



# Employee & Family Disaster Preparedness Guide

Fire

A graphic for the 'Fire' disaster category. The word 'Fire' is written in a large, bold, serif font. The letters are filled with a bright orange and yellow flame effect, with black outlines. The background is black, and there are vertical streaks of flame rising behind the text.

## **A Message from ODOT Director Matt Garrett**

A disaster can strike anytime, anywhere, and generally without warning. It can force you and your family to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you and your family do if basic services - water, gas, electricity or telephones - were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

Unfortunately, none of us are exempt from disasters - but there are many things we can do to prepare for them. I encourage all ODOT employees and their families to take steps now to be prepared to survive on your own for at least 72 hours after a disaster strikes. Additionally, you may want to consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks. That is why we created this guide.

If you are an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) emergency responder, you are expected to take immediate action to help protect the traveling public, or the transportation system, in response to a disaster. We understand, however, that you cannot do your job well if you are worried about the welfare of your family.

Please take the time to share this information with your family. It outlines several types of disasters, how to prepare for them in advance, and what to do during and after an emergency.

If you'd like additional copies of the guide, please call (503) 986-3020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Garrett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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# All hazards information

Do you and your family know what to do in an emergency?

Are you prepared to survive on your own for at least 72 hours? What will you do if you are separated from your family? How will you know if they are safe?

Who will provide first aid to your family if emergency medical service is not available?

Do you know what to do if you are at work in the office when a disaster occurs? On the road in a maintenance vehicle? Out of the area on travel?

## Family disaster preparedness in five easy steps

1. **DISCUSS** the disasters most likely to happen in Oregon and the impact of each on your family's safety. Hazards can include home fires, severe winter weather and storms, earthquakes, floods and hazardous materials threats.
2. **TRAIN** all family members. Take first aid classes. Learn to use a fire extinguisher and how to shut off utilities. Do not assume that the only person who knows first aid or how to turn off the natural gas will be at home when needed.
3. **ASSEMBLE** your disaster supplies into a personal 72-hour emergency preparedness kit. The kit should include food, water, clothing and medications to last you at least 72 hours. You need a kit for EACH family member. Additionally, you may want to consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks.
4. **IDENTIFY** in- and out-of-state emergency names and numbers and provide copies to each family member. Post a copy near your phone and put copies in your 72-hour kit. When local phone service is out, family members can use their out-of-state contacts to relay messages.
5. **MAINTAIN** your readiness. Review your disaster preparedness plan with your family at least once a year. Identify what new training, equipment or supplies you may need. Conduct fire evacuation and earthquake "duck, cover and hold" drills with your family

## **Be Prepared!**

**Know what to do and how to help yourself, your family, your co-workers and your neighbors**

# **Create a family disaster plan**

## **Meet with your family:**

- Discuss the types of disasters that could occur.
- Explain how to prepare and respond to each type of disaster.
- Discuss what to do if advised to evacuate.
- Discuss what to do with pets.
- Practice what you have discussed.

**Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility**

## **Plan how your family will stay in contact if separated by a disaster**

- Pick **two** meeting places:
  1. A location that's a safe distance from your home, in case of fire.
  2. A place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
- Choose an out-of-state friend or relative as a “check-in contact” for everyone to call.
- Plan to use the American Red Cross “Safe and Well Website” at <https://disastersafe.redcross.org/> to let family and friends know you are okay. The website lets disaster victims post “safe and well” messages that their loved ones outside the disaster area can view.

## Complete these steps:

- Post emergency telephone numbers by every phone.
- Show responsible family members how and when to shut off the water, gas and electricity at main switches.
- Install a smoke detector on every level of your home.
- Test the detectors monthly and change the batteries at least twice a year.
- Learn first aid and CPR.
- Meet with your neighbors and plan how you could work together after a disaster.
- Make plans for childcare in case parents cannot get home.
- Consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as elderly or disabled persons.



**Remember to practice and maintain your plan!**

## Individual/family disaster kits

### Water

A normally active person requires a minimum of 2 quarts of water per day. Hot environments or intensely stressful activities can double that amount. Nursing mothers, children and ill people will need more.

