

# Attention: Citizens of North Central Texas



## **KnoWhat2Do** **Think.Prepare.Act.**

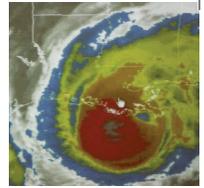


In case of emergency, KnoWhat2Do! There are skilled and caring emergency professionals throughout North Central Texas ready to help if and when disaster strikes. But you are your own best protection. This helpful guide will teach you how to think, prepare and act to protect your personal safety and the safety of those around you.

KnoWhat2Do. Developed through the collaboration of our North Central Texas regional governments, the KnoWhat2Do campaign reaches out to millions of people in our 16-county region. Through the Web site ([www.KnoWhat2Do.com](http://www.KnoWhat2Do.com)), a bi-lingual educational DVD, and preparedness guide full of fast facts and tips, users find instant information on disaster preparedness. There are steps people can take to safeguard themselves and their families. **Think. Prepare. Act.** [www.KnoWhat2Do.com](http://www.KnoWhat2Do.com)

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The image features a large, stylized brain in shades of orange and brown, filling most of the frame. In the center of the brain, there is a white lightbulb icon with three small lightning bolts radiating from its top, symbolizing an idea or thought. The word "Think" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with the lightbulb icon serving as the letter 'i'.

**Think**



# Weathering The Storm: Severe Weather

If your idea of preparing for severe weather is stashing an umbrella in the trunk, well, this section is for you. Those who have experienced a tornado or a flash flood first-hand will tell you just how serious and devastating severe weather in North Central Texas can be. The good news is that most weather can be predicted. The bad news is that many weather-related deaths still occur each year in North Central Texas despite advance warning. The first step to being prepared is realizing that severe weather can happen at any time—and it can happen to you.

## **Each year, the United States has an average of:**

- 100,000 thunderstorms
- 10,000 severe thunderstorms
- 5,000 floods or flashfloods
- 1,000 tornadoes
- 2 deadly hurricanes

## **In North Central Texas, an average year has:**

- 12 tornadoes
- 258 severe thunderstorm events (large hail, damaging winds)
- 68 flash flood events per year
- 5 people lose their lives to excessive heat

SOURCE: [stormready.noaa.gov](http://stormready.noaa.gov)



Think. 1

# Severe Thunderstorm & Lightning



Thunderstorms can be exciting to watch, especially from the safety of your warm, comfy couch. Besides staying dry, here's another good reason to stay inside (and off the phone)—lightning kills **more** people each year than tornadoes. Since every thunderstorm produces lightning, you need to be prepared! Flash floods and hail are also dangers associated with thunderstorms.

## One one-thousand, two one-thousand, **KABOOM!**

By counting the seconds between the flash and the thunder and dividing by five, you can estimate your distance from the strike (in miles).

### Thunderstorm Facts:

- In North Central Texas, most thunderstorms happen in the afternoon.
- Thunder and lightning can sometimes even come with a snowstorm!
- At any moment in time, over 1,800 thunderstorms are occurring around the world—that's 16 million a year!
- A typical thunderstorm lasts approximately 3 hours and can vary from a few miles to a few hundred miles.



Think. 2

## Severe Thunderstorm and Lightning Safety Tips:

- When thunder roars, go indoors.
- If you can hear thunder, you're close enough to be struck by lightning—find safe shelter immediately.
- Move to a sturdy building and stay away from the windows (don't take shelter in a shed, under isolated trees or in a convertible vehicle).
- If a sturdy shelter is not available, get inside a hardtop vehicle and keep the windows up.
- Get out of boats and away from water.
- Unplug appliances and avoid using the telephone except in an emergency (cell phones are okay to use but corded phones are not)

SOURCE: Severe Weather CD

## If Someone Is Hit by Lightning:

- **Call 9-1-1** for help immediately. Being struck by lightning can cause burns or nervous system damage, broken bones and loss of hearing and eyesight.
- You may touch them—they don't carry an electrical charge.
- Give first aid or CPR if necessary.



Think. 3

## LIGHTNING **FACT** VS. FICTION:

**Fiction:** Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

**Fact:** Lightning has “favorite” sites that it may hit many times during one storm.

**Fiction:** If it’s not raining, then there’s no danger from lightning.

**Fact:** Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 30 miles away from any rainfall.

**Fiction:** The rubber soles of shoes or rubber tires on a car will protect you from being struck by lightning.

**Fact:** Rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal. Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.

**Fact:** What is referred to, as “heat lightning” is actually lightning from a thunderstorm too far away for thunder to be heard. However, the storm may be moving in your direction, so be prepared!

**Fact:** Lightning-strike victims carry no electrical charge and should be attended to immediately.

SOURCE: NWS Fort Worth



Think. 4

# Flash Floods and Flooding



Tornadoes are impressive, but Flash Flooding takes more lives each year worldwide than any other severe weather related hazard. Only six inches of fast moving water holds enough force to knock over an adult, and only two feet of water will carry away most vehicles...even pickups and SUVs. Whenever you encounter high water, and especially during Flash Flood warnings, **Turn Around Don't Drive**. Never underestimate the power of water.

SOURCE: Mark Fox, NWS Fort Worth

## Flash Flood Safety Tips:

- Get out of areas subject to flooding, like dips, low spots, canyons, and washes.
- Do not drive through standing water.
- FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS; Never remove or attempt to go around a barricade where flooded roadways are present.
- Never drive through flooded roadways in case the roadbed is no longer intact.
- If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground.
- Be cautious at night when it's harder to see and recognize flood dangers.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
- Pay attention to warning signs

SOURCE: Severe Weather CD

## What's the difference between a flash flood and a normal flood?

Flash flooding occurs during heavy rain events and happens very quickly. It ends quickly as well. Regular flooding occurs as the result of a more prolonged rain event, lake overflow, or dam failure. It's more gradual, more predictable, and lasts longer.



Think. 5

# Hail



The sky is falling! The sky is falling! Oh wait—that's hail. Hail is frozen nuggets of ice formed when raindrops pass through a belt of cold air on their way to earth. The cold air causes the raindrops to freeze into small blocks of ice. Hail most commonly causes damage to property, vehicles (remember all of those "Hail Sales" at your local dealership?) and crops; more than \$1 billion in damage each year. In fact, the costliest hail storm event in U.S. history struck San Antonio in April 2016. But considering the fact that large stones can fall at speeds faster than 100 mph, it's important that you cover your head and learn what to do when hailstorm conditions are present.

## Hailstorm Safety Tips:

- During a storm, seek shelter. Hail of any size can be dangerous when pelted in high winds.
- Surfaces may become slick, so use caution if you're outside.
- When driving into a hailstorm, find a safe place to pull over and turn your car so the hail is hitting the windshield. The safety glass will protect you. The hail could break the glass in other windows.

SOURCE: Nature's Most Violent Storms, A Preparedness Guide, USDC, NOAA, NWS

## Ouch!

The largest hailstone ever documented weighed over 1.6 pounds and spanned 5.67 inches.



Think. 6



Remember the devastating tornado that hit Garland and Rowlett in December of 2015? The Garland-Rowlett tornado ranks #1 in terms of highest rated & deadliest tornado in Dallas County for December (rated EF4 with 10 fatalities) Much of the region was already beneath an “enhanced risk” for severe weather with the main hazards being large hail, damaging winds and tornadoes.

Cars were pummeled with grapefruit-sized hail, vegetation was totally stripped from the trees and shrubs, and rain poured down at a rate of as much as three inches in thirty minutes, causing massive flash flooding.



Think. 7

# Tornado



Texas averages 125 tornadoes every year- more than any other state. Oklahoma comes in second with an average of 54 per year. Twisters can occur at any time of year but spring and summer are considered tornado season. While tornadoes can happen at any time of day, they're most likely to occur between 3 and 9 p.m. So when your afternoon talk show or evening sitcom is interrupted for a tornado watch or warning—pay attention and don't go outside!

## **When a tornado watch or warning has been issued, look out for:**

- Dark, often greenish sky
- Wall cloud (a heavy, lowering cloud that is rain-free and may begin to rotate)
- Large hail
- Loud roar; similar to a freight train

## **Caution:**

- Some tornadoes appear as a visible funnel extending only partially to the ground. Look for signs of debris below the visible funnel.
- Tornadoes can be obscured by rain or nearby low-hanging clouds.

