

# Somerset County Individual & Family Disaster Preparedness Guide



**June 1, 2007**

**Somerset County  
Emergency  
Management  
Agency**



# **Somerset County Emergency Management Agency**

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## **Individual and Family Disaster Preparedness Guide**

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

#### **1. Be Informed**

- Why Be Prepared?
- Hazards that can Impact You
- Emergency Management
- Get Involved
- Where to Find More Information

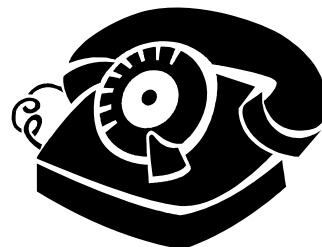


#### **2. Make a Plan**

- Family Communications Plan
- Home Evacuation Plan
- Shelter In Place
- Helping Your Children Cope with Disaster
- What To Do with your Pets
- Making Your Home Safer
- Safe Food Practices
- Health Care & Disability Information

#### **3. Assemble Disaster Supplies**

- Home Emergency Kit
- First Aid Kit
- Vehicle Kit
- Important Family Documents



#### **4. Stay Connected**

- Important Phone Numbers
- Getting Help
- Reporting Emergencies
- What's Going On?

#### **5. What to do**

- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Extended Power Outage
- Flooding
- Forest Fires
- Hazardous Materials
- Home Fires
- Hurricanes
- Pandemic Flu
- Winter Storms



# Chapter 1 - Be Informed

## WHY BE PREPARED?

Disasters such as Floods, Forest Fires, Hazardous Materials Spills and Winter Storms can strike Somerset County with little or no warning. Are you prepared to take care of yourself and your family?

Our fire, police and emergency medical services respond often to small emergencies, such as structure fires, car accidents and stolen property. However, in major disaster events, you may not be able to rely on local fire, police and emergency medical services to immediately assist you. Our emergency services are very limited and most are staffed by an ever shrinking pool of volunteers.

Each individual and family must take actions before a disaster strikes to prepare themselves and their families to protect and care for one another. The is called Disaster Preparedness.

Each individual or family that does not need emergency help places less stress on our local emergency services. Each



individual that is ready, may be able to volunteer to assist our local town officials and emergency services in responding to and recovering from the disaster. This can make or break a community during a disaster.

Please keep this guide and use it as a tool to help prepare yourself and your family before a disaster strikes and as a reference during and after a disaster occurs in your community. The Somerset County Emergency Management Agency suggests you keep the guide with your stack of telephone books, stuck with a magnet to your refrigerator, or located with your important family documents. Please do not throw this guide away!

If you need additional Disaster Preparedness information, you may reference the “Where to Find More Information” page later in this Chapter.

## HAZARDS THAT CAN IMPACT YOU

We think of Maine and Somerset County as a pretty safe place to live. Disasters happen in Florida, Kansas, California, or Louisiana, right? Yes they do; however Maine is not exempt from disaster. As a matter of fact, with changing weather patterns and increased populations, the risk to Maine and Waldo County is growing.

The biggest hurdle we have in Emergency Management is convincing people that disasters can happen to them. We like to compare Disaster Preparedness to Residential Fire Insurance. No one believes that their home will burn down anytime soon and many people have never lost a home. But most families wouldn't dream of not paying that dreadful fire insurance bill and having the piece of mind that their family is protected should they lose their home.



Maine has experienced terrible forest fires, lengthy power outages, severe winter storms and flooded homes, roads and downtowns. Not being prepared for a disaster can have severe repercussions for you. Being prepared can save you and your family from great harm or distress. Why not be Prepared?

This manual will focus on the following disasters:

- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Extended Power Outages
- Flooding
- Forest Fires
- Hazardous Materials
- Home Fires
- Hurricanes
- Pandemic Flu
- Winter Storms

The Key to Disaster Preparedness is accepting and preparing for the possibility of disasters.

# Chapter 1 - Be Informed

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

In the State of Maine, we have various levels of government that provide services for the citizens of this State. At each level of government there are Emergency Management programs that prepare and respond to emergencies. Many people have heard of the Federal Emergency Management Agency or FEMA. The State of Maine operates the Maine Emergency Management Agency or MEMA. Here in Somerset County, you have the Somerset County Emergency Management Agency and each Town has a Local Office of Emergency Management.



In Emergency Management, we say that “All Disasters are Local”. When a disaster strikes and you are impacted by it, you need help now. The first emergency responders that are going to arrive to help will probably be your community fire department and ambulance service and either the local police officer or sheriff’s deputy. When needing assistance, your first point of contact is going to be to your town government.

Should you need a road cleared of debris or information on where to find a Red Cross shelter, your best bet is to call your community emergency operations center. The emergency operations center will probably be located at your Fire Station, but some Towns use their Town Office. It is where the town officials coordinate their response to the disaster.

Somerset County maintains an emergency operations center in Skowhegan in the County Emergency Management Agency offices. The County will coordinate with all 27 Town emergency operations centers. Requests that your Town can not handle will be directed here.

The State of Maine maintains an emergency operations center in Augusta. The State will coordinate with all 16 County emergency operations

Centers. Requests that the County can not handle will be directed here. Requests that the State of Maine can not handle are forwarded to FEMA.

Your best bet is not to call the Governor’s Office when you have a tree down on your power line. (This happened many times during Ice Storm 98). Please call your Town emergency operations center for non-emergency requests. As you do every day when you have an emergency, call 911 to reach the Somerset County Communications Center.

## GET INVOLVED

Your Community needs your help! When disaster strikes, people everywhere want to help those in need. To ensure that this compassion and generosity are put to good use, be aware of these facts:

- Volunteers should go through a recognized voluntary agency such as the local Fire Department, the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army. They know what is needed and are prepared to deal with the need.
- Organizations and community groups wishing to donate items or volunteer staff should first contact your Town officials to find out what is needed and where to send it.
- Be prepared to deliver donated items to one place, tell officials when you’ll be there, and provide for transportation, driver, and unloading.
- Financial aid is an immediate need of disaster victims. Financial contributions should be made through a recognized voluntary organization, such as the American Red Cross to help ensure that contributions are put to their intended use.
- Before donating food or clothing, wait for instructions from your Town officials. Immediately after a disaster, relief workers usually don’t have the time or facilities to setup distribution channels, and too often these items go to waste.

