



# Preparing for the **Unexpected**



Get Informed

Get Prepared

Get Involved



# To all Texas residents:

Since September 11, 2001, much has changed in our world, nation, state and community. We have become much more aware of the devastation that can be caused by unexpected disasters—whether they are caused by nature, by accident or by terrorist attacks.

We often worry about the “what ifs” and wonder what we can do to protect ourselves and our families. To reduce the threats to Texans, the Governor’s Division of Emergency Management, Texas Homeland Security, Texas Cooperative Extension, the Texas Department of State Health Services and many local and national agencies are working together to help prepare our state for potential disasters.

But each individual, family and community also need to take steps to prepare for a possible disaster. This guide and the Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) Web site were developed to explain different types of disasters, suggest protective measures for yourself and your family, and offer sources of additional information. You and your family can be safer during and after a disaster if you become informed and prepared now.

In a disaster, response agencies and public health departments will manage the crisis and rely on the public to follow instructions and react quickly. To know exactly what to do if a disaster occurs, you will need to monitor TV, radio or on-line news reports for official news. The health department, county emergency management officials and law enforcement agencies will inform you of what your appropriate response should be. They will tell you what level of danger or possible health hazards there may be, where to get medications or vaccines if necessary and where to go for medical help or shelter. They will also help you determine if you should evacuate or remain where you are and shelter-in-place.

An important part of disaster preparedness is becoming involved with your community. The Protect Texas Volunteer program, along with many other organizations, is an excellent way to help enable your community and state to prepare for and recover from a disaster.

Government and other agencies are working to help keep you safe if a disaster occurs in our state. We hope this guide will help you do your part in protecting yourself and your family.

Sincerely,



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# Preparing for the Unexpected

## Get informed

If a disaster occurs in your community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help you. But you need to be ready as well. Although we cannot prevent disasters, we can reduce the risk of injury and even death by becoming informed.

A first step for disaster preparedness is to learn about what could happen and how to respond.

### Disasters

Disasters can result from natural hazards, accidents or terrorism.

**Natural hazards:** Natural disasters in Texas can be caused by drought, fire, floods, hurricanes, ice storms, tornados and, less commonly, by disease epidemics.

As a natural disaster occurs, check your local radio or television station or the Internet for current information. The National Weather Radio and the Emergency Alert System alert the public about dangerous conditions. You need to know what the different terms mean and how to respond. *Watches* are alerts to potential danger; *warnings* alert you to impending danger.

The ultimate goal of the Emergency Alert System is to get critical information to the people who need it. The Federal Communications Commission designed the Emergency Alert System in cooperation with the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**Accidental disasters:** Some disasters are caused by accidents, such as explosions, equipment failure, hazardous materials incidents, household chemical emergencies and nuclear power plant emergencies.

If a chemical incident occurs in your area, you can minimize your risk of contamination by staying as far away from the site as possible. There usually is little or no warning before accidental disasters. So advance preparation is essential for protecting your family and maintaining a safe environment.

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Emergency management agencies are trained to get the word out to the public. Listen to them for directions on what to do and where to shelter in order to minimize your exposure to the disaster.

**Terrorism:** There are many forms of terrorist attacks. According to the Department of Homeland Security, acts of terrorism include assassinations, bombings, cyber attacks, hijackings, kidnappings, threats of terrorism and the use of chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological weapons. No community is immune from the possibility of a terrorist attack.

The Governor's Division of Emergency Management, Texas Homeland Security, and many local agencies are working together to reduce the risk of terrorist threats in our state. They will alert the public as to the perceived risk level.

## Help in Texas

In addition to listening to the emergency alert system and local health officials, you also need to know about other sources of help that are available when a disaster happens. Please become familiar with the following resources; they can provide emergency assistance and critical information during a time of disaster.

### Emergency 9-1-1

9-1-1 is the universal emergency phone number for residents of the United States to use to request emergency assistance. During a disaster, do not call 9-1-1 unless the situation is life threatening.