SOURCE: Nature's Most Violent Storms, A Preparedness Guide, USDC, NOAA, NWS

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Think. 8

## Tornado Safety Tips:

- Designate a shelter area in your home or place of business, such as a basement, and go there during severe weather.
- If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy piece of furniture.
- Stay away from windows.
- Don't try to outrun a tornado in your car—leave it immediately and seek shelter in a sturdy building.
- If no shelter is available, get out of vehicles and find the most low-lying area (ditch, ravine, etc.) lay flat on your stomach and cover your head with your hands.
- Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that advance warning is not possible.
- Remain alert for signs of an approaching tornado and watch for flying debris.
- Mobile homes should always be abandoned prior to severe weather occurring. Don't wait until the storm actually approaches you are already too late.

SOURCE: Severe Weather CD



Think. 9



## TORNADO **FACT** VS. FICTION:

**Fiction:** Areas near rivers, lakes, and mountains are safe from tornadoes.

**Fact:** No place is safe from tornadoes. In the late 1980's, a tornado swept through Yellowstone National Park leaving a path of destruction up and down a 10,000-foot mountain.

SOURCE: Mark Fox, NWS Fort Worth

**Fiction:** The low pressure with a tornado causes buildings to “explode” as the tornado passes overhead.

**Fact:** Violent winds and debris slamming into buildings cause most structural damage.

**Fiction:** Windows should be opened before a tornado approaches to equalize pressure and minimize damage.

**Fact:** Opening windows allows damaging winds to enter the structure. Leave the windows alone; instead, immediately move to a safe place.

SOURCE: Nature's Most Violent Storms, A Preparedness Guide, USDC, NOAA, NWS



Think. 10

# Winter Weather



At the first mention of a winter freeze, traffic and commerce in North Central Texas freezes too. Why? While colder weather brings a welcome change, most people aren't prepared for it. Freezing rain, snow and ice can make for great outdoor fun—but can also result in car accidents, hypothermia, and carbon monoxide poisoning from defective heating units. In addition, a few inches of ice can bring down power lines that result in days-long outages. And on the road, that quick trip to grandma's can turn into an impromptu camp-out in the car. With a little planning, you can protect yourself and enjoy some frosty fun!

## Winter Weather Safety Tips:

- Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing instead of one heavy layer of clothing. Make sure outer garments are water-repellent.
- Ensure your heating source is working properly and well ventilated. Have it serviced regularly.
- Avoid driving on overpasses and bridges—they often freeze more quickly than roads.
- Winterize your car. Flush the cooling system, replace the coolant, replace the wiper blades, etc. Create a Winter Weather Kit in case you're stranded (**see page Prepare.6**).
- Winterize your pipes. Keep faucets dripping when the temperature drops below freezing.
- Take extra precautions to ensure the well-being of your animals by providing plenty of water and food, as well as appropriate shelter.

## Black ice

Black ice is caused by extremely cold rain droplets forming a film of clear ice on roadways (it's called "black" because you can see the black asphalt through it). It's hard to see and extremely slick, so look out for this hazard when the temperature drops near freezing!



Think. 11

## El Niño and La Niña:

Many large-scale weather elements contribute to the winter patterns we see over North Central Texas. Recent research has revealed that the El Niño and La Niña may play a significant role in the conditions we experience.



### What are they?

El Niño and La Niña are fluctuations in the oceanic and atmospheric circulations lasting for several months. Their most recognizable feature is a warming or cooling of the waters in the eastern and central tropical Pacific Ocean. El Niño can occur if the waters are warmer than normal and La Niña can occur if colder than normal waters are observed in this area.

### How do they affect us?

El Niño winter: North Central Texas typically experiences cool but not exceptionally cold temperatures. The area also tends to receive above-normal precipitation. La Niña winter: Characterized by warmer than normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation over North Central Texas. Winters with neutral conditions, neither an El Niño nor a La Niña, tend to be near normal on the average. However, our most extreme winter events tend to occur during near-neutral winters.

SOURCE: [srh.noaa.gov](http://srh.noaa.gov)

Get up-to-date drought information for North Central Texas at

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/?n=drought>



Think. 12

# Extreme Heat, Drought & Wildfire



Hot Texas summers—there's nothing quite like it! Careful—extreme heat not only kills lawns, it can also push your body beyond its limits. Older adults, children, and those who are sick or overweight are most likely to suffer when the mercury rises. Droughts and wildfires can also be the result of super-hot temperatures, low amounts of rainfall and careless behavior. Learn how to take protective measures to safeguard yourself and your environment.

## Hot Stuff: Get the Facts

- Hundreds of Americans die each year from extreme heat. Children, elderly people, and those who are sick or overweight are more likely to become victims.
- Heat-related injuries and deaths are preventable.
- Between 1999-2009, over 7,000 people, an average of 658 people each year, succumbed to the effects of heat and solar radiation.

SOURCE: [srh.noaa.gov](http://srh.noaa.gov), CDC, and [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com)

## Heat-Related Illness:

High temperatures, like the kind we experience in a North Central Texas summer, along with high humidity, can cause heat-related illnesses which range in severity from mild heat cramps, to heat exhaustion, to potentially life-threatening heatstroke.



Think. 13

## Heat Cramps:

Painful, involuntary muscle spasms. They may occur during heavy exercise and are often caused by dehydration.

### Signs and Symptoms:

- Spasms that feel like nighttime leg cramps, only more severe which often occur in the calves, arms, abdomen and back.

### If you suspect heat cramps:

- Cool down and rest.
- Drink a sports drink with electrolytes or clear juice.
- Gently stretch and massage the affected muscles.
- Call your doctor if your cramps don't go away in one hour.

## Heat Exhaustion:

Exhaustion that begins suddenly and is sometimes caused by heavy exercise, sweating and dehydration.

### Signs and Symptoms:

- Low blood pressure
- Cool, moist skin
- Low-grade fever
- Feeling faint
- Nausea
- Heavy sweating
- Rapid, weak heartbeat

### If you suspect heat exhaustion:

- Move the person to a shady area.
- Lay them down and slightly elevate their legs and feet.
- Loosen or remove their clothing.
- Give them cool water (not iced) or a sports drink containing electrolytes to drink.
- Fan the person and spray or sponge them down with cool water.
- Remember: Heat exhaustion can quickly become heatstroke. If fever greater than 102°F, fainting, confusion or seizures occur, **dial 9-1-1** immediately.



Think. 14

## Heatstroke:

A potentially life-threatening, heat-related problem that often results from heavy work and dehydration. The body's normal mechanisms for dealing with heat stress, such as sweating and temperature control, stop working. The elderly, the young, and those with underlying health conditions are at high risk of heatstroke.

### Signs and Symptoms:

- Body temperature, generally greater than 104°F, with changes in mental status like confusion and even coma.
- Skin may be hot and dry, although in heatstroke caused by exertion, the skin is usually moist.
- Rapid heartbeat.
- Rapid and shallow breathing.
- Elevated or lowered blood pressure.
- Sweating stops.
- Irritability, confusion or unconsciousness.
- Fainting, which may be the first sign in older adults.

### If you suspect heatstroke:

- Move the person into the shade or air-conditioned space.
- **Dial 9-1-1.**
- Wrap the person with damp sheets or spray them with cool water.

SOURCE: [mayoclinic.com](http://mayoclinic.com)



## Extreme Heat – At-Home Safety Tips:

- Stay out of the sun as much as possible. Use sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher).
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic and caffeine-free fluids.
- Install window air conditioners snugly; insulate and check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Weather-strip doors and sills to keep cool air in.

## Extreme Heat – Outdoor Safety Tips:

- Help prevent drought by watering your lawn only when necessary and by adhering to local water restrictions.
- Help prevent wildfires by respecting “no burn” days.
- Avoid roadside fires by disposing of cigarettes responsibly.
- Dispose of hot charcoal in a non-flammable container or hose down before dumping.



# Storm Spotters



A network of Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) volunteers (find a link to RACES in the Get Involved section) and SKYWARN Spotters to help obtain critical weather information. These volunteers help identify and describe severe local storms, enabling the NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods. SKYWARN Spotters form the Nation's first line of defense against severe weather and help save thousands of lives annually.

## How Can I Become a SKYWARN Spotter?

1. Obtain your amateur radio license.
2. Attend one of the **NWS SKYWARN** Spotter training programs.  
This will provide the observational knowledge you need.
3. Become integrated into the Spotter network in your area.

