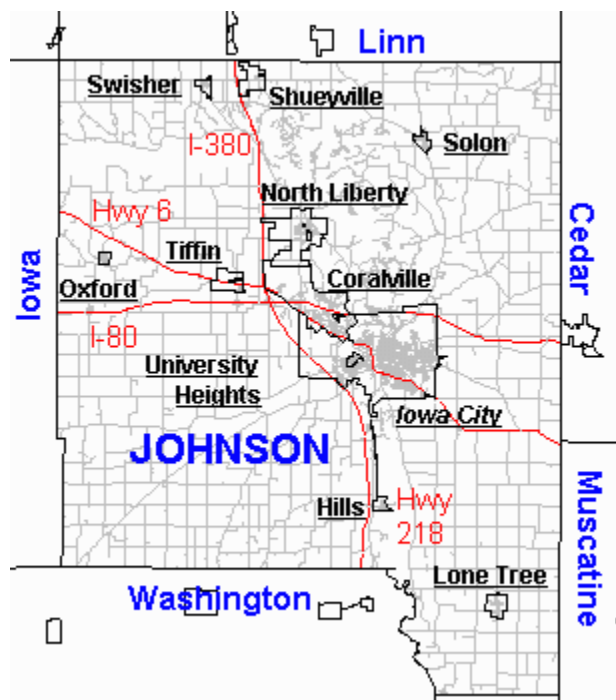


A Guide to the Basics of Emergency Preparedness

***Helping Johnson County seniors
and individuals with disabilities remain safe***



**Developed by the Johnson County, Iowa
Safety Coalition
August 2005**

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Johnson County Safety Coalition

Increasing Our Awareness of the Need to Prepare . . . “Just in Case”

Midwesterners tend to have a heightened awareness of the need to keep an eye to the sky for severe weather. Following the tragic events of 9/11/01, and at the urging of the President of the United States, we now have an even *greater* awareness of the need to prepare for possible disasters or emergencies of any type – severe weather, accidents, terrorist activities, etc.

We hope this guide will assist you in preparing for emergencies or disasters of any type. In compiling this guide, we have gathered information from various sources including publications from local law-enforcement, state and national disaster-preparedness specialists (e.g., the American Red Cross, US Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, etc.). A special thank you to the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program of Eastern Iowa & Western Illinois who provided the model for this project.

While we believe that the information included in this guide will be helpful in preparing for a variety of emergencies and disasters, we emphasize that these are just recommendations. As always, *in case of an actual emergency, stay tuned to the Emergency Alert System in your area and follow the directions of emergency-management authorities.*

About the Johnson County Safety Coalition

The mission of the Johnson County Safety Coalition is to provide support and education related to safety issues that concern Johnson County seniors and individuals with disabilities, their caregivers and local service providers. The Johnson County Safety Coalition works to develop and coordinate safety programs for seniors and individuals with disabilities and provide ongoing educational opportunities to these individuals, their caregivers and local service providers. The goal of the Coalition is to help people learn to live safer lives and to feel confident that they are prepared in the event of an emergency or disaster.

If you are interested in joining the Johnson County Safety Coalition, contact Elder Services, Inc. at 338-0515 for more information.

The Johnson County Safety Coalition encourages all community members to:

Plan, Prepare, Practice and Survive

The Johnson County Safety Coalition is made up of representatives from agencies, businesses and organizations concerned about the safety of seniors and individuals with disabilities in Johnson County. Current Coalition members include:

Bickford Cottage

Coralville Fire Department – **www.coralville.org**

Coralville Police Department- **www.coralville.org**

Ecumenical Towers

Elder Services, Inc.- **www.elderservicesiowa.com**

Evert Conner Center- **www.ownersvoices.com**

Grantwood Chapter of the American Red Cross- **www.grantwood-redcross.org**

Iowa City Fire Department- **www.icfd.org**

Iowa City Police Department- **www.iowacity.org/police**

Johnson County AARP- **www.aarp.org** (national website)