It is best to join an organization that provides disaster assistance, then to show up as an unexpected volunteer!

# Chapter 1 - Be Informed

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

There are a lot of sources of Disaster Preparedness information. Seeking out this information will help to better prepare you and your family to survive a disaster.

### Local Sources

- Local Emergency Management Director
- Town Office
- Fire Department

#### Somerset County Emergency Management Agency

8 County Drive, Skowhegan, ME 04976

Web: [www.somersetcounty-me.org](http://www.somersetcounty-me.org)

E-Mail: [emergencymanagement@somersetcounty-me.org](mailto:emergencymanagement@somersetcounty-me.org)

Phone: (207) 474-6788; Fax (207) 858-4216

### State Sources

#### Maine Prepares

[www.maine.gov/mema/prepare](http://www.maine.gov/mema/prepare)

1-800-452-8735

1-877-789-0200 (TTY)

#### Flu in Maine

[www.maine-flu.gov](http://www.maine-flu.gov)

1-207-287-8016

#### American Red Cross – Pine Tree Chapter

[www.pinetree.redcross.org](http://www.pinetree.redcross.org)

1-207-941-2903

#### VolunteerMaine

[www.volunteermaine.org](http://www.volunteermaine.org)

1-207-287-8059

#### 211 Maine

[www.211maine.org](http://www.211maine.org)

Dial 211

#### National Weather Service – Gray

[www.erh.noaa.gov/gyx](http://www.erh.noaa.gov/gyx)

1-877-633-6772 (To report severe weather)



### National Sources

#### American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

1-202-303-4498

#### Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

[www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)

1-888-246-2675

1-800-311-3435

1-866-874-2646 (TTY)

#### Citizens Corps

[www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov)

#### Department of Homeland Security

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

1-800-237-3239

1-800-464-6161 (TTY)

#### Disability Preparedness

[www.disabilitypreparedness.gov](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov)

#### Environmental Protection Agency

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

1-800-424-9346

1-800-553-7672 (TTY)

#### Federal Emergency Management Agency

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

1-800-480-2520

### International Source

#### World Health Organization

[www.who.int/csr/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/en/)

## Chapter 2 – Make a Plan

### FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

If your family is separated during an emergency, a Family Communications Plan will help you to reach one another.

Locate a meeting place outside your home, should you have to evacuate your home quickly because of a fire or hazardous condition. This might be a neighbors house or your mailbox.

Our location is: \_\_\_\_\_

Locate a meeting place outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot get back to your home. This might be a local community center or a friend's house in another part of town or in another town.

Our location is: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify a Contact Person outside the County. Local telephone service may be down, but long distance service may still be available. Should your family members be separated and unable to reach one another, everyone should know to call this Contact Person and check in.

Our Contact Person is: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Be sure that all family members have a pre-paid phone card in order to call your Contact Person.

#### Family Telephone Numbers

Dad's Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Mom's Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's School: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Child's School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Call 911 for Emergencies!**

### HOME EVACUATION PLAN

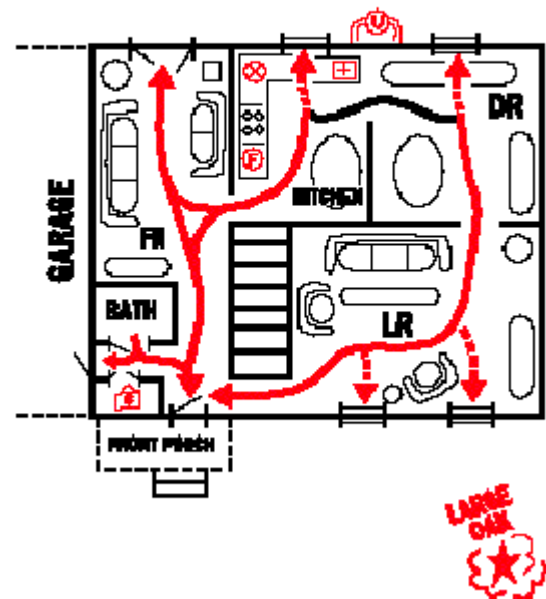
In a fire or a carbon monoxide release, you may need to evacuate your house or mobile home on a moment's notice. Be ready to get out fast.

Develop an evacuation plan by drawing a floor plan of your residence. Using a black or blue pen, show the location of doors, windows, stairways, and large furniture. Indicate location of emergency supplies (Disaster Supplies Kit), fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, collapsible ladders, first aid kits and utility shut off points. Next, use a colored pen to draw a broken line charting at least two escape routes from each room. Finally, mark a place outside of the home where household members should meet case of fire.

Be sure to include important points outside such as garages, patios, stairways, elevators, driveways and porches. If your home has more than two floors, use an additional sheet of paper.

Example:

Floor one



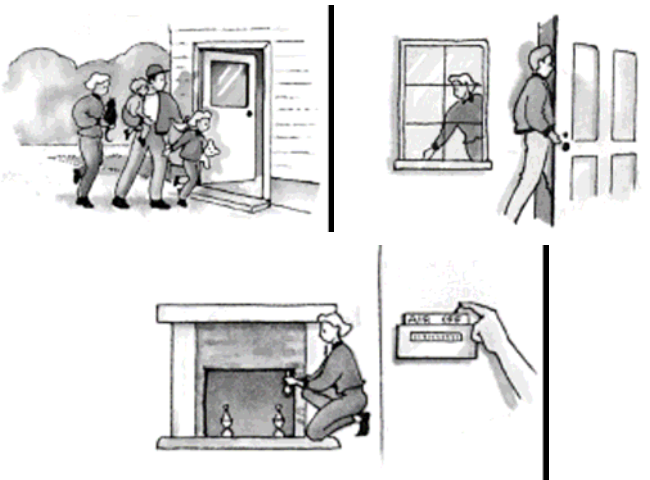
Remember to have a pre-designated meeting place and to count heads to make sure everyone is accounted for!

