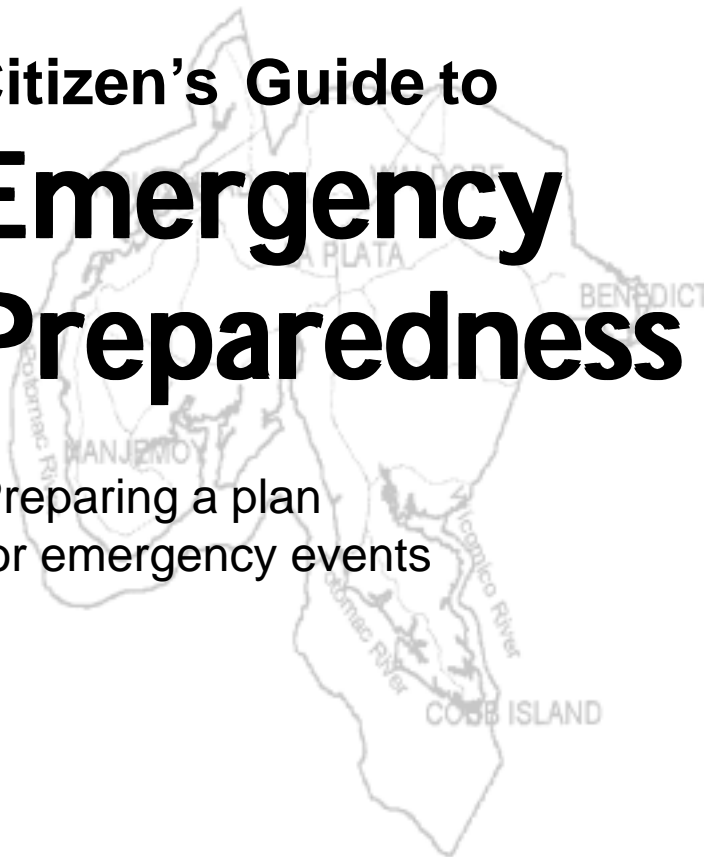


Charles County, Maryland



Citizen's Guide to Emergency Preparedness

Preparing a plan
for emergency events



A Message from the Charles County Commissioners:

Prepare for an Emergency

Dear Charles County Citizens:

The events of September 11, 2001, bioterrorism threats, health emergencies, tornadoes, hurricanes, winter storms and weather-related power outages in our County are a reminder that emergency preparedness is a must for everyone. Many persons in Charles County have been directly affected, or have friends, neighbors, or relatives who have been affected, by these events. Others have loved ones who have been called to service in the war on terrorism.

Charles County, because of its geography and proximity to our Nation's Capital, has always had an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The EOP is exercised and activated as needed to address many natural and man-made emergencies, both immediate (e.g., terrorism, hazardous chemical spill, tornado, hurricane) and long-term (e.g., drought, chronic chemical release). These events can occur without warning, impacting areas of our County for long periods of time.

While we cannot always predict when or where an emergency will strike, everyone can be prepared by developing a plan to suit their needs and reduce the impact of the emergency. This guide has been created to help do just that. Even though it does not cover every conceivable emergency, it does provide useful information and resources to help you plan for most emergency situations.

Charles County Commissioners

Wayne Cooper, *President*
Robert Fuller, *Vice President*
Candice Quinn Kelly
Edith Patterson
Allan R. "Al" Smith

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Create a Family Emergency Plan

An emergency can strike quickly and without warning, causing you to evacuate your home or forcing you to take shelter in your home. If an emergency strikes, basic services may be interrupted; therefore, you may need to be self-sufficient for 48-72 hours. By developing a **Family Emergency Plan**, getting through the emergency can be much easier.

Learn about warning signals, like the Emergency Alert System. Find out about evacuation plans at your workplace, your child's school or day care center. And, find out about **pet care** before and after a disaster, because health regulations will not permit them inside a shelter.

It's important to meet with your family and prepare your Family Emergency Plan before an emergency occurs. Children need to be told about the potential dangers of fire, severe weather, and other hazards, such as chemical spills.

Pick two places to meet in the event of an emergency, one right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire, and a second outside your neighborhood in case you can't go home. Ask an out-of-state friend or relative to be a contact. After an emergency, all family members should call the contact person and tell that person where they are. In forming your Plan, consider how to care for family members with special needs, such as the disabled or elderly.

Conduct a home hazard hunt to remove, repair, or brace anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire.

Complete this checklist:

- Post emergency numbers by telephones.**
- Teach children to dial 911.**
- Stock emergency supplies and prepare an emergency supplies kit.**
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR course.**
- Find the safe spots in your home that could be a refuge during an emergency.**
- Determine the best escape routes from your home.**

Prepare Your Home for an Emergency

Planning for any emergency requires us to consider all likely scenarios that could result when things that you rely on daily -- like electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, telephone service, and transportation -- are disrupted for a considerable amount of time. Consequently, you should plan on having food, water, and other essentials to get you



through the emergency. Most emergency management planners suggest having enough supplies to last you and your family for three to five days. However, many things may impact your decision, including storage space, special needs, number of people in the household, and available resources.

Your Emergency Preparedness Kit

The six basic items that should be stored in your home are **water, food, first-aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools, emergency supplies,** and **speciality items**. Keep the items that you would most likely need at home in one easy-to-carry container such as a trash can, camping backpack, or duffel bag. Store it in a convenient place and put a smaller version in your car. Keep items in waterproof containers. Remember to change the stored water every three months and rotate the food supplies every six months (place dates on containers). Check the supplies and re-think your needs every year. Consult your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications, and maintain a list of your prescription needs.