For more information on SKYWARN in North Texas,

**visit <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/skywarn/>**

SOURCE: Basic Spotters' Field Guide, NOAA CD

**StormReady®** is a program that arms communities with the skills needed to save lives and property—before and during the event. For more information, **visit [www.stormready.noaa.gov](http://www.stormready.noaa.gov)**

**Texas Severe Weather Awareness Week** is held every year in the spring. For more information, **visit [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)**



Think. 17

# Watches Vs. Warnings



In advance of approaching storms, the National Weather Service issues watches and warnings, providing much needed information to citizens so they are able to make sound judgments about the appropriate actions to take. Watches and warnings are broadcast over the radio and on TV. **(see page Act.5 for more information).**

## What's the Difference?

- **Watch** — Conditions are favorable for the severe weather event in or near the watch area. When a watch is announced, stay alert and be ready to take action.
- **Warning** — Severe weather event is imminent or occurring in the warned area. Take action based on the emergency at hand.

Find weather information for North Central Texas online at [weather.gov/fortworth](http://weather.gov/fortworth). You'll find the latest forecasts, watches and warnings, drought information, lake levels, winter weather info and more.

## Earthquakes

"An earthquake is ground shaking caused by a sudden movement of rock in the earth's crust." Such movements occur along faults, which are thin zones of crushed rock separating blocks of crust. When one block suddenly slips and moves relative to the other along a fault, the energy released creates vibrations called seismic waves that radiate up through the crust to the earth's surface, causing the ground to shake." <https://www.fema.gov/why-earthquakes-occur>

"The actual movement of the ground in an earthquake is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most casualties result from falling objects and debris



Think. 18



which is a result of the earthquake shaking. The duration and amount of shaking associated with an earthquake as well as the age and construction type of a structure greatly determines the amount of damage that may result. Older structures built with little or no seismic design will be the first structures to be tested by an earthquake.”

**<http://www.cusec.org/earthquake-safety/earthquake-safety-tips.html>**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross encourage the public to Drop, Cover, & Hold for personal safety during earthquake shaking. The Drop, Cover, & Hold method has been proven throughout the United States to reduce earthquake related injuries and death.

**DROP** — *DROP* down to the floor.

**COVER** — Take *COVER* under a sturdy piece of furniture. If that is not possible, seek *COVER* against an interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms. Avoid danger spots near windows, hanging objects, mirrors, or tall furniture.

**HOLD** — If you take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture, *HOLD* on to it and be prepared to move with it. *HOLD* the position until the ground stops shaking and it is safe to move.

**<http://www.cusec.org/earthquake-safety/earthquake-safety-tips.html>**

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

In cartoons, hazardous materials have a skull and crossbones printed on their label. In real life, they can be harder to spot. Hazardous materials are all around you: under the kitchen sink, in the garage and riding down the highway in a tanker truck. Most of them will be handled correctly and used only for their intended purposes. But if a chemical, biological, or radiological/nuclear emergency does occur, it is important that you know what to do!



Think. 19

# Industrial Chemicals



The same chemicals that are used to create useful things like fertilizers, window cleaners and exciting things like LCD flat-screen televisions can, under certain conditions, have a harmful effect on your health. They may even be used as a weapon (**see “Terrorism” on page Think.28**). So it’s up to you to be prepared in the event of a leak, spill, explosion or other potential chemical emergency.

## Preparing for a Chemical Emergency:

- Make sure your Emergency Supply Kit is ready (**see page Prepare.4**).
- Identify an internal room where you can shelter-in-place and protect yourself from contaminated air (**see page Act.8**).



Think. 20

# Biological



What happens when you cough without covering your mouth? Millions of tiny, invisible germs are released into the air and the guy next to you better hope he had his flu shot. That's how biological agents work too. They're microscopic germs and/or toxins that can be introduced into your environment with the intention of making hundreds of thousands of people sick at one time. They can also damage crops and livestock, hurting the food supply. Some examples of biological agents include smallpox, anthrax and botulism.

## Preparing for a Biological Emergency:

- Make sure your Emergency Supply Kit is ready (**see page Prepare.4**).
- Educate yourself about biological agents and how they may affect you.
- Follow directions from officials about sheltering-in-place or evacuating (**see page Act.8**).
- Do not stockpile or take antibiotics without a medical prescription. Taking medications that are not prescribed for you can be harmful or lessen their effectiveness later if and when they're needed.

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Think. 21

## How to Protect Yourself from Contaminated Air:

- Turn off AC/heat.
- Cut trash bags or plastic to cover windows, doors, vents and electrical outlets.
- Use sturdy tape to keep plastic in place.
- Block other ventilated areas and under doors with towels, blankets or clothing.



Think. 22

# Nuclear/Radiological



A nuclear or radiological emergency would most likely be the result of an accident. But it's possible that a hostile country could use a nuclear weapon or a "dirty bomb" could be used by terrorists (**see "Terrorism" on page Think.28**).

## Preparing for a Nuclear/Radiological Emergency:

- If you live near a nuclear plant, like Comanche Peak near Glen Rose, pay attention to the Outdoor Warning System sirens that may be used to alert you of a problem.
- In case of a nuclear spill or attack, determine how you can minimize your exposure to radioactive material.

## Think about:

- Time: Radioactive materials become less radioactive over time. Minimizing the length of your exposure will minimize your risk.
- Distance: Put as much distance between yourself and the source of the radiation as possible.
- Shielding: Put as much thick material between yourself and the radiation as possible. Try to stay indoors.



Think. 23

# Transportation of Hazardous Materials



All types of chemicals are riding down our highways and railroads—ant killer, anti-freeze, shower cleaner and even biological and nuclear waste (think about that next time you're tailgating a big rig or racing a train to the crossing). Most of the time, chemicals arrive safely at their intended destinations. Unfortunately once in a while, accidents happen. That's why it's important discuss and have a plan in mind and be ready to act instinctively.

## Preparing for a Transportation Emergency:

- Stay aware of your surroundings.
- Prepare to use your senses to help you decide how to act (Do you see a gas cloud? Smell a sharp odor? Hear an explosion?)
- Follow directions from officials about sheltering-in-place or evacuating (see page Act.8).



Think. 24

# Household Chemicals



Home is where the heart is—it's also where the bleach, ammonia and paint thinner lie in wait to cause unintended accidents. In fact, most chemical accidents occur in homes. It's time to get down and dirty with your cleaners and other potentially poisonous concoctions. Properly dispose of what you don't need and store what you do in a safe, child-proof location. The good news is, with a little planning and knowledge, most home emergencies can be prevented.

## Preparing for a Household Chemical Emergency:

- Read the emergency instructions on chemical containers to help you understand the threats they may pose.
- Always store chemicals in a safe place, out of reach of children, and dispose of them properly. Contact your city to find out if they have a special disposal program.
- Avoid mixing common household chemical products like ammonia and bleach.
- Never smoke while using household chemicals.
- Always use chemicals in well-ventilated areas.
- Program the **Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222** into your phone in case of emergencies.

Proper disposal of cleaners, paints, pesticide, pool chemicals, fuel, and other household products is important to keep yourself and your neighbors safe and healthy. For more information and resources visit: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/hhw/hhw.html>

[WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM](http://WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM)



Think. 25

# Epidemics/Pandemics



So what's the difference between a flu "bug" circulating around your school or office and a flu epidemic? Epidemics exceed what is expected. Many people are expected to get the flu each year but if flu cases skyrocket to an unpredictable level, it's considered an epidemic. A pandemic is a global outbreak of a disease that occurs when a virus appears in the human population, causes serious illness, and then spreads easily from person to person throughout the world. The H1N1 virus reached pandemic status in the winter of 2009-2010 and led the CDC to change flu vaccines the following season. The best thing you can do to prepare for the possibility of an epidemic or pandemic is to stay alert and informed. Communicable diseases are ever changing; you can also visit the Center for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and World Health Organization at [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) for more information. Your local county health department is an excellent source of information on health issues in your community, and where to find vaccines if appropriate.

## Preparing for an Epidemic:

- Make sure your Emergency Supply Kit is ready (**see page Prepare.4**).
- Educate yourself about types of epidemics and how they may affect you.
- Follow directions from officials about sheltering-in-place or evacuating (**see page Act.8**).
- Practice healthy habits that may protect you and others later: wash your hands, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home from work or school if you are sick.



Think. 26

## Flu Facts:

For everyone six months and older, the CDC recommends a flu vaccine. Your local health department tracks virus cases in your area and constantly informs the public on vaccine availability and shot clinics. Take advantage of the many opportunities to get flu shots each fall, as the vaccines are updated yearly to combat the most active strains.

Learn who is included in high risk groups, and the specific medical advice for each group by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Flu website, <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/> or call 800-CDC-INFO | (800-232-4636)



# Terrorism



In December 2009, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security added Dallas-Fort Worth to the nation's top ten terror targets. Just a few months earlier, a Jordanian national was arrested and eventually sentenced to 24 years in prison after federal investigators say he tried to blow up a downtown Dallas skyscraper. Authorities foiled his attempt, but the near-tragedy made it very clear that no one can predict what will happen next. The good news is that these same attacks also served to make communities and individuals more aware and improve their ability to cope with emergencies. Are you ready?

