

# EMERGENCY

a Public Safety publication **CITIZEN'S ACTION GUIDE**

## Be smart, informed and prepared

Immediately after an emergency, essential services may be cut off, and local disaster relief and government responders may not be able to reach you right away.

Knowing what to do to protect yourself and your household is essential.

This guide describes how to prepare for most disasters, includes safety tips and provides information about emergency water and food.

Common sense actions for one emergency event can apply to others. Being informed, remaining calm and having a plan are key to your safety.

As we learned from recent events in our nation's history, the following things can happen after an emergency or terrorist attack:



Make sure your entire family knows your emergency plans and have an emergency contact outside the home.

- Significant numbers of casualties and/or damage to buildings and the infrastructure may occur. Your employers need current contact numbers and medical information.
- Heavy public safety involvement at the local, state and federal levels will follow a terrorist attack.
- Emergency medical and mental health resources in your community may be strained or overwhelmed.
- Extensive media coverage will follow these events and strong public fear and international implications may arise for an extended time.
- You and your household may have to evacuate or relocate for a period of time.
- Cleanup may take many months.

This guide should serve as your foundation for disaster preparedness and safety. Since special conditions exist in every neighborhood, follow specific instructions for your immediate area.

In the event of an emergency, you should tune into your local news, Cobb Government Access Channel TV23 or the NOAA Weather Service Radio.

You can also aid your neighborhood prior to a crisis by enrolling in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, which teaches private citizens the basic skills they could need during an emergency.

Free CERT classes are held throughout the year. To reserve a place in a future class or get more information, call (770) 499-4567.



*Cobb County...Expect the Best!*

- Workplaces, schools and businesses may close, suspend operations, or modify schedules, and travel may be restricted.

# Protect your family through prior planning

Meet with your family and discuss why you should prepare for disasters. Explain the dangers of fire and severe weather to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team. Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.

## Pick two places to meet

- Right outside your home in case of sudden emergency, like a fire.
- Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.

## Choose an emergency contact

- Ask an out-of-state friend 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 how to take care of your pets. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters after a disaster due to health regulations.
- Contact your emergency management office and American Red Cross Chapter about disaster preparations – be prepared to take notes.
- Learn about your community's warning signals – what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, children's school or daycare center and other places where your family spends time.

## Working with neighbors

- Meet with neighbors to plan how residents could work together after a disaster.



Children need to know your family's fire and emergency plans.

- If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a homeowners' association or crime watch group, use disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbors' special skills.
- Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

## Review, then repeat

- Quiz your family every six months so they remember what to do. Practice and update your plan.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Post emergency numbers by phones.

*Family continued on page 3*

## Rule number one: Keep a proper first aid kit handy

You should have a first aid kit in your home and in each family vehicle. Mark it clearly. To assemble your own first aid kit, we recommend you include the following basics:

- (20) adhesive bandages, various sizes
- (1) 5-inch x 9-inch sterile dressing
- (1) conforming roller gauze bandage
- (2) triangular bandages
- (2) 3-inch x 3-inch sterile gauze pads
- (2) 4-inch x 4-inch sterile gauze pads
- (1) roll 3-inch width cohesive bandage
- (2) germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- (6) antiseptic wipes
- (2) pair large medical grade non-latex gloves
- Adhesive tape, 2 inch width
- Anti-bacterial ointment
- Cold pack
- Scissors (small, personal)
- Tweezers
- CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield
- Family prescription drugs
- Tools and supplies
- Non-prescription drugs
  - Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
  - Anti-diarrhea medication
  - Antacid (for stomach upset)



Robert Gugley

Multiple first aid kits can make the difference to your family's health during an unexpected emergency.

- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

### Family

*continued from Page 2*

- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches or breaker/fuse box.
- Verify that you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Establish the best escape routes from every room in your home and try to identify two ways out of each.
- Find safe areas in your home for each type of disaster.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a disaster supplies kit.
- Take classes such as Red Cross first aid and CPR, or join the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). You can get more information at (770) 499-4567.

# Transforming your house into a safe shelter

If authorities ask you to shelter in place, it is a precaution during a hazardous materials emergency to keep you safe while remaining indoors. (This is not the same as safety measures during a storm when you should seek shelter below ground level.)

This means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building.