Water

Store water in plastic containers or purchase bottled water, avoiding containers that will decompose or break, such as glass bottles. Plan for one gallon of water per person per day. Water should be stored in a cool, dark place with the date labeled on the container.

Prepare Your Home for an Emergency

Food

Store a supply of three to five days of non-perishable food per person.



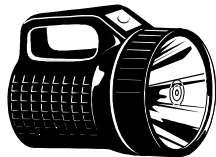
Foods should require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Examples include: ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables; canned or boxed juices, milk, and soup; condiments such as sugar, salt, and pepper; high-energy food like peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars, and trail mix; vitamins; foods for infants or persons on special diets; comfort/stress foods like cookies, hard candy, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags, and sweetened cereals. Bulk food items such as wheat, powdered milk, corn, and soybeans can be stored for long periods of time.

First-aid Kit

Assemble a first-aid kit for your home and each vehicle. Items should include sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, gauze pads, hypoallergenic adhesive tape, triangular bandages, sterile gauze roll bandages, scissors, tweezers, needle, moistened towelettes, antiseptic, thermometer, tongue depressors, tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant, safety pins, cleansing soap, disposable gloves, and sunscreen. Also include aspirin or other pain medication, anti-diarrhea medication, activated charcoal (in case of poisoning) and laxatives.



Tools and Supplies



Keep the following items handy for all-around use: extra batteries of assorted sizes (check shelf life before purchasing), mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, non-electric radio, flashlight, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, cash (include change) and/or traveler's checks, non-elec-

Prepare Your Home for an Emergency



tric can opener and utility knife, small ABC fire extinguisher, small shovel, tube tent, pliers, compass, waterproof matches, plastic storage containers, duct tape and thread, medicine dropper, shut-off wrench for house gas and water, whistle, plastic sheeting and local map. For sanitation, pack toilet paper, soap and liquid detergent, feminine supplies, plastic garbage bags with ties, a plastic bucket and lid, disinfectant, and household chlorine bleach.

Clothing and Bedding

Assemble one or two complete changes of clothing per person, sturdy shoes or work boots, rain gear, blankets or sleeping bags, hat and gloves, thermal underwear and sunglasses.

Specialty Items

- Babies:** formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk, and medications
- Adults:** medications, prescriptions, denture needs, eye glasses and/or contact lenses, and related supplies
- Entertainment:** games, books, and several quiet toys for children
- Important Family Documents:** wills, insurance policies, contacts, deeds, passports, stocks and bonds, immunization records, important phone numbers, credit card accounts, Social Security cards, and other personal family records



Once you've developed a family emergency plan, practice it regularly. Conduct fire and evacuation drills, test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions, and don't forget to test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries in your smoke detector at least twice a year.

What to Do for Pets in Emergencies

Emergency planning should include all members of the family, including pets. If you must evacuate, do not leave your animals behind. Evacuate them to a prearranged safe location if they cannot stay with you during the evacuation period. If you have not pre-planned an evacuation location for your pet, take them with you to the Red Cross shelter. An animal services representative will be available (or on call) at that location to take the animal to an approved animal sheltering facility. (Remember, pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters.) It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. You should:



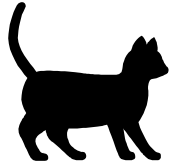
- ☑ Ask friends or relatives outside the affected area if they can shelter your animals (and you) should you have to evacuate. If you have more than one pet, they will be more comfortable if they are kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- ☑ Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and their restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if “NO PET” policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of these pet friendly locations including phone numbers with your portable pet disaster supplies kit.
- ☑ If you evacuate with your pet, don’t forget to prepare your pet and to bring your portable pet disaster supplies kit (see below). Make sure your dogs and cats are wearing collars that are securely fastened and include up-to-date information. Attach the phone number and location of your temporary shelter (cell phone number too), or a phone number of a friend or relative outside of the disaster area who can be contacted if your pet(s) become lost. Adhesive tape or duct tape with this information can be attached to your pet’s collar if needed.

Prepare a portable pet disaster supplies kit with the following:

- ☑ medications and medical/vaccination records stored in a water-proof container.
- ☑ first aid kit.

What to Do for Pets in Emergencies

- ☑ sturdy leashes, harnesses and carriers for each of your pets. Life gets very strange and stressful for your pets during this time, and they will react differently, so please transport them in an airline-type carrier at all times for their safety and to ensure that they can't escape and be left behind.



- ☑ **current** photos of your pets in case they get lost. A member of the “human” family along with the pet in the photo is always a plus in establishing ownership if the animal gets lost.
- ☑ food (especially if your pet is on a special diet), bottled water, disposable bowls, cat litter/pan (disposable cooking pans work great for this) and a can opener.
- ☑ pet beds and toys, if easily transportable. It is always good for your pets to have a familiar toy to take with them to a shelter as a reminder of home.
- ☑ written information on feeding schedules/amounts, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name/address and phone number of your veterinarian.

For more information on emergency preparedness for your pets, call **Charles County Animal Control Services** at 301-609-3425, 301-932-1713 or 1-800-903-1992, or visit these web sites: www.charlescounty.org/es/animalcontrol or www.hsus.org. (Go to the disaster preparedness areas of the web sites for brochures and information.)

Check on Relatives and Neighbors



During emergencies, check to see how your relatives and neighbors are coping, especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities. If possible, consider helping them plan or locate resources where they can obtain assistance.

Call the **Charles County Department of Community Services, Aging and Community Centers Division**, at 301-934-9305 or

301-870-3388, ext. 5144 for more information.

