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Are You Ready St. Clair County?

Information is your tool for empowerment! Action is your opportunity for resiliency! You can help decide how much an emergency may impact you and your family. By being ready, the deviation of your daily routine during



an emergency, may be significantly less during a power outage, for example. Having a plan, knowing what to do for different incidents, and preparing for variable emergencies will better ready you and your family. Having emergency kits, stocked with essential items for your entire family, including pets, for AT LEAST 72 hours, may help keep your daily routine closer to the norm. Remember, you are now more empowered to take action; to ready you and your family for emergencies.



St Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has partnered with EBW.tv in creating the **72 HOURS – BEREADY** St Clair County preparedness videos. These videos are designed to educate the public of any natural hazards or man-made threats and to minimize the effects of these emergencies to property, culture, environment and economy of St Clair County. Please [Click here](#) to watch the latest video.

"Be ready" is a coordinated public educational video project between the St. Clair County Homeland Security - Emergency Management and St. Clair County Regional Educational Services Agency. This program will help prepare you for what you may need in the case of an emergency. Please [Click here](#) to watch the playlist.



[St. Clair County Shelter-in-Place Procedures](#)

Public Education

- [Disaster Supply Kit](#)
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Links:

[Persons with Special Needs](#)

[Self-Study Courses](#)

The Emergency Management Institute in Maryland offers more than forty independent courses. These are self-paced courses for those



who want to learn more about Emergency Management. Most of the courses are interactive courses that you can take directly over the internet on the NETC Virtual Campus. Best of all, the courses are free-of-charge.

TORNADOES



Tornadoes can occur at any time of the day or night, during almost any month of the year. In Michigan tornadoes can occur at anytime, but primarily from the months of April through October. Tornadoes are the most brutal of storms. Winds speeds can reach over 200 miles per hour and can destroy anything it comes in contact with. Tornadoes can quickly form and can travel for miles along the ground, lift, and suddenly change directions and touchdown again. There is little you can do to protect your property, however, many actions can be taken to protect yourself and your family.

Knowing the difference between a tornado watch and tornado warning is one of the first steps in being prepared.

A **Tornado Watch** means weather conditions are favorable for the formation of a tornado. When a tornado watch is issued be prepared to watch the weather and take shelter if conditions worsen.

A **Tornado Warning** means a tornado funnel cloud has been sighted or indicated by radar. When a warning is issued you and your family should take cover immediately. Tornadoes can form and move quickly. There may not be time for the National Weather Service to issue a warning or time for the local official to accurately warn the citizens of St. Clair County of a pending tornado. It is extremely important for you to be alert during a storm.

Take shelter immediately if you observe a twisting, funnel shaped clouds, large hail, strong winds, and loud roaring noise like a train or plane. Always be alert to the changing weather conditions. Take shelter immediately if you hear a tornado siren or see a funnel cloud. It is important to stay calm and tune into a portable radio for storm updates or instructions. If you live in an area where there is a designated shelter for you and your family to go it is important to know where it is before you need it.

WHAT TO DO DURING A STORM:

- Stay away from windows.
- In a home or building move to a pre-designated shelter where your disaster supplies kit is located.
- If underground shelter is not available, move to the inner most room on the lowest level of the building or home.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in your car; instead, leave it immediately. Find a low-lying area on the ground, (i.e. a ditch or culvert) and crouch down to the ground.
- Listen to your local radio station for current weather updates
- Do NOT call 911 for general information - only call if you have an emergency!

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

FEMA is an independent federal agency with more than 2,600 full time employees. They work at FEMA headquarters in Washington D.C., at regional and area offices across the country, at the Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center, and at the FEMA training center in Emmitsburg, Maryland. FEMA also has nearly 4,000 standby disaster assistance employees who are available to help out after disasters. Often FEMA works in partnership with other organizations that are part of the nation's emergency management system. These partners include state and local emergency management agencies

Advising on building codes and flood plain management...teaching people how to get through a disaster...helping equip local and state emergency preparedness...coordinating the federal response to a disaster...making disaster assistance available to states, communities, businesses and individuals...training emergency managers...supporting the nation's fire service...administering the national flood and crime insurance programs...the range of FEMA's activities is broad indeed.