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors. If there is danger of an explosion, close the window shades, blinds or curtains.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your family disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable 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.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or told to evacuate.



## How you can prevent a bad situation from getting worse at home

During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause a fire is a home hazard.

For example, a water heater or a bookshelf can fall. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards.

- Repair defective wiring and plumbing. If you smell gas, turn it off and contact a certified professional for repair.
- Fasten all shelves securely to the walls. Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves closer to the floor.
- Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds Bolt large pictures and mirrors to the walls.
- Secure the water heater to the wall or floor with metal strapping or other means.
- Repair ceiling and foundation cracks. Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Store all toxic chemicals away from heat and flame sources.
- Have fireplaces, chimneys and gas vents cleaned and serviced by certified repair professionals.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.
- Know where the outside overhead utility lines run; stay away from downed power lines in emergencies.

# Gather the materials you'll need during a crisis

Where will your family be when disaster strikes? They could be anywhere – at work, at school or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your children are safe?

Disaster can strike without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home.

What would you do if basic services – water, gas, electricity or telephones – were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

Families can cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team.

Locate the main electric box, water service main and natural gas main. Learn how and when to turn off these utilities. Teach all responsible family members.

Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves. Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. If you turn the gas off, a professional must turn it back on.

## Supplies

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Assemble a disaster supplies kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or covered trash containers.

Include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications. Have a first aid kit for each vehicle.
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and many extra batteries
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card,

cash or traveler's checks.

- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- An extra pair of glasses
- Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car.
- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- *Emergency Citizen's Action Guide*

## Tools

- Nonelectric can opener, utility knife
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Pliers and tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare and whistle
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Plastic sheeting and small collapsible tent
- Map of the area (to locate assembly areas and evacuation routes)

## Apparel

- Clothing and bedding
- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Rain gear, hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

## Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towelettes, hand sanitizers
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant



# Keep a steady supply of safe drinking water

Having an ample supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments can double that amount.

Children, nursing mothers and sick people will need even more. You will also need water for food preparation and hygiene. Store a total of at least one gallon per person, per day. You should store at least a two-week supply of water for each person.

If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

## How to store water

Store your water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held toxic substances. Plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles, are best.

You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums. Seal water containers tightly, label them and store in a cool, dark place. Rotate water every six months.

## Emergency outdoor water sources

If you need to find water outside your home, you can use these sources. Be sure to treat the water before drinking it.

- Rainwater, streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water
- Ponds, lakes and natural springs

Avoid water with floating material, an odor or dark color. Use saltwater only if you distill it first. You should not drink flood water.

## Hidden water sources

If a disaster catches you without a supply of clean water, you can use the water in your



There are three ways of making sure outside water is safe for consumption.

water heater tank, pipes and ice cubes in your freezer. As a last resort, you can use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl).

Know the location of your incoming water valve. You'll need to shut it off to stop contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines.

To obtain the water from your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your house at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the house.

To use the water in your water heater tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off, and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve and turning on a hot-water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty.

## Three ways to treat water

In addition to having a bad odor and taste, contaminated water can contain microorgan-

*Water continued on page 8*

## Foods for thought: Stockpiling now means fewer worries later

While 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 stockpile is to increase the amount of food you normally keep on your shelves.

If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an extended period and without any food for many days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women.

If your water supply is limited, avoid foods that are high in fat and protein. Don't stock salty foods, since they will make you thirsty. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content.

You don't need to buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. Use canned foods, dry mixes and other staples in your cupboard. Familiar foods are important. They can lift morale and give a feeling of security in times of stress. Also, canned foods won't require cooking, water or special preparation.

### Special considerations

Take into account your family's needs and tastes. Include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition. 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. Nursing babies may need liquid formula in case they are unable to nurse. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for sick or elderly people.

Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils. And don't forget nonperishable foods for your pets.

### Powerless cooking

You can use a fireplace for emergency cook-



Familiar foods are best for preparing an emergency stockpile.

ing while a charcoal grill or camp stove can be used outdoors. You can also heat food with candle warmers, chafing dishes and fondue pots. Canned food can be eaten right out of the can. If you heat it in the can, be sure to first open the can and remove the label.

### Storage tips

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot – a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans carefully so you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags and keep them in airtight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or airtight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they spoil and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink.

