

Town of Westborough, Massachusetts

Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide



Introduction

In a continuing effort to provide meaningful and user-friendly documents to residents, we are pleased to present the Town of Westborough's first edition Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide.

This guide contains a significant amount of useful information and resources to help residents successfully plan for an emergency event.

It is our hope all Westborough residents take a proactive approach to family Emergency Planning.

For more information regarding please contact your local emergency planning committee at 508-366-3042 x119 or lepc@town.westborough.ma.us.

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Key Family Contact Information

OUT OF AREA CONTACT	SCHOOLS
Name:	Address:
Address:	Phone #:
	Address:
Phone # (day):	Phone #:
Phone # (night):	
Cell #:	
LOCAL CONTACT	UTILITIES
Name:	Electric- National Grid: 800-322-3223
Address:	Gas – NSTAR- 800-592-2000
	Water Department: 508-366-3070
Phone#: (day):	Heating Oil Provider:
Phone # (night):	Telephone:
Cell #:	Westborough TV: 508-898-3203
	Internet Provider:
NEAREST RELATIVE	
Name:	PHONE DIRECTORY
Address:	Emergency: 911
	Police: 508-366-3060
Phone#: (day):	Fire: 508-366-3040
Phone # (night):	DPW: 508-366-3070
Cell #:	Health: 508-366-3045
	Schools: 508-836-7700
FAMILY WORK NUMBERS	Town Hall: 508-366-3030
Mother:	Council on Aging: 508-366-3000
Father:	Poison Information Center: 800-222-1212
Other:	Physician:
Other:	Pharmacist::
Other:	Medical Insurer:
	Phone #:
	Home Insurer:
	Phone #:
	Auto Insurer:
	Phone #:

Town of Westborough Website: www.town.westborough.ma.us

Personal pertinent Information

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Reasons for Family Preparedness

In a disaster or emergency, you may need to survive on your own for some time before outside help will be available. Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, internet, cable TV, and telephones may be cut off for several days, or even a week or longer. Preparedness means having your own supply of water, food, medications and emergency supplies for a period ranging anywhere from a minimum of a few days to possibly several weeks. Or you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You will probably not have the opportunity to shop or search for the supplies you need. Assembling those items you may need in a disaster or emergency ahead of time is essential in your family's disaster plan.

This Emergency Preparedness Handbook has been prepared for Westborough households by the Town of Westborough. This guide has been designed to help residents learn how to protect themselves and their families against all types of potential hazards. It can be used as a reference resource or as a step-by-step manual. The focus of the content is on how to develop, practice, and maintain emergency plans that reflect what must be done before, during, and after a disaster to protect people and their property. Also included is information on how to assemble an emergency supply kit that contains the food, water, medications and other supplies in sufficient quantity for individuals and their families to survive following a disaster in the event they must rely on their own resources.

Hazards Facing Our Community

Civil Disorder	Northeast Storms (year round)
Dam Failure	Pandemics
Drought	Power Outages
Earthquakes	Terrorism
Extreme Cold	Thunderstorms
Extreme Heat	Tornadoes
Floods	Transportation Emergencies
Forest Fires	Utility Emergencies
Hazardous Materials Releases	Water Supply Emergencies
Hurricanes	Winter Storms
Ice Safety	Wild Fires
Lightning	

Create a Plan

It is important to plan for either of the following situations...

EVACUATION – In an emergency the Town of Westborough will designate a shelter location depending on the emergency incident. Listen carefully to Town Officials for information regarding these shelter(s).

SHELTER IN PLACE – At times during certain emergencies it is safer to stay home and shelter at home.

BE SURE TO:

- Assure that your entire family knows and understands your plan.
- Talk about how you will reach each other in different emergencies.
- Think about making an out-of-town family member or friend a point of contact should you get separated for any reason.

Tune to 1610 AM radio for additional information.

Prepare a Disaster Kit

Every family should have an “All Hazards” Disaster Supply Kit. Regardless of the season, your family could become isolated in your home for up to a week, without power. Below are some suggestions of items that you may want to include in your kit. It is best to keep items in a waterproof, portable container. Every kit will differ, depending upon what items your family considers essential. Check expiration dates and rotate on a regular basis.