## Chapter 2 – Make a Plan

### SHELTER IN PLACE

If a hazardous materials release occurs in your neighborhood, authorities would instruct people to either seek shelter in place or evacuate immediately. If the order is to remain in your home, office or school, you will need to “Shelter-in-Place.” Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there.

- Move or Stay Indoors
- Close all Windows and Doors
- Turn off Fans, Heating and Air Conditioning
- Go into an Interior Room or a Room with the fewest Doors and Windows.
- Stay There and Tune into a Local TV or Radio Station for Further Information



You should pick an interior room without windows that's above ground level because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.

Bring your pets with you, and be sure to bring additional food and water supplies for them.

It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Call your emergency contact and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.

### HELPING YOUR CHILDREN TO COPE WITH DISASTER

Disasters can leave children feeling frightened, confused, and insecure. Whether a child has personally experienced trauma, has merely seen the event on television, or has heard it discussed by adults, it is important for parents and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur.

Children may respond to disaster by demonstrating fears, sadness, or behavioral problems. Younger children may return to earlier behavior patterns, such as bedwetting, sleep problems, and separation anxiety. Older children may also display anger, aggression, school problems, or withdrawal. Some children who have only indirect contact with the disaster but witness it on television may develop distress.

Children's reactions are influenced by the behavior, thoughts, and feelings of adults. Adults should encourage children and adolescents to share their thoughts and feelings about the disaster. Clarify misunderstandings about risk and danger by listening to children's concerns and answering questions. Maintain a sense of calm by validating children's concerns and perceptions and with discussion of concrete plans for safety.

Listen to what the child is saying. If a young child is asking questions about the event, answer them simply without the elaboration needed for an older child or adult. Some children are comforted by knowing more or less information than others; decide what level of information your particular child needs. If a child has difficulty expressing feelings, allow the child to draw a picture or tell a story of what happened. Try to understand what is causing anxieties and fears. Be aware that following a disaster, children are most afraid that:

- The event will happen again.
- Someone close to them will be killed or injured.
- They will be left alone or separated from the family.

## Chapter 2 – Make a Plan

Suggestions to help reassure children include the following:

- Personal contact is reassuring. Hug and touch your children.
- Calmly provide factual information about the recent disaster and current plans for insuring their safety along with recovery plans.
- Encourage your children to talk about their feelings.
- Spend extra time with your children such as at bedtime.
- Re-establish your daily routine for work, school, play, meals, and rest.
- Involve your children by giving them specific chores to help them feel they are helping to restore family and community life.
- Praise and recognize responsible behavior.
- Understand that your children will have a range of reactions to disasters.
- Encourage your children to help update your a family disaster plan.

If you have tried to create a reassuring environment by following the steps above, but your child continues to exhibit stress, if the reactions worsen over time, or if they cause interference with daily behavior at school, at home, or with other relationships, it may be appropriate to talk to a professional. You can get professional help from the child's primary care physician, a mental health provider specializing in children's needs, or a member of the clergy.



### WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR PETS

Your pet is an important member of your household. The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire or flood, hurricane or chemical spill depends largely on emergency planning done today. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

If you must evacuate, take your pets with you. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for you and your pets.



### Assemble a Pet Emergency Supply Kit

Just as you do with your family's emergency supply kit, think first about the basics for survival, particularly food and water. Keep at least three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container. Store at least three days of water specifically for your pets in addition to water you need for yourself and your family. Keep an extra supply of medicines your pet takes on a regular basis in a waterproof container.

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.

## Chapter 2 – Make a Plan

### Pet Emergency Supply Kit (continued)

Your pet should wear a collar with its rabies tag and identification at all times. Include a backup leash, collar and ID tag 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 and also add them to your kit. You should also consider talking with your veterinarian about permanent identification such as micro-chipping, and enrolling your pet in a recovery database.

If you need to evacuate in an emergency situation take your pets and animals with you provided that it is practical to do so. In many cases, your ability to do so will be aided by having a sturdy, safe, comfortable crate or carrier ready for transporting your pet. The carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand, turn around and lie down.

Include pet litter and litter box if appropriate, paper towels, plastic trash bags and household chlorine bleach to provide for your pet's sanitation needs.

A picture of you and your pet 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 your pet. Include detailed information about species, breed, age, sex, color and distinguishing characteristics.



Put favorite toys, treats or bedding in your kit. Familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet.

# Prepare Your Pets!

### What You Will Do in an Emergency

If you have to evacuate, plan how you will assemble your pets and anticipate where you will go with them. If you go to a public shelter, keep in mind your animals may not be allowed inside. Secure appropriate lodging in advance depending on the number and type of animals in your care. Consider family or friends willing to take in you and your pets in an emergency. Other options may include: a hotel or motel that takes pets or a boarding facility, such as a kennel or veterinary hospital that is near an evacuation facility or your family's meeting place. Find out before an emergency happens if any of these facilities in your area might be viable options for you and your pets.

Plan with neighbors, friends or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Also designate specific locations, one in your immediate neighborhood and another farther away, where you will meet in an emergency.



Gather contact information for emergency animal treatment. Make a list of contact information and addresses of area animal control agencies and emergency veterinary hospitals. Keep one copy of these phone numbers with you and one in your pet's emergency supply kit. Obtain "Pets Inside" stickers and place them on your doors or windows, including information on the number and types of pets in your home to alert firefighters and rescue workers. Consider putting a phone number on the sticker where you could be reached in an emergency. And, if time permits, remember to write the words "Evacuated with Pets" across the stickers, should you flee with your pets.

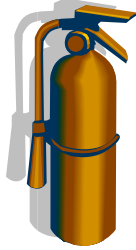
# Get Ready Now!

## Chapter 2 – Make a Plan

### MAKING YOUR HOME SAFER

There are many actions that you and your family can take to make your home safer during an emergency. Some of these actions include:

**Fire Extinguishers:** Have at least one A-B-C fire extinguisher on each floor of the home and make sure that all family members know how to use it.



**Smoke Alarms:** Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms. Individuals with sensory disabilities should consider installing smoke alarms that have strobe lights and vibrating pads.