- Store at least 1 gallon of water per person per day.
- Store in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles.  
DO NOT use plastic milk cartons or glass containers that can break.

### Food

**Store at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food per person.**

Foods should require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. If you need to heat food, pack a can of Sterno. Food items should be compact and lightweight. Suggestions include:

- Ready to eat canned meat, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples: sugar, salt, pepper
- High energy foods: peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons, or those on special diets, if appropriate
- Comfort/stress food: cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags
- Prepackaged foods such as MREs (Meals Ready to Eat)
- Non-electric can opener
- Keep a 72 hour emergency preparedness kit in your car
- Keep a 72 hour emergency preparedness kit in your home
- Consider keeping a kit near your desk at work



**Only YOU can guarantee if you and your family are prepared when a disaster occurs.**

## First aid kit

**You should assemble a standard first aid kit for your home, for each individual 72-hour disaster preparedness kit, and for each vehicle.**

These can be put together at home, or purchased.

## Tools and supplies

- Flashlight and batteries
- Battery-operated radio and batteries
- Shut-off wrench for household gas and water
- Pliers
- Sanitation and personal hygiene supplies
- Small sewing kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Whistle
- Paper and pencil
- Matches and waterproof container



## Clothing and bedding

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Rain gear/thermal underwear
- Blankets or sleeping bag
- Hat and gloves
- Sunglasses



## Personal vehicles

- Gas tank full
- Tool box (tow cable, jumper cables)
- Extra oil, anti-freeze
- Emergency flares and distress flag/signal
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable radio and extra batteries
- Tow chain or rope
- Traction devices, bag of sand and shovel
- Windshield scraper and brush
- First aid kit
- Necessary prescriptions
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Bottled water
- Canned fruit/nuts and non-electric can opener



**Note:** American Red Cross shelters do NOT take pets. You will need to make arrangements for the care of your animals.

## Special items

Remember family members with special needs such as infants and elderly or disabled persons. Pack their kits accordingly. Include diapers and formula and any prescription medications. Keep important documents in a waterproof container.

- Insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds and wills.
- Passport, social security cards and immunization records.
- Bank account and credit card numbers and company contacts.
- Inventory of household goods.

- Family records (birth, marriage and death certificates).
- Important telephone numbers.
- Have travelers checks, cash and change on hand for when ATM machines are down.
- Copies of prescriptions and extra medication.
- Spare pair of eyeglasses.
- Anything else you think you might need.

This is your personal preparedness kit. Customize it to meet your individual needs. Don't forget to plan for pets, too!

Review kit contents every three to six months and update as needed. Rotate water, food and medical supplies. Update important papers and emergency contact numbers.



## **Pets**

Just in case, make plans to **TAKE YOUR PET WITH YOU**. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is not the best action. **BUT**, pets cannot go with you to a Red Cross emergency shelter (unless they are service animals, like dogs for the visually impaired.) Since your pet cannot go to the shelter, you need to plan ahead. Call your county Emergency Manager to find out what plans have been made in your area for your pets.