Public Emergency Shelters

When conditions warrant, the Charles County Department of Emergency Services may establish community-based shelters for local residents who may be asked to evacuate their homes or work place. Normally, shelters are set up in public schools where residents can seek refuge, as well as sleep and eat. The American Red Cross, Southern Maryland Chapter, operates the shelters with the assistance of the Health Department of Charles County, Charles County Public Schools, and the Charles County Department of Social Services. Information on shelters is issued via radio and television, Charles County Government Cable Channel 95, the County's web site, www.charlescounty.org, or the County's 24-hour automated telephone response system at 301-645-0600.



What schools may be used as public emergency shelters?

Middle Schools

- **General Smallwood Middle School**, 4990 Indian Head Highway, Indian Head
- **John Hanson Middle School**, 12350 Vivan Adams Drive, Waldorf
- **Mattawoman Middle School**, 10145 Berry Road, Waldorf
- **Matthew Henson Middle School**, 3535 Livingston Road, Indian Head
- **Milton Somers Middle School**, 300 Willow Lane, La Plata
- **Piccowaxen Middle School**, 12834 Rock Point Road, Newburg

High Schools

- **Henry E. Lackey High School**, 3000 Chicamuxen Road, Indian Head
- **La Plata High School**, 6035 Radio Station Road, La Plata
- **Maurice McDonough High School**, 7165 Marshall Corner Road, Pomfret
- **Thomas Stone High School**, 3785 Leonardtown Road, Waldorf
- **Westlake High School**, 3300 Middletown Road, Waldorf

Persons needing shelter are asked to bring a sleeping bag or bed roll, change of clothing, bathing and sanitary supplies, pre-filled prescription and other medical needs, denture and eye care materials, and special dietary supplies or requirements.

Preparing for Evacuation from Your Home

Evacuation, as a protective action, is more common than you think. Hundreds of times each year, transportation or industrial accidents release harmful chemicals that force nearby residents to leave their homes. Fires and floods force people from their homes even more often, and almost every year residents along some areas of the Gulf and Atlantic coasts must evacuate for approaching hurricanes. Evacuation planning has been ongoing for many years across the country, in Maryland, and in Charles County.

If an evacuation is called for in your neighborhood, you will be given specific information through the Emergency Alert System, radio, television, and local officials (first responders, i.e. law enforcement and fire/rescue). Government agencies and the American Red Cross, among others, will provide emergency shelter if necessary.

Put your Family Emergency Plan into effect. All family members should wear protective clothing. Listen to the radio for official information and instructions regarding evacuation routes and emergency shelter locations.

Before leaving your home, lock the doors and windows. If there is time, unplug appliances, turn off natural gas, propane, water, and electricity.

Let your out-of-state contact know where you are going. Always follow specific evacuation routes. **DO NOT** take short cuts. They may be blocked. Before returning home, continue to listen to the radio or television (if available) for information and instructions. **DO NOT** return home until officials say it is safe.

DO NOT take any kind of flame into a damaged building. There may be leaking gas or other flammable materials present. **DO NOT** turn on lights because they can produce sparks that will ignite the gas. Leave the house immediately and notify the gas company. Never turn the gas back on, call your gas company and have its technician turn it on.

Notify the power company of downed power lines. If appliances are wet, turn off the main electrical power switch.

Follow health department instructions on using food items after an emergency.

After the emergency has passed, call family and friends to let them know you are safe.

Preparedness for Those with Special Needs

If you have special needs or are caring for someone with special needs, you need to prepare for an emergency well in advance.

What do we mean by special needs? Do you or someone you take care of require special medication? Do you need oxygen, tube feeding, dialysis, or other life-sustaining equipment? Will you need a wheelchair, walker, a special bed, or special toilet items? If you have to evacuate, will you need transportation?

Establish a personal support network. This can consist of friends, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers, and neighbors. Make arrangements for those in your support network to assist you well before an emergency occurs. Do not depend on any one person. Remember that they also may face disruptions because of an emergency. Work with several persons who will learn about your personal needs and what assistance you need in an emergency. If you are a caregiver for a person with special needs, make sure you have a plan to contact him/her if an emergency occurs.

Build a special needs emergency supply kit. In addition to the items everyone should include in an emergency supply kit (see page 5), seniors and persons with disabilities should gather specific items to manage their condition. This might include special medications, batteries for medical devices, respiratory supplies, mobility aids, and supplies for service animals. For more information on emergency supplies, visit www.redcross.org.

Register with the Charles County Department of Emergency Services. To assist in planning for the needs of special populations in the County, the Department of Emergency Services maintains a Disaster Registry. If you want to be on the Disaster Registry, or if you want someone for whom you are legally responsible to be on it, please complete the form on the following page (page 13) of this booklet, tear out the page, and mail it to the address listed at the bottom of the form. The Charles County Disaster Registry form is also available on the Charles County Government web site at: www.charlescounty.org/es.

For more information, or if you have questions, call the Department of Emergency Services at 301-609-3400.

Charles County Disaster Registry

Please fill out the information below if you wish to be included in the Charles County Disaster Registry. Once the application has been processed, an emergency information packet will be sent to you. The information that you provide will be used by the Department of Emergency Services and other emergency responders to assist you in the event of an emergency and in preparation for such an event.

