check whether each alarm in the home is working properly by pushing the test button.
- Replace batteries in smoke alarms at least once a year. Immediately install a new battery if an alarm chirps, warning the battery is low.
- Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years. Never disable smoke or carbon monoxide alarms.
- Carbon monoxide alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms. Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.

Fire Escape Planning

- Ensure that all household members know two ways to escape from every room of your home.
- Make sure everyone knows where to meet outside in case of fire.
- Practice escaping from your home at least twice a year and at different times of the day. Practice waking up to smoke alarms, low crawling and meeting outside. Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1.
- Teach household members to STOP, DROP and ROLL if their clothes should catch on fire.

Follow Your Escape Plan!

Remember to GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL 9-1-1 or your local emergency phone number.

- If closed doors or handles are warm, use your second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch.
- Crawl low under smoke.
- Go to your outside meeting place and then call for help.
- If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with doors closed. Place a wet towel under the door and call the fire department or 9-1-1. Open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight to signal for help.

Use Caution with Fire Extinguishers

- Use a portable fire extinguisher ONLY if you have been trained by the fire department and in the following conditions:
  • The fire is confined to a small area, and is not growing.
  • The room is not filled with smoke.
  • Everyone has exited the building.
  • The fire department has been called.
- Remember the word PASS when using a fire extinguisher.
  • Sweep the nozzle from side to side.
  • Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly.
  • Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
  • Place a wet towel under the door and call the fire department or 9-1-1.

Let Your Family Know You’re Safe

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For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit AllReadySTL.com or redcross.org.
Floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters. Conditions that cause floods include heavy or steady rain for several hours or days that saturates the ground. Flash floods occur suddenly due to rapidly rising water along a stream or low-lying area.

**What should I do?**

- Listen to area radio and television stations and a NOAA Weather Radio for possible flood warnings and reports of flooding in progress or other critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Be prepared to evacuate at a moment’s notice.
- When a flood or flash flood warning is issued for your area, head for higher ground and stay there.
- Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, stop, turn around and go another way. Six inches of swiftly moving water can sweep you off of your feet.
- If you come upon a flooded road while driving, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground. Most cars can be swept away by less than two feet of moving water.
- Keep children out of the water. They are curious and often lack judgment about running water or contaminated water.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood danger.
- Because standard homeowners insurance doesn’t cover flooding, it’s important to have protection from the floods associated with hurricanes, tropical storms, heavy rains and other conditions that impact the U.S. For more information on flood insurance, please visit the National Flood Insurance Program Web site at www.floodsmart.gov.

**What supplies do I need?**

- Water—at least a 3-day supply; one gallon per person per day
- Food—at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, cane)
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, deed/lease to home, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Map(s) of the area
- Baby supplies (bottles, formula, baby food, diapers)
- Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)
- Tools/supplies for securing your home
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Extra clothing, hat and sturdy shoes
- Rain gear
- Insect repellent and sunscreen
- Camera for photos of damage

**What do I do after a flood?**

- Return home only when officials have declared the area safe.
- Before entering your home, look outside for loose power lines, damaged gas lines, foundation cracks or other damage.
- Parts of your home may be collapsed or damaged. Approach entrances carefully. See if porch roofs and overhangs have all their supports.
- Watch out for wild animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into your home with the floodwater.
- If you smell natural or propane gas or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and call the fire department.
- If power lines are down outside your home, do not step in puddles or standing water.
- Keep children and pets away from hazardous sites and floodwater.
- Materials such as cleaning products, paint, batteries, contaminated fuel and damaged fuel containers are hazardous. Check with local authorities for assistance with disposal to avoid risk.
- During cleanup, wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots.
- Make sure your food and water are safe. Discard items that have come in contact with floodwater, including canned goods, water bottles, plastic utensils and baby bottle nipples. In when doubt, throw it out!
- Do not use water that could be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, make ice or make baby formula.
- Contact your local or state public health department for specific recommendations for boiling or treating water in your area after a disaster as water may be contaminated.

**Know the Difference**

- **Flood/Flash Flood Watch**—Flooding or flash flooding is possible in your area.
- **Flood/Flash Flood Warning**—Flooding or flash flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.

