# CONNECTICUT GUIDE TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

After reading and completing this guide, keep it in a safe place so you will always know where to find it.

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# CONNECTICUT STATE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PARTNERS

Each of Connecticut's state agencies and commissions work to strengthen Connecticut's level of emergency preparedness.

The Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) is in charge of the state's emergency plans and procedures.

DESPP assists all of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns, and two tribal nations in emergency planning and responding to an emergency.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) is in charge of protecting and promoting the health and safety of the people of Connecticut. DPH works with many different partners, including local health departments, tribal nations, hospitals, police, and other state agencies and community partners. They help make sure the state has the procedures and equipment to help protect people's health during and after an emergency.

## OTHER STATE PARTNERS:

- Connecticut Television Network (CT-N)
- Department of Administrative Services
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Children & Families
- Department of Consumer Protection
- Department of Correction
- Department of Developmental Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Department of Labor
- Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
- Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Transportation
- Military Department
- Office of Policy & Management
- Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

# WHAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAVE TO DO TO BE PREPARED

## EDUCATE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

- Find out if there are any places near your home that could be dangerous or cause an emergency like:
  - a nuclear power plant
  - an area that can flood, like land near a river or ocean
  - buildings where chemicals are made or stored
- Have a safe place to go. If you are asked to evacuate (leave your home), you can go to:
  - the home of a family member
  - a friend's home
  - a motel, hotel or shelter
- Learn what to do in case of an emergency where you work and at your child's school or daycare.
- Sign up for the Connecticut Emergency Alerting and Notification Systems to get emergency messages emailed to you or sent by text message to your mobile phone. For more information and to register, go to www.ct.gov/ctalert.

## MAKE A PLAN FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

- Pick safe places in your home where you can go if there is an emergency.
- Pick two different ways to get out of your home in case you have to leave it.
- Pick a place that your family will meet in case you are separated during an emergency.
  - Pick one place that's in your neighborhood.
  - Pick one place that's outside of your neighborhood.
- Pick your family contacts – two people you and your family members can call in case you are separated during an emergency.
  - Pick one person who lives in the same state.
  - Pick one person who lives in a different state.
  - Write down your contacts' phone numbers and make sure everyone in your family has a copy of them.
- Pick a place where you can stay in case you have to evacuate your home for a few days.
- Make a plan for what you will do to keep your pets safe if there is an emergency.
- Know how to turn off the electricity, gas and water in your home in case you are asked to do it.
- Make sure everyone knows the plan.

## MAKE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

If there is an emergency in your area, you might not be able to get food, water or other things you need to survive. Also, the heat, water and electricity in your home might not work. That's why you should make an emergency supply kit and keep it in your home. The kit should have enough supplies for you and your family for at least three days. In a pandemic (worldwide disease outbreak), you may be asked to stay home for weeks to help stop the spread of the disease. You would use this kit if you are told to stay at home during an emergency or take it with you if you are told to evacuate.

### PACK A BAG OR A CONTAINER WITH THESE THINGS FOR YOUR EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT:

- ☐ A supply of water in jugs or bottles. You should have at least one gallon of water for every person in your home for each day. You will need more water if there are children, if someone is nursing a baby or if the weather is hot.
- ☐ Food:
  - food in cans or sealed packages like soup and tuna fish
  - foods and juices that do not have to be refrigerated or cooked
  - food for infants or the elderly
- ☐ A manual can opener, paper plates, plastic utensils and something to cook on like a small grill with fuel. Be sure to only use charcoal and gas grills outdoors to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.
- ☐ Bleach and eyedropper (to treat water).
- ☐ Paper towels, toilet paper, soap.
- ☐ Battery-powered radio, flashlights, cell phone, extra batteries.
- ☐ Blanket/sleeping bag, pillows for everyone in the family.
- ☐ Extra clothing for everyone in the family.
- ☐ Things babies and children need like diapers, games, toys and books.
- ☐ First-aid kit. Remember to include:
  - medicines (prescriptions, fever reducers, aspirin)
  - eye glasses and contact lens supplies
  - list of the doctors you go to and their phone numbers
  - medical supplies (colostomy supplies, insulin syringes)
- ☐ Garbage bags and cleaning supplies.
- ☐ Things your pets need like food and water, a pet carrier or cage, medicines, muzzle, collar, leash, ID tags and their immunization records.
- ☐ Extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash and important information like social security numbers and birth certificates.
- ☐ Plastic sheeting and duct tape (see "Sealing the Room - pg. 7).
- ☐ A copy of this guide.
- ☐ Pictures of your family members and pets in case you are separated and need help looking for them.