Parents should teach their children how and when to dial 9-1-1. For tips on teaching children how to use 9-1-1, visit the children's page of the Texas Commission on State Emergency Communications Web site at [www.911.state.tx.us](http://www.911.state.tx.us).

### 2-1-1 Texas First Call For Help

2-1-1 is a nonemergency information and referral hotline. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to every resident of Texas. Specialists are trained to provide callers with current information such as evacuation routes and locations of food and shelter during a disaster.

2-1-1 Texas is included in Texas Homeland Security strategy as a way to share information and mobilize resources during local, state or national disasters. For more information, visit the Web at [www.211.org](http://www.211.org).

### Texas Poison Control Center

If you suspect that someone has ingested or inhaled a toxic substance, immediately call the poison control center at (800) 222-1222. A trained professional will give you specific instructions on how to handle the incident. Poison control specialists are available to take calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information, see the Web site at [www.poisoncontrol.org](http://www.poisoncontrol.org).

### Texas Department of State Health services (DSHS)

Texas DSHS offers current information on emergency preparedness for families, professionals and responders. For fact sheets, frequently asked questions, emergency checklists and information on volunteering with Protect Texas, see [www.dshs.state.tx.us/compreg](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/compreg).



# Get prepared

You can help protect your family during and immediately after a disaster by making a family disaster plan and by creating a family disaster kit for your household. You and your family need to be able to take care of yourselves without outside help for at least 3 days.

## Make a family plan

Families differ considerably. It's important to create a plan that fits your family's needs. Regardless, all family members need to know how to respond to severe weather or any disaster that could occur in your area.

When making a family disaster plan, you will need to consider escape routes, family communication, utility shut-off and safety, insurance and vital records, special needs, caring for animals and safety skills.

**Escape routes:** You need to know escape routes from each room in your house as well as from your neighborhood.

To establish escape routes from your house or apartment, draw up a floor plan and make sure that all family members understand the plan. Each room should have two exit points. Include all members of the household when you conduct a practice session. Be sure to select a site outside the home for everyone to meet after they've left the house.

To establish escape routes from the neighborhood, draw a map that shows all the streets and their names so that when authorities provide evacuation instructions, you will know where to go.

**Family communication:** It's important to plan how your family members would contact one another if they were separated when disaster strikes. Fill out a contact card for each family member (you may use the samples located in this booklet) and have everyone keep a copy of it in a wallet, purse or backpack for easy reference.

**Communication with emergency personnel:** If you are injured because of an accident or disaster, you may be unable to speak with emergency medical technicians. In these cases, paramedics and other emergency response personnel often turn to a victim's cell phone for clues to his or her identity and emergency contacts.

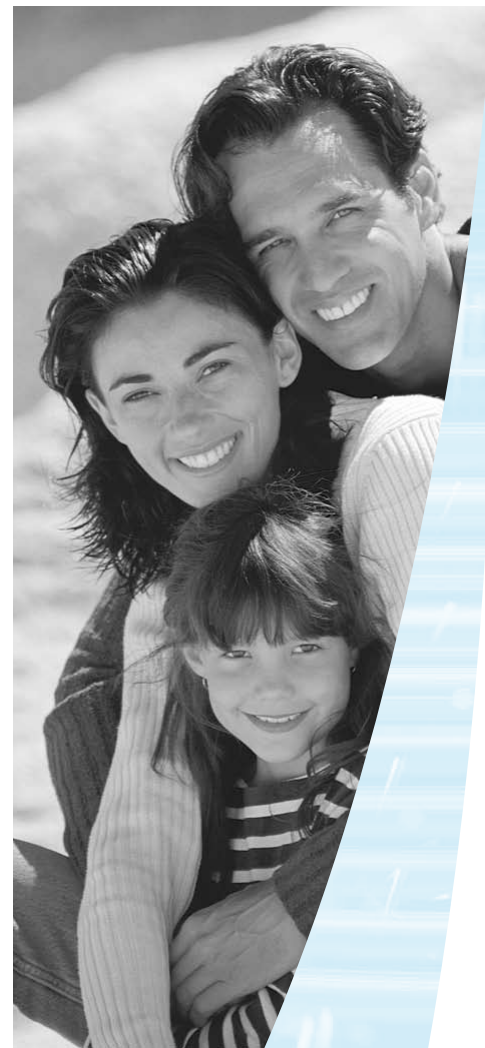
You can make their job much easier by simply adding an entry in the contacts list of your cell phone: ICE. ICE stands for "In Case of Emergency." Add an entry, label it ICE, and enter the name and phone number of the person whom the emergency services should call on your behalf.