Johnson County Ambulance Service- **www.johnson-county.com/ambulance**

Johnson County Department of Human Services- **www.dhs.state.ia.us**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency- **www.johnson-county.com**

Johnson County Public Health – **www.johnson-county.com**

Johnson County United Way- **www.unitedwayjc.org**

Johnson County Visiting Nurse Association- **www.vnaic.org**

Melrose Meadows- **www.mercyic.com/Homepage/Melrose_meadows.cfm**

Mercy Iowa City- **www.mercyic.org**

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Elder Services, Inc.- **www.elderservicesiowa.com**

GETTING PREPARED

Create (or review) a **Safety Plan (“Disaster Plan”)** for your home, work/school/daycare, and other locations where you and/or your family might be at various times of the day and night.

1. **Determine which types of disasters are most likely to happen**– for example, storm, flood, hazardous material exposure, fire, home accident, etc.
2. **Determine what to do in case of each type of disaster.**
3. **Learn the 5 stages of the national “threat conditions index”:** green, low; blue, guarded; yellow, elevated; orange, high; red, severe (www.dhs.gov).
4. **Learn your community’s warning system and what to do when the warning system is activated.**
 - In Johnson County and Iowa City the outdoor warning system is sounded in response to warnings issued by the National Weather Service.
 - A tornado siren tone starts low and goes higher lasting about 2-3 minutes.
 - A tornado siren alerts you to become aware of the possibility of severe weather. You should:
 - 1) Seek cover in a safe place inside a building
 - 2) Turn to your local radio or television station for updates *or*
 - 3) Turn your NOAA (National Oceanic Atmospheric Agency) weather radio for additional information.
 - If you hear a second alert that means there has been a second warning issued. In Johnson County there is **not** an “all clear” siren sounded at the end of a weather event.
 - It is important to be aware that when the Johnson County sirens are sounded they are heard throughout the entire county.
 - Johnson County and Iowa City sirens are tested with an audible test the first Monday of each month at 9 a.m. providing there are no actual weather threats present.
5. **Determine if there are special care needs for children, elderly, disabled and other vulnerable persons for whom you are responsible.**
6. **In the event you need to evacuate:**
 - Determine or review escape routes from your home.
 - Determine or review safe spots in or around your home for each type of emergency (i.e. tornado, fire, intruders).
 - Select or review two “back-up” places to relocate if it is not safe to remain in your home.
 - 1) Immediately outside your home in case of a sudden emergency (e.g., fire)
 - 2) Outside your neighborhood in the event you cannot return to your home.

7. **Designate an out-of-state friend or family member to be the family contact.** After a disaster, it might be easier to make a long-distance call to determine if family members have been separated. (It's helpful to designate someone outside your immediate calling area since this will decrease the odds that they are affected by the same situation with which you are dealing.)
8. **Provide safety/shelter for your pets.** Animals may not be allowed at shelter locations due to health regulations, so have an alternate plan ready for pets.
9. **Assemble an emergency supply kit and stock emergency supplies for 3 days of being confined to your home.** (See "*Recommended Emergency Supplies*" checklist on following page.)
10. **Periodically discuss and practice your evacuation plan** (at least twice a year).
11. **Post emergency phone numbers by the phone** – fire, police, ambulance. In Johnson County immediate assistance can be reached by calling 9-1-1. Remember that 9-1-1 is an emergency number and should not be used for routine business.
12. **Make sure each person in the household has a list of emergency and special family phone numbers that he/she can keep in a billfold or purse.** Each member of the family should carry with them the name, address, home phone number, cell phone number and e-mail of the designated family contact person.
13. **If you have a cellular telephone, develop an ICE contact in your address book.** ICE stands for In Case of Emergency and allows emergency services to quickly contact a nominated person who can be informed of the emergency. To develop your ICE contact:
 - Type the acronym ICE followed by the contact name (i.e. ICE- mom or ICE- David) into the address book on your cellular phone
 - Save their phone number
 - Tell your ICE contact that you have nominated them as your emergency contact
 - Make sure that the person whose name and number you are giving has agreed to be your ICE partner
 - Make sure your person's number is one that's easy to contact, for example a home number could be useless for an emergency if the person works full time
 - Make sure that your ICE contact knows about any medical conditions that could effect your emergency treatment- i.e. allergies or current medications
14. **Teach each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.**
15. **Purchase a fire extinguisher (ABC type, minimum 5-lb.) and teach each family member how to use it.**
16. **Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each level of your home.** Be sure to change batteries regularly – e.g., in spring and fall, when Daylight Savings Time begins or ends.