Check and refill your kit every few months to make sure no food or batteries have expired. A good time to do it is when you change your clocks in the fall and spring. You can build your kit over time by buying one thing, like a can of food or batteries, at a time.

# PLANNING FOR PEOPLE WITH FUNCTIONAL NEEDS

If you or someone you know has a functional need, like trouble seeing, hearing, walking, or has medical problems, you might have to do more to prepare for an emergency.

## IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN:

**SMALL CHILDREN** may need: formula, diapers, bottles, medications, wipes, baby food, extra water, toys, books.

Breastfeeding can save lives and keep your baby healthy during an emergency. Breastfeeding protects babies from the risks of contaminated water. It also protects your baby from breathing problems and diarrhea – diseases that can be deadly in a disaster. Breastfeeding is especially important if there is a loss of power, water and other services. For more information, go to www.usbreastfeeding.org.

**DAYCARE/SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN:** If there is an emergency while your child is in school or daycare, those places will have plans to protect your child. You should know what the plan is before an emergency happens.

## IF YOU ARE ELDERLY:

- If you use a home health care agency, make sure they know your family's emergency plan and who you would like to be contacted in the event of an emergency.
- Tell other family members where to find emergency supplies and teach them how to use any special medical equipment.
- Put your name on special equipment like wheelchairs, canes or walkers.

## IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY:

- Get other family members and friends to help in case of an emergency.
- Tell other people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Give one person you know and trust a key to your home.
- Wear a medical alert tag/bracelet so people know what your disability is.
- Show other people how to use your special medical equipment.
- If you have medical equipment that needs electricity and you have to evacuate to a shelter, bring an extension cord with you.
- If you have medical supplies delivered and have to evacuate or stay somewhere else temporarily, let your medical supply company know where you are staying. This lets them deliver you the medical supplies you need.
- If you need dialysis, find out where there are dialysis treatment facilities nearby.

If you have to stay in a hotel or motel, make sure you tell the people at the front desk that you will need help if there is an emergency. Tell them what kind of help you might need.

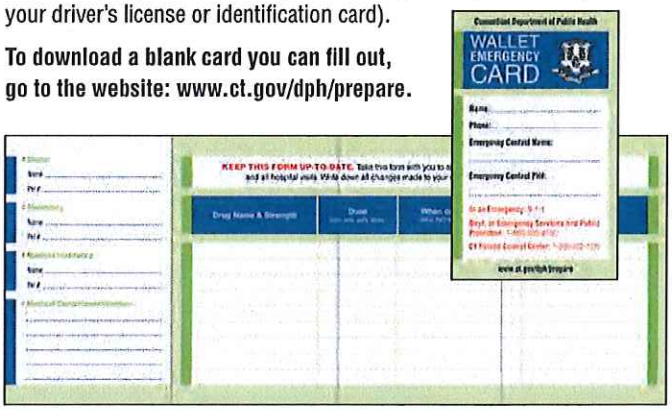
Your city or town might keep a list of people with functional needs so that they can be found quickly and helped in an emergency. Call the local emergency management director or fire department in your city or town and ask them how they can help you if there is an emergency.

**Make an "Emergency Health Information Card" for yourself and write down the following information:**

- Your name, address and phone number.
- Your disability.
- The name, address and phone number of a doctor, friend or family member who knows you and your disability.
- What others need to know about you if they find you unconscious or unable to talk to them, or if they need to move you out of your home quickly.
- Medical needs:
  - medicine or special equipment you need
  - allergies or problems with medicines
  - problems you have talking to people or understanding them
  - type of treatment you need
  - who you want to treat you
  - language(s) you speak

Make many copies of this card and keep it in your emergency supply kit, in your car, in your wheelchair pack, at work, and in your wallet (behind your driver's license or identification card).