1-2 Gallons of water per person, per day should be stored for sanitation and drinking	Poncho
Method of water purification	Light Sources
Food	Flashlight with batteries
96+ Hour Supply of Food and Water	Candle
Warmth and Shelter	Light Stick
Windproof/waterproof matches	Tools
Second method to start a fire	Pocket Knife
Medications	Shovel
Tent/shelter	Hatchet or Axe
Wool-blend Blanket	Sewing kit
Sleeping Bag	50-foot nylon rope
Emergency reflective blanket	First Aid kit and supplies
Lightweight stove and fuel	Radio with batteries or radio with alternate power sources
Hand and body warm packs	Whistle with neck cord
	Personal Sanitation

Personal Comfort Kit:: (include soap, toothbrush and gel, comb, tissue, sanitary napkins, razor, and other needed items)

A complete outfit of appropriate clothing for each family member. Items Include extra socks, underwear, hat, sturdy, shoes, and gloves.

Money: At least \$50 in small bills quarters and dimes for phone calls.

Stress Relievers: Games, books, hard candy, inspirational reading.

For children: small toys, paper and pen, favorite security item.

Important papers: Copies of documents important to your family such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, wills, and insurance forms.

Be sure to bring numbers you might need, credit card information

Canned goods and nonperishable foods that do not need cooking:

- Canned meats and fish – remember a manual can opener.
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Canned soups and puddings
- Canned fruit juices
- Dried fruit and nuts
- Bread, cookies and crackers
- Peanut butter and jelly

Additional items

- Extra food
- Extra batteries
- Camp stove mess kits and other cooking equipment
- Insect repellent, Sun block
- Portable toilet
- Special medication in labeled bottles (extra glasses also)
- Portable Container
- Durable water resistant duffel bag, frame pack or day pack
- All purpose cleaner with Broom, mop, bucket, and Chlorinated Bleach

Gather Information

It is important to stay calm during an emergency. The Town will make available information to all residents through the following media:

Town-wide Emergency Notification System – Reverse 911

This is a phone based notification system that allows the Town to contact residents and notify them of an emergency situation in a relatively quick time frame.

Town AM radio - AM 1610

This is an AM radio station which may be accessed by any AM radio. Messages can be sent through this system and direct you to other resources.

Town Electronic Signboards

Electronic signboards may be placed throughout the Town with short messages and other area specific information.

Town of Westborough web-site: www.town.westborough.ma.us

Web based news media:	www.westborough.patch.com www.thedailywestborough.com www.citizenobserver.com
Westborough Cable Access Channels:	Verizon- Channels 24, 26, and 28 Charter- Channels 11, 12, and 13
Local Television Stations:	WBZ Channel 4, WCVB Channel 5 WHDH Channel 7
Local Radio Stations:	WTAG AM 580 WSRS FM 96.1
Local Newspapers:	Telegram & Gazette Metrowest Daily News

Depending upon the scope of the emergency, directives may be dictated by your Westborough Police, Fire, Department of Public Works, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, or Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Family Emergency Communications Plan

Develop a Family Emergency Communications Plan in case family members are separated from one another during an emergency (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school). This plan should also address reuniting after the immediate crisis has passed.

Ask an out-of-state relative or a friend to serve as the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person. During and immediately after a disaster occurs, it is often easier to access a long distance telephone number than a local one. So calling outside a disaster area is usually easier than calling into or within the same area.

Make sure everyone knows the name, address and telephone number of the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person.

Designate two meeting areas for family members – one within your community (your primary location), and one outside of your community (your alternate location). Sometimes an emergency could impact your neighborhood or small section of the community, so a second location outside of your community would be more accessible to all family members.

Be familiar with the Emergency Plans at your children's school as well as your place of business.

A Family Emergency Communications Plan can help reassure everyone's safety and minimize the stress associated with emergencies.

Emergency Evacuation

PLANNING FOR EVACUATION

During an emergency, always follow the direction of your local Public Safety Officials to know which evacuation routes and shelters will be utilized during that particular emergency.

Those requiring specific assistance during times of emergency, such as transportation or alternative forms of communication, should make arrangements before the incident occurs.

Develop a Family Emergency Communications Plan.