17. Complete a Home Safety Review to locate any “hazards” that make your personal environment unsafe. Home Safety Checklists are available from the Johnson County Safety Coalition.

18. Review built-in safety equipment in your environment. Your place of residence may have built-in fire and life safety equipment (i.e. automatic fire alarm system, automatic fire sprinkler system, elevators, emergency call buttons, emergency plans, etc). Ask someone to explain the specific features and how you are expected to perform in an emergency.

CRIME PREVENTION

When to Call 911...

911 should only be used for an emergency. An emergency is any immediate threat to life and/or property that requires immediate response from police, fire or medical personnel. Use the routine line for information and non-serious needs.

Crime Prevention Tips...

- Install good locks on your doors and windows. Use them!
- Ask for identification from service or delivery people before letting them in your home. Call the company to verify.
- Use direct deposit for Social Security and other pension checks.
- Don't carry more cash than necessary. Keep your purse or wallet close to you.
- Don't be taken in my investment schemes, funeral scams, and home improvement scams, fake cures for illness, sweepstakes, free vacation offers and other promotions that sound “too good to be true”. Be wary of phone solicitors asking for personal information- credit card or personal account numbers- even if they say you have won something. Ask them to mail you the information.
- Don't let anyone rush you into signing anything, such as a contract, sales agreement, or insurance policy. Read it carefully and have someone you trust check it over as well.

If You Are the Victim of a Crime...

- If you arrive home and suspect a stranger may be inside, **DO NOT GO IN**. Leave quietly and call 911.
- If you are attacked on the street, make as much noise as possible by calling for help or blowing a whistle. Do not pursue your attacker. Call 911 and report the crime as soon as possible.
- If you are swindled or conned, report the crime to your local police department as soon as possible. Remember that if you don't make a report, they are free to cheat others and you have no chance of getting YOUR money back.

RECOMMENDED EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

- 1. A 3-day supply of commercially bottled water (one gallon per person per day)**
- 2. Food that won't spoil**
 - a. Ready-to-eat meats, fruits, vegetables
 - b. Canned juices, soup
 - c. High-energy food (peanut butter, jelly, granola bars, trail mix)
 - d. Vitamins
 - e. Special foods for infants (baby formula, etc.), elderly, people with special dietary needs
- 3. Personal Comfort Items:** One change of clothing and footwear per person; blankets; sleeping bags, etc.
- 4. Special-needs items for elderly, disabled, infants or other vulnerable persons**
- 5. Extra pair of eyeglasses & extra hearing aid batteries**
- 6. First Aid kit, including prescription medications**
 - General first-aid supplies
 - Non-prescription drugs – i.e. antacids, anti-diarrheals, and laxatives. (Be sure to check expiration dates).
 - Current list of prescription medications (Be sure to keep this list updated as medications change).
- 7. Emergency tools and materials**
 - Adjustable wrench
 - Battery-powered radio
 - Blankets
 - Can opener
 - Cloth to cover mouth
 - Duct tape, plastic sheeting to seal off doors and windows
 - Extra batteries
 - Fire extinguisher - ABC fire extinguisher
 - Flashlight
 - Matches in waterproof containers
 - Phone - cell phone and/or prepaid phone cards
 - Phone - hard-wired phone (“land line” not cordless) – good if electricity is out
 - Pliers
 - Utility knife or scissors
 - Whistle
 - Other items you deem appropriate

8. Extra set of car keys

9. Cash for emergency use (\$50 or less).

10. Copies of important documents in waterproof container

- Bank account and credit card information
- Birth certificates
- Driver's license or other photo ID
- Health insurance card or information
- Homeowner's or renter's insurance policy information
- Immunization record
- Living Will &/or Durable Power of Attorney information
- Passport
- Social security card
- Will