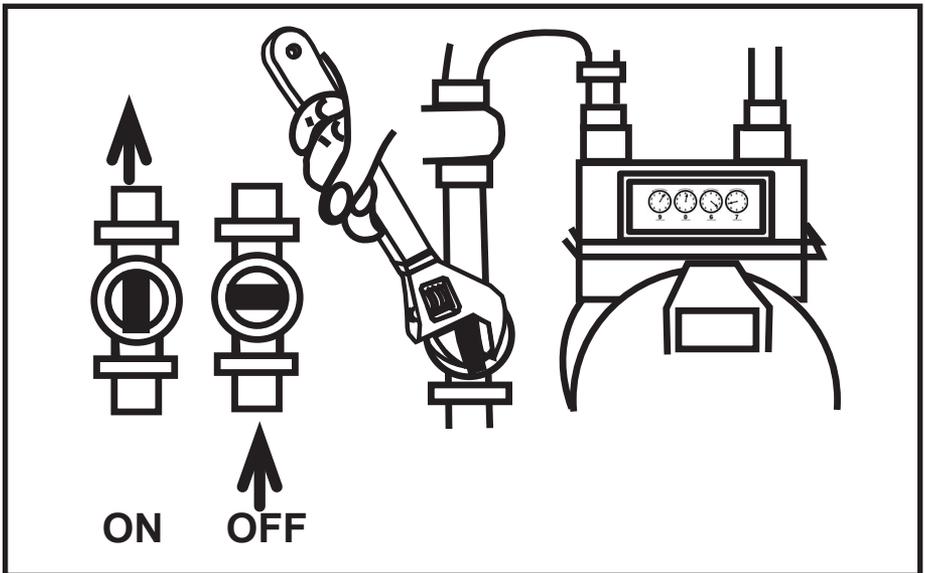
**You never know when a disaster will strike or where you will be when it does.**

## Utilities

Teach all responsible family members how to shut off natural gas, water and electricity in case the lines are damaged. Refer to your local telephone book for utility numbers.

### Natural gas

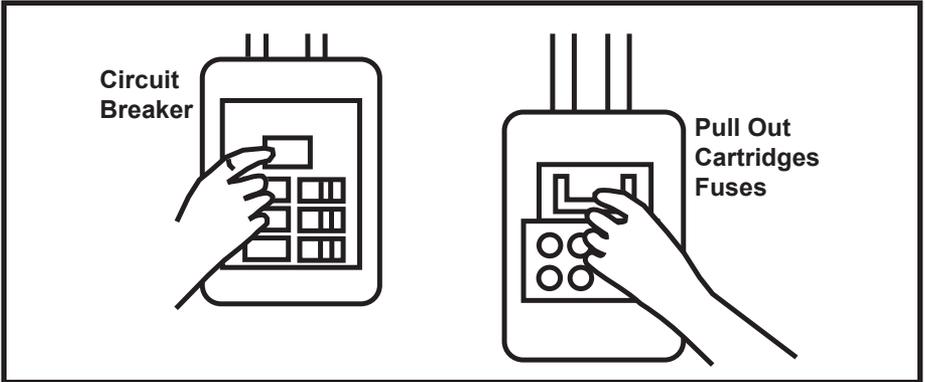
- If you smell natural gas, turn off your gas at the meter as soon as possible.
- Open windows and doors to increase ventilation.
- Stay out of the house until fumes are gone.
- When fumes are present, avoid using devices that produce flames (camp stoves, candles, lighters, matches) or sparks (light switches, phones).
- To turn off your gas, use a crescent wrench and turn the rectangular knob one quarter turn clockwise to the horizontal position (see diagram). Store a wrench near your gas main.
- **Always** call your gas company to re-light the pilot.



## Electricity

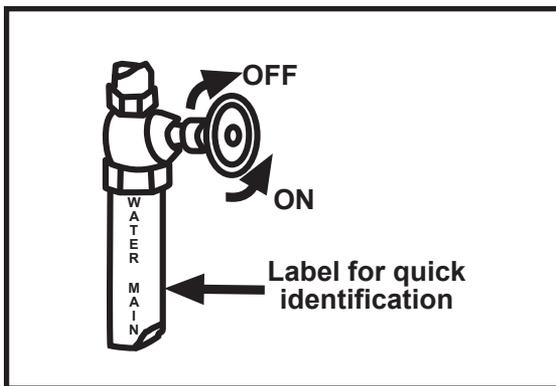
Electricity should be shut off if wires are broken or sparking.

To shut off your electricity, turn all circuit breaker switches to the “off” position. For a fuse box, pull out the two cartridges (see diagram).



## Water

- Locate the main water valve for your home (it will probably look like the diagram).
- Earthquakes and freezing weather can rupture water pipes and cause flooding if not turned off quickly.
- To turn off the water, turn the valve handle clockwise until it stops.



# For people with disabilities

## Check for hazards in the home

- Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures or overhead lights that could fall in an earthquake or a flood and block an escape path.