[Home Study Programs](#)

LIGHTNING



Right now there are over 2,000 lightning storms around the world. In the United States close to 200 people die each year from being hit by lightning or from fires caused by lightning. Lightning hits the highest objects, being houses, towers, or a person standing alone.

Here are several important facts about lightning that can help you if you are caught in a thunderstorm with lightning.

- Get off of motorcycles, bicycles, and golf carts.
- Get off from tractors and other metal farm equipment.
- Put down golf clubs.
- Stay away from open water.
- Avoid isolated tall trees.
- Do not stand in a small isolated shed or other small buildings in the open.
- Do not go near wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes, and rails, which could carry lightning to you from a distance away.
- Do not lie flat on the ground.
- If you are in an open area go to a low place such as a ditch or valley.

- Unless you are on a portable or cell phone, hang up until the lightning has passed. Lightning can travel along telephone lines and injure or kill you.
- Your house is the safest place to be in a lightning storm. If you are inside, stay there. Avoid windows and electrical appliances.

If someone is hit by lightning call 911 immediately and administer emergency first aid to the person.

WINTER STORM



Preparation for a winter storm is the best method for minimizing injury or damage during one. There will be little time to move to protected areas once a winter storm is in the immediate vicinity. Follow these important steps to prepare yourself and your family for the storm.

- Listen to your local radio or television newscasts for the latest information or instructions.
- Learn evacuation procedures and routes for your area.
- Keep your car fueled and in good condition in case evacuation is required
- Have emergency supplies and have them on hand in case a winter storm approaches.
- Keep a snow shovel, rock salt to melt ice, sand to improve traction, flashlights, fresh water, and non-perishable foods handy.
- Prepare for possible isolation in your home.
- Make sure you have emergency heating equipment and fuel so you can keep at least one room in your house warm in the event regular fuel sources are cut off.
- If you have a wood stove or fireplace, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood.
- If you have a gas furnace or heater, be sure that your fuel supply is abundant.
- Kerosene heaters are another option; however, check with your local fire department to see whether they are legal in your community.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on hand and make sure your family knows how to use it.
- Winterize your home to conserve your fuel supply and save money.
- Insulate walls, attics, and caulk and/or weather-strip doors and windows.
- Have several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight; warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing for each person. Have a good supply of coats, hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves.

FLOOD INFORMATION



Most Flooding is caused by slow-moving thunderstorms and heavy rains. Flooding debris or ice can accumulate at a natural or man-made obstruction and restrict the flow of water. Flash flooding can occur downstream if this obstruction should suddenly release. Find out how many feet your property is above or below possible flood levels in order to determine if you could be flooded. Losses due to flooding are not covered under most homeowner's policies. In flood-prone communities, the National Flood Insurance Program makes flood insurance available.

Know the difference between a **Flash Flood Watch** and **Flash Flood Warning**. A **Flash Flood Watch** mean heavy rains are occurring or expected to occur and may soon cause flash flooding in certain areas. A **Flash Flood Warning** means heavy rain is occurring and immediate those threatened should take action.

Before a possible flood make an itemized list of personal property in your residence take pictures if possible. Keep your insurance policy and a list of personal property in a waterproof box or at a relative's house in a safe location. Open basement windows to equalize water pressure on the foundation and walls.

If you must evacuate keep these suggestions in mind.

- Disconnect any electrical appliances.
- Shut off water, gas and electricity, if you are instructed to do so.
- Leave early enough, if possible, to avoid flooded roads.
- If the water in the street outside your house is deeper then a foot, do not attempt to drive away.
- If the water outside your house is deeper then 3 feet and/or seems to be rising or flowing fast, take a flotation device (such as a couch cushion) with you when you leave. Take one device for each person leaving.
- Make sure that pets are free to swim with you, but do not attempt to carry larger pets; you could both lose your lives.
- Plan ahead. Know where to go if told to evacuate. Never try to walk, swim, or drive through swift moving waters. Six inches of fast moving floodwater can knock you off of your feet, and a depth of two feet will float your car.

