

Town of Wilbraham

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS HANDBOOK

Preparing for the First 72 Hours of an Emergency or Disaster



KEY FAMILY CONTACT INFORMATION

OUT OF AREA CONTACT

Name.....
Address.....
.....
Phone # (day)
Phone # (night)
Cell #

SCHOOLS

Address.....
Phone #
Address
Phone #

LOCAL CONTACT

Name
Address
.....
Phone # (day)
Phone # (night)
Cell #

UTILITIES

Electric (National Grid) ... 800-322-3223
** Power Outages & Emergencies... 800-465-1212
Gas (EverSource)..... 800-525-8222
Water (Public)800-928-3734
Oil
Telephone
Cable TV
Internet Provider

NEAREST RELATIVE

Name
Address
.....
Phone # (day)
Phone # (night)
Cell #

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Emergency..... 911
Town Clerk Office.....413 596-2800, ext. 200
Police.....413 596-9771
Fire.....413 596-3122
Local Health Department..413 596-2800 ext.101
Council on Aging.....413 596-8379
Poison Control.....800-222-1212
Doctor
Pharmacist
Medical Insurer
Medical Insurance No.
Home Insurance
Auto Insurance
MASS 2-1-1 Information2-1-1
Hearing Impaired..... 7-1-1

FAMILY WORK NUMBERS

Father
Mother
Other
Other
Other

Wilbraham Website: www.wilbraham-ma.gov

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A Brief Word from Your Board of Selectmen

Town of Wilbraham

Town Hall
240 Springfield Street
Wilbraham, MA 01095
(413) 596-2800 Office

Dear Wilbraham Resident:

In a continuing effort to provide meaningful and user-friendly documents to residents, we are pleased to present the Town of Wilbraham's first edition Emergency Preparedness Handbook. This Handbook contains a significant amount of useful information and resources to help residents successfully plan for an emergency event.

It is our hope that all Wilbraham residents take a proactive approach to family Emergency Planning. For more information regarding Wilbraham's Emergency Planning, please visit the Town website at www.wilbraham-ma.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert Russell
Robert Boilard
Carolyn Brennan

Reasons for Family Preparedness

In a disaster or emergency, you may need to survive on your own for some time before outside help will be available. Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for several days, or even a week or longer. Preparedness means having your own supply of water, food, medications and emergency supplies for a period ranging anywhere from a minimum of a few days to possibly several weeks. Or you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You will probably not have the opportunity to shop or search for the supplies you need. Assembling those items you may need in a disaster or emergency ahead of time is essential in your family's disaster plan.

This Emergency Preparedness Handbook has been prepared for Wilbraham households by the Town of Wilbraham. This guide has been designed to help residents learn how to protect themselves and their families against all types of potential hazards. It can be used as a reference resource or as a step-by-step manual. The focus of the content is on how to develop, practice, and maintain emergency plans that reflect what must be done before, during, and after a disaster to protect people and their property. Also included is information on how to assemble an emergency supply kit that contains the food, water, medications and other supplies in sufficient quantity for individuals and their families to survive following a disaster in the event they must rely on their own resources.

Hazards Facing Our Community

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is prepared to coordinate a statewide response to any of the following natural or man-made hazards that may face the Commonwealth. Below is a list of possible hazards that our community may face.

- Brush Fires
- Civil Disorder
- Dam Failure
- Drought
- Earthquakes
- Extreme Cold
- Extreme Heat
- Floods
- Hazardous Material
- Hurricanes
- Ice Safety
- Lightning
- Nor'easters
- Pandemic (especially Pandemic Flu)
- Power Outages
- Terrorism
- Thunderstorms
- Tornadoes
- Transportation Emergencies
- Utility Emergencies
- Water Supply Emergencies
- Winter Storms

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Create a Plan

Note: It is important to plan for either of the following situations.

EVACUATION – (Please refer to [EMERGENCY EVACUATION](#) pg 9)

Town Shelters: In an emergency the Town of Wilbraham may designate a shelter location depending on the emergency incident. Listen carefully to Town Officials for directions to your shelter.

SHELTER IN PLACE – (Please refer to [SHELTER-IN-PLACE](#), pg. 10)

At times during certain emergencies it is safer to stay home and shelter at home.

BE SURE TO:

- Assure that your entire family knows and understands your plan.
- Talk about how you will reach each other in different emergencies.
- Think about making an out-of-town family member or friend a point of contact should you get separated for any reason.