*Food Supply continued on page 10*

# County siren system provides important warnings

When you hear one of the 74 emergency warning sirens anywhere in Cobb County, you need to take immediate action.

The county will sound these sirens for three to five minutes when:

- The National Weather Service issues a severe thunderstorm warning with a tornado watch.
- The National Weather Service issues a tornado warning.
- A tornado has been spotted or reported by public safety officials.
- Additional weather warnings are issued.
- National Security events.
- Hazardous material incidents where evacu-



ation or other action may be warranted.

Cobb County's sirens are tested at noon on the first Wednesday of every month for three to five minutes, weather permitting.

If the weather is questionable on that Wednesday, the test will be conducted on Thursday. If Thursday's weather is questionable, that month's siren test will be canceled.

Several Cobb County sirens have the capability of broadcasting voice messages.

The majority of Cobb's sirens will not specify the type of storm or emergency; therefore, you need to tune into your local radio or television station for further information.

## Water

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isms that cause diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. You should treat all water of uncertain purity before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene.

There are many ways to treat water. None is perfect. Often the best solution is a combination of methods.

Before treating, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towel or clean cloth.

**Boiling:** Boiling is the safest method of treating water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This will also improve the taste of stored water.

**Disinfection:** You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Only use regular household liquid bleach containing 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented bleaches, colorsafe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners.

Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.

The only agent used to treat water should be household liquid bleach. Other chemicals, such as iodine or water treatment products sold in camping or surplus stores that do not contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient, are not recommended and should not be used.

While the two above methods will kill most microbes in water, distillation will remove microbes that resist these methods, heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals.

**Distillation:** Distillation involves boiling water and collecting the vapor that condenses back to water. The condensed vapor will not include salt and other impurities. To distill, fill a pot halfway with water.

Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side-up when the lid is upside-down (make sure the cup is not dangling into the water) and boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.

# WHAT TO DO DURING HOMELAND SECURITY ALERT STATUS:

## SEVERE RISK

### COMPLETE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AT LOWER LEVELS (RED)

- Listen to radio or TV for current information and instructions
- Contact business and/or school to determine status of work and/or school day
- Adhere to any travel restrictions announced by local government
- Be prepared to shelter in place or evacuate if instructed to do so by local government
- Discuss children's fears concerning possible terrorist attacks

## HIGH RISK

### COMPLETE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AT LOWER LEVELS (ORANGE)

- Exercise caution when traveling
- Take additional precautions at public events

## ELEVATED RISK

### COMPLETE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AT LOWER LEVELS (YELLOW)

- Practice your Disaster Plan
- Develop alternate routes to and from work or school and practice them

## GUARDED RISK

### COMPLETE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AT LOWER LEVELS (BLUE)

- Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to the proper authorities (Non-emergency (770) 499-3911)
- Provide volunteer services and take advantage of additional volunteer training opportunities

## LOW RISK

### (GREEN)

- Develop a Personal/Family Disaster Plan and update as needed
- Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit and update as needed
- Prepare a Shelter in Place Kit and update as needed
- Develop emergency communication plan with family members, neighbors and friends and update as needed
- Examine volunteer opportunities in your community; choose an agency to volunteer with & receive initial training
- If not known to you, contact school to determine their emergency notification and evacuation plans for children

## You can do your part by keeping a careful watch

Residents may observe a variety of actions, statements, associations, timing or patterns of activity that may create suspicions of illegal conduct in their community.

No one has a better perspective about normal activity in the community than the people who live there. Law enforcement has always relied upon the common-sense perceptions of residents who notice something or someone that appears suspicious or out of place.

Participating in Cobb's Homeland Security is just like taking part in your local neighborhood watch, only much more is at stake.

When under any high alert, the Cobb County

Department of Public Safety has increased security at key county facilities. Access will be restricted at some county facilities and unescorted visitors will not be permitted to enter.

If you observe suspicious activity that requires immediate response, you should contact Cobb County 911. If you have information about suspicious activity that is no longer in progress, you should call the Cobb County Homeland Security 24-hour confidential tip hotline at (770) 590-5569.



Watch and report.

## Food supply

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- Place new items at the back of the storage area.

## Nutrition tips

During and right after a disaster, it will be vital that you maintain your strength.