WATER PURIFICATION



Before purifying, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom or strain them through layers of clean cloth. The following are four purification methods. The first three, boiling, chlorination, and purification tablets, will kill microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts, other chemicals, and radioactive fallout. The final method, distillation, will remove microbes as well as other contaminants, including radioactive fallout.

Boiling is the safest method of purifying water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 10 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring it back and forth between two containers.

Chlorination uses liquid chlorine bleach to kill microorganisms. Add two drops of liquid bleach containing 5.25% Sodium Hypochlorite with no soap for each quart of water (four if the water is cloudy). Stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not taste and smell of chlorine at that point, add another does and let stand another 15 minutes.

Purification tablets release chlorine or iodine. They are inexpensive and available at most sporting goods stores and some drugstores. Follow package directions.

There are many ways to purify water. None is perfect. Often the best solution is a combination of methods.

CHEMICAL RELEASE SITUATIONS



If you are outdoors, gather your family and pets and go indoors or get into your automobile. Once inside, close all windows and doors; turn off pilot lights; and shut down all ventilation equipment such as heating and air conditioning units. Put out fireplace fires and close dampers. Turn on your local radio or television station for more instructions.

If you are outdoors and cannot get inside, move crosswind (so the wind is blowing on the side of your face). This offers the best advantage for getting out of the path of the release and into a safe area. A wet cloth or towel over your nose and mouth will act as a filter and offer some protection.

When authorities have given the all-clear, move outdoors. In addition open all windows and doors, and start up the heating or air conditioning units to aide in removing any contaminated air that may have entered during the chemical release.

If you are advised to evacuate your home or business remember to...

- Follow the instructions and advice of your local government.
- If asked to evacuate do so immediately.
- If you are asked to go to a certain destination, respond there and do not go anywhere else. Accountability is very important.
- If you are asked to take a certain route use the route rather than trying to find short cuts on your own. If you take a short cut you could put yourself and family in danger if the short cut is in a contaminated area.
- If you are asked to shut off your water, gas or electric service before leaving home, do so. If you are unaware on how to do this notify a neighbor for emergency worker to help you.

RETURNING HOME AFTER A DISASTER



Cleaning up after a disaster can be a long and strenuous procedure. Depending on the kind and amount of damage your property sustains, you should seek professional assistance. Use only reputable contractors who check out with the Better Business Bureau. Keep all receipts for materials and labor for insurance and reimbursement purposes. Follow these helpful tips:

- Before going inside, walk carefully around the outside of your home and check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage.
- Do not enter if floodwaters remain around the building.
- If you have any doubts about the safety, have your home inspected by a professional before entering.
- Wear sturdy work boots and gloves. Enter the building carefully and check for damage.
- Watch out for animals.
- Use a stick to poke through debris. Check for cracks in the roof, foundation, and chimneys.
- If it looks like the building may collapse, leave immediately.
- Be aware of loose boards and slippery floors.
- Keep a battery-powered flashlight for lights on hand. Do not use oil, gas lanterns, candles or torches. Leaking gas or other flammable materials may be present. Do not smoke.
- Check for gas leaks, starting at the hot water heater. If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside if you can. Call the gas company from a neighbor's house.
- If you shut off the gas supply at the main valve, you will need a professional to turn it back on. Do not turn on the lights until you're sure they are safe to use.
- Check electrical system. If you see sparks, broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker, even if the power is off in your neighborhood. Do not touch the fuse box, a circuit breaker, or anything else electrical if you are wet or standing in water.
- Check appliances. If they are wet, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker, then unplug the appliances and let them dry out. Have them checked by a professional before using them again.
- Check water and sewage systems. If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Verify the safety of the water with local authorities before using it. If you have a well, it should be pumped out and the water tested by authorities before drinking.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches and gasoline. Open cabinets carefully. Be aware of objects that may fall.

- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left behind by floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals. Throw out fresh food that has come into contact with floodwaters.
- Check refrigerated food for spoilage. Throw out flooded cosmetics and medicines.
- If your basement has flooded, pump it out gradually (about 1/3 of the water per day) to avoid damage. The walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged.
- Open windows and doors to get air moving through and patch holes.
- Call your insurance agent as soon as possible. Take pictures of all damages and keep good records of repair and cleaning costs.

DISASTER SUPPLY KIT



In a community disaster, you may need to be able to survive on your own for three days or more. This means having your own water, food, and emergency supplies. The following checklist will help you assemble disaster supply kits for each member of your family.

- A two-week supply of water (one gallon per person per day).
- A two-week supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food
- A non-electric can opener and non-breakable eating and drinking utensils.
- One complete change of clothing for each person, sturdy work cloths, sturdy shoes, socks, extra underwear, and rain or snow gear.
- Towels, blankets, pillows, and sleeping bags.
- First aid kit that includes a first aid handbook, adhesive tape, bandages, antibiotic ointments, rubbing alcohol, cotton balls, aspirin, spare glasses and contact lens needs, medications, soap, and thermometer.
- A battery-powered radio, flashlight or lantern, extra batteries.
- Heating source (camp stove or canned heat stove), extra fuel and matches.
- Credit cards, cash, car keys, birth certificates, Social Security cards, driver licenses, and important household documents.
- Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.
- Household bleach or water purifying tablets.
- Paper towels and toilet paper.
- Emergency car kit that includes a battery powered radio, flashlight, lantern, extra batteries, blanket, booster cables, fire extinguisher, first aid kit and manual, bottles of water, non-perishable foodstuffs, maps, shovel, flares, spare tire, jack, crowbar, gasoline can, and tire repair kit and pump.

FIRE SAFETY TIPS



Every year 5,500 Americans die in fires and more than 30,000 are injured. Most fire deaths occur in the home and many can be prevented. Your local fire departments work to keep citizens informed and practiced in fire safety training. To protect yourself and your family it is important to understand the basic characteristics of fire.

- Fire spreads quickly; there is no time to grab valuables or make a phone call.
- In two minutes a fire can become life threatening. In five minutes a house can be engulfed in flames.
- Fire's heat and smoke are more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear your lungs.
- Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy.
- Request an inspection of your home or business by your local fire department.
- Install smoke detectors. Place detectors on the ceiling or high on the wall of every level of your house, outside bedrooms, at the top of open stairways, at the bottom of enclosed stairs, and near (but not in) the kitchen.
- Clean and test smoke detectors once a month and replace batteries at least twice a year.
- Install a fire extinguisher in your home and teach family members how to use it.
- Plan two escape routes from every room in your home or office. Choose a place outside for everyone to meet after escaping from a fire.
- Have a practice fire drill at least once a year; teach children how to report a fire, and when to use 911.
- Keep a whistle in each bedroom to awaken the household in case of fire. Teach family members to stay low to the floor (where the air is safer) when escaping from a fire.
- Teach family members never to open doors that are hot. In a fire feel the bottom of the door with the palm of your hand. If it is hot, do not open the door. Find another way out.
- Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut.
- Safeguard your home against fires by keeping storage areas clean, check wiring and outlets, and use caution with flammable liquids and materials.

PET DISASTER KITS



- **Food:** Keep at least three days supply of food in an airtight waterproof container.