## I Feel Helpless—What Can I Do? ....

If you see something, say something – Contact Local Authorities.

Terrorists specialize in creating, well, terror. Don't give them what they want—take action! You'll feel much better knowing that you're prepared for any emergency situation that comes along.

## Preparing for a Terrorist Attack:

- Develop a disaster plan (see page **Prepare.2**).
- Make sure your Emergency Supply Kit is ready (see page **Prepare.4**).
- Identify an internal room that you can shelter in and block out contaminated air in case of a chemical or biological attack.
- In the case of a nuclear attack, your three best tools are time, distance and shielding to minimize your exposure to radioactive material. (see **nuclear/radiological threats, Think.23**)
- Check on the school emergency plan for any school-age children.
- Follow directions from officials.
- Stay alert and informed at all times!

SOURCES: Ready NY Guide/redcross.org



Think. 28



The National Terrorism Advisory System combines threat information with vulnerability assessments and provides communications to public safety officials and the public. For more information, visit [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)

# Workplace or University Shootings and Other Public Acts of Mass Violence



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommends all individuals take the time to learn more about what is often termed as an “active shooter/threat.” An Active Threat is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes. Before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

## Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation:

- Remain calm & quiet
- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If you are unable to leave the area, block and secure the door
- As a last resort, protect yourself and attempt to take the active shooter down.

When the shooter is at close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate him/her.

**CALL 9-1-1 WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO!**



Think. 30

## How to respond when an Active Shooter is in your vicinity:

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation.

### 1. Evacuate if there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.

#### Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind, even if it is through restricted areas
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of public safety representatives or school administrators
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- **Call 9-1-1** when you are safe

### 2. Hide out If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door, behind large items such as cabinets or desks )
- Try not to restrict your options for movement.

#### To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:

- Lock the door
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture

#### If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet



### **If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:**

- Remain calm
- **Dial 9-1-1**, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

### **3. Take action against the active shooter**

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions



Think. 32

# Gas Wells & Pipelines



The people of North Central Texas are much more aware of gas wells, pipelines and drilling sites in our area thanks to the boom of the Barnett Shale. In addition to counting the dollars the natural gas industry may deliver to the area, residents also need to focus on what makes sense—educating themselves on where equipment is located and how to stay safe. Pipelines below ground are an invisible hazard and exposed pipelines may not be very well marked. There are more than 90,000 miles of pipeline in Texas, so it's likely that multiple pipelines, identifiable or not, run through your community. The Barnett Shale geological formation is possibly the largest onshore natural gas field in the U.S.

## So Where Are the Pipelines?

Signs indicating a pipeline's location are often placed along its path. Pay attention to these signs to help prevent accidents. If you see something you think may be an exposed pipeline, treat it as if it is. The Texas Railroad Commission provides a map of all pipelines across the state. Look up your area by selecting your county. <http://gis2.rrc.state.tx.us/public/startit.htm>

**Never dig before calling 8-1-1, your local utility company—Don't Be a Fool, Know the Rule!**



Think. 33

For gas drilling sites in North Texas, maps and information can be found through Chesapeake's Energy's website in the neighborhood section:

**<http://www.askchesapeake.com/Barnett-Shale/Neighborhood/Pages/information.aspx>**

## **How Can I Prepare for an Incident?**

- There is typically little or no warning with incidents involving gas wells and/or pipelines. Because of this, it's critical that you be prepared in the event of an emergency.
- Become familiar with gas well sites and pipelines.
- Familiarize yourself with "escape routes" in and around your neighborhood.

## **Know what to do in the event of a leak:**

### **DO -**

- Leave the area immediately on foot.
- Warn others in the area.
- Refrain from activities that could cause heat sparks.
- Notify **9-1-1** of the leak when you reach safety.

### **DON'T -**

- Light a match, start an engine, or switch electrical equipment on and off (including lights).
- Attempt to use a cell phone until you've left the area—it can potentially cause a spark.
- Drive into a vapor cloud.
- Make contact with any escaping material, some products may be toxic or corrosive.



Think. 34

# Carbon Monoxide Poisoning



What's invisible, odorless and colorless but can really make you sick? You guessed it—carbon monoxide (CO)! This potentially lethal gas is created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. And the danger is no joke—according to the National Safety Council, 200-300 unintentional-injury deaths a year are due to CO poisoning.

## Symptoms of CO Poisoning:

- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Light headedness or headaches

## To Protect Against CO Emergencies:

- Install CO alarms in a central location outside each sleeping area and test monthly.
- Contact your local fire department to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds. Post the number by your phone.
- Know the difference between the sound of smoke alarms and CO alarms.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Don't run a fuel-burning vehicle or generator indoors, even if garage doors are open.
- Only use barbecue grills outside—these grills can produce CO. Never use them in the home, garage or near building openings.
- When camping, remember to use battery-powered lights in tents, trailers, and motor homes.

## If your CO alarm sounds:

- Immediately move to a fresh air location and **call 9-1-1**. Remain at the fresh air location until emergency personnel say it is OK.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries or other trouble indicators.



Think. 35

# Traveling During the Holidays



When you're planning holiday travel, plan for the unexpected. With millions of people traveling at the same time, accidents, mistakes and traffic are all bound to happen. So if you get stuck in a traffic jam, are involved in a fender-bender or have to wait in the airport security line, take a deep breath, relax and be patient. The happiest holiday gift you can give your loved ones is your safe arrival!

## By Car:

- Have your vehicle serviced before long trips.
- Make sure you have any maps you may need.
- Have a cell phone with you, if possible.
- Check on road conditions before you leave at [drivetexas.org](http://drivetexas.org)
- Don't stop in remote areas to ask directions.
- Always keep a ½ tank of gas
- Don't advertise that you're from out-of-town by pulling over to the curb to read a road map.
- When you get out of your car, keep holiday packages and other valuables out of sight.
- Make sure you have a Vehicle Safety Kit in your car (see page Prepare.6).
- Don't drink and drive, and beware of intoxicated motorists.

## By Plane:

- Double-check your reservation a few weeks before your departure date.
- Make copies of your itinerary for yourself and the people you're going to visit.
- Check out current Federal Aviation Guidelines about safety, carry-on baggage and airport arrival time recommendations at [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov).
- When traveling with children, pets or individuals with functional needs make special arrangements with the airline and bring needed supplies.
- Call ahead to find out gate information to save time.
- Bring contact numbers and a bag with extra clothes and personal items in case you get stranded or the airline misplaces your luggage.



Think. 36

# Holiday Hazards



## CELEBRATING SAFE AND SOUND

Before you make merry, make sure you know how to keep yourself and your family safe during the holidays. Follow the tips below for a brighter (watch those candles!) holiday season.

### Fire Safety:

Holidays usually filled with more cooking, home decorating, and entertaining—not to mention an increased risk of fire. To protect yourself and your family, follow these safety tips:

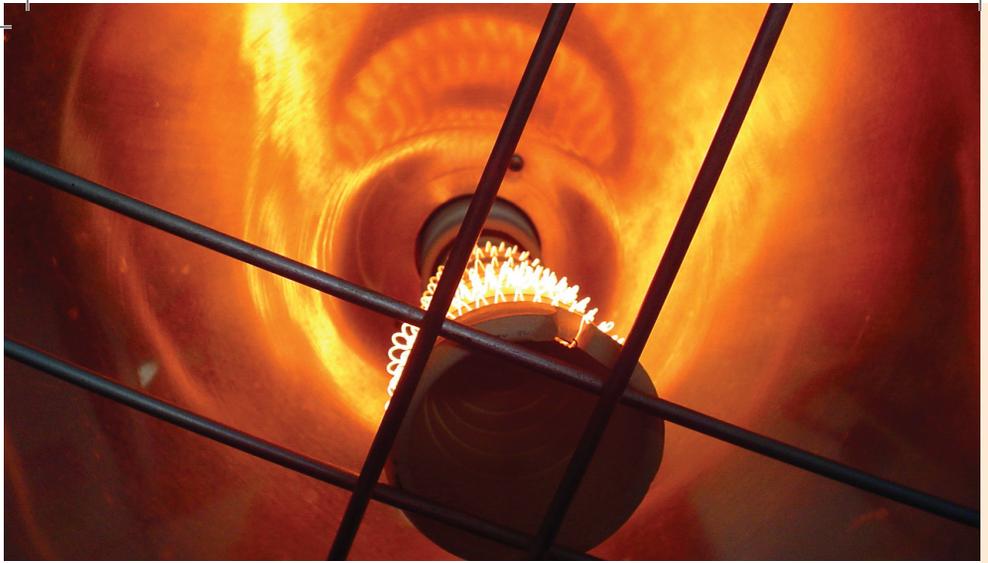
### Holiday Decorating and Lighting:

- Choose decorations made of flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials when possible.
- Keep candles away from decorations and Christmas trees.
- Check for damage, before plugging in lights.
- Don't overload extension cords.
- Don't pierce light string cords with clips or nails when hanging.
- Keep children and pets away from electrical decorations.
- Make sure to turn off light strings and decorations and blow out candles before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Make sure live greenery is fresh. Keep dried out trees and garland away from open flames.