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (at least two quarts a day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral and protein supplements in your stockpile to assure adequate nutrition.

## Rotation

Here are some general guidelines for rotating common emergency foods.

*Use within six months:*

- Powdered milk (boxed)
- Dried fruit (in metal container)
- Dry, crisp crackers (in metal container)
- Potatoes

*Use within one year:*

- Canned condensed meat, vegetable soups
  - Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
  - Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (in metal containers)
  - Peanut butter and jelly
  - Hard candy, canned nuts and vitamin C
- May be stored indefinitely (in proper containers and conditions):*

- Wheat, dried corn, white rice and dry pasta
- Vegetable oils, soybeans
- Baking powder, salt
- Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
- Noncarbonated soft drinks
- Bouillon products
- Powdered milk (in nitrogen-packed cans)

## If the electricity goes off . . .

FIRST, use perishable food and foods from the refrigerator.

THEN, use foods from the freezer. To minimize the number of times you open the freezer door, post a list of freezer contents on it. In a well-filled, well-insulated freezer, foods will usually still have ice crystals in their centers (meaning foods are safe to eat) for at least three days.

FINALLY, begin to use non-perishable foods and staples.

# Being prepared for terrorism: Tips on security

The threats of terrorism can take many forms, but you can take many simple steps to keep safe. Even during the worst scenarios, you can take action to reduce the dangers to yourself or others.

- Wherever you are, be aware of your surroundings.
- Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.
- Report unusual behavior, suspicious packages and strange devices should be reported promptly to the police or security personnel.
- Do not be afraid to move or leave if you feel uncomfortable or if something does not seem right.
- Learn where emergency exits are located in buildings you frequent. Notice where exits are in unfamiliar buildings. Plan how to get out of a building, subway or congested public area. Note where staircases are located. Notice heavy or breakable objects that could move, fall or break in an explosion.
- Be familiar with types of fire extinguishers and how to locate them. Know the location and availability of hard hats in buildings in which you spend a lot of time.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit at home and learn first aid. Separate the supplies you would take if you had to evacuate quickly and put them in a backpack or container, ready to go.

## Protection against cyber attacks

Cyber attacks target computer or telecommunication networks of critical infrastructures such as power systems, traffic control systems or financial systems.

Cyber attacks target information technologies in three different ways. First is a direct attack against a system through the wires, known as



The Cobb County Hazmat team is trained to deal with dangerous chemical and biological materials.

hacking.

Second, the attack can be a physical assault against a critical element. Third, the attack can be from the inside as a result of compromising a trusted person with system access.

- Be prepared to do without services you normally depend on that could be disrupted – electricity, telephone, natural gas, gasoline pumps, cash registers, ATM machines and internet transactions.
- Be prepared to respond to official instructions if a cyber attack triggers other hazards; for example, general evacuation, evacuation to shelter, or shelter in place, because of hazardous materials releases, nuclear power plant incidents, dam or flood control system failures.

## Chemical and biological weapons

In case of a chemical or biological weapon attack near you, authorities will instruct you on the best course of action. This may be to evacuate the area immediately, to seek shelter at a designated location or take immediate shelter

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## Security

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where you are and seal the premises.

The best way to protect yourself is to take emergency preparedness measures ahead of time and to get medical attention as soon as possible, if needed. Have a version of your disaster supplies kit at work.

### **If instructed to remain where you are:**

- Turn off all ventilation, including furnaces, air conditioners, vents and fans.
- Seek shelter in an internal room, preferably one without windows. Seal the room with duct tape and plastic sheeting. Ten square feet of floor space per person will provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide build-up for up to five hours.
- Remain in protected areas where toxic vapors are reduced or eliminated, and be sure to take your battery-operated radio with you.

### **If caught in an unprotected area:**

- Get upwind of the contamination.
- Find shelter as quickly as possible.
- Listen to your radio for official instructions.

### **What to do after a chemical attack**

Immediate symptoms of exposure to chemical agents may include blurred vision, eye irritation, difficulty breathing and nausea. A person affected by a chemical or biological agent requires immediate medical attention.

If medical help is not immediately available, decontaminate yourself and others. Decontamination is needed within minutes of exposure to minimize health consequences. (You should not leave a shelter to go outdoors to help others until authorities announce it is safe.)