Prepare a Disaster Kit

Every family should have an “All Hazards” Disaster Supply Kit. Regardless of the season, your family could become isolated in your home for up to a week, without power. Below are some suggestions of items that you may want to include in your kit. It is best to keep items in a waterproof, portable container. Every kit will differ, depending upon what items your family considers essential. Check expiration dates and rotate on a regular basis.

72 Hour Kit

- 72 + Hour Supply of Food and Water :
 - 1-2 Gallons of water per person, per day for sanitation and drinking
 - Method of water purification
 - Food (see below)
- Warmth and Shelter:
 - Windproof/waterproof matches
 - Second method to start a fire
 - Tent/shelter
 - Wool-blend Blanket
 - Sleeping Bag
 - Emergency reflective blanket
 - Lightweight stove and fuel
 - Hand and body warm packs
 - Poncho
- Light Sources:
 - Flashlight with batteries
 - Candle
 - Light Stick
- Tools:
- Pocket Knife
 - Shovel
 - Hatchet or Axe
 - Sewing kit
 - 50-foot nylon rope
- First Aid kit and supplies:
 - Burn gel and dressings
- **Canned goods and nonperishable foods that do not need cooking:**
 - Canned meats and fish
 - Canned fruits and vegetables
 - Canned soups and puddings
 - Canned fruit juices
 - Dried fruit and nuts
 - Bread, cookies and crackers
 - Peanut butter and jelly
- Bottle of potassium iodide tablets
- Communications:
 - Radio with batteries or radio with alternate power sources
 - Whistle with neck cord
- Personal Sanitation:
 - Personal Comfort kit (include soap, toothbrush and gel, comb, tissues, sanitary napkins, razor, and other needed items)
 - Extra clothing
 - A complete outfit of appropriate clothing for each family member. Include extra socks, underwear, hat, sturdy shoes, and gloves
 - Chlorinated Bleach
- At least \$50 in small bills in your kit. Be sure to include quarters and dimes for phone calls
- Stress Relievers – Games, books, hard candy, inspirational reading. For children: small toys, paper and pen, favorite security items
- Copies of important documents (such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, wills, insurance forms, phone numbers, credit card information)
- **Additional items**
 - Extra food
 - Extra batteries
 - Camp stove mess kits and other cooking equipment
 - Insect repellent, Sun block
 - Portable toilet
 - Special medication (extra glasses)
 - Portable Container
 - Durable water resistant duffel bag, frame pack or day pack
 - All purpose cleaner with Broom, mop and bucket

Gather Information

It is important to stay calm and informed during an emergency.

In the case of an actual emergency the Town of Wilbraham will make available information to all residents through the following media:

Town-wide Emergency Notification System – **Blackboard Connect**

This is a phone based notification system that allows the Town to contact residents and notify them of an emergency situation in a relatively quick time frame.

Town of Wilbraham web-site: <https://www.wilbraham-ma.gov/>

**Wilbraham Cable Access Channels: Charter Cable Channels
191, 192 and 193**

Local News

**Western Mass News
22 News WWLP**

Local Newspapers:

**The Republican
Wilbraham-Hampden Times**

** It is important to note that depending upon the scope of the emergency, directives may be dictated by your Wilbraham Police, Fire, DPW, and Emergency Management, State MEMA, or federal FEMA. During an emergency, it is important to follow their instruction and advice.

FAMILY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Develop a Family Emergency Communications Plan in case family members are separated from one another during an emergency (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school). This plan should also address reuniting after the immediate crisis has passed.

Ask an out-of-state relative or a friend to serve as the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person. During and immediately after a disaster occurs, it is often easier to access a long distance telephone number than a local one. So calling outside a disaster area is usually easier than calling into or within the same area.

Make sure everyone knows the name, address and telephone number of the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person.

Designate two meeting areas for family members – one within your community (your primary location), and one outside of your community (your alternate location). Sometimes an emergency could impact your neighborhood or small section of the community, so a second location outside of your community would be more accessible to all family members.

Be familiar with the Emergency Plans at your children's school as well as your place of business.

A Family Emergency Communications Plan can help reassure everyone's safety and minimize the stress associated with emergencies.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Planning for Evacuation

During an emergency, always follow the direction of your local Public Safety Officials to know which evacuation routes and shelters will be utilized during that particular emergency.

If you do not have personal transportation, make arrangements with friends or your local government.

Those requiring specific assistance during times of emergency, such as transportation or alternative forms of communication, should notify the Wilbraham EMA of these requirements.