**Carbon Monoxide Alarm:** Carbon monoxide is formed from incomplete combustion from any flame-fueled device, including gas ovens, gas clothes dryers, furnaces, fireplaces, grills, space heaters, vehicles and gas water heaters. Carbon monoxide poisoning can result in unconsciousness, permanent brain damage, and death. Carbon monoxide detectors are set to sound an alarm before the exposure to carbon monoxide would present a hazard to a healthy adult. Babies, children, pregnant women, people with circulatory or respiratory ailments, and the elderly are more sensitive to carbon monoxide than healthy adults.

Because carbon monoxide is slightly lighter than air and also because it may be found with warm, rising air, detectors should be placed on a wall about 5 feet above the floor. Do not place the detector right next to or over a fireplace or flame-producing appliance. Keep the detector out of the way of pets and children. Each floor needs a separate detector. If you get a single carbon monoxide detector, place it near the sleeping area and make certain the alarm is loud enough to wake you up.

**Escape Exits:** Ensure that exits from your home are not blocked both the inside or outside.

**Hazardous Materials:** Store chemicals in locations where children can not get at them.

### SAFE FOOD PRACTICES

In a disaster, you might be cut off from food, water, and electricity for days. By preparing emergency provisions, you can turn what could be a life-threatening situation into a manageable problem. Even though it is unlikely that an emergency would cut off your food supply for two weeks, you should prepare a supply that will last that long. The easiest way to develop a two-week stockpile is to increase the amount of basic foods you normally keep on your shelves and store them.

#### Storage Tips

- Keep food in a dry, cool, dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans carefully so that you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

Canned vegetable soups, peanut butter, jelly, ready-to-eat cereals, canned fruits, fruit juices and vitamin C need to be used within 1 year. Foods like powdered milk, dried fruit (in a metal can), crackers and potatoes must be used within 6 months.

If your water supply is limited, avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content. Canned foods won't require cooking, water or special preparation. Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking are best.

Individuals with special diets and allergies will need particular attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people. Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils.

## Chapter 2 – Make a Plan

### DISABILITY INFORMATION

If you or someone close to you has a disability or a special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family in an emergency.

Disability/ Special Need	Additional Steps
Hearing Impaired	Need to make special arrangements to receive warnings
Mobility impaired	May need special assistance to get to a shelter
Non-English speaking persons	May need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. Community groups may be able to help keep people informed
People without vehicles	Make arrangements for emergency transportation
People with special dietary needs	Take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply

### Free and Low-Cost Email Pagers Available for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Mainers

There is a State of Maine program called the "Emergency Notification System" or "ENS" for residents who are deaf or hard of hearing in Maine.

The ENS program supplies free email messages that notify users of local, state, and national emergencies such as road closures, child abductions, severe weather warnings, and public safety announcements. The program also offers a stationary all-hazard alert radio with amplification instead of the pager device.

Email pagers and alert radios are available for free or reduced cost depending on individuals' income. For more information contact:

Maine Center on Deafness  
68 Bishop Street, Portland, Maine 04103  
1-800-639-3884, ext. 109v or 309ty  
email at [Ealert@mcdmaine.org](mailto:Ealert@mcdmaine.org)  
or visit <http://www.mcdmaine.org>

### If You Need a Ride to a Shelter

If you need to go to an Evacuation Shelter and do not have transportation or someone you can call on to drive you, please call the Somerset County Emergency Management Agency at 474-6788. The EMA program is executing signed agreements with the local school districts and with local Somerset County Bus Transportation to provide buses during a state of emergency. Please inform the EMA office if you have special transportation requirements, such as a wheel chair so that we can send an appropriate bus.

### If You Need to Go to a Shelter and have a Pet

If you need to go to an Evacuation Shelter and you have a cat or dog, please call the Somerset County Emergency Management Agency at 474-6788. The EMA program is establishing a Pet Friendly Shelter system in Somerset County. Please inform the EMA office if you have a cat or dog so that we can send the appropriate materials to transport your pet.



Licensed companion animals such as seeing eye dogs are generally allowed to stay in American Red Cross shelters with their owner.

### Personal Preparedness

- Consider getting a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help if you are immobilized in an emergency.
- If you use an electric wheelchair or scooter, have a manual wheelchair as a backup.
- If you use a personal care attendant obtained from an agency, check to see if the agency has provisions for emergencies.
- Be prepared to provide clear, specific and concise instructions to rescue personnel.
- Prepare your personal support network to assist you with anticipated reactions and emotions associated with disaster and traumatic events.
- If on oxygen, have spare tanks. Contact 911 if you lose electrical power.

## Chapter 3 – Assemble Disaster Supplies

### HOME PREPAREDNESS SUPPLIES

Severe storms, power outages, flooding and disease outbreaks can force you to stay home for an extended period of time. Do you have the supplies on hand that you will need if you are stuck at home for a week or two? How about if you do not have electricity? (Remember Ice Storm 98!) We recommend that you have what you need for emergency supplies for at least one week; two weeks would be even better. The following is a list of supplies that you should stockpile in your home in the event of a major emergency.

- A gallon of water per person per day. Store in clean containers. Change out every 6 months.
- Canned and boxed food. Check date expirations and rotate before food expires. Pre-cooked, canned food is best.
- Manual Can Opener
- Dry baby formula + powdered milk
- Pet food
- Paper plates & cups + plasticware
- Paper Towels
- Flashlights & extra batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Battery-operated or hand-crank AM/FM Radio
- NOAA Weather Alert Radio
- Toilet Paper & other toiletry items
- Matches
- Medications
- Fire Extinguisher
- Battery-operated or wind-up clock
- Filter Masks
- Hand Sanitizer
- Garbage Bags & Resealable plastic bags

### VEHICLE EMERGENCY KIT

- Flashlight
- Maps
- White distress flag or handkerchief
- Tire repair tools & booster cables
- Bottled water & snack bars
- Winter clothing

### FIRST AID KIT

Your chances of being injured during a disaster is higher than during normal periods of time. It is important to have a good first aid kit on hand. The following items are good to have in your kit.