As part of your Family Emergency Communications Plan, designate a meeting destination if you have to leave the community. In your planning, consider different scales of evacuation – neighborhood, town, county, etc.

Assemble a Disaster Supply Kit

Keep your car fueled if evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during an emergency or unable to pump gas during power outages.

Know how to shut off your home's electricity, gas and water supplies at main switches and valves. You may want to do so prior to evacuating your home.

After meeting your family needs, check on elderly or disabled neighbors.

What to do if Asked/Told to Evacuate

Gather all persons in the house together.

Do not pick up children at their schools unless instructed to do so. In many cases (such as a chemical spill emergency), school children may be taken to a pre-designated host school outside the impacted area where you may pick them up.

Household members located outside the area when the emergency occurs may be advised not to return to their residence or community during an evacuation. They may be directed to a reception center or shelter where you can be reunited.

Do not call your local fire or police departments for information. Emergency workers will need their telephone lines open for emergency use. Listen to radio information listed in "Gathering Information".

Turn off lights and unnecessary appliances.

If a hard freeze is likely during your absence, take actions needed to prevent damage to water pipes, such as turning off the water main, draining faucets, turning off inside valves for external faucets and opening outside faucets to drain.

Close and lock windows and doors.

Check with neighbors to see if they need assistance. Offer to share transportation.

If unable to take them with you, shelter your livestock, leaving at least a three-day supply of stored food and water that has been protected from possible contamination.

Sheltering-In-Place

Sheltering-in-place is a standard protective action utilized in emergencies during an accident or event in which hazardous materials have been released into the atmosphere. You may, at some time, be instructed by local officials to “Shelter-in-Place” to reduce your exposure to some type of hazardous materials in the air. The purpose is to create an airtight as possible enclosure to prevent the hazardous material from reaching the enclosure’s occupants.

The following are steps to be taken only when instructed to “Shelter-in-Place”, not to be completed ahead of time:

You should immediately go indoors. Keep children and pets indoors.

Close and lock all doors and windows. Locking is preferred since it generally ensures that the door or window is shut tight.

Turn off air handling systems such as window fans, kitchen and bath exhaust fans, air conditioners, and other sources of outside air. Shut off clothes dryers and seal exhaust vents with plastic and duct tape.

Close the fireplace flue if it is not in use. (A structure with a burning fire in the fireplace is not a good candidate for sheltering-in-place.)

Seal off any cracks that could cause leakage from the outside such as with a damp towel at door jams.

If you have livestock, shelter them also. Provide them with stored feed and water from a covered source.

Go to an above ground room with the fewest windows and doors or a below ground room during a tornado or hurricane.

If Sheltering-in-Place is recommended during school hours, children will be sheltered in their school building and cared for by school personnel. When the emergency is over, you will be directed where and when to pick them up.

If Traveling When Sheltering-In-Place is Ordered

If you are traveling in a motor vehicle, close the windows and air vents. Turn off the heater and air conditioner. Keep the radio tuned to an Emergency Alert System (EAS) station for the official messages and instructions.

Go inside a nearby building. If none is available, leave the area immediately.

Stay inside your vehicle or building until officials say otherwise.

Do not use your telephone unless in need of special assistance.

Do not call '911' unless it is a true emergency.

Preparedness for Populations with Functional Needs

For many of the citizens in Massachusetts who have physical, medical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, as well as the elderly and other populations with functional needs, emergencies can present real challenges.

Create a disaster supply kit. Depending upon your needs, you may want to include extra eyeglasses, hearing aid batteries, wheel chair batteries, oxygen, the style and serial number of your medical devices, a list of your medications, including dosage, a list of your allergies, medical insurance information and medical cards. If you utilize a manual wheelchair, include heavy gloves to help make your way over glass and debris.

Make an Emergency Plan. Create a Family Emergency Communications Plan. If you receive regular support services from a provider or Personal Care Attendant (PCA), speak with them about their disaster plans and their services during times of emergency. Work with them to identify back-up services. Complete a Personal Assessment of what you can do for yourself and what assistance you may need to face the challenges of an emergency. Consider the environment during and after an event, your capabilities, and possible barriers. Create a 'Personal Support Network' or 'Self-Help Team' who can help identify and acquire resources and assist you before, during and after the emergency. Your Team should include roommates, relatives, friends, neighbors and co-workers because disasters might strike when you are at home, school, the workplace, a volunteer site, or wherever you spend a lot of time. Teach others on your Team to operate any special equipment you might utilize as well as where you keep your emergency supplies.