- **Water:** Store at least three days of water specifically for you pets in addition to water you need for yourself and your family.
- **Pet food/water bowls and a manual can opener.**
- **Medicines and medical records:** Keep an extra supply of medicines your pet takes on a regular basis in a waterproof container. Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, the name and number of your veterinarian.
- **First Aid Kit:** Talk to your veterinarian about what is most appropriate for your pet's emergency medical needs. Most kits should include cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors; antibiotic ointment; flea and tick prevention; latex gloves, isopropyl alcohol and saline solution. Include a pet first aid reference book.
- **Collar with ID tags, harness or leash:** Your pet should wear a collar with its rabies tag and identification at all times. Include a backup leash, collar or harness and ID tags in your pet's emergency supply kit. In addition, place copies of your pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents and medical records in a clean plastic bag or waterproof container. You should also consider talking with your veterinarian about permanent identification such as Avid micro-chipping and enrolling your pet in a recovery database.
- **Crate or other pet carrier:** Have a sturdy, safe, comfortable crate or carrier ready to transporting your pets. The carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around and lie down.
- **Sanitation:** Include pet litter and litter box if appropriate, newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide your pet's sanitation needs. You can use bleach as a disinfectant (dilute nine parts water to one part bleach) or in an emergency you can also use it to purify water. Use 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented or color safe bleaches, or those with added cleaners
- **A picture of you and your pet(s) together:** If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and allow others to assist you in identifying you pet. Include detailed information about species, breed, age, sex, color and distinguishing characteristics.
- **Familiar Items:** Put favorite toys, treats, or bedding in the kit, Familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet.

Find a Safe Place Ahead of Time

Because evacuation shelters generally don't accept pets (except for service animals), you must plan ahead to make certain your family and pets will have a safe place to stay. Don't wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets. Ask about any restrictions on number, size and species. Inquire if the "no pet" policies would be waived in an emergency. Make a list of animal-friendly places and keep it handy. Call ahead for a reservation as soon as you think you might have to leave your home.
- Check with friends, relatives or others outside your immediate area. Ask if they would be able to shelter you and your animals or just your animals, if necessary. If you have more than one pet, you may need to house them at separate locations.
- Make a list of boarding facilities and veterinary offices that might be able to shelter animals in emergencies; include 24-hour telephone numbers.
- Ask your local animal shelter if it provides foster care or shelter for pets in an emergency. This should be your last resort, as shelters have limited resources and are likely to be stretched to their limits during an emergency.

In Case You're Not Home

An evacuation order may come, or a disaster may strike, when you're at work or out of the house.

- Make arrangements well in advance for a trusted neighbor to take your pets and meet you at a specified location. Be sure the person is comfortable with your pets and your pets are familiar with him/her, knows where your animals are likely to be, knows where your disaster supplies are kept and has a key to your home.
- If you use a pet-sitting service, it may be able to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.
- If your family and pets must wait out a storm or other disaster at home, identify a safe area of your home where you can all stay together. Be sure to close your windows and doors, stay inside, and follow the instructions from your local emergency management office.
- Bring your pets indoors as soon as local authorities say there is an imminent problem. Keep pets under your direct control; if you have to evacuate, you will not have to spend time trying to find them. Keep dogs on leashes and cats in carriers, and make sure they are wearing identification.
- If you have a room you can designate as a "safe room," put your emergency supplies in that room in advance, including your pet's crate and supplies. Have any medications and a supply of pet food and water inside watertight containers, along with your other emergency supplies. If there is an open fireplace, vent, pet door, or similar opening in the house, close it off with plastic sheeting and strong tape.
- Listen to the radio periodically, and don't come out until you know it's safe.

After the Storm

Planning and preparation will help you survive the disaster, but your home may be a very different place afterward, whether you have taken shelter at home or elsewhere.

- Don't allow your pets to roam loose. Familiar landmarks and smells might be gone, and your pet will probably be disoriented. Pets can easily get lost in such situations.
- While you assess the damage, keep dogs on leashes and keep cats in carriers inside the house. If your house is damaged, they could escape and become lost.
- Be patient with your pets after a disaster. Try to get them back into their normal routines as soon as possible, and be ready for behavioral problems that may result from the stress of the situation. If behavioral problems persist, or if your pet seems to be having any health problems, talk to your veterinarian.



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