- First Aid Manual
- Sterile bandages & gauze pads of assorted sizes
- Adhesive tape and ace bandage
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain relievers
- Anti-diarrhea medicine & antacid
- Cough syrup
- Thermometer
- Safety pins, tweezers & scissors
- Alcohol wipes
- First aid antibiotic cream
- Disposable latex or nitrile gloves

### VALUABLE RECORDS

It is important that you inventory all of your personal property and keep those lists and other important documents safe. We recommend that you acquire a fireproof and waterproof container to store these important documents.

- Household inventory
- Property records, deeds, titles & leases
- Personal wills
- Automobile titles
- Marriage, Birth and Death Certificates
- Social Security Cards
- Important receipts and bills of sale
- Insurance policies
- Military Service Records
- Adoption Papers
- Passports & Citizenship papers
- Income Tax Returns
- Educational Records
- Extra cash and credit cards
- Extra house and car keys
- Immunization Records
- Bank records

## Chapter 4 – Stay Connected

### WARNING SYSTEMS

The Federal and State governments have several systems in place to warn the public of emergencies and inform the public of what appropriate actions to take. These systems include:

#### Emergency Alert System

You have all heard of the Emergency Alert System. This is the strange tone that broadcasts over your television and radio periodically which is normally followed by a message that starts off with “This is a tests of the Emergency Alert System. If this were a real event...”. During an emergency, it will not be a test; it will be a real message that will provide you with the necessary information to protect yourself and your family. Please listen and act as instructed.

#### NOAA Weather Radio

The NOAA Weather Radio is known as “The Voice of the National Weather Service.” This system provides the public with a constant source of up-to-date weather information, including special weather alerts that will automatically activate a NOAA weather radio.

In addition to routine and emergency weather information, the NOAA Weather Radio can also broadcast alerts to the public for hazardous materials releases, earthquakes, AMBER alerts and 911 Telephone outages.

We recommend that all homes have a NOAA Weather radio or an AM/FM radio that picks up NOAA weather reports.

### 911

It is important to understand that the 911 Emergency Call service should not be used to “find out what’s going on.” 911 should only be used when you have an emergency and need fire, police or ambulance services. Calling 911 to report power outages or asking for information will only tie up emergency dispatchers and slow down emergency response calls.

### WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

#### Phone Contacts



- Shelter information: Call 211
- Assistance: Call 211
- Road conditions: Call 511
- American Red Cross: 941-2903
- State Police: 800-452-4664
- Bird Disease Reporting: 888-697-5846
- Flooded oil tanks (DEP): 800-482-0777
- If you think your well may be contaminated: 557-4214 (Maine Drinking Water Program)
- For insurance questions: 800-300-5000
- County Emergency Management: 474-6788
- Maine Prepares: 800-452-8735 or 877-789-0200 (TTY)
- To report power outages:
  - Central Maine Power: 800-696-1000
  - Bangor Hydro: 800-440-1111
- Small Business Admin: 800-659-2955
- Dept of Homeland Security: 800-237-3239
- FEMA: 800-621-3362 or 800-462-7585 (TTY)
- Poison Control Center: 800-222-1222
- SSA: 800-772-1213 or 800-325-0788 (TTY)

#### Online Information

- Road conditions: [www.511maine.gov](http://www.511maine.gov)
- Shelter information: [www.211maine.org](http://www.211maine.org)
- Insurance questions: [www.maine.gov/insurance](http://www.maine.gov/insurance)
- Weather: [www.erh.noaa.gov/er/gyx/](http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/gyx/)
- Are You Ready?: [www.fema.gov/areyouready](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready)
- Maine Prepares: [www.maine.gov/prepare](http://www.maine.gov/prepare)
- Ready.Gov: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- Red Cross: [www.pinetree.redcross.org](http://www.pinetree.redcross.org)
- Volunteer Maine: [www.volunteermaine.org](http://www.volunteermaine.org)
- 21 Maine: [www.211maine.org](http://www.211maine.org)
- Flu in Maine: [www.maineflu.gov](http://www.maineflu.gov)
- Disability Preparedness:

[www.disabilitypreparedness.gov](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov)

Somerset County Emergency Management Agency  
8 County Drive, Skowhegan, ME 04976

[www.somersetcounty-me.org](http://www.somersetcounty-me.org)

## Chapter 5 – What To Do

### ACTIONS TO TAKE

It is important to know what to do should an emergency or disaster strike our area. The following emergency and disaster situations will be reviewed in this guide.

- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Extended Power Outage
- Flooding
- Forest Fires
- Hazardous Materials
- Home Fires
- Hurricanes
- Pandemic Flu
- Winter Storms

### CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Carbon Monoxide is a colorless and practically odorless gas that is poisonous to people. Appliances fueled with natural gas, LP gas, oil, kerosene, coal, charcoal and wood may produce carbon dioxide. Cars left running in a garage and generators running in a home produce carbon monoxide and have killed too many Mainers.

Buy and install a carbon monoxide detector. Install the detector in hallways outside bedrooms. Ensure that your furnace, stove, water heater and room heaters are functioning properly and have your furnace inspected and serviced annually. Never operate an unvented fuel-burning heater in any room. Never operate a generator inside the home.



Symptoms include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness. Death follows. If you think you are experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning, get fresh air immediately. Open windows and doors in your home, turn off any fuel-burning appliances such as your furnace and leave your home. Call 911.

### EXTENDED POWER OUTAGE

Blustery winter winds, snow, and ice are three reasons your power may be interrupted during the winter. If your power does go out, it's good to follow a few simple safety measures.

Watch out for live wires! If you find electrical wires dangling from poles or lying on the ground, stay away -- they may still be live. If you do see a downed power line, be sure to call CMP right away. And remember, no line is ever safe to touch.

Turn off and unplug all your electrical appliances. Leave one light or a radio on so you know when power returns. Don't use grills or campstoves indoors - they can give off carbon monoxide. Use them in a sheltered location away from your house and other buildings.

Make sure your generator has a double-throw switch, so there is no electrical connection between your home and CMP. Before you start the generator up, check that all wires are properly grounded. Be sure to pull the main fuses or turn off the main circuit breaker.