11. Sanitation supplies

- Bucket with a lid
- Disinfectant
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Garbage bags
- Personal hygiene items (toothbrushes, toothpaste)
- Pre-moistened towelettes or hand cleansing gel
- Soap
- Toilet paper

PRACTICE AND MAINTAIN YOUR PLAN

- 1. Quiz family members on the plan** – the more the plan becomes “second nature” to your family, the more likely that people will react well in an emergency.
- 2. Conduct practice drills** (at least twice a year, preferably more frequently).
- 3. Rotate stored water and food** – water every 3 months and food every 6 months.
- 4. Check your fire extinguisher** – get it recharged if necessary.
- 5. Test smoke and CO (carbon monoxide) detectors monthly** and change batteries in the spring and fall.
- 6. Update medication lists on a regular basis in “vial of life” or other medication listings.**

HOW INDIVIDUALS CAN GET INVOLVED

- **Take basic first aid and CPR training classes - *American Heart Association (1-877-242-4277); American Red Cross (319-337-2119); Kirkwood Community College (319-887-3659).***
- **Volunteer to staff display booths; distribute preparedness information, assist with recruitment of volunteers . . .** Contact Elder Services, Inc. RSVP (Retired Senior & Volunteer Program) at 356-5218 for volunteer opportunities in Johnson County.
- **Contact the Johnson County Safety Coalition to arrange for Informational Speakers on safety topics concerning seniors or individuals with disabilities or home safety checklists.** Call Elder Services, Inc. at 338-0515 for information.

RESOURCES

www.cdc.gov- the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's main Website. Offers a variety of Health and Safety information and a section specific to Emergency Preparedness and Response.

www.dhs.gov – the Department of Homeland Security's main Website offers information on the current threat level and travel safety.

www.disasternews.net – the Disaster News Network has tips on how to plan for all types of disasters.

www.donotcall.gov- Website for the national “DO Not Call” registration, to block telemarketers from calling your telephone number.

www.fema.gov – Website of the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA).

www.heritageaaa.org- Website for Heritage Area Agency on Aging, provides information about resources for seniors in eastern Iowa.

www.infolink.org – the United Way community services directory matching needs and resources.

www.nwsnoaa.gov – the National Weather Service site offers advice about surviving dangerous weather.

www.ready.gov – the Department of Homeland Security's “personal readiness” Website.

www.redcross.org- Website for the Red Cross. Provides news, safety and disaster information.

www.usfa.fema.gov/subjects/fireprev/- Provides fire prevention and planning information.

www.weather.com – information from the Weather Channel regarding natural disasters.

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency: 9-1-1

National Poison Control Center: 1- 800-222-1222

**Fire (*non-emergency*): Coralville (319) 248-1835; Iowa City (319) 356-5260;
Lone Tree (319) 629-4617; North Liberty (319) 626-5717;
Oxford (319) 828-8120; Solon (319) 624-2386;
Tiffin (319) 545-2102**

**Police (*non-emergency*): Coralville (319) 248-1800; Iowa City (319) 356-5275;
North Liberty (319) 626-5724; Johnson County Sheriff (319) 356-6020**

**Hospital (*non-emergency*): Mercy On Call (319) 358-2767 or 1-800-358-2767
University of Iowa Health Care (319) 356-1616**

American Red Cross: (319) 337-4928

Department of Homeland Security: 1-800-BE-READY (1-800-237-3239)

Department of Human Services, Johnson County: (319) 356-6050

Elder Services, Inc.: (319) 338-0515

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency): 1- 800-480-2520

Heritage Area Agency on Aging: 1-800-332-5934
(Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington Counties)

InfoLINK (*United Way community resources phone number directory*):
Iowa: 2-1-1
National Number: 1-888-680-4636

Johnson County Ambulance Service, non-emergency number: (319) 356-6013

Johnson County Public Health: (319) 356-6040

Visiting Nurse Association: (319) 337-9686