

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE 2009

From the Hood County Office of Emergency Management

By reading this guide you have taken the first step in preparing for emergencies. Emergencies happen quickly and may leave their victims feeling lost. The best thing you can do to be prepared is to get involved.

- Know the hazards
- Know your needs
- Know the plan and practice it
- Know the programs and use them

Members of Hood County Fire Marshal's Office and Emergency Management designed this comprehensive easy guide to help citizens begin the planning process. It is a walk-through, providing contact information needed during and after a disaster and brief descriptions of programs that help families and individuals become more prepared.

Please take full advantage of this guide; it truly is a matter of life and death. Don't hesitate to contact us for clarification or additional information at 817-579-3335.

Sincerely,

Brian Fine
Hood County Fire Marshal
Emergency Management Coordinator

WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD DO TO PREPARE

Even though responses vary with disasters, preparing for each situation is similar. For example, the emergency kit and family communication plan for a tornado will be similar for other emergencies.

BE PREPARED!

Find the safest area in your home to gather the family during severe weather, away from windows, doors, and skylights. Ensure everyone knows what to expect and what to do in case the family isn't together when an event occurs.

TYPICAL TEXAS WEATHER EVENTS

Flooding
Hail
Ice Storms
Straight-line windstorms
Thunderstorms
Tornados

FLOOD:

Flash flooding is common in Hood County and may form a wall of water carrying deadly debris. Gradual flooding may be just as dangerous.

HAIL:

Quite common in Hood County, hail can be as large as softballs and is potentially deadly.

ICE STORMS:

Common occurrence in Texas. Business, school and road closures possible.

STRAIGHT-LINE WINDSTORMS:

High winds causing minor to severe damage. Commonly mistaken for tornados.

THUNDERSTORM:

Heavy rain lasting 30 minutes to an hour, potentially disastrous lightning, hail, winds and tornadoes.

TORNADO:

Rotating, funnel-shaped clouds typically occurring near a thunderstorm's trailing edge with winds up to 300 miles per hour. The air may become still before a tornado hits. A whirling cloud of debris may mark a tornado's approach.

FLOODS and THUNDERSTORMS

Floods threaten some neighborhoods more than others. Hood County has many low water crossings and run off from higher elevations. The rule for safety is simple: Head for higher ground and stay away from flood- waters. Do not cross moving water! What appears shallow may be deep enough or have a strong enough current to be deadly.

Thunderstorms occur on a regular basis. Although most are not what most people would consider dangerous, there are many hazards associated with them. Heavy rain can result in flooding. Lightening and wind often accompany a thunderstorm and can be hazardous.

FLOODS

- Are longer-term events that may last more than a week
- More frequent in the spring.
- In rural settings, low water crossing and natural flow of surface water may cause it to occur without notice.

BE AWARE OF FLASH FLOODS

- May occur within a few minutes or several hours of heavy rainfall, or may happen if no rain has fallen in your area.
- Floods are the number one killer among North Texas Disasters.
- May push massive debris ahead of them and may trigger ground erosion.
- Typically caused by-slow moving or frequent thunderstorms.

ALERTS and WARNINGS

Flash floods or flood watch: possible within designated watch area, be alert to environmental clues and ready to evacuate.

Flash flood or flood warning: has been reported or is imminent; act quickly to save yourself because you may have only seconds. Small streams, low-lying area, railroad underpasses and storm drains are flooding.

Flash flood or flood statement: follow-up information regarding an event.

BEFORE THE FLOOD WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Fill the bathtub and other containers with water so you have an uncontaminated supply if water service is cut off.
- Stock food requiring little cooking and no refrigeration.
- Prepare a disaster kit.
- Keep NOAA weather radio, battery-powered radio, emergency cooking equipment and flashlights in working order.

IF YOU ARE TOLD TO EVACUATE

- If there's time, secure outdoor equipment
- Lock doors and windows.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches and valves.
- Tell someone where you're going.
- Follow recommended evacuation.
- Watch for washed-out roads and bridges.
- Watch out for down power lines.
- Don't try to wade, swim, or drive through high water as the current may be deadly.