Check in with your neighbors. Look down your street or give the neighbors a call. Are their lights out, too? If not, check your fuses and circuit breakers. It may not be the storm; you may have a blown fuse.

Call CMP's hotline to report an outage: 800-696-1000. Please note: Cordless phones don't work during a power outage. Have a recent CMP bill on hand and look for the 13-digit account number in the upper right hand corner.

Make sure your flashlights and battery-powered radios have fresh batteries, are ready to use and easy to find. Stock extra batteries, too.

Have candles, lamps and matches handy. Instruct family members in their proper use to reduce the risk of accidental fires.

## Chapter 5 – What To Do

### FLOODING

Floods are the number one disaster in Maine. Flooding can happen at anytime of the year and in any location; regardless if a river or lake is nearby. Take flood waters seriously. During the April 2007 storm here in Maine, two people, a grandmother and her granddaughter were killed when they tried to cross flood waters.

**Flood Watch:** Flooding is possible during the next 12-36 hours.

**Flood Warning:** Flooding is occurring or expected to happen soon.

Don't ever drive or walk through flooded areas. You and your vehicle can be swept away. Six inches of water will cause most passenger cars to lose control or stall. A foot of water will float many vehicles. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including SUVs. Stay away from streams, rivers, ponds, lakes and flooded areas. You cannot see hazards that may exist under the surface of the water.

If flood water may threaten your home, move as much of your property to second stories. Before the waters reach your home, evacuate with your family and important records.

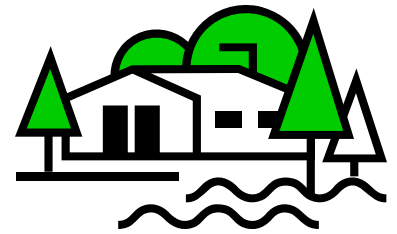
Consider purchasing flood insurance if you are in a special floodzone. The National Flood Insurance Program can be reached at (888) 379-9531 and TTY (800) 427-5593 or by going online to [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).



### FOREST FIRES

If you live in a forested area, which many of us in Somerset County do, you face the real danger of forest fires. Forest fires destroy thousands of homes and devastate hundreds of thousands of acres of woodland every year.

Protecting your home from forest fires is your responsibility. To reduce the risk, you'll need to consider the fire resistance of your home, the topography of your property and the nature of the vegetation close by.



Always be ready for an emergency evacuation. Evacuation may be the only way to protect your family in a forest fire. Know where to go and what to bring with you. You should plan several escape routes in case roads are blocked by a forest fire.

All vegetation is fuel for a forest fire, though some trees and shrubs are more flammable than others. To reduce the risk, you will need to modify or eliminate brush, trees and other vegetation near your home. The greater the distance between your home and the vegetation, the greater the protection.



Create a 30-foot safety zone around the house. Keep the volume of vegetation in this zone to a minimum. If you live on a hill, extend the zone on the downhill side. Fire spreads rapidly uphill. The steeper the slope, the more open space you will need to protect your home. In this zone, do the following:

- Remove vines from the walls of the house.
- Move shrubs and other landscaping away from the sides of the house.
- Prune branches and shrubs within 15 feet of chimneys and stove pipes.
- Remove tree limbs within 15 feet of the ground.

## Chapter 5 – What To Do

- Thin a 15-foot space between tree crowns.
- Replace highly flammable vegetation such as pine, evergreen, junipers and fir trees with lower growing, less flammable species.
- Replace vegetation that has living or dead branches from the ground level up (these act as ladder fuels for the approaching fire).
- Cut the lawn often.
- Clear the area of leaves, brush, dead limbs and fallen trees.

Are eaves and overhangs enclosed? Like porches and balconies, eaves trap the heat rising along the exterior siding. Enclose all eaves to reduce the hazard.

If you're planning a porch or sun deck, use non-combustible or fire resistant materials. If possible, build the structure to the ground so that there is no space underneath.

Is the roof made of noncombustible materials? The roof is especially vulnerable in a forest fire. Embers and flaming debris can travel great distances, land on your roof and start a new fire. Avoid flammable roofing materials such as wood, shake and shingle. Materials that are more fire resistant include single ply membranes, fiberglass shingles, slate, and metal. Clear gutters of leaves and debris.



Are chimneys and stovepipes covered with spark arrestors? Chimneys create a hazard when embers escape through the top. To prevent this, install spark arrestors on all chimneys, stovepipes and vents for fuel burning heaters. Use spark arrestors made of 12-gauge welded or woven wire mesh screen with openings 1/2 inch across.

If you're building a chimney, use non-combustible materials and make sure the top of the chimney is at least two feet higher than any obstruction within 10 feet of the chimney.

Use fire resistant materials in the siding of your home, such as metal, brick, cement shingles, concrete and rock. You can treat wood siding with UL-approved fire retardant chemicals, but the treatment and protection are not permanent.

Windows allow radiated heat to pass through and ignite combustible materials inside. The larger the pane of glass, the more vulnerable it is to fire. Dual- or triple-pane thermal glass, and fire resistant shutters or drapes, help reduce the forest fire risk. You can also install noncombustible awnings to shield windows and use shatter-resistant glazing such as tempered or wire glass.

### PRACTICE FOREST FIRE SAFETY

People start most wildfires. Practice wildfire safety.

- Contact your Fire Department or the Maine Forest Service for information on fire laws. Make sure that fire trucks can get to your home. Clearly mark all driveway entrances and display your name and address.
- Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.
- Teach children about fire safety. Keep matches out of their reach.
- Post fire emergency telephone numbers.
- Plan several escape routes away from your home – by car and by foot.
- Talk to your neighbors about forest fire safety. Plan how the neighborhood could work together after a wildfire.
- Consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs such as elderly or disabled persons.
- Make plans to take care of children who may be on their own if parents can't get home.

### WHEN FOREST FIRE THREATENS

If you are warned that a wildfire is threatening your area, listen to your battery-operated radio for reports and evacuation information. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Seconds will count.