## Be ready to evacuate

- Have a plan in place, and have two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

## Maintain a list of important items

Store your list with the emergency supplies, and give a copy to a family member and a friend or neighbor.

- Special equipment and supplies, such as hearing aid batteries
- Current prescriptions names and dosages
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacists
- Detailed information about the specifications of your medication regime

Keep extra canes well placed around the home and office, even if you use a guide dog.

## Create a self-help network

If you may need help moving or require special arrangements to receive emergency messages, make a plan with friends now. Make sure they know where you keep emergency supplies. Give a key to a neighbor or friend who may be able to assist you in a disaster.

## Contact your local emergency management office

Many local emergency management offices maintain registers of people with disabilities so they can be located and assisted quickly in a disaster.

Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability.

Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

## **If you have a severe speech, language or hearing disability:**

When you dial 9-1-1, tap the space bar to indicate a TDD call.

Store a writing pad and pencils to communicate with others.

- Keep a flashlight handy to signal whereabouts to other people and for illumination to aid in communication.
- Remind friends that you cannot completely hear warnings or emergency instructions. Ask them to be your source of emergency information as it comes over the radio.
- If you have a guide dog, be aware that the dog may become confused or disoriented in an emergency.
- If you have a guide dog, store extra food, water, and supplies for your dog. Trained guide dogs will be allowed to stay in emergency shelters with their owners. Check with local emergency management officials for more information.

## **Evacuation planning**

People with disabilities have the same choices as other community residents about whether to evacuate their homes and where to go when an emergency threatens. Listen to the advice of local officials. Decide whether it is better to leave the area, stay with a friend or go to a public shelter.

## **If you use a wheelchair**

Show friends how to operate your wheelchair so they can move you if necessary. Make sure your friends know the size of your wheelchair in case it has to be transported.

# Tsunamis

*A tsunami is a very large ocean wave caused by an underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption. Tsunamis can be powerful, dangerous and destructive. When you hear a tsunami warning, move at once to higher ground and stay there until local authorities say it is safe to return home.*

## Preparing for a tsunami

- Find out if your home is in a danger area.
- Know the height of your street above sea level and the distance your street is from the coast. Evacuation orders may be based on these numbers.
- Be familiar with the tsunami warning signs.
- People living along the coast should consider an earthquake or a sizable ground rumbling as a warning signal. A noticeable rapid rise or fall in coastal waters is also a sign that a tsunami is approaching.
- Roads in and out of the vicinity may be blocked, so pick more than one evacuation route.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the family contact. After a disaster, often it's easier to call long distance than locally. Make sure everyone knows the name, address and phone number of the contact person.

## During a tsunami

- Listen to a radio or television to get the latest emergency information, and be ready to evacuate if asked to do so.
- If you hear an official tsunami warning or detect signs of a tsunami, evacuate at once. Climb to higher ground. A tsunami warning is issued when authorities are certain that a tsunami threat exists.
- Stay away from the beach, and never go there to watch a tsunami come in. If you can see the wave, you are too close to escape it.

- Return home only after authorities advise it is safe to do so. A tsunami is a series of waves. Do not assume that one wave means that the danger is over. The next wave may be larger than the first one. Stay out of the area.
- In case family members are separated from one another during a tsunami (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together.

## **After a tsunami**

- Stay tuned to a battery-operated radio for the latest emergency information.
- Help injured or trapped persons. Give first aid where appropriate. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance — infants, elderly people and people with disabilities.
- Stay out of damaged buildings. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Enter your home with caution. Use a flashlight when entering damaged buildings. Check for electrical shorts and live wires, and do not use appliances or lights until an electrician has checked the electrical system.
- Open windows and doors to help dry the building.
- Shovel mud while it is still moist to give walls and floors an opportunity to dry.
- Check food supplies and test drinking water. Fresh food that has come in contact with floodwaters may be contaminated and should be thrown out. Have tap water tested by the local health department.