SOURCE: nfsc.org



Think. 37



## Holiday Entertaining

- Keep an eye on the stove and oven while chatting with visitors.
- Ask visitors to smoke outside and use ashtrays.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Place candles on non-flammable surfaces and away from drafts.
- Don't keep candles burning for more than a few hours at a time.
- Test your smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms before any gathering.
- Let guests know what your fire escape plan is.

## Holiday Heating

- Make sure any space heater you buy carries the mark of an independent testing lab (look for a tag or sticker).
- Maintain a 36-inch clearance between space heaters and anything flammable.
- Turn off space heaters when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Make sure the flue is open before starting a fire in the fireplace.
- Have solid-fueled heating equipment inspected annually by a professional.
- Use seasoned wood to reduce sap build-up in your chimney.
- Use a fireplace screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room.
- Place fireplace and woodstove ashes in a metal container.
- Test smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms monthly.



Think. 38

## Fireworks Safety Tips:

- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Be aware whether your county has a burn ban in place before using fireworks.
- Avoid buying fireworks that come in brown paper packaging, as this can often be a sign that the fireworks were made for professional displays and could pose a danger to consumers.
- Adults should always supervise fireworks activities. Parents often don't realize that there are many injuries from sparklers to children under five. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees - hot enough to melt some metals. Never have any portion of your body directly over a fireworks device when lighting the fuse. Move back to a safe distance immediately after lighting.
- Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- Light one item at a time then move back quickly.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.
- After fireworks fully complete their functioning, douse the spent device with plenty of water from a bucket or hose before discarding to prevent a trash fire.



# House Fires



In 2014, there were 1,298,000 fires reported in the United States. These fires caused 3,275 civilian deaths, 15,775 civilian injuries, and \$11.6 billion in property damage. (Source: U.S. Fire Administration 2015 report)

Fires come from any number of sources. Smoking is the most common cause of residential fires, and many of them start in the bedroom. Faulty wiring, unsupervised children and improper use of space heaters are among other causes for residential fires.

## **Smoke Alarms:**

A working smoke alarm can help you and your family escape a deadly home fire. It can also help save the lives of firefighters who would otherwise have to risk their lives by searching a burning home for residents. A working smoke alarm continuously scans the air for smoke, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Install. Inspect. Protect**



Think. 40

## Smoke alarm powered by a 9-volt battery-

Test the alarm monthly.

Replace the batteries at least once per year.

The entire smoke alarm unit should be replaced every 8-10 years.

## Smoke alarm powered by a 10-year lithium (or “long life”) battery-

- Test the alarm monthly.
- Since you cannot (and should not) replace the lithium battery, the entire smoke alarm unit should be replaced according to manufacturer’s instructions.



## **Smoke alarm that is hardwired into the home's electrical system-**

- Test the alarm monthly.
- The backup battery should be replaced at least once per year.
- The entire smoke alarm unit should be replaced every 8-10 years.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, between 2003-2006, more than 66% of home fire deaths occurred in homes without a working smoke alarm. A working smoke alarm significantly increases your chances of surviving a deadly home fire. Check with your local fire department; reduced-cost or free smoke alarms are often available.

## **Where to install smoke alarms:**

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. Many fatal fires begin late at night or early in the morning, so the U.S. Fire Administration recommends installing smoke alarms both inside and outside of sleeping areas.
- Since smoke and many deadly gases rise, installing your smoke alarms at the proper level will provide you with the earliest warning possible. Always follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Some fire departments will install battery-operated smoke alarms in your home at no cost. Contact your local fire department's non-emergency phone number for more information.
- Never disable a smoke alarm while cooking.



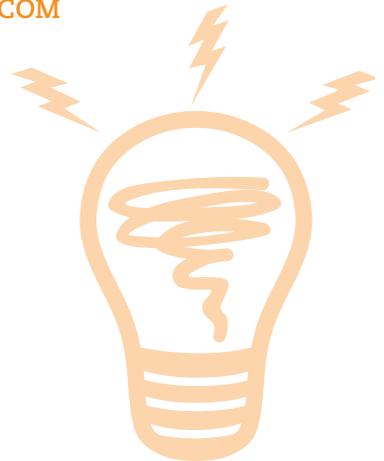
## **A smoke alarm is just doing its job when it sounds while you're cooking or taking a shower with lots of steam.**

If a smoke alarm sounds while you're cooking or taking a shower with lots of steam, do not remove the battery. Instead, you should:

- Open a window or door and press the "hush" button,
- Wave a towel at the alarm to clear the air, or
- Move the entire alarm several feet away from the location.

**Disabling a smoke alarm or removing the battery can be a deadly mistake.**

[WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM](http://WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM)



Think. 43

# 9-1-1 Emergency



## TEACHING CHILDREN HOW AND WHEN TO CALL

Teaching your child how to use **9-1-1** in an emergency could be one of the simplest and most important lessons you'll ever share. Role-playing is a great way to address various emergency scenarios and give your child the confidence he or she will need to handle them. For younger children, it also helps to talk about who emergency workers are and what kinds of things they do. Don't forget: learning what an emergency is goes hand in hand with learning what isn't. Still, teach your child that if ever in doubt, and there's no adult around, always make the call. It's much better to be safe than sorry.



Think. 44

## How to Use 9-1-1:

Although most **9-1-1** calls are now traced, it's still important for your child to have your street address and phone number memorized (write down your phone number, address and basic directions to your house and keep the information next to every phone in the house just in case). Walk him or her through some of the questions the operator will ask, including:

- Where are you calling from? (Where do you live?)
- What type of emergency is this?
- Who needs help?
- Is the person awake and breathing?

Explain to your child that it's OK to be frightened in an emergency, but that it's important to stay calm, speak slowly and give as much detail to the operator as possible. If your child is old enough to understand, also explain that the emergency dispatcher may give first-aid instructions before emergency workers arrive at the scene. Make it clear that your child should not hang up until the person on the other end says it's OK.

## More Safety Tips:

- Explain the importance of pressing the one-key twice instead of looking for a non-existent 11-key.
- Make sure your child understands that **calling 9-1-1** as a joke is a crime in many places.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street so that police, fire, or ambulance workers can easily locate your address.
- If you live in an apartment building, make sure your child knows the apartment number and floor you live on.
- If you have an elderly grandparent or a person with a medical condition living in your home, discuss specific emergencies that could occur and how to spot them.
- Keep a first-aid kit handy and make sure your child and babysitters know where to find it. When your child is old enough, teach him or her basic first aid.





**Prepare**



## What's The Plan?

It's fun to plan holidays, birthdays and barbecues, but no one looks forward to planning for disaster. The truth is that a little preparation could protect your life and the lives of those around you, so pencil in some time for emergency preparedness planning.

✓ **Get ready to Think. Prepare. Act!**

### DID YOU KNOW?

September is National Preparedness Month. During this time, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security urges all Americans to take simple steps to become better prepared for emergencies. Visit [www.KnoWhat2Do.com](http://www.KnoWhat2Do.com) to learn free, specific steps you can take to personalize a plan for yourself or your family.

✓ Prepare. 1

# Pre-Plan



Texas twister or flash flood? Recent history shows many types of emergencies occur anywhere in North Central Texas. Learn about the emergency plans that have been established by your state and local government.

Knowing what to do during an emergency may make all the difference when seconds count.

## **Community Hazards:**

Ask about specific hazards that threaten your community and about your risk from those hazards. For instance, if you live near a nuclear plant (i.e. Comanche Peak Nuclear Plant) or in an area prone to flooding, or near a chemical facility, you'll want to make a plan for a potential emergency. Additionally, hazard information for your local area can be obtained. Each year, more North Texas communities add gas drilling rigs to neighborhoods populated by homes and schools. Know the risks. Monitor water testing and safety checks at drilling sites. Ask your local fire department or emergency management office about evacuation plans and shelters in your immediate area.