## Chapter 5 – What To Do

### HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials are chemical substances, which if released or misused can pose a threat to the environment or health. These chemicals are used in industry, agriculture, medicine, research, and consumer goods. Hazardous materials come in the



form of explosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons, and radioactive materials. These substances are most often released as a result of transportation accidents or because of chemical accidents in plants.

A hazardous materials accident can occur anywhere. Communities located near chemical manufacturing plants are particularly at risk. However, hazardous materials are transported on our roadways, railways, and waterways daily, so any area is considered vulnerable to an accident.

Many hazardous materials do not have a taste or an odor. Some materials can be detected because they cause physical reactions such as watering eyes or nausea. Some hazardous materials exist beneath the surface of the ground and can be recognized by an oil or foam-like appearance.



Do not walk into or touch any spilled substance. Try not to inhale gases, fumes, and smoke. If possible, cover mouth with a cloth while leaving the area.



Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified. Try to stay upstream, uphill, and upwind of the accident.

Be prepared to immediately evacuate or to shelter-in-place, as directed by local emergency authorities.

Beside hazardous material accidents, nearly every household uses products containing hazardous materials. Although the risk of a chemical accident is slight, knowing how to handle these products and how to react during an emergency can reduce the risk of injury.

Store household chemicals according to the instructions on the label. Read instructions on how to dispose of chemicals properly.

Post the number of the nearest poison control center by the telephone. Learn to recognize the symptoms of toxic poisoning.

- Difficulty in breathing
- Irritation of the eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract
- Changes in skin color
- Headache or blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination
- Cramps or diarrhea

Wash hands, arms, or other parts of the body that may have been exposed to the chemical. Discard any clothing that may have been contaminated.

Administer first aid treatment to victims of chemical burns.



- Call 9-1-1 for help.
- Remove clothing and jewelry from around the injury.
- Pour clean, cool water over the burn for 15-30 minutes.
- Loosely cover the burn with a sterile or clean dressing. Be sure that the dressing will not stick to the burn.
- Refer victim to a medical professional for further treatment.

# Chapter 5 – What To Do

## HOME FIRES

A fire can engulf a structure in a matter of minutes. Understanding the basic characteristics of fire and learning the proper safety practices can be the key to surviving a house or building fire.

## HOME ESCAPE PLAN

In a fire, you may need to evacuate your home on a moment's notice. Be ready to get out fast.

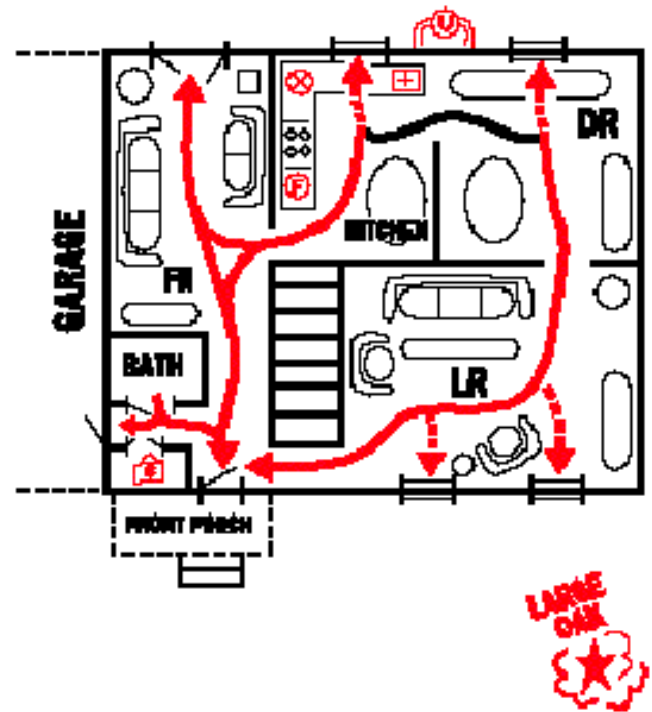
Develop an escape plan by drawing a floor plan of your residence. Using a black or blue pen, show the location of doors, windows, stairways, and large furniture. Indicate location of emergency supplies (Disaster Supplies Kit), fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, collapsible ladders, first aid kits and utility shut off points. Next, use a colored pen to draw a broken line charting at least two escape routes from each room. Finally, mark a place outside of the home where household members should meet case of fire.

Be sure to include important points outside such as garages, patios, stairways, elevators, driveways and porches. If your home has more than two floors, use an additional sheet of paper.

- Plan two escape routes out of each room.
- Practice fire drills at least twice a year.
- Stay low to the floor when escaping from a fire.
- Never 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.
- Use a whistle or air horn to awaken other family members in case of fire.
- Check electrical outlets. Do not overload outlets or plug multiple power strips into one another.
- Acquire and learn to use a fire extinguisher.
- Have a collapsible fire escape ladder on your home's second story floor.
- Learn to stop, drop to the ground, and roll if your clothes catch fire.
- Make sure wiring is not under rugs, over nails, or in high traffic areas.

Example:

FLOOR ONE



## USE SMOKE DETECTORS

Install smoke detectors. Check them once a month and change the batteries at least once a year. Smoke detectors more than double the chance of surviving a fire. Smoke detectors sense abnormal amounts of smoke or invisible combustion gases in the air. They can detect both smoldering and burning fires. At least one smoke detector should be installed on every level of a structure. Purchase smoke detectors labeled by the Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).

## COOKING

Keep the stove area clean and clear of combustibles such as bags, boxes, and other appliances. If a fire starts, put a lid over the burning pan or use a fire extinguisher. Be careful. Moving the pan can cause the fire to spread. Never pour water on grease fires.

Talk to your local Fire Department for more information.

## Chapter 5 – What To Do

### HURRICANES

Hurricanes can cause extensive damage due to extremely high winds, flooding and coastal storm surge. Hurricanes can also produce tornadoes. Hurricane season extends from June to November.

Hurricanes can produce widespread torrential rains. Winds can reach 155 miles per hour. Never try to drive during a Hurricane.

A Hurricane Watch means that hurricane conditions are possible within 36 hours.