AFTER THE FLOOD

- Avoid standing water; it may be contaminated or electrically charged.
- Avoid moving water; **six-inch deep water** can sweep you off your feet.
- Roads and bridges may be weakened and could collapse at anytime.
- Stay out of disaster area unless authorities ask for volunteers.
- Return home only after authorities say it's safe.
- Stay out of buildings surrounded by water.
- Listen for reports on tap water's safety before using.
- Throw out fresh food that came in contact with floodwater.
- Boil tap water before drinking. Have wells tested for purity before using it for drinking.
- Seek necessary medical care at nearest hospital
- Food, clothing, shelter and first aid may be available through the American Red Cross.
- Dry out and check electrical equipment before using.
- Use flashlights, **not open flames**, of any kind to examine buildings; there may be flammable residue and/or gases.
- Report broken utility lines to proper authorities.

HAIL and ICE STORMS

Hailstorms typically do not have a major long lasting impact on the area. However, hailstorms can knock out utilities, damage roofs, vehicles and cause injuries.

Ice storms occur on a fairly regular basis throughout north Texas. Typically they do not have a long term effect, however utilities may be down, road, school and business closures may occur. Pets and livestock are affected.

HAIL

- Short term
- Localized damage

ICE STORMS

- May cover large geographic area
- Last several days
- Damage to utilities
- Hazardous road conditions

PREPARATION

- Seek shelter indoors
- Move pets and livestock to shelter
- Place vehicles under covered area
- Avoid unnecessary travel
- Have emergency lighting (flashlights)
- Monitor weather broadcast
- Maintain supply of food and water to last 3 days
- Have additional blankets, jackets and other warm items available

TORNADOS and STRAIGHT-LINE WINDS

Tornados can and do occur in Hood County. They are not as frequent as straight-line winds. Major damage can occur.

Straight-line winds are a regular occurrence and can result in major damage. They are often confused with tornados.

PREPARATION

- Seek shelter indoors
- If possible move pets and livestock to shelter
- Avoid unnecessary travel
- Have emergency lighting (flashlights)
- Monitor weather broadcast
- Maintain supply of food and water to last 3 days

IF A TORNADO WARNING IS ANNOUNCED:

- ***Seek shelter immediately.*** Interior rooms of the house such as bathrooms and closets are best.
- If you can't reach shelter, lie face down in the lowest spot you can find and cover your head with your hands. If you're in a car, get out of it and shelter in a building or ditch.

AFTER IT PASSES:

- Monitor radio for updates.
- Watch for broken glass and downed power lines.
- Do not move injured people unless there is immediate danger call for help.

OTHER HAZARDS

HOMELAND SECURITY

Since its inception, the **NATIONAL THREAT LEVEL SYSTEM** has been used to indicate the nation's risk of terrorist attack.

RED-Severe risk of attack

ORANGE-High risk of attack

YELLOW-Elevated significant risk of attack

BLUE-Guarded general risk of attack

GREEN-Low risk of attack

TERRORISM:

The use of violence against people for intimidation or coercion.

- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Get to know your neighbors.
- Be alert to and report suspicious behavior.
- Never accept packages from strangers or leave baggage unattended.
- Leave an area if you feel uncomfortable with a situation.
- Know emergency exits from buildings you enter.

CHEMICAL/BIOLOGICAL/NUCLEAR:

Emergencies involving these materials can result from accidental as well as intentional events.

- Prepare a room with as few windows and doors as possible in case authorities ask you to shelter in place.
- Lock doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
- Turn off air conditioning/heating system, exhaust fans and clothes dryers.
- Monitor radio or TV for further instructions.

**HAVE A PLAN AND KNOW WHAT TO DO...
BECAUSE EVERY MINUTE COUNTS!**

COMMUNICATION PLANS

- Have a plan to help the family regain contact if one or more get separated.
- Have a contact outside of the area (preferable out of state) that each family member can call.
- Pick two places to meet.

YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY DEPENDS ON BEING PREPARED.

- Assemble disaster supplies kit.
- Create emergency communications plans.
- Establish a meeting place.
- Check on school emergency plans
- Remember in disasters stay calm.
- U.S. Department of Homeland security web site, www.ready.gov.