Adding this entry takes only a few moments, but it can save time for the emergency personnel who can contact your loved ones quickly. Paramedics know what ICE means, and they look for it immediately.

**Utility shut-off and safety:** For some types of disasters, you may need to disconnect utility services to your home. Natural gas leaks are the number one cause of fires after a disaster.

Be sure that responsible family members can turn off the gas, electricity and water supplies. Contact your local utility company for proper shut-off procedures.

▽ **Caution:** Never turn gas service back on by yourself. Service should be restored only by a trained professional.



## Important documents

The documents that you might want to have copies of include:

- List of medications
- Insurance policies
- Driver's license or other photo ID
- Bank account information
- Credit card information
- Financial records
- Inventory of home possessions
- Cash and travelers checks



**Insurance and vital records:** In an emergency, you may not have time to gather your important documents. Make photocopies of your important documents and secure them in a safe place away from your home.

You may also want to keep an extra set of copies in your disaster supply kit along with a small amount of cash. A *Personal and Family Financial Records Inventory* booklet (publication number B-1330) may also be helpful. It can be ordered from the Texas Cooperative Extension Bookstore at <http://tcebookstore.org/>.

**Special needs:** Because disabled, elderly, unhealthy or non-English-speaking people have special needs, you must take additional steps to protect them. This chart offers tips on preparing for people with special needs.

DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEED	ADDITIONAL PRECAUTION
Hearing impaired	Make special arrangements to send warnings.
Mobility impaired	Provide special assistance to get to a shelter.
Single working parent	Offer help in planning for disasters and emergencies.
People who don't speak English	Contact community and cultural groups that can help keep them informed.
People without vehicles	Make arrangements for transportation.
People with special dietary needs	Be sure that the emergency food supply is appropriate.
People with medical conditions	Consult with a pharmacist about storing extra medications in case of an emergency.

**Source:** Federal Emergency Management Agency, Are You Ready?

Special assistance may be available in your area. Call your local emergency management office or local fire department to ask about special assistance programs. For more information, visit [www.prepare.org/disabilities/disabilities.htm](http://www.prepare.org/disabilities/disabilities.htm).

**Safety skills:** Responsible family members should know how to administer first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to use a fire extinguisher. For more information on training courses in your area, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

**Pet care:** If you must evacuate your home, what will you do with your pets? Emergency shelters generally do not accept pets, so you need to make plans for a safe place to take yours.

Keep in mind that most animal control shelters accommodate lost and stray pet disaster victims first. They will probably be unable to take your pets.

When creating a disaster plan for pets, consider taking these steps:

- Ask hotels/motels about their policies concerning pets and whether they would waive a "no pets" policy in an emergency.
- Make a list of pet-friendly places.
- Make a list of phone numbers and addresses of veterinarians and pet-boarding facilities.
- Ask friends outside the area if they would be willing to care for your pets.
- Prepare an emergency pet supply kit.



## Create a disaster supplies kit

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic necessities that members of a household will need during and immediately after a disaster. Every family should assemble a disaster supplies kit and keep it up to date. Individual disaster kits can be packaged in backpacks. A family-size disaster supply kit can be stored in a portable trunk or sealable plastic trash can.