A Hurricane Warning means that a hurricane is expected within 24 hours. Take protective action immediately.

#### Before a Hurricane Arrives

- Stay tuned to weather reports.
- Board up the windows in your home.
- Remove outside antennas.
- Get extra cash.
- Bring in lawn furniture, toys and garbage cans. Tie down anything that can't be brought inside.
- Top off the fuel in your car and generator.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Evacuate if told to do so by public safety authorities.
- Move boats to safe harbor and moor securely.
- Locate your disaster supplies kit.

#### During a Hurricane

- Take refuge on the ground floor in a small central room or hallway.
- Get under a table or other strong object.
- Keep away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all inside doors. Brace all outside doors.
- Don't use the telephone, unless absolutely necessary.

Follow other guidelines as listed in the sections on Extended Power Outages and Flooding.

### WINTER STORMS

Like Hurricanes, Winter Storms can cause extensive damage from high winds and coastal surge. However, winter storms also produce severe cold temperatures which can make things far more difficult. Also, high snow accumulations can effectively block all traffic from moving.

A Winter Storm Watch means severe winter weather is possible.

A Winter Storm Warning means severe winter weather is approaching.

#### Before a Winter Storm Arrives

- Winterize your home, if possible.
- Set up a safe alternate heat source that does not require electricity (such as a wood stove).
- Stay tuned to weather reports.
- Get extra cash.
- Top off the fuel in your car and generator.
- Locate your disaster supplies kit.
- Acquire rock salt to melt walkways.
- 

#### During a Winter Storm

- Stay indoors.
- Eat regularly so your body has energy for producing heat. Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- If stuck in your car, stay there and wait for help. Attach a distress flag or bright piece of cloth to the antenna so rescuers can find you.
- Keep hands and feet warm; they are the most vulnerable to frostbite.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.

**DO NOT RUN GENERATORS AND NON-VENTED FUEL HEATERS INSIDE YOUR HOME.**

Follow other guidelines as listed in the section on Extended Power Outages.

## Chapter 5 – What To Do

### PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

#### What you need to know

An influenza (flu) pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of flu disease that occurs when a new type of influenza virus appears that people have not been exposed to before (or have not been exposed to in a long time). The pandemic virus can cause serious illness because people do not have immunity to the new virus. Pandemics are different from seasonal outbreaks of influenza that we see every year. A pandemic will last much longer than most flu outbreaks and may include “waves” of influenza activity that last 6-8 weeks separated by months. The number of health care workers and first responders able to work may be reduced. Public health official will not know how severe a pandemic will be until it begins.

#### Avian Influenza or “Bird” Flu

Avian Influenza or “Bird” Flu is not the same as an Influenza Pandemic. Avian influenza occurs naturally among birds. “Bird Flu” may infect humans, although it is rare. Typically, people have only contracted Avian Influenza after prolonged contact with heavily contaminated birds. If a disease such as bird flu infects a human and should it mutate to allow for easy transmission between humans, then it has the potential for becoming a pandemic among people.

#### Importance and Benefits of Being Prepared

It is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how severe it would be. If a pandemic starts, everyone around the world could be at risk. A pandemic would touch every aspect of modern society. The effects of a pandemic can be lessened if you prepare ahead of time. Preparing for a disaster will help bring peace of mind and confidence to deal with a pandemic.



### Challenges and Preparation

Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted. These could include services provided by hospital and other healthcare facilities, ambulance services, firefighting and police services, banks, restaurants, government offices, telephone and cellular phone companies, and the post office. Stores may close or have limited supplies.

Public gatherings, such as meetings and worship services, may be canceled. Prepare contact lists that include phone numbers and email addresses, to access or distribute necessary information.

Prepare backup plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away.

Widespread illness could result in the shut down of local ATMs and banks. Keep a small amount of cash or traveler’s checks in small denominations for easy use.

Grocery stores may be closed or have a limited stock. You may also be unable to get to a store. To prepare for this possibility you should store at least one to two weeks supply of non-perishable food and fresh water for emergencies.

Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand. Examples of supplies: Prescribed medical supplies; Soap and water, or alcohol based (60-95%) hand wash; Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen; thermometer; Anti-diarrheal medication.



Being able to work may be difficult; ask your employer how business will continue during a pandemic. Discuss staggered shifts, working at home, or telecommuting possibilities with your employer. Discuss possible flexibility in leave policies, and how much leave you can take to care for yourself or family. Plan for possible loss of income.

## Chapter 5 – What To Do

Schools and Daycare Centers may be closed for an extended period of time to limit the spread of flu in the community and to help prevent children from becoming sick. School closings would likely happen very early in a pandemic and could occur on short notice.

- Plan now for children staying at home for extended periods of time, as school closings may occur along with restrictions on public gatherings, such as at malls, movie theaters.
- Plan home learning activities and exercises. Have learning materials, such as books, school supplies, and educational computer activities and movies on hand.

### Prevention and Treatment

Stay Healthy. These steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu:

- Get a flu shot annually.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious foods.
- Properly chicken to at least 165°F, which will destroy viruses and other bacteria.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue away immediately after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based (60-95%) hand sanitizers cleaner.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance form others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings. In this way you will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs are often spread this way.



### Common Flu Symptoms

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Extreme Tiredness
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle Aches
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.



### Realities of a Pandemic

Understand, there is no vaccine for a pandemic influenza available at this time. Even if one were developed, it is unlikely that it could be produced fast enough for issue to the general public.

During a Pandemic, there would be no room at area hospitals to take those sick from influenza. The best thing you can do is to stay at home, prevent dehydration, take fever-reducing medicine and rest.

It is also likely that there would be no ambulance service available for those sick with influenza.

Maintain contact with your family physician, but understand that your doctor will be extremely busy.

### Stay informed

Knowing the facts is the best preparation. Identify sources you can count on for reliable information. Reliable, accurate and timely flu information is available at [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov) and [www.maine flu.gov](http://www.maine flu.gov). Another source is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at: 1-800-232-4636. This line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Listen to your local and national radio and watch your local television stations for public service announcements, news reports and Emergency Alert System, and read your newspaper and other sources of printed and web-based information.