Please print

Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Address: (include street address if mailing address is PO Box)

City _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Phone Number: _____

Special Needs: (Check all that apply)

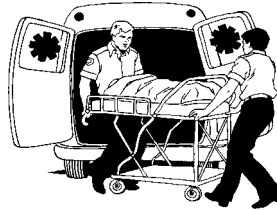
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical | <input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Service Animal | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Please tear out this page and mail to:

**Charles County Department of Emergency Services
P.O. Box 2150
La Plata, MD 20646**

Important Phone Numbers

Emergencies (Fire/Emergency Medical Services, Police): 9-1-1



Non-emergency: (Sheriff's Office)

301-932-2222 (La Plata District Station)

301-743-2222 (Indian Head District Station)

301-932-7777 (Waldorf District Station)

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

**Maryland State Police: 301-392-1200 or
301-753-1200**

Maryland Transportation Authority Police:

301-259-4444 (Southern Region, Nice Bridge)

Natural Resources Police: 1-800-628-9944

Maryland Center for Missing Children:

1-800-637-5437

Charles County Department of

Emergency Services: 301-609-3400

Charles County 24-Hour Information: 301-645-0600

Charles County Emergency Operations Center/

Citizen Information Line (during an emergency): 301-609-3435

Maryland Relay Service TTY/TDD: 7-1-1 or 1-800-735-2258

Charles County Public Schools 24-Hour Information:

301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656

American Red Cross Southern Maryland Chapter: 301-934-2066

Crisis Center (24-Hour Hotline): 301-645-3336

Health Department: 301-609-6900

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Maryland State Highway Administration (La Plata):

301-934-8031

Crime Solvers: 1-866-411-TIPS

Verizon (Residential Service): 301-954-6260

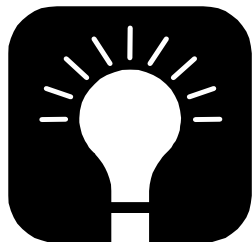
Public Water and Sewer Service

Emergencies: 301-609-7400 (County);

301-934-8421 (La Plata); 301-743-5511

(Indian Head)

SMECO: (Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative) 1-877-74-SMECO



Make Financial Preparations

Whether you own or rent your home, there are many things you can do to protect your home and possessions. You can increase your safety and reduce your insurance costs by:

- ☑ **Installing safety equipment** such as smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors to alert you to potential deadly conditions.
- ☑ **Securing large or heavy items** that could fall and cause damage during storms.
- ☑ **Covering windows, turning off utilities, or moving possessions** to a safer location if you have adequate warning of something like a hurricane or flood.
- ☑ **Having your house inspected** by a building inspector or architect to find out what structural improvements could prevent or reduce major damage from disasters.
- ☑ **Conducting an inventory of your household possessions** to help you prove the value of what you own for insurance purposes if those possessions are damaged or destroyed and to provide documentation for tax deductions you claim for your losses. Make a visual or written record of your possessions. Include a video or photographs of cars, boats, and recreational vehicles. Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles, artwork or other items that are difficult to value. Update the appraisals every two to three years.
- ☑ **Keeping the originals of all important financial and family documents**, such as birth and marriage certificates, wills, deeds, tax returns, insurance policies, and stock and bond certificates in a safe place. Store copies elsewhere. You'll need accessible records for tax and insurance purposes.
- ☑ **Photographing the exterior of your home.** Include the landscaping -- that big tree in the front yard may not be insurable, but it does increase the value of your property for tax purposes.
- ☑ **Making copies** of receipts and canceled checks for more valuable items.
- ☑ **Updating your inventory** list annually and putting a copy in a safe place.
- ☑ **Buying insurance** to protect against the perils you may face.

What to Do When Electrical Power Is Lost

Disruption of electrical service can occur as a result of many things, including lightning, high winds, ice and heavy snow, and equipment failure. For the most part, service is normally restored within a short period. However, major power outages can happen for extended periods from time to time. When power is lost, you should:



☑ **Check to see if your neighbors have power.** It may only be in your home, a blown fuse, or a tripped circuit. If your neighbors are also without service, call your local power company. If you must go outside to assess the situation, take a flashlight and watch for downed power lines that may still be energized. If downed lines are located, don't go near them or touch anything that they may be touching them. Report downed power lines to the local power company immediately.

☑ **Turn off major appliances.** Leave just a couple of light switches on in the home and the front porch light. When major appliances -- refrigerators, electric water heaters, air conditioners and pumps -- are left on, they could overload electric lines when power is restored causing a second outage.

☑ **Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.** Food can be kept cold enough for a day or two, if the doors are kept closed. During the winter, you may be able to store some items outside in a proper container. If temperatures are below freezing, it's possible to freeze water outside in containers and place them inside your refrigerator to help keep food cold. Try to consume perishable foods first. Some partially frozen foods can be refrozen as long as they contain ice crystals or are no warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Consider purchasing a thermometer for both the refrigerator and freezer. Don't refreeze seafood, poultry, ice cream, cream sauces, or anything susceptible to spoilage. When in doubt, throw it out.

During times of prolonged outages, your power company may provide dry ice at a designated location; bring an ice cooler or suitable container to transport it back home. As a rule of thumb, 25 pounds of dry ice will keep a 10-cubic-foot freezer at the proper temperature (32 degrees F) for three to four days.

What to Do When Electrical Power Is Lost

☑ **Flashlights or battery-operated lanterns** should be used to illuminate the home. Candles and kerosene lanterns are not recommended for lighting because of the inherent fire safety hazards and fumes.

☑ **Portable emergency generators** can be used to provide limited electrical power during an outage. But, take care to ensure that they do not pose a threat to you and your family. Never fuel or run a portable generator in the home or garage. Gas-powered generators pose a serious fire and carbon monoxide threat. Generators should be installed in compliance with your local utility's guidelines. Make sure the generator is equipped with a double-throw transfer switch that protects your equipment and prevents feedback on power lines. Always operate according to the manufacturer's instructions. Call the local power company for more information on the proper use of emergency generators.

