



# Ada County **Emergency Preparedness Guide**



**Ada City-County Emergency Management**  
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For more information visit our home page at  
<http://www.accem.org>

Preparing our Community for Times of Emergency

Ada County • Ada County Highway District  
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# When disaster strikes . . . BE PREPARED

## Hazards to Prepare for in Ada County

### Earthquakes

The Federal Emergency Management Agency ranks Idaho fifth highest in the nation for earthquake risk. In the last 50 years Idaho has experienced two of the largest earthquakes in the continental US. Idaho doesn't have the large population and infrastructure of some states at risk, such as California. However, we do have many citizens who are unaware of their earthquake risk as well as numerous unsafe buildings. We cannot predict or prevent earthquakes, but by preparing for the consequences we can save lives and reduce injury and property loss.

### Floods and Flash Floods

On average, the Boise River reaches 7,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), or flood stage, once every 5 years. This results in some minor inconveniences and damage each time it happens. Continued encroachment and development in the river floodway aggravates the situation. Future floods over 10,000 cfs may result in substantial expense to the community.



Three out of every five years certain creeks and gulches in Ada County also pose a threat. The highest risk drainages include Seaman, Pierce, Polecat, Stuart, Crane and Hulls Gulches, Dry Creek and Cottonwood Creek. Existing channels are inadequate to carry sudden large flows of water in many areas of dense development.



### Thunderstorms and Lightning

Thunderstorms, large amounts of rain, hail, lightning, and high winds directly affect Ada County. These storms may also cause secondary problems such as loss of utilities, automobile accidents due to low visibility, and flash floods. Each year an average of two to five incidents of thunderstorm related damage is recorded in Ada County.

### Hazardous Materials Accidents

Hazardous materials incidents are the most likely hazard to occur locally. Hazardous materials, including agricultural chemicals, are commonly produced, stored and used in Ada County. About 150 facilities in the county contain hazardous materials, approximately 50 of these locations have at least one extremely hazardous substance. Sixteen facilities in the county have radioactive materials licenses.

### Wildfires

More people are making their homes in the foothills and outlying areas. These homeowners enjoy the beauty of the environment but face the very real danger of wildfires. Wildfires, when forced along a path of dry vegetation by high winds, may move very rapidly, often destroying everything in their path within minutes.



## CHILDREN & DISASTERS

Children depend on daily routines. They wake up, eat breakfast, go to school, and play with their friends. When emergencies interrupt this routine, children may become anxious. They'll look to you and other adults for help. How you react to an emergency gives them clues on how to act. You need to keep control of the situation. Your response during this time may have a lasting impact.



### Children are most afraid that:

- the event will happen again.
- someone will be injured or killed.
- they will be separated from their family.
- they will be left alone.



Having children participate in the family's recovery activities will build their confidence and help them feel that their life will return to "normal."

- Teach children how to recognize danger signals. Teach them what smoke detectors and fire alarms sound like.
- Explain how and when to call for help. Post emergency phone numbers and teach your children how to call 911.
- Help your children memorize important family information. They should know their family name, address, phone number and where to meet in case of an emergency. If they are too young, they should carry a small index card that lists emergency information to give to an adult.

# Your **DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT**

## SUPPLIES

There are six basics you should stock in your home: **water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies and special items.** Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. Possible containers include:

a large, covered trash container



a camping backpack

a suitcase



## SUGGESTIONS

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of your **Disaster Supplies Kit** in the trunk of your car.
- Keep items in air tight plastic bags.
- Change your stored water supply every 6 months.
- Rotate your stored food supply every 6 months.
- Rethink your kit and family needs once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

Below is a checklist of suggested items to include.

### Water

Store water in containers such as soft drink bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least 2 quarts of water each day. Children, nursing mothers and elderly may need more.



- Store one gallon of water per person per day (2 quarts for drinking, 2 quarts for food preparation and sanitation.)
- Keep at least a 3-day supply of water for each person in your home.

### Food

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples - sugar, salt, pepper
- High energy foods - peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars
- Food for infants, elderly or persons on special diets
- Comfort food - cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, tea bags, instant coffee
- Vitamins



### First Aid Kit



Assemble or purchase a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. Kits may be purchased at any camping or outdoor store.