**Why is a disaster supplies kit important?** If you are forced to evacuate from your home or shelter-in-place, you will not have time to gather the necessary supplies. Assembling a disaster supplies kit will help your family stay safe and be more comfortable after a disaster.

**What does a disaster supplies kit contain?** Every disaster kit should contain enough supplies to enable you and your family to take care of yourselves without outside help for at least 3 days.

Store your kits in a portable, airtight plastic container or rubber trash can and make sure they are easy to reach. One place to keep an individual supply kit is in your vehicle.

Not all family kits are the same. The size of your family kit will be determined by the number of people in your family and any special needs they might have. A basic disaster supplies kit will contain:

- **Water:** Pack enough bottled water to last for 3 days. Each person requires 1 gallon of water each day.
- **Food:** Choose foods that you know your family will eat and that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking. Examples include protein or fruit bars, dried fruit, nuts, peanut butter, crackers and canned juices. Also pack a hand-operated can opener and disposable eating utensils.
- **Clean air items:** If there is an explosion, you may need to create a barrier between yourself and the airborne contamination. Pack nose and mouth protection masks (N-95 rating), plastic sheeting and duct tape.
- **Extra clothing:** Gather one complete change of clothes, a pair of shoes and a blanket per person.
- **First aid kit:** Include two pairs of sterile gloves, sterile gauze, soap, antibiotic towelettes, antibiotic ointment, burn ointment, adhesive bandages, thermometer, prescription medications and prescribed medical supplies.
- **Emergency items:** Pack a battery-powered radio, flashlights, extra batteries, a whistle, shovel, basic tools, baby wipes, garbage bags, toilet paper and a state map.
- **Special needs items:** If there is a baby in the family, you will need to pack formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk, medications, baby wipes and diaper rash ointment.

For adults with special needs, consult with the doctor about storing prescription medications such as heart and high blood pressure meds, insulin and other prescription drugs.

Also include supplies for dentures and contact lenses.

**Maintain your kit!** Replace flashlight and radio batteries every 6 months and replace foods according to expiration dates.

## Emergency pet supply kit

You may need these items to take care of your pet during a disaster:

- Medical and current vaccination records
- Pet medications
- First aid kit
- Leash and carrier/crate
- 3-day supply of food and water
- Current photos in case you are separated
- Pet beds and toys
- Hand-operated can opener
- Cat litter and box
- Paper towels, plastic bags and bleach to properly handle pet waste



For more information on family disaster plans, see the Get Prepared section at [www.ready.gov/index.html](http://www.ready.gov/index.html).



### Listen to and obey officials

- Listen to public health officials via local radio and/or local television news stations.
- If the authorities tell you to evacuate immediately, grab the essentials and go.
- Take enough supplies to be able to take care of yourselves without outside help for at least 3 days (disaster supplies kit).
- Shelter-in-place until authorities say you can leave

**Source:** Talking About Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages, produced by the National Disaster Education Coalition, Washington, D.C. For more information, visit [www.disastereducation.org](http://www.disastereducation.org) and click on Disaster Guide.

## Deciding to stay or go

You may be faced with the decision to evacuate or shelter-in-place. Evacuation means moving from an unsafe place to a safe place in a hurry. Sheltering-in-place is staying exactly where you are during a disaster; it may be at home, school, work or a friend's house.

Take the following into consideration when making your decision:

- Listen for directions from local authorities.
- Use common sense.
- Monitor TV or radio news reports.

**Evacuation:** If local officials ask you to evacuate, do so immediately. The authorities will not ask you to leave unless they determine that lives may be in danger.

If you do not own or drive a car, you will need to make other arrangements for transportation. Ask your local emergency management office about the types of public transportation available.

A few things to know before an evacuation:

- Evacuate immediately if told to do so by authorities.
- Listen to a local radio or TV station and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.
- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes.
- Take your pets with you when you leave.
- Grab your disaster supplies kit.
- Use the travel routes specified by local authorities.

**Sheltering-in-place:** Some conditions may require that you shelter-in-place, or seek protection in your home, place of employment, school or wherever you are when the disaster occurs.