# When an earthquake strikes

- Drop, cover, and hold on! Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. Most injured persons in earthquakes move more than five feet during the shaking. It is very dangerous to try to leave a building during an earthquake because objects can fall on you.
- If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured staying where you are. Broken glass on the floor has caused injury to those who have rolled to the floor or tried to get to doorways.
- If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, streetlights and power lines. Drop to the ground and stay there until the shaking stops.
- If you are in a vehicle, pull over to a clear location, stop and stay there with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking has stopped. Trees, power lines, poles, street signs and other overhead items may fall during earthquakes. Once the shaking stops, proceed with caution. Avoid bridges or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.
- Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit. More injuries happen when people move during the shaking of an earthquake. After the shaking stops, if you go outside, move quickly away from the building to prevent injury from falling debris.
- Stay away from windows. Windows can shatter with such force that you can be injured several feet away.
- In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off during a quake. Earthquakes frequently cause fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems to go off even if there is no fire. Check for and extinguish small fires, and, if exiting, use the stairs.
- If you are in a coastal area, move to higher ground. Earthquakes often create tsunamis. (See the tsunami section for more information.)
- If you are in a mountainous area or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling rocks and other debris.

## After an earthquake

- Check yourself for injuries. You will be better able to care for others if you are not injured or if you have received first aid for your injuries.
- Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and work gloves. This will protect you from further injury by broken objects.
- After you have taken care of yourself, help injured or trapped persons. Call 911, then give first aid when appropriate. Don't try to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
- Look for and extinguish small fires. Fire is the most common hazard following earthquakes.
- Leave the gas on at the main valve, unless you smell gas or think it's leaking. Explosions have caused injury and death when homeowners have improperly turned their gas back on by themselves.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately. Avoid the hazard of a chemical emergency.
- Open closet and cabinet doors cautiously. Contents may have shifted during the shaking of an earthquake and could fall, creating further damage or injury.
- Inspect your home for damage. Get everyone out if your home is unsafe. Aftershocks can cause further damage to unstable buildings. If your home has experienced damage, get out before aftershocks happen.
- Help neighbors who may require special assistance. Elderly people and people with disabilities may require additional assistance.
- Listen to a portable, battery-operated radio (or television) for updated emergency information and instructions. If the electricity is out, this may be your main source of information.
- Expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one, drop, cover and hold on! Aftershocks can occur minutes, days, weeks and even months after an earthquake.

- Watch for fallen power lines or broken gas lines, and stay out of damaged areas. Hazards caused by earthquakes are often difficult to see, and you could be easily injured.
- Stay out of damaged buildings. If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe.
- Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to inspect your home. Kerosene lanterns, torches, candles and matches may tip over or ignite flammables inside.
- Inspect the entire length of chimneys carefully for damage. Cracks in chimneys can be the cause of a fire years later.
- Take pictures of the damage, both to the house and its contents, for insurance claims.
- Avoid smoking inside buildings. Smoking in confined areas can cause fires.
- When entering buildings, use extreme caution.
- Examine walls, floor, doors, staircases and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.
- Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
- Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.
- Check for sewage and water line damage. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap. You can obtain safe water from undamaged water heaters or by melting ice cubes.
- Watch for loose plaster, drywall and ceilings that could fall.

- Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies. Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in disaster situations. They need to be clear for emergency calls.
- Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard. The behavior of pets may change dramatically after an earthquake. Normally quiet and friendly cats and dogs may become aggressive or defensive.

**Information contained in this guide is credited to:**

**“Before Disaster Strikes: How Families and Individuals Can Prepare”**

American Red Cross  
Oregon Trail Chapter  
PO Box 3200  
Portland, OR 97208-3200  
(503) 284-1234

**“Your Family Disaster Plan”**

Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA L-191  
American Red Cross, ARC 4466

**“Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit”**

Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA L-189  
American Red Cross, ARC 4463

For additional information on disaster preparedness, contact your local emergency management agency or the American Red Cross.

Emergency information on the Internet is located at:

OEM: <http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/>

FEMA: <http://www.fema.gov>

**Personal phone numbers**

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