☑ **Water systems with electric pumps** will not operate when the power is out. Use alternate sources of water until power is restored.

☑ **Gas appliances** may not work if the power is off because the equipment may require electricity for ignition or valve operation.

☑ **Water heaters** that are drained to prevent damage from freezing must also have their power circuit shut off. Failure to do so could result in loss of the heating element when power is restored. **Never** turn on a water heater unless the tank is full.

☑ **Plumbing** can freeze when power is lost during cold weather periods. Drain pumps, supply lines, water heaters, boilers and traps in drains of tubs, sinks, toilets, washing machines, and dishwashers. To avoid major flooding when temperatures rise, turn off supply lines to outside spigots.

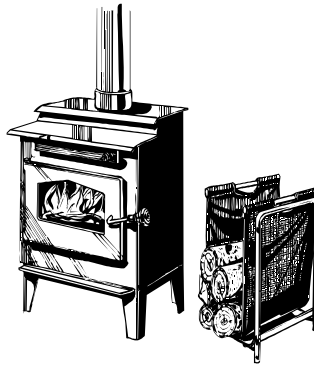
☑ **Life support equipment** required for family members who depend on respirators, ventilators, oxygen equipment or other life-sustaining devices should be listed with the power company, with your doctor's approval. You should have a contingency plan that always includes an alternate power source for the device and relocating the person.

☑ **Trees** falling on electrical lines are a primary cause of power outages. The power company has regularly scheduled tree trimming programs. When planting and/or trimming trees on your property, seek professional help when trimming branches or limbs that are close to power lines.

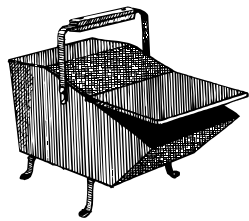
What to Do When Electrical Power Is Lost

Keeping Warm

Select a single room in the home in which the entire family can live; ideally a room which gets sunlight during daylight hours. Use fireplaces and wood-burning stoves with care and always supervise them when burning. Make sure the fireplace is in proper working condition and has been inspected before use. Wear layers of clothing, including sweaters and coats, which entraps warm air and helps to maintain body heat for longer periods. For homes with natural gas heaters, keep meters and vents clear of ice and snow.



Safety Note



Never use gas ovens, stovetops, charcoal or propane grills to heat your home. They pose a serious threat of fire and creation of poisonous carbon monoxide. Kerosene heaters should always be used in a well-ventilated room, and never refueled inside the home or in an attached garage.

When removing ashes from the fireplace, make sure that the ashes have been cooled and are placed in a metal container outside and away from the home.

Keep Updated During an Emergency

Getting information during an emergency situation is vital, especially if evacuation may be required. Listen to local radio stations **WMDM 97.7 FM**, **WSMD 98.3 FM**, **WKIK 102.9 FM**, **WPTX 1690 AM**, **WTOP 103.5 FM**, **WRC-TV Channel 4**, **Fox News Channel 5**, **WJLA-TV Channel 7**, **WUSA-TV Channel 9**, **News Channel 8**, **Charles County Government Cable Channel 95**, or go to **News Releases** on the Charles County Government web site, www.charlescounty.org.

In-place sheltering

Many emergency situations occur without warning, but still require emergency protective actions to take place. Chemical accidents are good examples of incidents that happen without warning. In the event of a chemical incident, you may be asked to take shelter within your home. There are precautions you must take in making your home safe. To reduce the possibility of chemical vapors entering your home you should take the following precautions:

- ☑ **Close** and lock all windows. Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels or duct tape, or similar thick tape.
- ☑ **Seal** any gaps around window air conditioning units, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fan grilles, and stove and dryer vents with tape and plastic sheeting, wax paper, or aluminum wrap.
- ☑ **Close** all fireplace dampers.
- ☑ **Close** as many doors as possible.
- ☑ **Turn off** all ventilation systems, including furnaces, air conditioners, vents, and fans.
- ☑ **Have** building superintendents set all ventilation systems at 100% recirculation so that no outside air is drawn into the structure.
- ☑ **Close** all drapes, curtains, and shades, if local authorities warn of potential explosions. Stay away from windows to prevent injury.
- ☑ **Remain** in protected interior areas of your home and stay tuned to radio or television so that you will be informed of when it is safe to leave your home.

Students in School

In the event of a local or national emergency, or ordered evacuation, parents should listen to local radio and television stations for announcements about changes in school closings or openings, or call the school system's 24-hour information line at 301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656. Parents may pick up their children from school during the day, but during a crisis the best place for children may be the school itself. Unless an evacuation of a school is ordered, students will be kept at school until they can be safely transported home on normal bus routes.

Heat Wave Safety Tips

- ☑ **Slow down.** Strenuous activities should be reduced, eliminated or rescheduled to the coolest time of the day. Individuals at risk because of medical problems should stay in the coolest place available, not necessarily indoors.
- ☑ **Dress for summer.** Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing that reflects heat and sunlight and helps the body maintain normal temperatures.
- ☑ **Reduce consumption of foods that increase metabolic heat production,** like protein, that also increase water loss.
- ☑ **Drink plenty of water,** even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with sugar, caffeine, or alcohol. Those with epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease, who are on fluid restrictive diets, or have a fluid retention problem should consult a physician before increasing their water consumption.
- ☑ **Do not drink alcoholic beverages.**
- ☑ **Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician.** Those on salt-restrictive diets should consult a physician before increasing their salt intake.
- ☑ **Spend more time in air-conditioned places.** Air conditioning in homes and other buildings greatly reduces your danger from heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, spend some time each day during hot weather in an air-conditioned environment.
- ☑ **Do not get too much sun.** Sunburn makes heat dissipation more difficult.