Develop a Family Emergency Communications Plan. (See Pg 9)

As part of your Family Emergency Communications Plan, designate a meeting destination if you have to leave the community. In your planning, consider different scales of evacuation – neighborhood, town, county, etc.

Assemble a Disaster Supply Kit (See Pg 7)

Keep your car fueled if evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during an emergency, or unable to pump gas during power outages.

Know how to shut off your home's electricity, gas and water supplies at main switches and valves. You may want to do so prior to evacuating your home.

After meeting your family needs, check on elderly or disabled neighbors.

What To Do If Asked/Told To Evacuate

- Gather all persons in the house together.
- Do not pick up children at their schools, unless instructed to do so. In many cases (such as a chemical spill emergency), school children may be taken to a pre-designated host school outside the impacted area where you may pick them up.
- Household members located outside the area, when the emergency occurs, may be advised not to return to their residence or community during an evacuation. They may be directed to a reception center or mass care shelter where you can be reunited.
- Do not call your local fire or police departments for information. Emergency workers will need their telephone lines open for emergency use. If you need special help, contact your local Emergency Management Office.
- Turn off lights and unnecessary appliances.
- If a hard freeze is likely during your absence, take actions needed to prevent damage to water pipes, such as turning off the water main, draining faucets, turning off inside valves for external faucets and opening outside faucets to drain.
- Close and lock windows and doors.
- Check with neighbors to see if they need assistance. Offer to share transportation.
- If unable to take them with you, shelter your livestock, leaving at least a three-day supply of stored food and water that has been protected from possible contamination.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE

Sheltering-in-place is a standard protective action utilized in emergencies during an accident or event in which hazardous materials have been released into the atmosphere. You may, at some time, be instructed by local officials to "Shelter-in-Place" to reduce your exposure to some type of hazardous materials in the air. The purpose is to create as airtight as possible enclosures to prevent the hazardous material from reaching the enclosure's occupants.

The following are steps to be taken only when instructed to "Shelter-in-Place", not to be completed ahead of time:

- You should immediately go indoors. Keep children and pets indoors.
- Close and lock all doors and windows. Locking is preferred since it generally ensures that the door or window is shut tight.
- Turn off air handling systems such as window fans, kitchen and bath exhaust fans, air conditioners, and other sources of outside air. Shut off clothes dryers and seal exhaust vents with plastic and duct tape.
- Close the fireplace flue if it is not in use. (A structure with a burning fire in the fireplace is not a good candidate for sheltering-in-place.)
- Seal off any cracks that could cause leakage from the outside such as with a damp towel at door jams.

- If you have livestock, shelter them, also. Provide them with stored feed and water from a covered source.
- Go to an above ground room with the fewest windows and doors. (A below ground room during a tornado or hurricane.)

If Sheltering-in-Place is recommended during school hours, children will be sheltered in their school building and cared for by school personnel. When the emergency is over, you will be directed where and when to pick them up.

If Traveling When Sheltering-In-Place Is Ordered

- If you are traveling in a motor vehicle, close the windows and air vents. Turn off the heater and air conditioner. Keep the radio tuned to an Emergency Alert System (EAS) station for the official messages and instructions.
- Go inside a nearby building. If none is available, leave the area immediately.
- Stay inside your vehicle or building until officials say otherwise.
- Do not use your telephone unless in need of special assistance.
- Do not call '911' unless it is a true emergency.

PREPAREDNESS FOR POPULATIONS WITH UNIQUE NEEDS

For many of the citizens in Massachusetts who have physical, medical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, as well as the elderly and other populations with unique needs, emergencies can present real challenges.

Create a disaster supply kit. Depending upon your needs, you may want to include extra eyeglasses, hearing aid batteries, wheel chair batteries, oxygen, the style and serial number of your medical devices, a list of your medications, including dosage, a list of your allergies, medical insurance information and medical cards. If you utilize a manual wheelchair, include heavy gloves to help make your way over glass and debris. (See pgs 8 & 9)

Make an Emergency Plan. Create a Family Emergency Communications Plan. (See page 11). If you receive regular support services from a provider or Personal Care Attendant (PCA), speak with them about their disaster plans and their services during times of emergency. Work with them to identify back-up services.

Complete a Personal Assessment of what you can do for yourself and what assistance you may need to face the challenges of an emergency. Consider the environment during and after an event, your capabilities, and possible barriers.