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Influenza, also known as the flu, is a contagious respiratory disease caused by different strains of viruses. In the United States, there is a flu season that begins every fall and ends every spring. The type of flu people get during this season is called seasonal flu. Flu viruses spread from person to person when people who are infected cough or sneeze.

Know the Difference
Seasonal Flu—A contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza (flu) viruses occurring every year. It affects an average of 5 percent to 20 percent of the U.S. population by causing mild to severe illness, and in some instances can lead to death. Adults may be able to infect others 1 day before getting symptoms and as long as 5 days after getting sick.

Epidemic—The rapid spread of a disease that affects some or many people in a community or region at the same time.

Pandemic—An outbreak of a disease that affects large numbers of people throughout the world and spreads rapidly.

Flu Checklist

The flu usually begins with the rapid-onset of a high fever and body aches. Be aware of other common flu symptoms:

• Headache
• Extreme tiredness
• Sore throat
• Cough
• Runny or stuffy nose
• Vomiting and/or diarrhea (more common in children than in adults)

NOTE: Having all of these symptoms doesn’t always mean that you have the flu. Many different illnesses have similar symptoms.

Diagnosing the flu:

• It may be difficult to tell if you are suffering from the flu or another illness.
• Your health care provider may be able to tell you if you have the flu.
• If you develop flu-like symptoms and are concerned about possible complications, consult your health care provider.

Potential risks and serious complications of the flu:

• Bacterial pneumonia
• Dehydration
• Worsening of chronic medical conditions
• Ear infections
• Sinus problems

What should I do to avoid getting sick?

Get your flu shot every year for the best chance of protection.

• Always practice good health habits to maintain your body’s resistance to infection.
  • Eat a balanced diet.
  • Drink plenty of fluids.
  • Exercise daily.
  • Manage stress.
  • Get enough rest and sleep.
  • Take these common sense steps to stop the spread of germs:
    • Wash hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
    • Avoid or minimize contact with people who are sick (a minimum three feet distancing is recommended).
    • Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
    • Cover your mouth and nose with tissues when you cough and sneeze. If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
    • Stay away from others as much as possible when you are sick.

• Anyone with a fever or other symptoms of the flu should stay home from work or school until at least 24 hours after the fever has gone (without medications).

• Get a flu shot every year. Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to minimize illness and death. Two shots will be needed for the 2009 flu season - one for seasonal flu and one for H1N1 flu.

What should I do when someone is sick?

• Designate one person as the caregiver.
• Keep everyone’s personal items separate. All household members should avoid sharing pens, papers, clothes, towels, sheets, blankets, food or eating utensils unless cleaned between uses.
• Disinfect doorknobs, switches, handles, computers, telephones, toys and other surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace.
• Wash everyone’s dishes in the dishwasher or by hand using very hot water and soap.
• Wash everyone’s clothes in a standard washing machine as you normally would. Use detergent and very hot water and wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
• Wear disposable gloves when in contact with or cleaning up body fluids.

Terminology defined

Immunization to a disease is defined by the presence of antibodies to that disease in a person’s system. Most people have some resistance to infections, either after they recover from an illness or through vaccination. Seasonal flu viruses change over time and immunity to them cannot be acquired unless vaccination is administered.

Quarantine is the physical separation of healthy people who have been exposed to an infectious disease from those who have not been exposed.

Isolation is a state of separation between persons or groups to prevent the spread of disease.

Social distancing is a practice imposed to limit face-to-face interaction in order to prevent exposure and transmission of a disease.

Are you considered high risk for flu-related complications?

• The following groups of people are at an increased risk: people age 50 or older, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions, children age 6 months and older and people who live with or care for anyone at high risk.
• People at high risk should have their vaccinations updated every year and receive pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine if age 50 or older, as directed by their physician.
In recent years, excessive heat has caused more deaths than all other weather events, including floods. A heat wave is a prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity. Generally temperatures are 10 degrees or more above the average high temperature for the region during summer months, last for a long period of time and occur with high humidity as well.

Know the Difference
Excessive Heat Watch—Conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event to meet or exceed local Excessive Heat Warning criteria in the next 24 to 72 hours.