If asked to evacuate, inform your Team where you are staying, because it may not always be the first choice in your Plan. (A public shelter, relative, friend, hotel, etc).

Find the location of the main utility cutoff valves and switches in your home, and learn how and when to disconnect them during an emergency, either by yourself or with a Team member.

Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability or health condition. Label any special equipment including wheel chairs, walkers or canes with your contact information. Most individuals who normally live independently should be able to function well at a universal public shelter.

Making Your Home Safe

Make sure all of your equipment and hazard detector devices are approved and certified by a nationally recognized testing institute such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the proper use, installation, maintenance and testing procedures.

Smoke Detectors

Have a minimum of one (1) smoke detector installed on each level of your home (including the basement) and outside each sleeping area. Some areas homes require a detector in each bedroom.

Test each detector on a monthly basis.

Replace all batteries twice a year or sooner if power is low. Develop a schedule, choosing the same days; such as the days we move the clocks forward/backwards, New Year's Day, etc.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Have at least one (1) Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector on each floor of your home, and also within ten (10) feet of each sleeping area.

Do not place a CO detector in a garage, furnace room, or near a stove or fireplace. Doing so may cause high incidents of false alarms.

Do not place CO detectors near open windows or doors, excessively hot, cold, or damp areas and 'dead-air spaces' such as corners of rooms and peaks of ceilings. Doing so may minimize the effectiveness of the detector.

Be able to differentiate between the alarms of your Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors.

Set up a power replacement schedule, as with your smoke detectors.

Fire Escape Plan

Have at least two (2) escape paths from each room, a primary and an alternate. Never use an elevator in case of a fire.

Make sure everyone can easily unlock and open doors utilized in the escape plan.

If you must go through a smoky area, crawl. The coolest, cleanest air will be up to 18" from the ground.

Designate a family meeting area located a safe distance from the house.

Safely leave the building before contacting the fire department. Never return into a burning structure.

Practice your Fire Escape Plan at least twice a year. For assistance in designing your own plan, visit the National Fire Protection Association web page: www.NFPA.org

Fire Extinguishers

Have at least one (1) multi-purpose (ABC) fire extinguisher located near an escape path.

Ensure that the fire extinguisher is cared for and maintained properly according to manufacturer's instructions which you should keep with your extinguisher.

Ensure everyone understands how to properly and safely use the extinguisher. Even though extinguishers come in a number of shapes and sizes, they all operate in a similar manner. An easy acronym for fire extinguisher use: PASS (Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep).

Recharge or replace all fire extinguishers immediately after use, regardless of how much or little they were used.

Empower Yourself

Immediately following a disaster, emergency crews cannot respond everywhere at once. You could be the difference between life and death for someone close to you. Make it a practice to check on elderly neighbors and those with disabilities. Get yourself some invaluable training on life-saving techniques.

Utility Shut-off and Safety

In the event of a disaster, you may be instructed to shut off the utility service at your home. Below is some general guidance for shutting off utility service. You should modify the information provided to reflect your shut off requirements as directed by your utility company. Please refer to the utility company directly with any questions regarding when utilities will be restored during a power outage.

Natural Gas

Natural gas leaks and explosions are responsible for a significant number of fires following disasters. It is vital that all household members know how to shut off natural gas. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise get everyone out quickly. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. Call the fire department outside of the building at a safe distance.

CAUTION – If you turn off the gas for any reason, a qualified professional must turn it back on. **NEVER** attempt to turn the gas back on yourself.

Electricity

Electrical sparks have the potential of igniting natural gas if it is leaking. It is wise to teach all responsible household members where and how to shut off the electricity. Locate your electrical circuit box. Teach all responsible household members how to shut off the electricity to the entire house. **FOR YOUR SAFETY:** Always shut off all individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker. Do not shut off any electrical devices if gas is leaking.

NOTE: If you plan to use a generator, be absolutely sure that the connections to the street electrical supply wires have been disconnected. It is strongly recommended that you have a professional electrician do this type of work.