Create a 'Personal Support Network' or 'Self-Help Team' who can help identify and acquire resources, and assist you before, during and after the emergency. Your Team should include roommates, relatives, friends, neighbors and co-workers because disasters might strike when you are at home, school, the workplace, a volunteer site, or wherever you spend a lot of time.

Teach others on your Team to operate any special equipment you might utilize, as well as where you keep your emergency supplies.

If asked to evacuate, inform your Team where you are staying, because it may not always be the first choice in your Plan. (A public shelter, relative, friend, hotel, etc).

Find the location of the main utility cutoff valves and switches in your home, and learn how and when to disconnect them during an emergency, either by yourself or with a Team member.

Learn about Wilbraham's Alerting/Warning System Blackboard Connect.

Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability or health condition.

Label any special equipment including wheel chairs, walkers or canes with your contact information.

Most individuals who normally live independently should be able to function well at a universal public shelter. Individuals requiring higher levels of medical support or assistance might be transferred to a higher-level care shelter where they can receive a higher level of support.

While at a shelter, please ask disaster personnel for any accommodation you may require.

MAKING YOUR HOME SAFE

Make sure all of your equipment and hazard detector devices are approved and certified by a nationally recognized testing institute, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the proper use, installation, maintenance and testing procedures.

Smoke Detectors

- Have a minimum of one (1) smoke detector installed on each level of your home (including the basement) and outside each sleeping area.
- Test each detector on a monthly basis.

Replace all batteries twice a year or sooner if power is low. Develop a schedule, choosing the same days; such as the days we move the clocks forward/backwards, New Year's Day, etc.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- Have at least one (1) Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector on each habitable floor of your home, and also within ten (10) feet of each sleeping area.
- Do not place a CO detector in a garage, furnace room, or near a stove or fireplace. Doing so may cause high incidents of false alarms.
- Do not place CO detectors near open windows or doors, excessively hot, cold, or damp areas and 'dead-air spaces' such as corners of rooms and peaks of ceilings. Doing so may minimize the effectiveness of the detector.
- Be able to differentiate between the alarm sounds of your Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors.
- Set up a power detection schedule, as with your smoke detectors.

Replace all batteries twice a year or sooner if power is low. Develop a schedule, choosing the same days; such as the days we move the clocks forward/backward, New Year's Day, etc.

Fire Escape Plan

- Have at least two (2) escape paths from each room, a primary and an alternate. Never use an elevator in case of a fire.
- Make sure everyone can easily unlock and open doors utilized in the escape plan.
- If you must go through a smoky area, crawl. The coolest, cleanest air will be up to 18" from the ground.
- Designate a family meeting area located a safe distance from the house.
- Safely leave the building before contacting the fire department. Never return into a burning structure.
- Practice your Fire Escape Plan at least twice a year. For assistance in designing your own plan, visit 'Family Fun' with Sparky the Fire Dog on the National Fire Protection Association web page: www.NFPA.org

Parents with children should attend a Fire Safety Day in Wilbraham or visit their local fire station to help promote fire safety.

Fire Extinguishers

- Have at least one (1) multi-purpose (ABC) fire extinguisher located near an escape path.
- Ensure that the fire extinguisher is cared for and maintained properly according to manufacturer's instructions which you should keep with your extinguisher.
- Ensure everyone understands how to properly and safely use the extinguisher. Even though extinguishers come in a number of shapes and sizes, they all operate in a similar manner. An easy acronym for fire extinguisher use: PASS (Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep).
- Recharge or replace all fire extinguishers immediately after use, regardless of how much or little they were used.

EMPOWER YOURSELF

Immediately following a disaster, emergency crews cannot respond everywhere at once. You could be the difference between life and death for someone close to you. Make it a practice to check on elderly neighbors and those with disabilities. Get yourself some invaluable training on life-saving techniques. Check a few of the resources available to you on pg 17 of this booklet.

UTILITY SHUT-OFF AND SAFETY

In the event of a disaster, you may be instructed to shut off the utility service at your home. Below is some general guidance for shutting off utility service. You should modify the information provided to reflect your shut off requirements as directed by your utility company. Please refer to the utility company directly with any questions regarding when utilities will be restored during a power outage.

Natural Gas

Natural gas leaks and explosions are responsible for a significant number of fires following disasters. It is vital that all household members know how to shut off natural gas.

If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out quickly. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call 911 from a neighbor's home.