**To download a blank card you can fill out, go to the website: www.ct.gov/dph/prepare.**




## HOW TO MAKE CHILDREN FEEL BETTER DURING AND AFTER AN EMERGENCY

- Ask your children to talk about anything that scares them. Let them ask questions and tell you how they're feeling. Talk together as a family about the emergency.
- Give children plenty of love. Tell them they are safe. Hold and hug them a lot.
- Tell children what is happening in simple words so they can understand.
- Make sure they know that the emergency is not their fault.
- Tell children it's okay to go back to school and do other normal things, like playing with friends. Tell them they can talk to their teachers about the emergency, too.

# WHAT YOU SHOULD WRITE DOWN

## WHERE TO GO IN AN EMERGENCY

Write down where your family spends most of their time: work, school, daycare, the homes of friends and family members. Workplaces, schools and daycare centers should have emergency plans. Find out what they are and write them down. Find out what your town will do in case of an emergency by calling the town hall. Write down that plan. Local TV and radio stations can give you important information during an emergency. Write down at least three local TV and radio stations.

## IMPORTANT NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Fill in this information and make a copy for everyone in your family.

### Your Family's Contact Person in Your State

Name:.....

City:..... State:.....

PH # (day):.....

PH # (evening):.....

Mobile #: .....

### Your Family's Contact Person in a Different State

Name:.....

City:..... State:.....

PH # (day):.....

PH # (evening):.....

Mobile #: .....

### Nearest Relative

Name:.....

City:..... State:.....

PH # (day):.....

PH # (evening):.....

Mobile #: .....

### Family Work Numbers

Mother:.....

Father:.....

Other:.....

### Utility Company Phone Numbers

Electric Co:.....

Gas Co:.....

Water Co:.....

Telephone Co:.....

Cable TV Co:.....

### School

Address:.....

PH #:.....

### Other School or Workplace

Address:.....

PH #:.....

### Other School or Workplace

Address:.....

PH #:.....

### Other Important Information and Phone Numbers

Doctor:.....

.....

.....

Pharmacist:.....

Medical Insurance:.....

SS Numbers:.....

Local Health Department/District:.....

Veterinarian:.....

Home/Rental Insurance

Name:.....

PH #:.....

Policy #:.....

The American Red Cross helps people prepare for emergencies and provides disaster relief to Connecticut residents. These services are done mostly by volunteers and are free of charge. The American Red Cross is also the main provider of blood to Connecticut's 31 hospitals.

# WHAT TO DO IF AN EMERGENCY HAPPENS

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Stay in a safe place and tune to your local TV or radio stations for instructions on how to keep safe.
- Do what state and local emergency officials tell you to do.
- Check to see if anyone around you is hurt and get help for anyone who's seriously injured.
- Dial 9-1-1 ONLY if there's a life-threatening situation. It is very important to keep these lines open for those who need them.
- Make sure your pets are safe and secure.
- Call your family contact – do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency. For non-emergency calls, try sending text messages from your mobile phone. In many cases, text messages will go through when a phone call may not.
- Check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or have a disability.

## WHAT SHOULDN'T I DO?

- **DO NOT** go to the hospital unless there is a medical emergency.

## WHAT DO I DO WHEN TOLD TO SHELTER IN PLACE?

In some emergencies, you may be told to shelter in place. This means that you should stay inside wherever you are and not go outside. You should:

- Stay calm.
- Bring children and pets inside right away.
- Close and lock all windows and outside doors.
- Get your emergency supply kit.
- Go to a room in the middle of your home or a room without windows if you have one.
- Turn on your radio and tune to a local news station for information.
- Stay where you are until you are told it is safe.

If there is a chemical, nuclear or radiological emergency, you should also:

- Turn off all vents that bring in outdoor air, like fans and air conditioners.
- If you have a fireplace, close the damper.
- You may also consider sealing the room (see "Sealing the Room" - pg. 7).

## WHAT DO I DO WHEN TOLD TO EVACUATE?

If you are told to evacuate, leave right away and take your emergency supply kit with you. Remember to take any medications or medical supplies you may need for the next few days with you, too. Depending on what's happening, you will be told the safest way to evacuate and where to go. You can also get information from local TV and radio stations.

## MONITOR AND LISTEN:

In an emergency, local officials may not be able to give you information and tell you what to do right away. Keep checking your local TV and radio stations, and the Internet for official news and information as it becomes available.