PLANNING FOR PETS

- Keep pets inside during emergency.
- If you must evacuate, remember that the American Red Cross emergency shelters DO NOT ALLOW PETS.
- Make a pre-plan for housing your pets.
- Call hotels and motels out side your area and ask about accepting pets during an emergency.
- Assemble portable pet kit with food, water, collar, leash identification, vaccination record and phone numbers for vet and boarding facilities.
- For lost pets, contact your local Animal Care and Control Center
- If a pet must be left behind, prepare an outdoor emergency pen with three-day supply of food and water.

**MAKE A PLAN FOR WHEN YOU ARE AT WORK AND IN YOU CAR.
Small kits placed in your car or desk. Kits should include emergency lighting, blanket, water, food, emergency contacts, medication and any other item you feel is essential.**

GATHER THE FAMILY AND TALK ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF A DISASTER STRIKES.

- Write down what you come up with; make it flexible enough for any event. Then practice it.
- What are potential emergencies?
- Staying informed during disaster.
- Evacuating your home.
- How to get out.
- Where to go.
- What to take and where it is kept.
- What about special needs of children the elderly and the disabled. Medications, wheelchairs, portable oxygen things that will require a pre-plan, remember plan for 3 days.

NOAA Weather Radio is designed to keep listeners informed during all types of emergencies -not just weather related-and may be purchased at electronics stores.

Cable-Override-emergency message may override cable programming to spread important information. Outdoor warning sirens warn of imminent threat.

STAY INFORMED AT ALL TIMES

Emergency Alert Station WBAP- **820AM** and KRLD-**1080AM** are the Primary stations.

KPIR-1420 AM IS THE LOCAL STATION IN HOOD COUNTY

KDFW-CHANNEL 4, KXAS-CHANNEL 5, WFAA-CHANNEL 8.

CABLE OVERRIDE-emergency messages MAY override cable programming to spread important information.

OUTDOORS WARNING SIRENS-warn of imminent threat, but are not only for severe weather. If you hear a siren, go inside, turn on local TV or radio station and follow authorities' instructions.

RECOVERY TIPS: DEALING WITH DIASTER'S AFTERMATH

How do I find my local emergency management office?

**Hood County Fire Marshal's Office
201 W. Bridge St.
Granbury, Texas 76048
817-579-3335**

How do I request disaster assistance?

Disaster assistance is provided based on the need of the affected area. Local volunteer agencies step in to provide immediate, essential needs such as shelter, food, water and clothing. News media will announce locations where agencies have set-up facilities to distribute these items.

How can I get in touch with my family?

Call American Red Cross-Chisholm Trail Chapter, 817-335-9137, to access a family-location database. Do not call the disaster area.

What if my home is damaged?

All structural damage should be reported to your local emergency management office. **817-579-3335**. If damage is so severe and has displaced you from your home, contact the American Red Cross (Disaster Services) at 817-336-8718. In addition, before disaster strikes you want to ensure that you have adequate insurance coverage on your home, including: flood, wind, and hail. Most typical homeowner's insurance policies do not cover these items and you may be left without insurance relief.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY: 911

Non-Emergency

Hood County Dispatch: 817-579-3307

Erath County Dispatch: 254-965-3318

Somervell County Dispatch: 254-897-2242

Texas Highway Patrol: 817-579-3337

Granbury Police: 817-573-2648

Hood County Fire Marshal's Office: 817-579-3335

Granbury Hood County EMS (Ambulance): 817-279-1408

Poison Control: 800-222-1222

TXU Power outage: 800-242-9113

TXU Gas leak: 800-817-8090

Texas-New Mexico Electric: 888-866-7456

Tri-County Electric: 817-279-7010

United Cooperative Electric: 817-556-4000

SBC Repair 800-246-8464

Alltel: 800-982-2280

Lipan-Bluff Dale Telephone: 254-728-3500

Hood County Crime Stoppers: 817-573-TIPS

Hood County Health Department: 817-579-3288

Hood County Commissioners Office 817-579-3300

American Red Cross Chisholm Chapter: 817-335-9137

National Weather Service: 817-429-2631

National Youth Crisis Hotline: 800-448-4663

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE

Crisis Intervention Agencies: 888-818-HOPE

Mission Granbury: 817-579-6848

Texas Runaway Hotline: 888-680-HELP

FBI (Dallas): 972-559-5000