## Community Disaster Plans:

Ask about the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places that you and your family spend time such as places of employment, schools and childcare centers. If you don't drive, be sure to make arrangements for transportation prior to a disaster and create a plan with those you trust.



## Resources to Help You Get Informed:

### Local

- National Weather Service, Southern Region Headquarters or [www.srh.noaa.gov](http://www.srh.noaa.gov)
- Local emergency management offices
- Local fire stations
- Local police departments
- Large area churches
- Neighborhood groups/neighborhood watch

### National

- Federal Emergency Management Agency - [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)
- Homeland Security - [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control - [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov)
- National Flood Insurance - [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov)

# Get Ready



Hello? Anybody out there? When disaster strikes, city services may be cut off and local disaster relief and government responders may not be able to reach you. You need to have plans and supplies in place to make it on your own, at least for a limited time, no matter where you are when an emergency happens. Start planning now!

## Creating Your Emergency Supply Kit:

Remember how long it took to pack for your last vacation? That's why everyone should have an Emergency Supply Kit ready to go. Pack supplies in a duffel bag, suitcase or storage container and keep it in an easily accessible place. Remember: check and update your kit every year—test batteries, check expiration dates and update important documents.

- **Water**—one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- **Food**—at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- **Radio**—Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- **Flashlight** and extra batteries
- **First-aid kit**
- **Whistle** to signal for help
- **Dust mask**—to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- **Personal sanitation.**
- **Wrench or pliers** to turn off utilities.
- **Can opener** for food (if kit contains canned food).
- **Local maps**
- **Cash**—in case ATMs are unavailable or something prevents the use of credit/debit cards

## Don't forget to include critical items for:

- Family members with functional needs—medications, special foods, medical equipment
- Infants—formula, diapers, bottles
- Pets—food, leash, medications



# Vehicle Emergency Supply Kit



In the winter of 2015, a thick layer of ice covered most bridges and overpasses in the Metroplex, North Texans were encouraged to drive only when absolutely necessary. If you're on the road when an emergency strikes or you have to evacuate, you'll want to have these supplies on hand:

- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First-aid kit and manual
- White distress flag
- Tire repair kit, booster/jumper cables, pump and flares
- Bottled water and non-perishable food items
- Seasonal supplies to combat weather conditions like blankets and gloves
- Local maps



# Create a Communications Plan



Your family and friends may not be together when disaster strikes. That's why it's important you find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and make a plan to help you stay in touch, stay safe and reunite after the event.

## **Choose an out-of-town contact.**

It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.

Be sure every member of your family knows the phone number and has coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. You may have trouble getting through, or the telephone system may be down altogether, so be patient.

Personalize your own communications plan with the form found on the **KnowWhat2Do website at <http://www.thinkprepareact.com/plan/>.**

[WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM](http://WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM)

# Caring for Those with Functional Needs



If you or someone in your household has functional needs, it's important to incorporate them into your disaster plans. For planning assistance, contact your local emergency management office to see if your community has a Functional Needs Program.

## Ways to Help Prepare for an Emergency:

- Keep 7-14 days of medication on hand. Have a list of medication taken by special needs patient. Include dosage and medication schedule.
- Keep support items in a designated place so they can be found quickly.
- Include any caretakers in the planning process.
- Provide the power company with a list of all power-dependent life-support equipment and plan for an alternate power source in advance.
- Create an adequate emergency food supply for those with special dietary needs.

\*Many North Texas police departments or other city departments offer calls, texts, and emails for emergency notifications and welfare checks or those with function needs during times of emergency. Find out if your local police department offers this service and get signed up if you qualify. Don't forget to assist relatives or neighbors who may benefit from these programs as well.

# Planning for Pets



Don't forget to include your pets in your disaster plans. Take them with you if you evacuate. Remember: pets aren't allowed in public shelters unless they are service animals. So make a list of friends, boarding facilities and vets that could keep your pets in case of emergency.

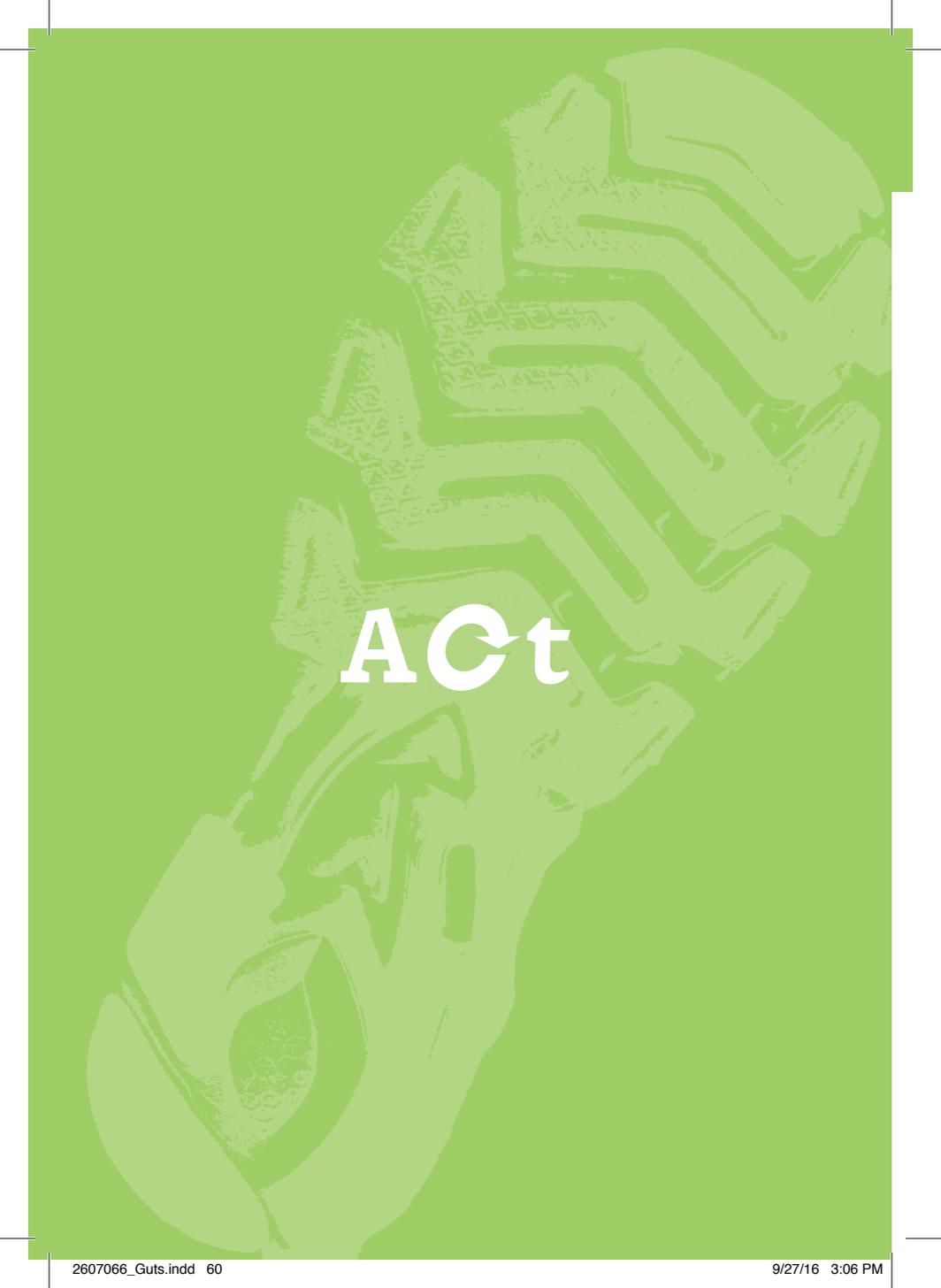
## Your Pet Disaster Kit should include:

- Pet food and treats
- Drinkable water in plastic bottles
- Can opener for canned food
- Pet medications and medical records in a waterproof container
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers so you can move your pets safely and they can't escape (remember they may be scared and may act different than usual)
- Current photos of your pet in case they get lost
- The name of your veterinarian
- Pet beds and toys, if there is room

Additionally, all your pets should have an identification tag and collar

## Caring for Livestock:

If you own livestock or a farm, it's important to plan for the watering, safety, identification, boarding and transportation of animals in case of emergency. Don't forget to keep a current list of all animals, including their location and records of vaccinations.