Heat Disorder Symptoms and Treatment

- ☑ **Sunburn:** Redness and pain. Severe cases may result in swelling of the skin, blisters, fever, and/or headaches. Use ointments for mild cases. If blisters appear, do not break. If blisters break, apply a dry sterile dressing. For serious cases, consult a physician.
- ☑ **Heat Cramps:** Painful muscle spasms may occur in the legs and/or abdomen. Use firm pressure on cramping muscles, or gentle massage to relieve the spasms. Give sips of water to replace water

Heat Wave Safety Tips

lost through sweating. Discontinue water if nausea occurs.

- ☑ **Heat Exhaustion:** Heavy sweating, weakness, skin is cold, pale, and clammy. Pulse is weak and shallow. Normal temperature possible. Fainting and vomiting may occur. Get victim out of the sun. Lay him or her down and loosen clothing. Apply wet, cool cloths.
- ☑ **Heat stroke:** High body temperature (106 degrees F or higher). Skin is hot and dry. Pulse is rapid and strong. Possible unconsciousness.

Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Call 911 to summon emergency medical assistance. Get victim to a hospital. Until help arrives, do not give fluids. If safe to do so, move victim to a cooler environment. A cool bath, sponging with cool water and use of fans or air conditioning, may be attempted to reduce the victim's body temperature. Repeat cooling process if victim's body temperature rises again.

Emergency Supplies for Your Car

Emergency supplies that should *always* be kept in your vehicle:

- Blanket(s)
- tools (to do minor repairs)
- flashlight (with spare batteries)
- change (for pay phones)
- flares or warning triangle
- jumper cables
- first aid kit
- bottled water
- work gloves

You may want to include:

- Maps of the areas you travel
- sleeping bag
- can opener
- traction mats/chains
- necessary medications
- paper and pen
- paper towels
- canned food/nuts
- shovel
- rain gear
- warm gloves
- personal hygiene items
- spare pair of glasses
- waterproof matches and candles

Bio-Terrorism Threats

Anthrax is only one component of bio-terrorism. Tomorrow it could be other bacteria, such as plague, tularemia, the smallpox virus; or the botulism toxin. Unlike bombs or chemical weapons, these highly infectious agents cannot be identified by sight, smell, or feel. Once exposure has happened, it may be several days before the source is determined.

☑ **Anthrax** is “nature’s perfect bio-weapon.” It is readily available, easily produced, easily stored, highly lethal and does not break down in sunlight. There is no screening test for anthrax. Treatment: antibiotics.



☑ **Smallpox** is highly contagious. Symptoms include high fever, fatigue, head and backache, followed in 2-4 days by a rash. The lesions are round, tense, and deeply embedded in the skin.

Treatment: vaccine.

☑ **Botulism** toxins are among the most toxic to man. They can be inhaled or ingested. Symptoms include droopy eyelids, generalized weakness, dizziness, dry mouth and throat, blurred and double vision, altered speech and voice production, difficulty swallowing, and respiratory failure. Treatment: antitoxin.

☑ **Plague** comes in three forms, bubonic (spread by rodents), pneumonic (by aerosol), and septicemic (from dissemination of the other two forms). Symptoms include malaise, high fever, chills, headache, myalgia, and a cough with bloody sputum. Treatment: antibiotics.

☑ **Tularemia**, which is transmitted by handling infected animal tissues, ingestion of contaminated water, food, or soil or inhalation of infective aerosols, is characterized by fever, fatigue, chills, headache, and malaise. Treatment: antibiotics

What precautions should you take?

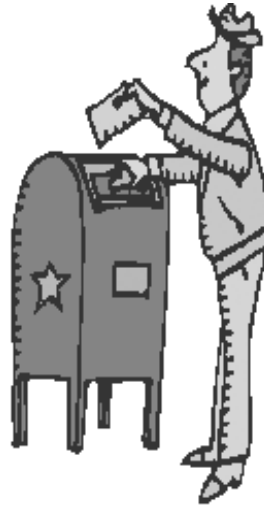
- ☑ **Practice** good personal hygiene
- ☑ **Follow** the United States Postal Service procedures established for handling suspicious mail, since bioterrorism exposure has come from the mail.

Handling Mail Safely

What constitutes suspicious mail?

Parcels that:

- are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you,
- are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated,
- have no return address, or have one that can't be verified as legitimate,
- are marked with restrictive markings, such as "personal" or "confidential,"
- have protruding wires, strange odors, or stains,
- show a city or state in the postmark that doesn't match the return address, or
- have excessive postage, tape or string.



What should I do with a suspicious piece of mail?

- Don't** handle a letter or package you suspect is contaminated
- Don't** shake it, bump it, or sniff it.
- Wash** your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Notify** local law enforcement authorities.

To notify local law enforcement authorities in Charles County, call 911 for a **life-threatening** emergency. To report suspicious activity, suspicious mail, or if you have other non-emergency questions about substances or activities, call the Charles County Sheriff's Office, 301-932-2222, 301-743-2222 or 301-932-7777; Maryland State Police, Barrack H, La Plata, 301-392-1200; or La Plata Town Police, 301-934-1500.

When you call, don't panic. Keep calm. Answer the questions asked by the call taker. Your response is important in how the incident will be handled. Follow their instructions until help arrives.

Handling Mail Safely

When opening mail:

- ☑ **Examine** it for foreign bodies or powder.
- ☑ **Lay** it flat on a desk and open it with a letter opener.
- ☑ **Use** a minimal amount of movement. Don't shake or spill contents without first looking inside.