## WHAT ABOUT PETS?

Long before an emergency happens, you should make a plan for what to do with your pets to make sure they're cared for if you have to evacuate your home. Call friends, family, veterinarians or boarding kennels outside of your neighborhood to see if they'd be able to care for them.

Remember, pets aren't allowed in most Red Cross shelters. Only service animals that help people with disabilities will be allowed in. For more information on caring for your pets before, during and after an emergency, visit www.ready.gov/animals.

## THE EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

In Connecticut, we use the Emergency Alert System (EAS) during emergencies. When the EAS is activated, all TV and radio programs are stopped and an emergency message comes on. It is important that you listen to these instructions and stay tuned for more information. For a list of local Connecticut radio stations, go to www.ctba.org/stations.cfm.

## TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING IN AN EMERGENCY:

In an emergency, many people may be trying to use their mobile and landline telephones at the same time. When large numbers of people try to make phone calls at the same time, it can make it hard for your call to go through. Here are ways to help keep the telephone networks working in an emergency:

- Limit non-emergency calls
- Keep all phone calls short
- For non-emergency calls, try sending text messages from your mobile phone. In many cases, text messages will go through when a phone call may not.

# NATURAL DISASTERS

A natural disaster could happen in any part of Connecticut. Natural disasters include severe thunderstorms, flash floods, snowstorms, hurricanes and tornadoes. If a major storm is coming, make sure you have flashlights, a battery-operated radio, extra batteries and cell phones because you might lose electricity and phone service for a few days or even weeks.

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE A NATURAL DISASTER:

- Make sure you have an emergency supply kit ready.
- Know what different weather terms mean:
  - A severe storm watch means that dangerous weather may happen.
  - A severe weather warning means there is a storm on its way – take cover or seek shelter right away.
- Evacuate if you are told to do so by emergency officials. Plan on where you can stay for a few days, if you have to leave.

## DURING A NATURAL DISASTER:

- Move to a room near the middle of your home. If there is a storm like a hurricane or tornado, move to the lowest part of your home, like your basement if you have one. If there is severe flooding, move to the highest level of your home.
- Take your emergency supply kit with you.
- Keep checking local TV and radio stations and the Internet for official instructions, including shelter locations, weather reports, etc.

## AFTER A NATURAL DISASTER:

- Make sure that your family members are not hurt.
- **DO NOT TOUCH** or go near power lines that have been knocked down. Tell your local power company where you see any downed power lines.
- If there is a power outage, you should be careful of food safety and carbon monoxide poisoning. See "Power Outages" on page 9 for more information.
- If there is flooding, stay away from flood water. Flood water may contain viruses, bacteria and germs which could make you very sick. All food, water and medicine that have come in contact with flood water should be considered contaminated and thrown away.

In a serious storm or flood, you may have sewage backup into your home. Sewage contains bacteria, viruses, and other germs that can cause disease. A sewage backup can make your home unsafe to live in.

If you have a sewage backup in your home:

- Turn off the power if there is standing water or the chance of electrical wires touching water or anything wet.
- Do not flush the toilets.
- Keep all children and pets away from the sewage.
- Wear rubber gloves when touching anything with sewage on it. Wash hands right after. Never touch raw sewage with bare hands.
- Call your town or local health department to report a sewage backup.

## MAKE AN EMERGENCY CAR KIT FOR TRAVELING:

- blankets/sleeping bags
- flashlight with extra batteries
- first-aid kit
- utility knife
- high-calorie, non-perishable food (protein bars, granola bars or fruit bars)
- extra clothes to keep dry
- sack of sand (or cat litter)
- shovel
- windshield scraper and brush
- tool kit
- tow rope and booster cables
- bottled water
- compass and roadmaps

## TYPES OF NATURAL DISASTERS

### BLIZZARDS:

Weather forecasts usually let you know ahead of time if there's a blizzard coming. If a blizzard is coming, avoid driving and make sure you have food and supplies to last you a few days without electricity or phone service. If there is snow, make sure inlets and outlets for furnaces and other appliances are free from snow to prevent ventilation problems and carbon monoxide build-up. Also make sure your car's exhaust pipe is clear of snow or ice before starting.