Excessive Heat Warning—Heat Index values are forecast to meet or exceed locally defined warning criteria for at least 2 days (daytime highs=105-110° Fahrenheit).

Heat Advisory—Heat Index values are forecast to meet locally defined advisory criteria for 1 to 2 days (daytime highs=100-105° Fahrenheit).

How can I prepare?
- Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of upcoming temperature changes.
- The heat index is the temperature the body feels when the effects of heat and humidity are combined. Exposure to direct sunlight can increase the heat index by as much as 13° F.
- Discuss heat safety precautions with members of your household. Have a plan for wherever you spend time—home, work and school—and prepare for the possibility of power outages.
- Check the contents of your emergency preparedness kit in case a power outage occurs.
- Know those in your neighborhood who are elderly, young, sick or overweight. They are more likely to become victims of excessive heat and may need help.
- If you do not have air conditioning, choose places you could go to for relief that spend much of their time alone or who do not have air conditioning, who are people living in rural areas.
- Be aware that people living in urban areas may be at greater risk from the effects of a prolonged heat wave than are people living in rural areas.
- Get trained in first aid to learn how to treat heat-related emergencies.
- Ensure that your animals’ needs for water and shade are met.

What should I do during a heat wave?
- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio for critical updates from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Never leave children or pets alone in enclosed vehicles.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Eat small meals and eat more often.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun’s rays.
- Slow down, stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day.
- Postpone outdoor games and activities.
- Use a buddy system when working in excessive heat.
- Take frequent breaks if you must work outdoors.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.
- Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat.

Recognize and care for heat-related emergencies ...

Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms that usually occur in the legs or abdomen caused by exposure to high heat and humidity and loss of fluids and electrolytes. Heat cramps are often an early sign that the body is having trouble with the heat.

Heat exhaustion typically involves the loss of body fluids through heavy sweating during strenuous exercise or physical labor in high heat and humidity.
- Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea; dizziness; weakness; and exhaustion.
- Move the person to a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths or towels to the skin. Fan the person. If the person is conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Watch for changes in condition.
- If the person refuses water, vomits or begins to lose consciousness, call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.

Heat stroke (also known as sunstroke) is a life-threatening condition in which a person’s temperature control system stops working and the body is unable to cool itself.
- Signs of heat stroke include hot, red skin which may be dry or moist; changes in consciousness; vomiting; and high body temperature.
- Heat stroke is life-threatening. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number immediately.
- Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the person’s body by giving care as you would for heat exhaustion. If needed, continue rapid cooling by applying ice or cold packs wrapped in a cloth to the wrists, ankles, groin, neck and armpits.
Learn First Aid for Your Pets

Dogs and cats are more than pets—they’re family. And just like any other family member, pets deserve to be cared for and protected. That’s why the American Red Cross has developed Dog First Aid and Cat First Aid, comprehensive guides to help keep pets healthy and safe. From basic responsibilities, like spaying/neutering and giving medications, to managing cardiac emergencies and preparing for disasters, these guides offer information pet owners can trust.

Contact your local chapter to purchase guide books and first aid kits or log on to the Red Cross Store to see all available products.

Plan to take your pets with you in an evacuation. If it is not safe for you to stay, it is not safe for them either.

Know which hotels and motels along your evacuation route will accept you and your pets in an emergency. Call ahead for reservations if you know you may need to evacuate. Ask if no-pet policies could be waived in an emergency.

Most Red Cross shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety concerns and other considerations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are allowed in Red Cross shelters.

Know which friends, relatives, boarding facilities, animal shelters or veterinarians can care for your animals in an emergency. Prepare a list with phone numbers.

Although your animals may be more comfortable together, be prepared to house them separately.

Include your pets in evacuation drills so that normally allow them to find their way home.

Make sure that your pet’s vaccinations are current and that all dogs and cats are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Many pet shelters require proof of current vaccinations to reduce the spread of disease.

Consider having your pet “microchipped” by your veterinarian.

Assemble a portable kit with emergency supplies for your pets.

Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers so that they can be carried easily. Your kit should include—

- Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that they can’t escape.
- Food, drinking water, bowls, cat litter/pan and a manual can opener.
- Mediations and copies of medical records stored in a waterproof container.
- A first aid kit.
- Current photos of you with your pet(s) in case they get lost. Since many pets look alike, this will help to eliminate mistaken identity and confusion.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

Know what to do as the disaster approaches.

Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.

Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.

Ensure that all pets are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification.

Check that your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment’s notice.

Bring pets inside so you won’t have to search for them if you need to leave quickly.

Emergency action plans for your family should include your animals—all of your animals.

For information on disaster planning and emergency actions to take for livestock, horses, birds, reptiles or other small animals, such as gerbils or hamsters, please visit redcross.org, the Humane Society of the United States (www.HSUS.org) or ready.gov.

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For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit AllReadySTL.com or redcross.org.
**Power Outage Checklist**

**Sudden power outages can be frustrating and troublesome, especially when they last a long time. If a power outage is 2 hours or less, you need not be concerned about losing your perishable foods. For prolonged power outages, though, there are steps you can take to minimize food loss and to keep all members of your household as comfortable as possible.**

**Energy Conservation Recommendations**
- Turn off lights and computers when not in use.
- Wash clothes in cold water if possible; wash only full loads and clean the dryer's lint trap after each use.
- When using a dishwasher, wash full loads and use the light cycle. If possible, use the rinse only cycle and turn off the high temperature rinse option. When the regular wash cycle is done, just open the dishwasher door to allow the dishes to air dry.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lights.

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**How do I prepare for a power outage?**

- **To help preserve your food, keep the following supplies in your home:**
  - One or more coolers—Inexpensive styrofoam coolers work well.
  - Ice—Surrounding your food with ice in a cooler or in the refrigerator will keep food colder for a longer period of time during a prolonged power outage.
  - A digital quick-response thermometer—With these thermometers you can quickly check the internal temperatures of food to ensure they are cold enough to use safely.

**Put together an emergency preparedness kit with these supplies in case of a prolonged or widespread power outage:**
- Water—one gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Food—Non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Flashlight (NOTE: Do not use candles during a power outage due to the extreme risk of fire.)
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply)
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, deed/lease to home, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash

- **If someone in your home is dependent on electric-powered, life-sustaining equipment, remember to include backup power in your evacuation plan.**
- **Keep a non-cordless telephone in your home. It is likely to work even when the power is out.**
- **Keep your car's gas tank full.**

**What should I do during a power outage?**

- **Keep food as safe as possible.**
  - Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. First use perishable food from the refrigerator. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold for about 4 hours.
  - Then use food from the freezer. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
  - Use your non-perishable foods and staples after using food from the refrigerator and freezer.
  - If it looks like the power outage will continue beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items.
  - Keep food in a dry, cool spot and keep it covered at all times.

**Electrical equipment**
- Turn off and unplug all unnecessary electrical equipment, including sensitive electronics.
- Turn off or disconnect any appliances (like stoves), equipment or electronics you were using when the power went out. When power comes back on, surges or spikes can damage equipment.
- Leave one light turned on so you'll know when the power comes back on.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel, especially by car. Traffic lights will be out and roads will be congested.

**Using generators safely**
- **When using a portable generator, connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Do not connect a portable generator to a home's electrical system.**
- **If you are considering getting a generator, get advice from a professional, such as an electrician. Make sure that the generator you purchase is rated for the power that you think you will need.**

**What should I do when the power comes back on?**

- **Do not touch any electrical power lines and keep your family away from them. Report downed power lines to the appropriate officials in your area.**
- **Throw out unsafe food.**
  - Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40° F (4°C) for 2 hours or more or that has an unusual odor, color or texture. When in doubt, throw it out!
  - Never taste food or rely on appearance or odor to determine its safety. Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they have been at room temperature too long, bacteria causing food-borne illnesses can start growing quickly. Some types of bacteria produce toxins that cannot be destroyed by cooking.
  - **If in the freezer is colder than 40° F and has ice crystals on it, you can refreeze it.**
  - If you are not sure food is cold enough, take its temperature with the food thermometer. Throw out any foods (meat, poultry, fish, eggs and leftovers) that have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40° F (4°C) for 2 hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture, or feels warm to touch.