If a parcel is open and/or a threat is identified:

for biological or chemical (a suspicious powder or liquid):

- ➔ if the substance spills onto a surface, leave the letter, and don't move or clean up the substance; cover with another piece of paper, newspaper, or what is at hand; don't move it or leave it unattended, ask everyone in room to leave; call 911; wash hands with soap and water; after assessment, follow instructions of emergency responder.
- ➔ if the substance from the envelope spills onto your skin, wash with soap and water right away. Remove the clothes you were wearing and put them in a plastic bag. Change clothes and take a shower as soon as possible. Call 911. Seek medical attention immediately.

Emergency Planning for Businesses

Businesses are just as vulnerable to emergencies as individuals. Business owners should develop an emergency plan that includes:

- ☑ Maintaining a list of emergency numbers of employees so their families can be contacted if necessary.
- ☑ Having a plan in place to safely evacuate employees and customers.
- ☑ Practicing the plan with staff.
- ☑ Backing up computer data regularly and storing off-site.
- ☑ Purchasing ample insurance coverage to minimize losses.
- ☑ Identifying crucial business operations and developing plans to ensure their continuation in the event of an emergency.

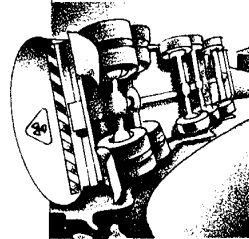


The time to think about what you need to do in the event of a disruption to your business is before you face a crisis. Your employees need to know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Hazardous Materials Incidents

What are hazardous materials?

A hazardous material, by law, is “any product that corrodes other materials, explodes, or is easily ignited, reacts strongly with water, is unstable when exposed to heat or shock, or is otherwise toxic to humans, animals, or the environment.” Hazardous materials can include: explosives, flammable gases and liquids, poisons and poisonous gases, corrosives and caustics, nonflammable gases, oxidizers, water-reactive materials, and radioactive materials.



Hazardous materials are transported by road, water, air, rail, and pipeline, and stored at fixed sites across the state.

Hazardous materials pose a risk to life, health, and property if they are released. Service stations, chemical plants, farms, wastewater treatment plants, and hospitals are just some of the facilities that routinely store radioactive, flammable materials, and other hazardous substances.

If you are outside during a hazardous material incident, go indoors immediately. If you are in your car, turn off the heating and air conditioning systems. Roll up all windows. Evacuate immediately if you are told to do so. If you are asked to take shelter, follow the instructions under “in-place sheltering.” After a hazardous material incident, don’t go home until officials say it is safe. After returning home, open windows, vents, and fans to ventilate the house. If you or anything in your home has been exposed to hazardous materials, get medical attention immediately.

Hazardous Materials Found in Homes:

Cleaning products

Bleach
Ammonia
Oven cleaner
Laundry detergent
Aerosols

Beauty Products

Hair Spray
Nail Polish and Removers
Perfume, Cologne
Aerosol Deodorants

Garden, Garage Products

Paints, Varnish, Thinners
Gasoline
Diesel
Pesticides, Herbicides
Fertilizer
Lighter Fluid

Others

Propane Tanks
Oily Rags



Report Suspicious Activity

The Federal, State, or local government may call for a heightened state of alert on the part of local law enforcement and citizens. When on heightened alert, law enforcement may add extra patrols at a number of locations, increase staff, carry extra protective equipment, and communicate more frequently with federal, state, or other local law enforcement agencies.

Citizens should also be on the alert and report any suspicious activity to police. Don't fail to act because you are not sure what you observe is worth reporting. If you suspect a crime is being or is about to be committed, call **911**. Don't panic. Don't put yourself at risk. If the activity simply appears suspicious, call **1-800-492-TIPS**, a non-emergency law enforcement number that is staffed around the clock, and describe the activity.

What types of activity should you report?

- A strange vehicle parked in your neighborhood for a long time.
- Recurring appearances of a strange vehicle in your neighborhood.
- Strangers looking into houses and vehicles, or knocking on doors.
- A person tampering with utility systems without an identifiable company vehicle and uniform.
- A large amount of traffic coming to an apartment or house.
- A house where extreme security measures are in force.
- Homes or buildings where no owner or primary renter is apparent, and no home activities, yard work, painting, or maintenance seem to go on.
- Strange odors coming from houses or buildings.
- Door-to-door solicitors without proper identification or permits.
- Persons standing around possibly acting as lookouts.
- Strangers who come around livestock or crops, or employee-only areas.
- A person who asks improper questions about your workplace operations, security, or co-workers' habits.

Natural Emergencies

Hurricanes are one of nature's most powerful forces. Hurricanes can destroy entire communities in very little time. It is important to learn the terminology to describe the status of the hurricane and its potential for landfall in Maryland. If forecasters warn of any of the following, it is important to take the necessary precautions:

A **hurricane alert** means that hurricane conditions pose a possible threat to your area over the next 72 hours. A **hurricane watch** means the potential for hurricane conditions are good for your area over the next 36 hours. A **hurricane warning** means that hurricane conditions are expected for your area within the next 24 hours. If you live in an area subject to storm surge or flooding, you may be asked to evacuate. Begin precautionary action at once.

When a warning is declared you should put a family protection plan into action and ensure you have disaster supplies ready. Also prepare your home for the storm. Shutter, board, or tape all windows and remove loose objects from your yard. Finally, fuel your car. Gas stations may not be open after the storm.

