



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Emergency Management?

Emergency Management involves the planning, assignment and coordination of the resources available in an integrated program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery of natural or man-made emergencies or disasters. It provides for the safety of our citizens in Alexander County, since all known possible hazards have been identified and plans made, which address the needs before, during and after an emergency or disaster. We continually review the plans to identify and correct problems and work together with neighboring counties, the state and federal government to insure a correct and adequate response will be made in the event of an emergency or disaster.

### Are there different parts to Emergency Management?

There are four basic parts or activities that make up the Emergency Management program concept. These are *mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery*.

**Mitigation** involves actions taken to prevent or reduce the occurrence of an emergency or risk to life and property. It includes the following programs or activities:

1. Building / Fire Codes
2. Identification of Resources
3. Procurement of Equipment
4. Public Education
5. Disaster / Flood Insurance

**Preparedness** involves the actions taken prior to an emergency or disaster to aid in coordinated response. It includes the following:

1. Identification of Hazards
2. Development of Emergency Plans and Guidelines
3. Establish and Maintain Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
4. Acquire Equipment / Resources
5. Test and Maintain Equipment
6. Coordinate Training, Drills and Exercises
7. Continuity of Government

**Response** involves the actions taken immediately before, during and immediately after an emergency in order to save lives, minimize property damage and increase the effectiveness of recovery operations. It includes some of the following resource responses:

1. Fire and Rescue Services
2. Emergency Medical Services
3. Security / Law Enforcement
4. Volunteer Disaster Services
5. Health Services
6. Protective Actions

**Recovery** can be divided into two parts, short-term actions which are taken to assess the damages and re-establish vital life-support systems; and long-term actions to restore all systems to a normal state.

Recovery activities include the following:

1. Decontamination
2. Damage Assessment
3. Debris Clearance

#### 4. Disaster Assistance

##### **What actions should I take if told to evacuate my home?**

In some situations evacuation is the only protective action available to protect the public, if time permits. If you are advised to evacuate, first consider going to the homes of relatives or friends, or checking into a hotel or motel outside the danger area. If these locations are not feasible then you will need to go to a shelter site, but remember that most shelter sites will not allow pets to be brought in due to health, safety and space reasons. If going to a shelter you should contact your veterinarian for animal boarding or contact the Alexander County Emergency Management Office at 828-632-1139 for directions on where you can take your pet for boarding.

##### **If instructed to evacuate:**

- Stay calm - don't panic.
- Take only essential emergency supplies with you.
- Do not go to pick up children at school. They will be taken care of at school or taken to a shelter outside the affected area. Listen to local radio or TV stations, they will have information on where to pick up your children and shelter locations.
- Unless you are planning to stay with friends or family, leave your pets and farm animals at home. Be sure to put out plenty of water and food for your animals before you leave.
- Turn off all lights and appliances (including the hot water heater) with the exception of the refrigerator and freezer.
- Secure windows and doors and tie a white cloth or white towel to your front door as an indicator that you have evacuated (this will save emergency responders time when searching for victims or fatalities).
- Follow the recommended routes, do not take shortcuts.
- Notify a family contact person of your location.
- Stay tuned to your local radio stations for updates.
- Do not return home until advised to do so.

##### **What should I do if told to "Shelter in Place"?**

In certain situations when an emergency occurs so quickly that there is insufficient time to evacuate, or an evacuation would actually place more people in danger, it is necessary to "Shelter in Place". If this should occur, immediately go inside your home or the nearest structure (if you are at work or away from your home), if you have a pet get it inside too, and do the following:

- Secure all doors and windows (if tape is available, tape cracks for extra protection).
- Shut off all air conditioners, window fans or other equipment with air intakes. Cover food and put uncovered food in the refrigerator.
- Move to a center room or central area of the structure (keep water and emergency supplies with you).
- Keep your TV or radio on and turned on to the Emergency Broadcast System (or local station).
- Do not use the telephone except for an extreme emergency.
- Do not leave your home (or the structure) until you are told it is safe to do so. If you're in an automobile, roll the windows up, close all vents, turn off the fan and leave the area immediately.

### **What type supplies should I keep on hand for emergency situations?**

The Alexander County Emergency Management Office recommends that citizens keep enough supplies at home to meet family needs for at least 72 hours, since it may take that long before outside assistance is available from the state or federal government. Home disaster supply kits should be made up from sturdy and easy to carry containers such as backpacks, duffel bags or large trash containers in the event that you may have to evacuate and take your emergency supplies with you. These emergency supply kits should contain a number of things including the following:

- Three-day supply of water (1 gallon per person per day).
- A three-day supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food.
- One change of clothing for each member of the family.
- Rains gear or coats depending on the time of year.
- Blankets or sleeping bags for each member of the family.
- A battery powered radio with extra batteries.
- Two flashlights with batteries.
- Emergency candles and matches.
- Sanitation supplies (toilet paper, handy wipes, etc.)
- A first aid kit and any prescription medications needed.
- Extra pair of prescription glasses.
- Special care items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.
- Small writing tablet with two or three pencils.
- Manual can and bottle opener.
- Pocketknife or multi-purpose type tool.
- Recommend \$50 to \$100 money in cash, since electronic teller machines may not be working due to power outages.

- Reading materials or games to help pass the time.

**How will I be notified of an emergency situation other than by Emergency Personnel?**

Emergency responders will do their best to notify individuals if an evacuation is needed, but if there is a large area effected it may not be possible, in which case EBS will be activated to warn citizens. The EBS (Emergency Broadcast Stations) are designated radio and TV stations that will broadcast emergency information. They will tell you everything you need to know, where shelters are being opened, where you need to go, what roads you should use and other safety measures you can take