The directions for sheltering-in-place depend strictly on the type of emergency situation. Listen to local officials on how to shelter-in-place and remain there until they tell you that it is safe to leave. Here are a few incidents that require sheltering in place:

- **Tornado warning:** Go to an interior, underground or wind-safe room without windows.
- **Chemical attack:** If possible, take shelter on an upper floor in an interior space without windows and seal the space using plastic sheeting and duct tape. If you do not have a second floor, choose a room with few or no windows and a limited number of doors. Access to a bathroom is desirable.
- **Nuclear attack:** If possible, take shelter below ground in an interior space without windows. If you do not have such a shelter, listen to authorities for the next best option.



# Get involved

Becoming involved with your community's disaster response efforts can help make your home, community and state a safer place to live. You can become involved by being aware of your surroundings, reporting suspicious activity and volunteering your time.

**Recognize suspicious activity:** Every Texan can serve as the eyes and ears of law enforcement to help safeguard our state. Be alert and aware of your surroundings and report suspicious activity to your local sheriff or police department.

A quick, accurate description of events, vehicles and people can make all the difference in apprehending a potential criminal. Report activities or circumstances that seem unusual.

**Report suspicious behavior:** If you have information regarding suspicious or criminal activity, please contact your local law enforcement agency immediately. Do not confront a suspicious person. Leave that response to law enforcement.

You may also report tips by calling the Texas Department of Public Safety, Special Crimes Service, Counter Terrorism Intelligence Unit, at (866) 786-5972 or by e-mailing [Counter.Terrorism@txdps.state.tx.us](mailto:Counter.Terrorism@txdps.state.tx.us) or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at <https://tips.fbi.gov>.

**Volunteer:** You can help make your family, community, state and nation safer and stronger by offering your time and skills to support crime prevention and emergency preparedness efforts.

Protect Texas, a program sponsored by the Texas Department of State Health Services, offers volunteers the opportunity to protect their local communities from natural and public health disasters. Protect Texas volunteers include medical and health-care professionals as well as other people who care about their communities and want to help during emergencies. For information, see [www.dshs.state.tx.us/comprep/protect](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/comprep/protect).

You may also ask your county judge or local emergency management office about other disaster preparedness volunteer opportunities available in your area.

In summary, you can help protect yourself and your family by following this advice from the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Move or leave the area if you feel uncomfortable.
- Take precautions when traveling—be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior.
- Do not accept packages from strangers.
- Do not leave your luggage unattended.
- Report unusual behavior, suspicious packages and strange devices to police immediately.
- Ask your local emergency management office about your community's warning system.
- Know your children's school emergency plan.
- During an emergency, listen to local officials. Tune into your local TV and/or radio station or check the Internet.

## Examples of suspicious behavior

- A person showing unusual interest in utilities, government buildings, historic buildings or similar infrastructure—photographing, videotaping, inquiring about security, drawing diagrams or making notes about such facilities
- Suspicious or abandoned packages, luggage or mail in a crowded place such as an airport, office building or shopping center
- A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly
- Someone peering into cars or the windows of a home
- A high volume of traffic going to and coming from a home every day
- Someone loitering around schools, parks or secluded areas
- Strange odors coming from a house or building
- Open or broken doors and windows at a closed business or unoccupied residence
- Someone tampering with electrical, gas or sewer systems without an identifiable company vehicle and uniform

Source: [www.texas homelandsecurity.com](http://www.texas homelandsecurity.com)

# Special issues

## Discussing a disaster with children

During emergencies, children often feel afraid, anxious, confused and worried. To help give them a sense of comfort and security, discuss the disaster with them. Below are some tips suggested by Judith A. Myers-Walls of Purdue University.

*Assume that the children know about the disaster.* Children know more than you think. They are often exposed to the events as soon as they are able to watch television and interact with others.