### **Use extreme caution when helping others exposed to chemicals**

- Remove all clothing and other items in con-

tact with the body. Contaminated clothing normally removed over the head should be cut off to avoid contact with the eyes, nose and mouth.

- Put the clothes in a plastic bag if possible. Decontaminate hands using soap and water. Remove eyeglasses or contacts. Put glasses in household bleach to decontaminate.
- Remove all items in contact with the body.
- Flush eyes with lots of water.
- Gently wash face and hair with soap and water; then thoroughly rinse with water.
- Decontaminate other body areas likely to have been contaminated. Blot (do not swab or scrape) with a cloth soaked in soapy water and rinse with clear water.
- Change into uncontaminated clothes. Clothing stored in drawers or closets is likely to be uncontaminated.
- If possible, go to a medical facility.

### **What to do after a biological attack**

In many biological attacks, people will not know they have been exposed to an agent.

The first evidence of an attack may be when you notice symptoms of the disease caused by an agent exposure and you should seek immediate medical treatment.

In some situations, like the anthrax letters sent in 2001, people may be alerted to a potential exposure. If this is the case, pay close attention to all official warnings and instructions. Medical services for a biological event may be handled differently because of increased demand. It will be important for you to pay attention to official instructions via radio, television and emergency alert systems.

If your skin or clothing comes in contact with a visible, potentially infectious substance, you should remove and bag your clothes, personal items and wash yourself with warm soapy water immediately. Put on clean clothes and seek medical help.

## Follow basic procedures for bomb threats, unusual packages

If you receive a bomb threat by phone, get as much information from the caller as possible. Keep the caller on the line and record everything said. Then notify police and building management.

If you are notified of a bomb threat, do not touch any suspicious packages. Clear the area around packages and notify police immediately.

While evacuating a building, don't stand in front of windows, glass doors or other potentially hazardous areas. Do not block sidewalk or streets to be used by emergency officials or others still exiting the building.

Be wary of suspicious packages and letters. They can contain explosives, chemical or biological agents. Be particularly cautious at your place of employment. Typical characteristics which should trigger suspicion include parcels that are:

- Unexpected or from someone unfamiliar.
- Have no return address, or have one that can't be verified as legitimate.
- Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as Personal, Confidential or Do not x-ray.
- Have protruding wires or aluminum foil, strange odors or stains.
- Show a city or state in the postmark that doesn't match the return address.
- Are of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped.
- Marked with any threatening language.
- Have inappropriate or unusual labeling.
- Have excessive postage or excessive packaging material such as masking tape and string.
- Have misspellings of common words.
- Addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated.
- Have incorrect titles or title without a name.
- Not addressed to a specific person.
- Handwritten or poorly-typed addresses.

With suspicious envelopes and packages



The Cobb County Bomb Squad is trained to deal with explosives and threats.

other than those that might contain explosives, take these additional steps.

- Refrain from eating or drinking in a designated mail handling area.
- Place suspicious envelopes or packages in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents. Never sniff or smell suspect mail.
- If you do not have a container, then cover the envelope or package with anything available (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove the cover.
- Leave the room and close the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
- Wash your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
- If you are at work, report the incident to your building security official or an available supervisor, who should notify police and other authorities without delay.
- List all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give a copy of this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials.

## Fires and explosions: What to do during the worst case scenarios

Explosions can collapse buildings and cause fires. People who live or work in a multi-level building can do the following:

- Review emergency evacuation procedures. Know where emergency exits are located. Notice where all exits are when you enter unfamiliar buildings.
- Keep fire extinguishers in working order. Know where they are located and learn how to use them.
- Learn first aid. Contact the American Red Cross or take Community Emergency Response Team classes. Call (770) 499-4567 for CERT information.



### Businesses can prepare, too

Building owners should keep the following items in a designated place on each floor of the building.

- A portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Several flashlights and extra batteries
- First aid kit and basic first aid manual
- Several hard hats
- Fluorescent tape to block dangerous areas



### If there is an explosion:

Leave the building as quickly as possible. Do not stop to retrieve personal possessions or make phone calls.

If things are falling around you, get under a sturdy table or desk until they stop falling. Then leave quickly, watching for weakened floors and stairs and falling debris as you exit.

### If there is a fire:

- Stay low to the floor and exit the building as quickly as possible.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth.