ACT

# Getting Involved



You don't have to know CPR, be able to lift a sandbag or have a lot of free time to be a valuable volunteer. The training is beneficial to you and your family. If you're interested in getting involved, there are hundreds of ways you can help North Central Texas stay prepared and ready for any emergency, starting with:

## **Personal Responsibility:**

Developing a household preparedness plan and emergency supply kit, knowing your hazards, staying alert to severe weather, and participating in crime prevention and reporting.

## **Volunteer Service:**

Supporting first responders, disaster relief groups, community safety organizations, local law enforcement, fire departments and emergency medical services. In times of catastrophic loss of life or property, people often rush to donate clothing and other items to survivors. Many relief organizations only accept cash, and the donations go unused. Check the procedures used by various organizations to know which donations will be most helpful and most likely to get to victims.

## **Training:**

Take classes in emergency preparedness, response capabilities, first aid, CPR, fire suppression, and search and rescue procedures. When an actual emergency occurs, it's time to take action. Be prepared to assess the situation at hand and use your common sense to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Seek out and follow directions from authorities at the scene of an emergency. During a large-scale emergency, you can also listen for official instructions through the media.

## **Citizen Corps: Uniting Communities-Preparing the Nation**

The mission of Citizen Corps is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service. They pledge to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds. Citizen Corps promotes a range of measures for you to make your family, your home, and your community safer from the threats of crime, terrorism, and disasters of all kinds.



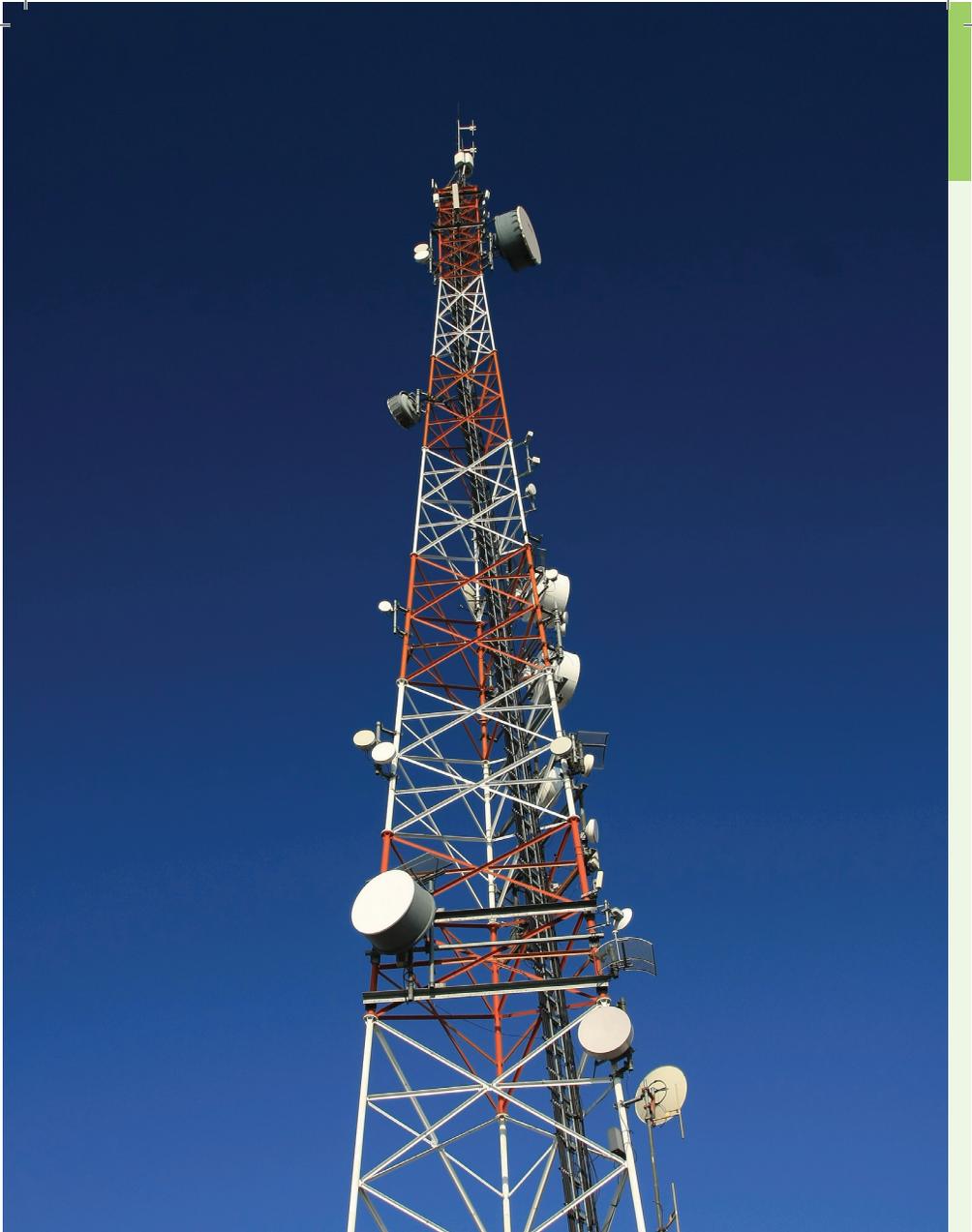
## Programs:



**Fact:** Currently, there are Citizen Corps Councils serving 78% of the total US population. Visit [www.citizencorps.com](http://www.citizencorps.com) to search for active Citizen Corps Councils in your part of North Central Texas.

If you'd like to take an active role in helping your community prepare for emergencies, join Citizen Corps. Get information at [www.citizencorps.com](http://www.citizencorps.com)

Citizens Fire and Police Academies Local North Central Texas Fire and Police Departments offer classes to citizens interested in learning more about personnel and policies and taking an active role in helping to protect their communities. Class topics may include emergency medical training, communications, codes and hands-on training. To find an academy near you, contact your local police or fire department.



# Emergency Notification System



## **NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio (NWR):**

### **Listen for emergency information. Emergency Alert System (EAS):**

- Tune into **WBAP 820AM** radio for instructions.
- Outdoor Warning System:
- Pay attention to sirens.
- Sirens may be used for all-hazard notification.
- When sirens are sounded, go indoors and tune in to local news and radio programs to understand the nature of the emergency.

## **TV Broadcasts:**

- Watch for emergency interruptions and tune into news stations.

## **Reverse Emergency Telephone Notification:**

- Check with your local Emergency Management office to see if they have a notification system in place to sign up for calls, texts, and emails and how it will be utilized.
- The police department in many cities can sign you up for text alerts if there's a public threat or danger.
- Sign up if this is offered in your area.
- Encourage college-aged family members to register for campus text or other emergency notification systems.

## **Highway Messaging:**

- Look for emergency information on highway message boards.
- Radio often announces alternate routes in cases of highway closures or accidents that shut down a freeway.

# Protecting Your Community



## Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (**RACES**) is a public service provided by a volunteer group of amateur radio operators. RACES is administered by local, county and state emergency management agencies, and supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (**FEMA**). As a part of the Amateur Radio Service, it provides radio communications for civil-preparedness purposes during periods of local, regional or national civil emergencies. Emergencies may include: war-related activities, natural disasters, power outages, floods, victim searches, air crashes, and many others. For more information, **visit <http://www.usraces.org/>**



## SKYWARN Storm Spotters

The National Weather Service (NWS) has established a network of SKYWARN Spotters to help obtain critical weather information. These volunteers help identify and describe severe local storms, enabling the NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods. SKYWARN Spotters form the Nation's first line of defense against severe weather and help save thousands of lives annually. For more information, **visit [www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd)**.

# Protecting Your Neighborhood



## Neighborhood Watch

Plan to hold a Neighborhood Watch meeting. It's important that you're able to join with your neighbors in the face of an emergency. Together you can help safeguard your homes and children. Your local Sheriffs' office or police station can help you get started or **visit <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/home-and-neighborhood-safety/neighborhood-watch>** for more information.

## The National Crime Prevention Council

McGruff the Crime Dog also has information on forming a preventing crime. **Visit [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org).**



[WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM](http://WWW.KNOWWHAT2DO.COM)

# Evacuating



In certain emergencies, you'll be faced with the decision of whether you should stay put or get away. Local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what's happening and what you should do. It's your responsibility to gather as much information as possible and use common sense in making a decision.

## Sheltering-In-Place

In certain emergencies, it's best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty and/or create a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may also want to "seal the room" (**see page Think.22**).

- Bring your family and pets inside.
- Lock doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
- Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced-air heating systems.
- Take your Emergency Supply Kit into an interior room with few windows.
- Seal all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape.
- Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.