*Reassure them.* Help your children feel safe by giving them reassurance. Be realistic—although you try to support and protect them, you cannot prevent all bad things from happening. Tell them that you love them, no matter what happens.

*Be available.* Be available and “askable.” Let your children know that it’s OK to talk about unpleasant events.

*Say how you feel.* Sharing your feelings can help children know that others also are upset by the events.

*Recognize their fears.* Support your children’s concern for people they do not know. Children often are afraid not only for themselves, their family and their friends, but also for people they do not know.

*Be aware of other emotions.* Look for feelings beyond fear. Let your children express all of their emotions.

*Find emotional outlets.* Help your children use creative outlets such as art and music to express their feelings.

*Help them take action.* Children may want to take action. The action can be very simple, such as writing a letter or getting involved with a disaster preparedness organization.



## Food safety

Our food can become unsafe after a flood, fire, disaster or the loss of power from high winds, snow or ice. Here’s how to minimize the potential loss of food and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

### ABCD’s of keeping food safe in an emergency

**Always** keep meat, poultry, fish, and eggs refrigerated at or below 40 degrees F and frozen food at or below 0 degrees F.

**Be prepared** for an emergency by having items on hand that don’t require refrigeration and can be eaten cold or heated on the outdoor grill. Store the following items in an emergency kit: nonperishable foods, ready-to-use baby formula, pet food, and a hand-operated can opener.

**Consider** what you can do ahead of time to store your food safely in an emergency. Keep coolers and frozen gel packs on hand to help keep food cold if the power will be out for more than 4 hours. If you live in a flood-prone area, store your food on shelves that will be safely away from contaminated water.

**Digital, dial or instant-read food thermometers** and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food is at safe temperatures. Keep thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer at all times.

For a fact sheet from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on when to save food and when to throw it out, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/).

## On-site wastewater treatment (septic) systems

Disasters can cause residential on-site wastewater treatment systems to fail. These systems are designed to protect public health by removing organic matter, solids and living organisms (such as viruses, bacteria and protozoa) from wastewater. If a system fails, people and animals can be exposed to untreated wastewater and can become ill.

You can better protect yourself and your family if you know your wastewater system's components, understand how they work and know how a disaster can affect the system. You also need to know what to do in case of a power outage or flood.

**System components:** On-site wastewater treatment systems generally consist of four components:

- Wastewater source (homeowner)
- Wastewater collection system (plumbing)
- Pretreatment component (septic tank)
- Final treatment and dispersal component (perforated piping in the ground)

Several types of on-site systems are used to treat wastewater. In a disaster, the extent of system failure and the potential health hazard varies with the specific type of system component.

**Electrical outages:** In a disaster, service is most likely to be interrupted by an electrical outage. Without power, wastewater treatment options that rely on electricity to operate will shut down, causing the wastewater to collect in the treatment system and potentially overflow it.

During a power outage, you can help prevent health risks caused by wastewater system failure by:

- Limiting water usage to essentials such as toilet flushing and hand washing
- Stopping all water usage if electrical outage is extended or the plumbing begins to drain slowly

Once power is restored, limit your water usage to allow the treatment system to regain normal productivity and proper treatment.

**Flooding:** During and after floods, the wastewater treatment system might be inundated with surface water. If your system's components become flooded with water, the wastewater treatment will be severely limited.

To prevent system failure, take these actions before a flood:

- Turn off electrical power to treatment systems that have electric components.
- Stop using water—any wastewater introduced into the system will undergo little, if any, treatment.
- Plug the floor drains in your home to prevent water from backing up through the system.

After a flood, take these steps to make sure your family and the environment are not harmed by untreated wastewater:

- Have a service provider check for system damage, sediment buildup in tanks and electrical problems.
- Do not use water until the floodwaters have receded.
- Inspect the system for signs of damage (such as missing lids or inspection ports).
- Do not pump the tanks empty or below their normal operating levels, as this may cause them to float out of the ground and damage piping.