- When approaching a closed door, use the back of your hand to feel the lower, middle and upper parts of the door.
- Never use the palm of your hand or fingers to test for heat: burning those areas could impair your ability to escape a fire (i.e., using ladders and crawling).
- If the door is NOT hot, open slowly to ensure fire or smoke is not blocking your escape route.
- If your escape route is blocked, shut the door immediately and use an alternate escape route, such as a window.

- If the main route is clear, leave immediately through the door. Be prepared to crawl. Smoke and heat rise. The air is clearer and cooler near the floor.
- If the door is hot, do not open it. Escape through a window.
- If you cannot escape, hang a white or light-colored sheet outside the window, alerting fire fighters.
- Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling. Stay below the smoke at all times.



### If you are trapped in debris:

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap rhythmically on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if you have it.

Shout only as a last resort when you hear sounds and think someone will hear you. Shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

# How to make your workplace a safe shelter

- Close the business.
- If customers or visitors are in the building, ask them to stay. When authorities instruct to shelter-in-place, they want everyone to take those steps immediately and not go outdoors.
- Unless an imminent threat exists, ask everyone to call their emergency contacts to let them know where they are and that they are safe.
- Turn on call-forwarding or alternative telephone answering systems. If the business has voice mail or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate the business is closed and everyone will remain in the building until authorities decide it is safe.
- Close and lock all windows, exterior doors and any openings to the outside. If there is a danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds or curtains.
- Have employees familiar with your building's mechanical systems turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically exchange inside air with outside air. These systems need to be turned off, sealed or disabled.
- Gather essential supplies, such as nonperishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting/garbage bags.
- Select interior room(s) with the fewest windows or vents above the ground floor. It should have space for everyone to sit down. Avoid overcrowding by using several rooms.
- Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, copy and conference rooms without exterior windows work well. Avoid a room with equipment like ventilation blowers or pipes, because it may not be sealed from the outdoors.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room. Cellular phone systems may be overwhelmed in an emergency.
- Bring everyone into the room. Shut and lock the door. Write down the names of everyone and call your business' emergency contact to report who is there.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the doors and any vents into the room.



Cobb EMA (770) 499-4567

Atlanta Red Cross (770) 428-2695

CERT classes (770) 499-4567

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

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

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

[www.defenselink.mil/specials/homeland/](http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/homeland/)

[www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/)

[www.ganet.org/gbi/](http://www.ganet.org/gbi/)

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

[www.gahomelandsecurity.com](http://www.gahomelandsecurity.com)

[www2.state.ga.us/](http://www2.state.ga.us/)

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

FOR KIDS:

[www.fema.gov/kids/feel.htm](http://www.fema.gov/kids/feel.htm)

FOR EDUCATORS:

[www.fema.gov/kids/teacher.htm#terror](http://www.fema.gov/kids/teacher.htm#terror)

FOR BUSINESSES:

[www.fema.gov/pdf/library/bizindst.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/bizindst.pdf)

# EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

## CITIZEN'S ACTION GUIDE

### Out-of-state contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (Day): \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening): \_\_\_\_\_

### Local contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (Day): \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening): \_\_\_\_\_

### Nearest Relative

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (Day): \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening): \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Work Numbers

Father: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Numbers (In a life-threatening emergency, dial 911)

Police: \_\_\_\_\_ Fire: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Physicians

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reunion locations

Right outside home: \_\_\_\_\_  
Away from neighborhood, in case you can't return:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Route to try first: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Be prepared to leave*

Local government officials issue evacuation orders when disaster threatens. Listen to local radio and television reports. If officials ask you to leave, do so immediately!

If you have only moments before leaving, grab these items and go.

- Medical supplies: Prescription medications and dentures.
- Disaster supplies: Flashlight, batteries, radio, first aid kit, food and bottled water.
- Clothing and bedding: a change of clothes and a sleeping bag or bedroll and pillow for each household member.
- Car keys and keys to the place you may be going.
- If there's a chance the weather may get worse or flooding may happen – and local officials have not asked you to leave – take steps to protect your home and belongings.

**Keep this contact list and emergency guide near the phone where it can be easily located.**

**CobbLine**  
your county news source

This official Cobb County publication was produced by the Cobb County Emergency Management Agency and Board of Commissioners.

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