

You can prepare at home for

EMERGENCIES!

Spring/Summer 2005

While every municipality in Ontario is required to have an Emergency Response Plan, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that their household is prepared for emergency situations. Review this information sheet with your family to see if you are prepared!

May through September is Tornado Season!

A tornado is a column of rotating wind, travelling across the land at speeds of 30 to more than 100 km/h. Most often tornadoes occur from May to September in late afternoon. Tornadoes are most frequent during moderate summer temperatures, accompanied by high relative humidity.

Property damage is usually most severe within a tornado's path, which in Canada usually

ranges between 40 and 400 metres in width. Depending on the tornado's strength, damage within this area can be total.

Summer storms can also cause severe damage because of high winds, hail and lightning. Such storms can also spawn tornadoes. That is why it is recommended people take the same precautions during a severe thunderstorm as they should during a tornado warning.

Environment Canada will issue severe thunderstorm or tornado watches and warnings when appropriate. Local radio stations will usually broadcast such advisories as soon as possible. There are differences between watches and warnings. For example, a tornado **WATCH** is issued if conditions exist for tornadoes to develop - a tornado has not been sighted. A tornado **WARNING** is issued if one has been sighted, or if radar detects a tornado-like disturbance.

Responding to a Tornado Warning:

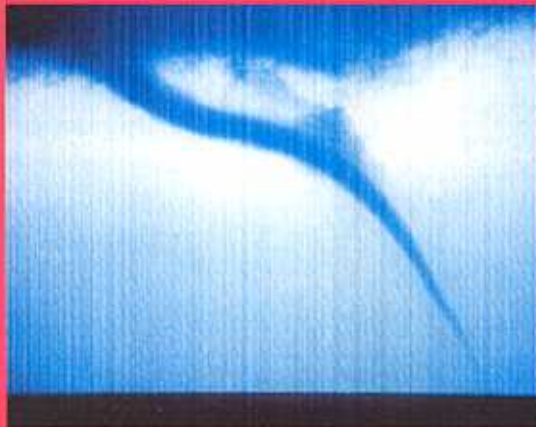
*If you are in the open, seek shelter in a sturdy building. If shelter is not available, be prepared to lie flat in a depression or ditch, and hang onto something on the ground...a culvert, large rock, shrub, etc.

*If you are in a vehicle, get away from it and seek shelter described above. You are safer in a ditch than in a car.

*If you are in a public facility, (i.e. school, work, mall), go to an interior hallway on the lowest level. Avoid large rooms and stay away from windows. Determine who is in charge of the facility and follow their instructions. Your calm, orderly behaviour will set an example for others and help prevent panic.

*If you are at home, head for the basement. Seek shelter under a staircase or sturdy furniture. If you don't have a basement, go to a bathroom or closet on the lowest floor, or seek shelter under sturdy furniture.

*If you are in a mobile home, go immediately to a more substantial shelter.



Are You Prepared for a Power Outage?

Two years ago this August, more than 50 million people living in Ontario and eight north-eastern States were left without electricity after the occurrence of the largest blackout in North American history. Is your family prepared for another power outage? Review the dos and don'ts below!

- *Don't call 9-1-1 to report power outages. If you need to report an outage, contact your local electricity supplier.
- *Don't use the telephone unless it is absolutely necessary.
- *Do listen to local radio stations to find out if people are being asked to remain at home.
- *If you must travel, do use caution because traffic and street lights may not be working.
- *Do turn off all tools, appliances, computers or other electrical equipment. Power can be restored more easily when the system isn't overloaded.
- *Don't open your fridge or freezer unless absolutely necessary - discard any thawed food that has been at room temperature for more than two hours.
- *Do check on elderly or disabled neighbours.
- *Do conserve water until power is restored.
- *Do use proper candleholders and never leave candles unattended.
- *Don't use barbecues or home generators indoors.
- *Do give the electrical system a chance to stabilize before reconnecting tools and appliances.