### FLASH FLOODING:

Move quickly to higher ground. Water rushing at you in a flood can knock you off your feet! If you're in your car and water comes up around you, get out and move to higher ground right away. Cars can be swept away in just two feet of moving water.

### HURRICANES:

A hurricane is a big storm with thunder, lightning and very strong winds. A big hurricane can have winds blowing 75 miles per hour or higher. Hurricane season in Connecticut is June 1 through November 30. If there is a hurricane warning, take shelter right away or evacuate if you are told to do so. You can learn more about what to do before and after a hurricane online at www.ct.gov/hurricane.

### TORNADOES:

If there is a tornado warning, get to shelter right away. If you are in your car, stop. Do not try to outrun the tornado. Get out and lie flat, face down in a low area. Cover your head and wait for the tornado to pass by. If you are home, go to the basement, storm shelter or a room near the middle of the home. If you are in a tall building go to the middle of the building, like in a stairwell or hallway.

# BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES

Bacteria, viruses, and poisons cause biological emergencies. They can be sprayed into the air, used to contaminate (poison) food, and put into drinking water. Some types can also be spread by person-to-person contact. A biological emergency can happen by accident or when germs or other biological hazards are used on purpose to make people sick. How to protect yourself depends on the type of germs. Some germs, like anthrax, can't be passed on by someone who has it. Other germs, like smallpox, can be passed from one person to another. If that happens, people who have gotten sick might have to be isolated. People who are exposed to the germs might have to be quarantined.

### WHAT DO "QUARANTINE" AND "ISOLATION" MEAN?

To help stop diseases from spreading, you might be put into quarantine or isolation. "Quarantine" means that you are not sick, but are kept away from other people because you may have been exposed to an infectious or contagious disease. "Isolation" is when you are kept away from other people because you are sick. These are common during a biological emergency. You can also do these things on your own, even if you are not told to, to help stop the spread of disease.

### BEFORE A BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY HAPPENS:

- Be sure you have your emergency supply kit ready.

### WHEN A BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY HAPPENS:

- Check local TV and radio stations and the Internet for official instructions. They will tell you how to know if you or a family member has gotten sick, where to go for medical help and whether or not they are giving out medicines to help you.
- Always do what doctors and officials tell you to do.
- There may be long lines of people waiting for medications, vaccine or medical care, so you may have to be patient.
- If the illness can be passed from person to person, people who have been exposed may have to be quarantined.
- **EVERYONE** should practice good hygiene and cleanliness to avoid spreading germs.

### AFTER A BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY:

- Check local TV and radio stations and the Internet for official news, information and instructions.

Connecticut is divided into public health areas so it's easier to give out medicines during an emergency. If an emergency happens, state and local officials will tell you when and where to go for help through your TV and radio. To find out which local health department is responsible for getting you and your family medicine or vaccinations in a biological emergency, go to www.ct.gov/dph/mda.

# CHEMICAL EMERGENCIES

A chemical emergency can happen when gasses, liquids or solid materials that can poison people have been released. This kind of emergency can happen by accident or on purpose by a terrorist attack.

Some chemicals are very dangerous and make you sick right away. Other chemicals are less dangerous and may not hurt you. Chemicals that are liquids or gasses are usually more dangerous than chemicals that are solid materials.

Protecting yourself and your family before, during and after a chemical emergency can help keep you safe and keep you from getting sick. Follow these simple steps:

### BEFORE A CHEMICAL EMERGENCY HAPPENS:

- Be sure you have your emergency supply kit ready.
- Pick a room in the middle of your home or building for shelter. Rooms without windows on the highest level are the best.

### WHEN A CHEMICAL EMERGENCY HAPPENS:

- Close all your doors and windows.
- If you have a fireplace, close the damper.
- Turn off fans, air conditioners, and forced-air heating units that bring in fresh air from the outside.
- If you are told to stay where you are, you should:
  - Move to an inside room and bring your emergency supply kit with you.
  - Check local TV and radio stations and the Internet for official news, information and instructions.
- You may also consider sealing the room (see "Sealing the Room" - pg. 7).

### AFTER A CHEMICAL EMERGENCY:

- Wash with soap and water right away if you think you were near a chemical.
- Change out of your clothing.
- Get medical help if you feel sick.