**Caution: Carbon Monoxide Kills**
- **Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. Locate unit away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.**
- **The primary hazards to avoid when using alternate sources for electricity, heating or cooking are carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire.**
- **Install carbon monoxide alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide.**
- **If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door.**
- **Call for help from the fresh air location and remain there until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.**

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Be Red Cross Ready

Thunderstorm Safety Checklist

A thunderstorm is considered severe if it produces hail at least 1 inch in diameter or has wind gusts of at least 58 miles per hour. Every thunderstorm produces lightning, which kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes. Heavy rain from thunderstorms can cause flash flooding and high winds can damage homes and blow down trees and utility poles, causing widespread power outages.

Know the Difference

Severe Thunderstorm Watch—Severe thunderstorms are possible in and near the watch area. Stay informed and be ready to act if a severe thunderstorm warning is issued.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning—Severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property.

Every year people are killed or seriously injured by severe thunderstorms despite advance warning. While some did not hear the warning, others heard the warning and did not pay attention to it. The following information, combined with timely watches and warnings about severe weather, may help save lives.

How can I prepare ahead of time?

- Learn about your local community’s emergency warning system for severe thunderstorms.
- Discuss thunderstorm safety with all members of your household.
- Pick a safe place in your home for household members to gather during a thunderstorm. This should be away from windows, skylights and glass doors that could be broken by strong winds or hail.
- Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of a severe thunderstorm.
- Make trees and shrubbery more wind resistant by keeping them trimmed and removing damaged branches.
- Protect your animals by ensuring that any outside buildings that house them are protected in the same way as your home.
- Consult your local fire department if you are considering installing lightning rods.
- Get trained in first aid and learn how to respond to emergencies.
- Put together an emergency preparedness kit:
  - Water—one gallon per person, per day
  - Food—non-perishable, easy-to-prepare
  - Flashlight • Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
  - Extra batteries • First aid kit
  - Medications (7-day supply) and medical items • Multi-purpose tool • Sanitation & personal hygiene items • Copies of personal documents • Cell phone with chargers • Family & emergency contact information • Extra cash

What should I do during a thunderstorm?

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.
- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.
- Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
- Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are NOT safe.

What do I do after a thunderstorm?

- Never drive through a flooded roadway. Turn around, don’t drown!
- Stay away from storm-damaged areas to keep from putting yourself at risk from the effects of severe thunderstorms.
- Continue to listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or to local radio and television stations for updated information or instructions, as access to roads or some parts of the community may be blocked.
- Help people who may require special assistance, such as infants, children and the elderly or disabled.
- Stay away from downed power lines and report them immediately.
- Watch your animals closely. Keep them under your direct control.

If Lightning Strikes ...

Follow these steps if someone has been struck by lightning:
- Call for help. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number. Anyone who has sustained a lightning strike requires professional medical care.
- Check the person for burns and other injuries. If the person has stopped breathing, call 9-1-1 and begin CPR. If the person is breathing normally, look for other possible injuries and care for them as necessary. People who have been struck by lightning do not retain an electrical charge and can be handled safely.

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## Tornado Safety Checklist

**A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground. Tornado intensities are classified on the Fujita Scale with ratings between F0 (weakest) to F5 (strongest). They are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees and hurling objects through the air like deadly missiles. Although severe tornadoes are more common in the Plains States, tornadoes have been reported in every state.**

### What should I do to prepare for a tornado?
- During any storm, listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay informed about watches and warnings.
- Know your community’s warning system. Communities have different ways of warning residents about tornadoes, with many having sirens intended for outdoor warning purposes.
- Pick a safe room in your home where household members and pets may gather during a tornado. This should be a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.
- Practice periodic tornado drills so that everyone knows what to do if a tornado is approaching.
- Consider having your safe room reinforced. Plans for reinforcing an interior room to provide better protection can be found on the FEMA Web site at http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/rms/pms453.shtml.
- Prepare for high winds by removing diseased and damaged limbs from trees.
- Move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything else that can be picked up by the wind and become a projectile.
- Watch for tornado danger signs:
  - Dark, often greenish clouds—a phenomenon caused by hail
  - Wall cloud—an isolated lowering of the base of a thunderstorm
  - Cloud of debris
  - Large hail
  - Funnel cloud—a visible rotating extension of the cloud base
  - Roaring noise