### Wastewater treatment options that rely on electricity

- Aerobic treatment units
- Sand filters
- Recirculating media filters
- Flow equalization tanks
- Low pressure distribution
- Subsurface drip distribution
- Spray distribution



## Farmstead preparedness

The 229,000 farms and ranches in Texas may be hit by natural disasters such as droughts, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires. They are also susceptible to terrorist acts that damage property, destroy lives and cause widespread economic damage.

Farmers and ranchers are more likely to preserve life and property if they are prepared for disasters. Such preparation may also help them minimize recovery time and resume productivity much faster.

When creating a farmstead disaster plan, you will need to decide on the steps to take before, during and after the disaster.

If you are an agriculture producer, one way to prepare for a possible disaster is to create a farmstead disaster plan. To create a plan, consider:

- The safety of your family members and coworkers, livestock and the emergency response personnel who would assist in recovery efforts.
- The protection of crops, equipment and machinery, agricultural chemicals, water supplies, stores of food for animals and other bulk materials stored on the farm.
- Economic issues related to loss of life, property or income that may occur.

### Before a disaster

To minimize losses from a possible future disaster, producers should take inventory of property and livestock, gather disaster supplies and make special preparations for the farm.

**Inventory:** It is essential that you make a comprehensive accounting of livestock, property or potentially hazardous substances on your farmstead. Producers should:

- Attach animal ID tags on all animals and note the ID number and description of the animal, so that you can identify any killed, lost or stolen.
- Maintain a list of machinery and equipment, including makes and model numbers.
- Keep an updated list of pesticides, fertilizers, fuels, medicines and other chemicals. During a disaster, these chemicals can wash into streams or contaminate food supplies, placing people and animals at risk.

**Disaster supplies:** In addition to family disaster kits, agriculture producers should keep on hand additional supplies to protect the farm. These include:

- Sandbags and plastic sheeting, in case of flood
- Wire and rope to secure objects
- Lumber and plywood to protect windows
- Extra fuel for tractors and vehicles in a safe location
- Hand tools to assist in preparation and recovery
- Fire extinguishers in all barns and in all vehicles
- A safe supply of food to feed livestock
- A gas-powered generator in case of power failure

**Farm preparation:** There are several steps you can take to minimize damage to livestock and property. You should:

- Establish escape routes for cows, horses, sheep and other livestock to higher elevation in case of flooding.
- Plan for providing food and water for relocated livestock.



- Know how to turn off electrical power to machines, barns and other structures.
- Plan for how and to where you would move hay, machinery, fuels, pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals out of flood-prone areas.

## During a disaster

Livestock, property and utilities need special attention during a disaster.

**Livestock:** Drive large animals out of barns that may be flooded. When frightened, livestock often seek shelter in barns. Also, make sure the livestock have a good source of food and water.

**Property:** Move hay, machinery, fuels, pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals out of flood-prone areas. Secure loose items, such as lumber, logs, pipes, machinery parts and tools.

**Utilities:** Turn off electrical power to machines, barns and other structures that may become damaged or flooded.

## After a disaster

Once the initial emergency situation has passed, producers should attend to livestock, utilities and inventory. They may also need to seek economic assistance from government agencies.

### Livestock

- Make sure the livestock have plenty of water and food that has not been contaminated by pollutants. In some cases, you may need to truck in water and food or remove the livestock from the contaminated areas.
- After a flood, spray the livestock with insect repellent to protect them against disease-carrying mosquitoes.
- Gather and dispose of trash, limbs, wire and damaged equipment that could harm livestock. Clear and repair damaged fences.
- Observe all livestock for signs of infectious disease such as pneumonia or foot rot.
- Have a veterinarian necropsy all animals that die immediately after the disaster.
- Immediately dispose of the dead carcasses. Rendering plants will process some dead animals. Those not processed should be buried away from bodies of water at least 3 to 4 feet deep and covered with quick-lime to accelerate decomposition.