If a biological or chemical emergency happens, officials may not be able to tell you what to do right away. It might take time for them to figure out exactly what the illness or chemical is, how it should be treated, and who is in danger. You should check local TV and radio stations and the Internet for official news following the emergency so you know:

- How dangerous it is.
- What illness you might get.
- Where to get medicines if you have to.
- Where to go for medical help or shelter.

# NUCLEAR & RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES

A nuclear or radiological emergency might be an accident at a nuclear power plant, the use of a small nuclear weapon or someone setting off a "dirty bomb." When a dirty bomb explodes, it sends off dangerous radioactive material over a certain area. Radiation's health effects can be mild, like reddening of the skin, or very serious, like cancer or even death.

## BEFORE A NUCLEAR OR RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY HAPPENS:

- Be sure you have your emergency supply kit ready.
- Make sure you know where and how to get information from your city or town.
- If you live near the Millstone Station (a nuclear power plant), you should get a guide called "Emergency Planning for Millstone Station" in the mail every year. Make sure you put that guide in your emergency supply kit. If you live within 10 miles of a nuclear power plant, you should know the evacuation routes for your neighborhood.

## WHEN A NUCLEAR OR RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY HAPPENS:

- During and after a release of radioactive materials, local, state and federal officials will watch the levels of radiation and tell you what you should do to protect yourself.
- The best action will depend on the emergency. Tune to your local TV, radio stations and Internet for information and instructions during any emergency.
- If a lot of radioactive material is released in a radiological emergency, you may be told to "shelter in place," which means to stay indoors where you are; or you may be told to move to another location.
- If you are told to shelter in place, you should do the following:
  - Close and lock all doors and windows.
  - Turn off fans, air conditioners, and forced-air heating units that bring in fresh air from the outside. Only use units that recirculate air that is already in the building.
  - Close fireplace dampers.
  - If you can, bring pets inside.
  - Move to an inner room or basement.
  - You may also consider sealing the room (see "Sealing the Room" to the right).
  - Keep your radio tuned to the emergency response network or local news to find out what else you need to do.
  - Do not leave your shelter until you are told that it is safe by local officials.
- If you are told to evacuate, follow the directions from your local officials. Leave the area as quickly and orderly as possible. Also:
  - Turn off the fan, air conditioning, and heating system in your car. These bring in air from the outside. Close your vents and keep your windows rolled up.
  - Take your emergency supply kit, medicines you need, extra clothes, cash and credit cards.
  - Take pets only if you are using your own vehicle and going to a place you know will accept animals. Emergency vehicles and shelters usually will only accept service animals and may not accept pets.

## AFTER A NUCLEAR OR RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY:

Check your local TV and radio stations and the Internet for official news, information and instructions.

## SEALING THE ROOM

During a chemical, nuclear or radiological emergency, the air outside may be dangerous. For short periods of time, "sealing the room" can help protect you and your family from harmful air outside. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local officials say the air is dangerous, you may want to take this kind of action.

Choose one room in the middle of your home or a room with no windows as your shelter. When you move to your shelter, use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal any doors, windows, or vents in case a chemical or radiation plume is passing over (listen to your radio for instructions). Within two or three hours, you should take down the plastic and duct tape and air out the room. **You can suffocate if you keep the room tightly sealed for more than five hours.** To seal a room:

- Seal all windows, doors and air vents in one room with 2-4 mil. thick plastic sheeting and duct tape. You might want to measure and cut the plastic sheeting in advance to save time.
- Cut the plastic sheeting at least six inches wider than the openings and label each sheet.
- Duct tape plastic at corners first and then tape down all the edges.

Connecticut has special plans in case there is an emergency at the nuclear power plants at the Millstone Station in Waterford, Connecticut or Indian Point in Buchanan, New York. These plans include steps the state takes to protect the health and safety of all Connecticut residents. If an emergency happens at one of these facilities, public safety officials will begin the state emergency response plan and tell residents what is going on and what to do.

# PANDEMIC FLU EMERGENCIES

### WHAT IS A FLU PANDEMIC?

A flu pandemic happens when a new kind of flu virus makes people sick all over the world. It can last for many months, affect many different places and be very dangerous. Millions of people around the world might get very sick. Many people could die. In the 1900s there were three flu pandemics, including the Spanish Flu of 1918 which caused over 40 million deaths worldwide (over 500,000 in the U.S.) According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), during the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009 more than 60 million people got sick, more than 274,000 were hospitalized, and more than 12,000 died in the U.S. No one knows for sure when, or where, the next flu pandemic might happen, but everyone should be prepared.