Water Quality Advisories

Most residents of Lambton County are served by one of three drinking water treatment facilities located on the shores of Lake Huron (however some residents obtain their drinking water from wells). The Lake is an excellent source of water but that does not mean treated water, once in the distribution system, is immune from contamination or quality concerns. It may therefore be necessary for the Medical Officer of Health of the County of Lambton Community Health Services Department to advise the public to either boil or stop using piped water until the problem has been resolved. Depending on the nature of the problem, the Medical Officer of Health may issue one of the following types of advisories.

- ***Boil Water Advisory** - drinking water must be boiled in order to render the water safe to drink.
- ***Drinking Water Advisory** - residents are advised that the water is unsafe for drinking.

The public will normally be notified of such advisories by media and those residing in the affected area may be provided with door-to-door notification. Only the Medical Officer of Health can lift the Boil Water Advisory or Drinking Water Advisory when the issue has been resolved and the water is considered safe to drink.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are an integral, sometimes essential part of modern society. They are the raw materials used in manufacturing processes to create consumer products (such as plastics, paints and cleansers) but they are often by-products of these same manufacturing processes. The classification of "hazardous materials" is broad and includes thousands of materials, in solid, liquid or vapour form, such as fuels, solvents, refrigerants, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers - the list goes on. These materials may be found at sites which use, produce, or store chemicals and they can also be found in transports, railcars and pipelines.

Different chemicals have different properties and associated hazards (flammable, explosive, water reactive, etc.). Therefore, there is no standard response to an accident involving hazardous materials. However, unless you are advised otherwise by an emergency responder, the first thing you should do is go indoors (Shelter-in-Place) and listen to a local radio station. The local CAER organization has arranged for CHOK 1070 AM to provide a continual broadcast of information if an event occurs in the "Chemical Valley" but residents will be advised of any serious release occurring in any part of the County.

If emergency and municipal officials determine that it is safer for the public to evacuate, an evacuation plan will be formulated and instructions concerning proper routes and evacuation centre locations will be provided to affected residents by radio, loudhailer, or door-to-door notification.

The Emergency Management Act

Recent Provincial legislation requires that municipalities develop emergency management programs to prepare for, and respond to, local disasters. Emergency management programs must also include strategies to educate the public about the potential hazards they face (i.e. tornadoes). In an effort to create "disaster resilient communities," residents are also being instructed to prepare for emergencies at home. If you and your family are prepared to respond to an emergency and care for yourselves for at least three days after an event, you will assist municipal officials and emergency responders by allowing them to deal directly with the impacts of the disaster.

Know What To Do When a Shelter-In-Place Advisory is Issued!!

If an accident involving a hazardous material occurs, an advisory may be issued as a precautionary measure to safeguard the health and safety of residents. In the event of a more serious incident, residents may be advised to evacuate.



If you are advised to "Shelter-in-Place" it is expected that you remain inside your home or office and protect yourself there. The following steps will minimize your exposure:

- Close and lock all windows & exterior doors;
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems;
- Close the fireplace damper;
- Get your emergency supplies kit and turn on the radio;
- Go to an interior room that's above ground level (if possible, one without windows);
- Use duct tape to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room;
- Continue to monitor your radio until you are told all is safe or are advised to evacuate.

Spare the Air!

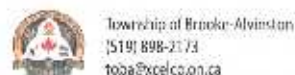
Smog levels often rise between May and September when summer heat causes elevated levels of ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter - two key components of smog. When the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds or is expected to exceed a value of 50 - the lowest value of the "Poor" air quality classification - Environment Canada and the Ministry of the Environment will jointly issue a Smog Advisory. During Smog Advisories, the public may be asked to "spare the air" by driving less, not using lawn mowers and reducing electricity consumption. Do your part and heed these advisories - your lungs and our environment will thank you!



You can learn more about air quality advisories and access tips about how you can spare the air at www.airqualityontario.com.

For more information about how you and your household can prepare for an emergency, visit www.lambtononline.ca/community_emergency_planning or contact your local municipal office.

This Information Sheet has been provided by:



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