## Evacuating

In emergencies when you are ordered to leave or you decide to get away, plan how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options.

## Creating an Evacuation Plan:

- Plan places to meet within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- Keep a half tank of gas in your car at all times in case you need to evacuate.
- Familiarize yourself with alternate routes out of your area.
- If you don't have a car, plan other means of transportation.
- Take your Emergency Supply Kit with you.
- Lock the doors behind you.
- Take your pets with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters.



# Disaster Recovery, Finding Hope Again



Recovering from a disaster is usually a gradual process. The victims of the 9/11 attacks, the Garland/Rowlett Tornado and Hurricane Katrina could tell you that it takes time to get your home, community, and life back to normal. Immediately after an emergency, safety is a primary issue. Mental and physical well-being will continue to be a concern for some time afterward. It's important to know how to access local and national help to make the recovery process faster and less stressful.

**Visit [www.fema.org](http://www.fema.org) check out the Local Resource Section on page Act.17 for information on recovering from specific disasters like tornadoes, flash floods and winter weather.**

# Health and Safety Guidelines

## **Your family's health and safety should be your first concern after a disaster:**

- Check for injuries.
- Don't try to move anyone who is seriously injured unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury.
- If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back, then call for help immediately.

## **Make sure you don't overexert yourself after an emergency:**

- Be aware of exhaustion. Get enough rest.
- Don't try to do too much at once. Set priorities and pace yourself.
- Drink plenty of clean water and eat well.
- Wear sturdy work boots and gloves.
- When working in debris, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water.

## **Be aware of new safety issues created by the disaster:**

- Watch for washed out roads, contaminated buildings, contaminated water, gas leaks, broken glass, damaged electrical wiring, and slippery floors.
- Inform local authorities about health and safety issues, including chemical spills, downed power lines, washed out roads, smoldering insulation, and dead animals.



# Returning Home



## **Returning home can be both physically and mentally challenging. Above all, use caution.**

- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home. Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris; wear pants and closed toed shoes.
- Be wary of wildlife and other animals.
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Stay off the streets. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks.

## **Before you enter your home:**

- Walk carefully around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage.
- If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

## **Do not enter if:**

- You smell gas.
- Flood waters remain around the building.
- Your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.

[WWW.KNOWHAT2DO.COM](http://WWW.KNOWHAT2DO.COM)

## When you go inside your home:

- Enter carefully and check for damage. Be aware of loose boards and slippery floors.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside and call the gas company.
- If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, check the electrical system. If possible, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker.
- If you see roof, foundation, and chimney cracks or if it looks like the building may collapse, leave immediately.
- If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Then, unplug appliances and let them dry out.
- If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with local authorities before using any water. Pump out wells and have the water tested by authorities.
- Throw out all food and other supplies that you suspect may have spoiled, become contaminated, or come in contact with floodwater.
- If your basement has flooded, pump it out gradually (about one third of the water per day) to avoid damage.
- When opening cabinets, be alert for objects that may fall.
- Clean up household chemical spills. Disinfect all salvageable items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria, or chemicals.
- Call your insurance agent. Take pictures of damages. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs.

Visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) or check out the Local Resource Section on **page Act.17** for a list of rebuilding resources.

## Seeking Disaster Assistance:

Direct assistance to individuals and families may come from any number of organizations, including:

- Non-profit organizations
- Religious organizations
- Local government
- State government

In the most severe disasters, the federal government is also called in to help individuals and families with temporary housing, counseling (for post-disaster trauma), low-interest loans and grants, and other assistance. The federal government also has programs that help small businesses and farmers.

The emotional toll that disaster brings can sometimes be even more devastating than the financial strains of damage and loss of home, business, or personal property.

If your property is damaged during a disaster, you can apply for grants and assistance. Find a complete list of sources at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).



## **As you recover, keep these things in mind:**

- Everyone who sees or experiences a disaster is affected by it in some way.
- It is normal to feel anxious about your own safety and that of your family and close friends.
- Profound sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event.
- Acknowledging your feelings helps you recover.
- Focusing on your strengths and abilities helps you heal.
- Accepting help from community programs and resources is healthy.
- Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping.
- It is common to want to strike back at people who have caused great pain.

SOURCE: Fema.gov

## **Signs that an adult may need crisis counseling:**

- Difficulty communicating thoughts
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty maintaining balance in their lives
- Low threshold of frustration
- Increased use of drugs/alcohol
- Limited attention span
- Poor work performance
- Headaches/stomach problems
- Tunnel vision/muffled hearing
- Colds or flu-like symptoms
- Disorientation or confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Reluctance to leave home
- Depression or sadness
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Mood-swings and easy bouts of crying
- Overwhelming guilt and self-doubt
- Fear of crowds, strangers, or being alone



Contact local faith-based organizations, volunteering agencies, or professional counselors for counseling. Additionally, FEMA and state and local governments of the affected area may provide crisis-counseling assistance.

Children can be especially vulnerable after a disaster. Learn how to help them cope at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

KnoWhat2Do's kids pages teach kids hazards and introduce them to the emergency supply kit and family plans and drills in a non-frightening way as well. When children are familiar with what can happen, as well as the plans in place to begin recovery, they feel safer. Visit with your child at [www.knowwhat2do.com/kids](http://www.knowwhat2do.com/kids).

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# Resources



## Local Emergency Management Directory

Contact information for North Central Texas County and Municipal Emergency Management offices can be found on the KnowWhat2Do Website.  
[www.KnoWhat2Do.com](http://www.KnoWhat2Do.com)

## Federal Web Sites

**Avian Flu Information**

<http://www.avianflu.gov>

**Center for Disease Control**

<http://www.cdc.gov>

**Center for Disease Control -  
Preparedness & Response**

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov>

**Center for Food Safety and  
Applied Nutrition**

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html>

**Citizen Corps**

<http://www.citizen corps.gov>

**Department of Health and  
Human Services**

<http://www.hhs.gov/>

**Department of Homeland Security**

<http://www.dhs.gov>

**Department of Transportation**

<http://www.dot.gov>

**Environmental Protection Agency**

<http://www.epa.gov>

**FCC - Emergency Alert System**

<http://ftp.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/eas.html>

**Federal Bureau of Investigations**

<http://www.fbi.gov>

**Federal Emergency Management  
Agency**

<http://www.fema.gov>

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| <b>Federal Transit Administration</b>      | <a href="http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Default.asp">http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Default.asp</a> |
| <b>Humane Society of the United States</b> | <a href="http://www.hsus.org/">http://www.hsus.org/</a>   |
| <b>NOAA Weather Radio</b>                  | <a href="http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/index.html">http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/index.html</a>                   |
| <b>Pandemic Flu Information</b>            | <a href="http://www.pandemicflu.gov">http://www.pandemicflu.gov</a>   |
| <b>Ready.gov - Citizen Preparedness</b>    | <a href="http://www.ready.gov">http://www.ready.gov</a>   |
| <b>USA Freedom Corps</b>                   | <a href="http://www.serve.gov/">http://www.serve.gov/</a>   |
| <b>National Weather Forecast Office</b>    | <a href="http://www.srh.weather.gov/fwd">http://www.srh.weather.gov/fwd</a>                                   |

## State Web Sites

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|--|---|
| <b>Governor's Division of Emergency Management</b>   | <a href="http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/index.htm">http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/index.htm</a> |
| <b>Texas Animal Health Commission</b>                | <a href="http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/">http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/</a>                             |
| <b>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</b>     | <a href="http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/">http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/</a>                             |
| <b>Texas Department of Health and Human Services</b> | <a href="http://www.dshs.state.tx.us">http://www.dshs.state.tx.us</a>                               |
| <b>Texas Department of Transportation</b>            | <a href="http://www.dot.state.tx.us/">http://www.dot.state.tx.us/</a>                               |
| <b>Wireless Amber Alert Notification</b>             | <a href="http://www.wirelessamberalerts.org">http://www.wirelessamberalerts.org</a>                 |

## Regional Web Sites

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|---|---|
| <b>North Central Texas Council of Governments</b> | <a href="http://www.nctcog.org/ep">http://www.nctcog.org/ep</a> |
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## Non-Profit Web Sites

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| <b>American Red Cross</b>            | <a href="http://www.redcross.org">http://www.redcross.org</a>                       |
| <b>Salvation Army</b>                | <a href="http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/">http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/</a>   |
| <b>Volunteers Active in Disaster</b> | <a href="http://www.nvoad.org/">http://www.nvoad.org/</a>                           |
| <b>United Way 2-1-1</b>              | <a href="http://national.unitedway.org/211/">http://national.unitedway.org/211/</a> |