### WHAT CAUSES A FLU PANDEMIC?

When an animal flu virus mutates (changes form) and spreads to humans.

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- A lot of sick people
- Hospitals and clinics with long lines, lack of medicine
- Closed schools, businesses, stores, banks and government offices
- Limited supplies (food and water)
- Limited services (power, water, garbage collection)

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

- Be as healthy as you can be. Eat a balanced diet, get plenty of rest and exercise daily
- Stay away from anyone who is sick
- Stay home from work or school if you feel sick
- Clean the surfaces of shared objects (telephones, countertops, doorknobs)
- Listen for school and work closings
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth (these are attack areas for the flu virus)
- Make sure your emergency supply kit is ready

### GOING TO WORK DURING A FLU PANDEMIC:

- Stay home if you can or if you are sick
- Plan on getting your work done with less people
- Expect to do things that usually aren't part of your job

If there is a flu pandemic, check your local TV and radio stations and the Internet for information and instructions.

For more information about pandemic flu, go to www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch.

# DRINKING WATER EMERGENCIES

Contamination (dangerous chemicals or substances) of drinking water does not happen very often in Connecticut. Contamination may be caused by water system failures, accidents or terrorist attacks. For example, things like chemicals or animal and human waste can get into a water supply and make the water dangerous to drink.

Your drinking water may not be safe during or after an emergency, like a hurricane. You will be told by your water company or local officials if your drinking water is not safe. Water that has an unusual change in color, smell or taste, or has floating pieces in it, should NOT be used. Listen to your local news or your water company to know if your water is not safe.

If you are a homeowner in a flooded area whose private well has flooded, you should consider your well contaminated. Flooded wells should be disinfected before use. To be safe, you should treat your water or use bottled water until you disinfect your well. For information on disinfecting wells, go to www.ct.gov/dph/floods.

If you are told to treat your drinking water, use treated or bottled water when cooking, washing fruits and vegetables, brushing teeth, or making baby formula. You should also use treated or bottled water to wash your hands when cooking. Adults and older children do not need to use treated water to shower or bathe, but should try not to swallow or get untreated water in their mouth. *Infants, toddlers, the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems should be bathed using treated or bottled water.*

## HOW TO TREAT WATER

You may need to treat your drinking water or use bottled water in an emergency. To protect you and your family, you should do **ONE** of the following to make sure your water is safe to use:

- Boil your drinking water at a rolling boil for one minute. Make sure water is clear of floating pieces before boiling; OR,
- Use sealed bottled water; OR,
- Add eight drops of liquid chlorine bleach for every gallon of clear water or 16 drops for every gallon of cloudy water. Do NOT use household bleach that has perfumes or ingredients other than sodium hypochlorite as it may be toxic. Be sure to mix the water well and let it stand for at least 30 minutes before using; OR,
- Add water purification tablets as it says on the package. When using treatment chemicals, be sure to mix the water well and let it stand for at least 30 minutes before using.

### IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

If you notice suspicious people or activities near public drinking water sources or water supply facilities, report them to the local police.

# POWER OUTAGES

Be sure to report all power outages to your utility company. In Connecticut, the major utility companies include:

- Connecticut Light & Power: 1-800-286-2000
- United Illuminating: 1-800-7-CALL-UI

## FOOD SAFETY:

Food in your refrigerator and freezer may be unsafe to eat if:

- The power is off for four hours or more.
- The temperature inside your refrigerator is at or above 45°F/7°C for more than two hours.

Keep the refrigerator and freezer closed to help keep food safe longer:

- Keep the refrigerator/freezer door closed during a power outage to keep it cold.
- Refrigerated food will be safe for no more than four hours.
- Freezer full of frozen food will be safe for no more than 48 hours (24 hours if half full).

Clean your refrigerator and freezer after a power outage:

- When the power comes back on, clean out your refrigerator and freezer **BEFORE** you put new food in it.
- Wash the inside of the refrigerator and freezer with soap and warm water. Next, wipe the inside down with a mild solution of 1/2 tablespoon of bleach in a gallon of water. Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors open to air dry.
- Once dry, close the doors and let it get cold inside the freezer and refrigerator before you fill it with food.