CAUTION – If you turn off the gas for any reason, a qualified professional must turn it back on. NEVER attempt to turn the gas back on yourself.

Electricity

Electrical sparks have the potential of igniting natural gas if it is leaking. It is wise to teach all responsible household members where and how to shut off the electricity. Locate your electrical circuit box. Teach all responsible household members how to shut off the electricity to the entire house.

FOR YOUR SAFETY: Always shut off all individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker.

NOTE: If you plan to use a generator, be absolutely sure that the connections to the street electrical supply wires have been disconnected. It is strongly recommended that you have a professional electrician do this type of work.

HELPFUL TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR ANIMALS

Taking your pets along is the most important thing individuals or families can do for their animals during an evacuation. Pets left behind can be injured, lost or killed during an emergency, or in its aftermath. Pet owners should include their animals in their Family Disaster Planning, before a disaster threatens.

Make plans ahead of time to take your pet to stay at relatives, friends or a kennel outside the affected area:

- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter your animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers. Know the locations of pet-friendly hotels and motels.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have, as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.
- If unable to take them with you, shelter your livestock, leaving at least a three-day supply of stored food and water that has been protected from possible contamination.

Prepare an emergency kit for your pets:

- Include a photo of yourself with your pet, collars and leashes, a three-to-five-day supply of food, a can opener, bottles of water, bowls, litter boxes and plastic bags, and a week's supply of medications (with instructions) that your pet may be taking (in case you and your pet are separated).
- Have copies of your pets' vaccinations, medical records and prescriptions and your veterinarian's phone number. Make sure your pets wear collars with current license and rabies tags, and identification tags that include information on where you will be staying during the emergency.

Use a pet carrier for each of your pets to make transportation easier.

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo and leg band for identification. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

Exotic and dangerous pets are generally dealt with on a case-by-case basis in order to ensure that they are handled, transported and cared for by properly trained personnel and at an appropriate facility. For the safety of their animals, owners of these pets should have advanced planning preparations ready for their pet's special needs.

AFTER A DISASTER

- If you have been evacuated, do not return to your home until you have been directed to do so by state or local officials.
- Keep tuned to local Media for information about such things as caring for your household, where to find medical help, and applying for financial assistance.
- Do not become a spectator. Unnecessary travel into the impacted areas could hinder the efforts of Public Safety officials.
- Drive only when and where necessary. Streets may be filled with debris or flooded. Closed roads are for your protection, in that they may be weakened and could collapse.
- Upon returning, do not turn on any electronic equipment until the electricity has been safely restored.
- Be sure to check all electronic equipment for water damage. If you are uncertain, throw them away. It is better to be safe than risk electrocution.
- Watch for loose or dangling power lines. Assume any downed wire is a live wire! Be careful when clearing fallen trees with a chainsaw.
- If there is structural damage to your home or downed trees in the yard, use care.
- If Public Safety officials determine it is safe, open doors and windows to ventilate your home.
- Limit your use of the telephone, utilizing it only for emergency calls.
- Use bottled water until local officials have determined the safety of the water supply.
- Guard against spoiled food. If the power was disrupted, food in the refrigerator may have spoiled. Freezers can keep food for several days, if unopened.
- Do not refreeze food once it begins to thaw.
- Use generators outdoors, in well ventilated areas.
- For specific assessment and clean-up remedies, contact the appropriate Town of Wilbraham Departments.

MAINTAIN YOUR PLAN

Once you and your family have developed your plan, you need to practice and maintain it. For example, ask questions to make sure your family remembers meeting places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct drills and create theoretical scenarios and see how family members respond.

Do not wait for a disaster or emergency to occur. Plan, prepare and practice to ensure that when an unplanned disaster or emergency does occur, you and your family will be ready.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EDUCATION

RESOURCES/LINKS

ONLINE RESOURCES

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency	www.mass.gov/mema
Executive Office of Public Safety & Security	www.mass.gov/eops
Department of Homeland Security	www.dhs.gov
Federal Emergency Management Agency	www.fema.gov
Are you Ready?	www.Ready.gov
American Red Cross	www.redcross.org
National Weather Service	www.nws.noaa.gov
National Hurricane Center	www.nhc.noaa.gov
Massachusetts Department of Public Health	www.mass.gov/dph
State of Massachusetts Animal Response Team	www.smart-mass.org
Guide to Massachusetts State Services	http://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/ciscig/guide.html
Town of Wilbraham	http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov
Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School System	https://www.hwrsd.org/