### Tools and Supplies

- Paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Battery operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash including change
- Manual can opener, utility knife
- Fire extinguisher
- Tent
- Pliers, tape, compass
- Paper, pencil
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal Flare
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Wrench to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area



### Sanitation Items

- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

### Clothing and Bedding

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Rain gear
- Hat and gloves
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses



### Special Items

#### For Baby

- Formula and bottles
- Diapers
- Medications



#### For Adults

- Heart and blood pressure meds
- Insulin and other prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses/extra eye glasses
- Entertainment**-games/books

#### Important Documents

- (Keep together in a portable, waterproof container.)
- ✓ Will, deeds, stocks, & bonds
- ✓ Passport, social security cards
- ✓ Bank account numbers
- ✓ Credit card numbers
- ✓ Birth & marriage certificates

# Your FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

## 4 Steps to Safety

### 1 Find Out What Could Happen to You

- Find out what type of disasters could occur in your community as well as your neighborhood and how you should respond. (*See Hazards to Prepare for in Ada County on the first page.*)
- Learn about the sirens along the foothills and if they affect you.
- Contact the Idaho Humane Society at 342-3508 to arrange for the care of your animals before a disaster occurs.
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare and other places where your family spends time.



### 2 Create a Disaster Plan

- Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Discuss the types of hazards you're at risk from and how to respond.
- Pick 2 places to meet:
  1. Right outside your home in case of a fire.
  2. Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Ask an out-of-state person to be your "family contact." After a disaster it's often easier to call long distance. Family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan what to do with your pets.



### 3 Put Your Plan into Action

- Post emergency telephone numbers by each phone in your home.
- Teach children how and when to call 911.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach family members old enough how to use the fire extinguisher and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a **Disaster Supplies Kit**.
- Take a first aid and a CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safest location in your home for each type of disaster.



### 4 Practice and Maintain Your Plan

- Quiz your kids every 6 months so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills periodically.
- Replace stored water and rotate stored food every 6 months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s).
- Test your smoke detector monthly and change the batteries annually.

## HOME HAZARD HUNT

In a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause a fire is a potential hazard. For example, a hot water heater or a bookshelf can fall. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards.



- Have defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections repaired.
- Fasten shelves securely.
- Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Secure water heater. Strap to wall studs.
- Repair cracks in ceilings or foundations.
- Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products away from heat sources and off the ground.
- Place oily rags and hazardous waste in covered metal cans.
- Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors and gas vents.

## EVACUATION

Evacuate immediately if told to do so. Take your **Disaster Supplies Kit**. Listen to the radio for emergency instructions. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes. Make sure to lock your home and use travel routes specified by the authorities. Don't use shortcuts or break barricades.

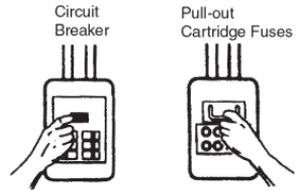
**If** instructed to do so, and you have time, shut off water, gas and electricity. Let others know when you left and where you're going. Make arrangements for pets. Animals may not be allowed in public shelters.

# Planning for UTILITY FAILURE

## Electricity

Following a disaster, check for damaged wiring within your home. Look for sparks or the smell of hot or burning insulation. If damaged, shut off the power at the circuit breaker or fuse box.

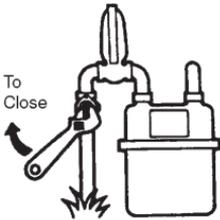
Outside, consider all downed power lines as live. Do not touch downed lines or attempt to move any object in contact with them. Report any broken or damaged lines or poles.



Open



Closed



## Natural Gas

If an emergency occurs and you **do not smell** or hear escaping gas, you probably do not need to shut off your gas. Doing so may deprive you of service unnecessarily. If you **do smell** gas turn off the meter as follows:

- Locate the meter shut-off valve on the gas supply pipe.
- Use a wrench to turn the valve 1/4 turn so that the lever is cross-wise to the pipe.
- Once the gas is off, leave it off until a technician can turn it on.

## Water

After a disaster water supplies may be cut off or contaminated. Below are water sources in the home that may be used for drinking.

- **Hot Water Tank** - Turn off the power that heats the tank and let it cool. Place a container below tank and open the drain valve.
- **Water Pipes** - Release air pressure by turning on the highest faucet in the home. Then drain the water from the lowest faucet.

Turn Clockwise  
to Shut Off