For a list of foods that should be thrown away after a long power outage, go to www.ct.gov/dph/poweroutage/food.

## BREAST MILK:

- For breast milk stored in your freezer, if you can see ice crystals, it is safe to re-freeze.
- If the breast milk has defrosted (no ice crystals), use within 48 hours for healthy babies and within 24 hours for premature or sick babies.

## CARBON MONOXIDE (CO):

When the power goes out during an emergency, like a hurricane or winter storm, some people may use portable generators for electricity or outdoor grills for cooking and heating. Misuse of portable generators and outdoor cooking devices can cause CO to build up in a home, garage, or camper and poison the people and animals inside.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can kill you. To prevent CO poisoning:

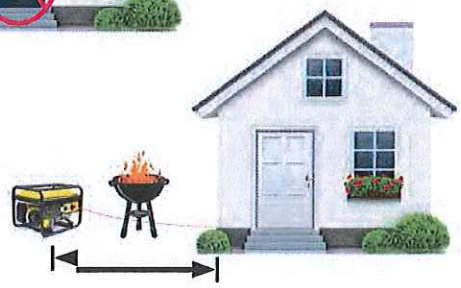
- **DO NOT** use portable generators inside your home, garage, carport, basement or other enclosed space, like a covered porch. Only use portable generators outside and at least 20 feet from you and your neighbors' homes. Keep your generator away from doors, windows or air intake vents.
- **DO NOT** use charcoal grills, gas grills or camping stoves inside your home.
- **DO NOT** use propane or kerosene heaters inside your home.
- **DO NOT** use your gas oven or stove top to heat your home.
- Check to make sure that you have CO detectors installed on each level of your home and outside sleeping areas. Change the batteries every six months and replace your CO detector every five years.

**IMPORTANT:** Opening windows and doors, and using fans is **NOT** enough to stop a deadly buildup of CO in your home.

The signs of CO poisoning are like the flu: headache, tiredness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, or loss of consciousness. These signs may be your only warning because you cannot see or smell CO. If you or a family member has signs of CO poisoning, get outside and dial 9-1-1 from a mobile phone or from a neighbor's home.

For more information on carbon monoxide, go to www.ct.gov/dph/co.

***DO NOT use portable generators or outdoor grills indoors.***



*At least 20 feet*

***ONLY use portable generators and outdoor grills outside.***

# IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS & WEBSITES

## IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 9–1–1

Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. . . . . 1-860-685-8190
www.ct.gov/demhs
www.twitter.com/ctdemhs
www.facebook.com/ctemhs

Connecticut Department of Public Health. . . . . 1-860-509-8000
www.ct.gov/dph/prepare
www.twitter.com/ctdph
www.facebook.com/dphct

Connecticut Poison Control Center . . . . . 1-800-222-1222

United Way Information Line . . . . . 2–1–1

American Red Cross . . . . . 1-877-RED-CROSS (1-877-733-2767)
www.redcross.org

Tip Lines
Report suspicious terrorist activities . . . . . 1-866-HLS-TIPS (1-866-457-8477)

Connecticut radio and television stations are a timely source of information in an emergency. For a list of local Connecticut radio stations, go to www.ctba.org/stations.cfm.

# HOW CAN I HELP?

- Call the American Red Cross at 1-877-RED-CROSS (1-877-733-2767) to make an appointment to donate blood.
- Contact the relief agencies/organizations in your area to see what they may need, like clothing or food.
- Take a Basic First-Aid or CPR class.
- Consider joining a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Contact your local town or city for more information.
- Consider volunteering for a public health response team. Contact your local health department/district for more information. To find your local health department, go to www.ct.gov/dph/localhealth.
- If you are a licensed or retired healthcare professional, or if you're not a healthcare professional and are interested in volunteering during a disaster at a hospital or local/regional medical reserve corps unit, go to www.ct-esar-vhp.org or www.ctmrc.org and sign up to volunteer today.
- Form a neighborhood watch program to be better prepared for future events.

Keeping Connecticut Healthy
DPH
Connecticut Department of Public Health

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