### What should I do if a tornado is threatening?
- The safest place to be is an underground shelter, basement or safe room.
- If no underground shelter or safe room is available, a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building is the safest alternative.
  - Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes or other severe winds.
  - Do not seek shelter in a hallway or bathroom of a mobile home.
  - If you have access to a sturdy shelter or a vehicle, abandon your mobile home immediately.
  - Go to the nearest sturdy building or shelter immediately, using your seat belt if driving.
  - Do not wait until you see the tornado.
- If you are caught outdoors, seek shelter in a basement, shelter or sturdy building. If you cannot get to shelter, a recent study\(^1\) suggests that you:
  - Get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive at right angles to the storm movement and out of the path.
  - If strong winds and flying debris occur while you are driving, pull over and park, keeping seat belts on and the engine running. Put your head down below the windows, covering with your hands and a blanket if possible.
  - If you are unable to get to a building or vehicle, as a last resort, lie in a ditch or vehicle, as a last resort, lie in a ditch or

### What do I do after a tornado?
- Continue listening to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.
- If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes when examining your walls, doors, staircases and windows for damage.
- Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately.
- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Use battery-powered flashlights when examining buildings—do NOT use candles.
- If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out of the building quickly and call the gas company or fire department.
- Take pictures of damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Keep all of your animals under your direct control.
- Clean up spilled medications, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids that could become a fire hazard.
- Check for injuries. If you are trained, provide first aid to persons in need until emergency responders arrive.

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### Let Your Family Know You’re Safe

If your community has experienced a disaster, register on the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site, available through redcross.org/safeandwell, to let your family and friends know about your welfare. You may also call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-723-2877) to register yourself and your family.

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Winter Storm Safety Checklist

Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Some winter storms are large enough to affect several states, while others affect only a single community. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

Know the Difference

Winter Storm Outlook
Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2 to 5 days.

Winter Weather Advisory
Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening.

Winter Storm Watch
Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. People in a watch area should review their winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

Winter Storm Warning
Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. People in a warning area should take precautions immediately.

What should I do?

- Dress in several layers of lightweight clothing, wear mittens and a hat (preferably one that covers your ears).
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots to keep your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
- Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.
- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or other local news channels for critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Winterize your vehicle and keep the gas tank full. A full tank will keep the fuel line from freezing.
- Insulate your home by installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic from the inside to keep cold air out.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year.
- Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.
- Running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.

Cold-Related Emergencies

- Frostbite and hypothermia are two dangerous and potentially life-threatening emergencies. Learn how to care for these emergencies by taking a first aid class.

What supplies do I need?

- Water—at least a 3-day supply; one gallon per person per day
- Food—at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, cane)
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)
- Tools/supplies for securing your home
- Sand, rock salt or non-clumping kitty litter to make walkways and steps less slippery
- Warm coats, gloves or mittens, hats, boots and extra blankets and warm clothing for all household members
- Ample alternate heating methods such as fireplaces or wood- or coal-burning stoves

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Winter Storm Outlook
Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2 to 5 days.

Winter Weather Advisory
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Winter Storm Watch
Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. People in a watch area should review their winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

Winter Storm Warning
Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. People in a warning area should take precautions immediately.

What do I do after a storm?

- Go to a designated public shelter if your home loses power or heat during periods of extreme cold.
- Avoid driving when conditions include sleet, freezing rain or drizzle, snow or dense fog.
- Before tackling strenuous tasks in cold temperatures, consider your physical condition, the weather factors and the nature of the task.
- Protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in several layers. Stay indoors, if possible.
- Help people who require special assistance such as elderly people living alone, people with disabilities and children.
- Check on your animals and make sure that their access to food and water is not blocked by snow drifts, ice or other obstacles. If possible, bring them indoors.

Caution: Carbon Monoxide Kills

- Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area. Locate unit away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- The primary hazards to avoid when using alternate sources for electricity, heating or cooking are carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide.
- If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door.
- Call for help from the fresh air location and remain there until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

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