Helpful Tips to Protect Your Animals

Taking your pets along is the most important thing individuals or families can do for their animals during an evacuation. Pets left behind can be injured, lost or killed during an emergency, or in its aftermath. Pet owners should include their animals in their Family Disaster Planning, before a disaster threatens.

Prepare an emergency kit for your pets. Include a photo of yourself with your pet, collars and leashes, a three-to-five-day supply of food, a can opener, bottles of water, bowls, litter boxes and plastic bags, and a week's supply of medications (with instructions) that your pet may be taking (in case you and your pet are separated).

Have copies of your pets' vaccinations, medical records and prescriptions and your veterinarian's phone number.

Typically, only service animals are allowed inside a public shelter, although in Massachusetts, the State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team (SMART) has made great strides in creating 'pet-friendly' sheltering options. Contact your Local Emergency Management Director regarding community animal policies at shelters, as well as other options you may have for sheltering your pets during an emergency.

Make plans ahead of time to take your pet to stay at relatives, friends or a kennel outside the affected area.

Know the locations of pet-friendly hotels and motels.

Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter your animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.

Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have, as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.

Make sure your pets wear collars with current license and rabies tags, and identification tags that include information on where you will be staying during the emergency.

Use a pet carrier for each of your pets to make transportation easier.

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the

carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo and leg band for identification. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

Exotic and dangerous pets are generally dealt with on a case-by-case basis in order to ensure that they are handled, transported and cared for by properly trained personnel and at an appropriate facility. For the safety of their animals, owners of these pets should have advanced planning preparations ready for their pet's special needs.

After a Disaster

Assessment and Clean-up

If you have been evacuated, do not return to your home until you have been directed to do so by state or local officials.

Keep tuned to local Media for information about such things as caring for your household, where to find medical help, and applying for financial assistance.

Do not become a spectator. Unnecessary travel into the impacted areas could hinder the efforts of Public Safety officials.

Drive only when and where necessary. Streets may be filled with debris or flooded. Closed roads are for your protection in that they may be weakened and could collapse.

Upon returning, do not turn on any electronic equipment until the electricity has been safely restored. Be sure to check all electronic equipment for water damage. If you are uncertain, throw them away. It is better to be safe than risk electrocution. Limit your use of the telephone; utilizing it only for emergency calls.

Watch for loose or dangling power lines. Assume any downed wire is a live wire! Be careful when clearing fallen trees with a chainsaw.

If there is structural damage to your home or downed trees in the yard, use care. If officials determine it is safe, open doors and windows to ventilate your home.

Use bottled water until local officials have determined the safety of the water supply.

Guard against spoiled food. If the power was disrupted, food in the refrigerator may have spoiled. Freezers can keep food for several days, if unopened. Do not refreeze food once it begins to thaw.

Use generators outdoors, in well ventilated areas.

For specific assessment and clean-up remedies, contact the appropriate Westborough Departments.

Maintain Your Plan

Once you and your family have developed your plan, you need to practice and maintain it. For example, ask questions to make sure your family remembers meeting places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct drills and create theoretical scenarios and see how family members respond.

Do not wait for a disaster or emergency to occur. Plan and prepare now so that when an unplanned disaster or emergency does occur, you and your family will be ready.

Resources and Links

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency	www.mass.gov/mema
Executive Office of Public Safety & Security	www.mass.gov/eops
Department of Homeland Security	www.dhs.gov
Federal Emergency Management Agency	www.fema.gov
Are you Ready?	www.Ready.gov
American Red Cross	www.redcross.org
National Weather Service	www.noaa.gov
National Hurricane Center	www.nhc.noaa.gov
Massachusetts Department of Public Health	www.mass.gov/dph
State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team	www.smart-mass.org
Guide to Massachusetts State Services	www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/ciscig/guide
Home Safety Network	www.homesafetynetwork.org
Town of Westborough	www.town.westborough.ma.us
Public Health Emergency Preparedness	www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/
Worcester Regional Medical Reserve Corps	www.worcesterregionalmrc.org
Westborough Public School System	westborough.ma.schoolwebpages.com
Central Mass. Disaster Animal Response Team	www.cmdart.org