### Utilities

- If you were unable to disable electric power before the disaster, look carefully for signs of damage to electrical components. Contact your electric utility company if you suspect damage, and ask for advice on how to determine if your electric system is safe to turn back on.
- Never try to turn the electricity back on in areas that have been flooded before having the system checked.
- Depending on the extent of damage, gas lines could also sustain significant damage. Have the gas company check the system for leaks before continuing service.

### Inventory

- Account for all livestock, fuels, chemicals, machinery and equipment. Compare this list to the inventory prepared before the incident.

- Note any lost livestock, and report to emergency response personnel any hazardous materials such as fuels, pesticides, fertilizers or other chemicals that have leaked.
- Check machinery and equipment for damage.
- For insurance or emergency assistance purposes, take photographs of all damage.

## Farm disaster assistance

Agriculture producers need not face a disaster alone. Farms or ranches that have suffered losses because of a disaster may be eligible for assistance under one or more of the following Farm Service Agency programs listed below.

### Farm disaster programs

- The **Emergency Conservation Program** provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, or other disasters
- The **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program** provides financial assistance to eligible producers affected by natural disasters, and covers noninsurable crop losses and planting prevented by disasters
- **Emergency Loan Assistance** provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses from drought, floods, other natural disasters or quarantine
- **Emergency Haying and Grazing Assistance** provides emergency haying and grazing of certain Conservation Reserve Program acreage in areas suffering from weather-related disasters.

Contact your local Farm Service Agency for more information about these programs.



# For more information

Contact the agencies and groups below for information on preparing for and recovering from a disaster.

## **211 Texas–First Call for Help**

Dial 2-1-1 from any land-line phone

Web: [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)

## **American Humane Society Animal Emergency Service**

Phone: (303) 792-9900

Web: [www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org)

## **American Red Cross**

Phone: (866) GET-INFO (866-438-4636)

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

## **American Red Cross – Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities and Special Needs**

Phone: (866) GET-INFO (866-438-4636)

Web: [www.prepare.org/disabilities/disabilities.htm](http://www.prepare.org/disabilities/disabilities.htm)

## **Citizen Corps**

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

## **Texas Governor’s Division of Emergency Management**

Phone: (512) 424-2277

Web: [www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/)

## **Federal Emergency Management Agency**

Phone: (800) 745-0243

Web: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

## **Texas Department of State Health Services**

### **Protect Texas Volunteers**

Web: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/comprep/protect](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/comprep/protect)

## **Texas Cooperative Extension**

Call your local county agent for information

Web: <http://texasextension.tamu.edu>

## **United States Department of Homeland Security**

Phone: (202) 282-8000

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

## **Texas Poison Control Center**

Phone: (800) 222-1222

Web: [www.poisioncontrol.org](http://www.poisioncontrol.org)

## **Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)**

Web: [texashelp.tamu.edu](http://texashelp.tamu.edu)

# Help in Texas

## Emergency 9-1-1

Dial 9-1-1 to request emergency assistance. Do not call 9-1-1 unless the situation is life threatening.

[www.911.state.tx.us](http://www.911.state.tx.us).

## 2-1-1 Texas First Call For Help

Dial 2-1-1 for nonemergency information and referral. Information on evacuation routes and locations of food and shelter during a disaster will be available.

[www.211.org](http://www.211.org).

## Texas Poison Control Center

Call (800) 222-1222 if you suspect that someone has ingested or inhaled a toxic substance.

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

## Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)

Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) provides access to resources on disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

[texashelp.tamu.edu](http://texashelp.tamu.edu)

## Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) offers current information on emergency preparedness.

[www.dshs.state.tx.us/comprep](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/comprep)



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Extension publications can be found on the Web at: <http://AgriLifebookstore.org>

Visit the Texas AgriLife Extension Service at <http://texasextension.tamu.edu>

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*Emergency Contacts*

Contact name:

Telephone:

Out-of-town contact name

Telephone:

**Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies**

*Emergency Contacts*

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Out-of-town contact name

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***Emergency Information***

Allergies:

Medications:

Medical conditions:

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