Boaters should have a storm preparation plan as well. When a hurricane develops, monitor National Weather Ser-



Hurricane Categories:

Category 1 -- 75-95 mph
Category 2 -- 96-110 mph
Category 3 -- 111-130 mph
Category 4 -- 131-155 mph
Category 5 -- 155 mph plus

Storm Surge: An abnormal rise in the lower level of the sea, produced by a hurricane or tropical storm

Storm Tide: The actual sea level resulting from the astronomical tide combined with the storm surge. Used interchangeably with "hurricane tide."

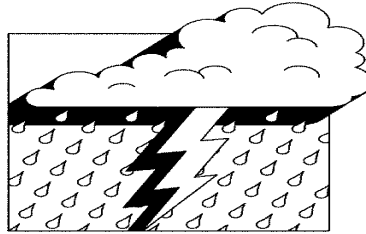
Tropical Depression: A tropical low-pressure system in which the maximum sustained surface wind (1-minute mean) is 38 mph or less

Tropical Disturbance: Organized convection originating in the tropics/sub-tropics with a non-frontal migratory character, sustained for 24 hours or more

Tropical Storm: A tropical low-pressure system in which the maximum sustained surface wind ranges from 39-73 mph

Natural Emergencies

vice marine broadcasts and begin getting ready at the earliest hurricane alert stage for your area. Secure all hatches and doors and tape windows from the inside. Shut off fuel lines at the tank and close through hull fittings. Remove all electronics and valuables. If told to evacuate, do so immediately. When a hurricane arrives, do not stay on your boat.



If your boat is trailerable, remove the boat from the water and secure the boat and trailer on high land. The trailer should be firmly anchored.

If your boat is at the dock, remove all articles on the deck and store them on land. Unstep the mast, if possible, and store it on land. Double up lines and use several cleats to distribute the load on the boat. Allow as much line as possible for tide and storm surge. Attach chafing gear where lines will rub.

Take extreme precaution after the storm. Do not travel unless officials have deemed your area safe. If you were evacuated to a shelter, stay there until officials say it is safe to leave. Avoid disaster areas so that recovery crews can begin clean-up efforts. Avoid downed power lines and report them to your utility company.

Floods

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural hazards. Some floods take days to develop, but flash floods can result in raging waters very quickly. Everyone should know the terms used to describe flooding conditions. A **flood watch** means flooding is possible. A **flood warning** means flooding is expected.



Before a flood, find out if you live in a flood-prone area. See if check valves have been installed in your sewer traps. These valves prevent floodwater from backing up in sewer drains. Store materials like sandbags, plywood, and plastic sheeting to help protect your home from flood waters.

Natural Emergencies

Never attempt to walk or drive through floodwater or water on a road. Two feet of water can float most cars, and not much more will float a large pickup. The water can be deeper and moving faster than it appears. If your car stalls on a flooded roadway, abandon it and move to higher ground.

After floodwaters have subsided, don't return home until authorities say you can. Be careful entering buildings that have been flooded, and don't enter buildings if floodwaters are higher than the first floor. Pump out basements gradually (about one third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.

Tornadoes

Tornadoes can strike the ground with winds of up to 300 miles per hour leaving a wide path of destruction in just seconds. Because a tornado can appear quickly, learn what to do to protect yourself and your family.



A **tornado watch** means a tornado is possible.

A **tornado warning** means a tornado has been sighted.

If you see a tornado or hear a tornado warning for your area, go to the lowest level or basement and get under something sturdy. Stay away from windows. Take a battery-operated radio with you to your shelter location and listen to the Emergency Broadcast System for official information. If you are outside when a tornado is sighted, get inside if possible. If shelter isn't nearby, lie in a low area or ditch and use your arms to protect your head and neck. **NEVER** try to out drive a tornado. Leave the vehicle and seek shelter in a building, low lying area, or ditch.

After a tornado hits, be careful when entering buildings. Stay clear of downed power lines.

Note: Residents living in areas damaged by a major storm or natural or man-made emergency, should listen to the local radio and television stations listed on page 16 of this guide, or visit the County's web site, www.charlescounty.org, for debris removal instructions.

Winter Storms



Heavy snowfall, extreme cold, and ice can become dangerous. When caught in a winter storm outside, find shelter, try to stay dry, and cover all exposed parts of the body. If in a car or truck, stay inside the vehicle. Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat, open the window for a little fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, and make sure the exhaust pipe is not

blocked. Make yourself visible to rescuers, and vigorously move your arms, legs, fingers, and toes from time to time to keep blood circulating. At home or in a building, stay inside. Properly ventilate and use fire safeguards if using an alternate source of heat. Eat and drink. Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing.

National Weather Service Winter Season Terminology

Winter Storm Watch: Adverse winter weather is possible in the watch area.

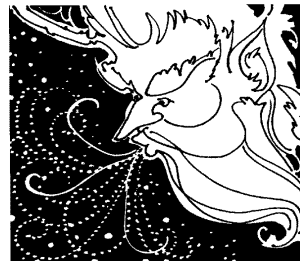
Winter Storm Warning: Adverse weather will occur in the warning area.

Heavy Snow:

Accumulation to 6 inches or more in 12 hours; or 8 inches or more in 24 hours.

Blizzard:

Sustained winds or frequent gusts up to 35 mph or greater, considerable falling snow and/or blowing snow, reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile for three hours or more.



Snow Removal

When it snows, County and contract forces concentrate on keeping primary County roads and major residential streets passable. These roads are cleared down to bare pavement as soon as possible after a storm is over. A storm has ended when wind has diminished and temperatures start to rise above freezing.

Plowing generally begins when snow becomes 1 to 3 inches deep and the temperature indicates there will be no melting. Even after plowing, snow that has been hard packed by traffic often remains on the street, and the plows are unable to remove it completely. In this type of situation, a mixture of sand and salt is spread to provide adequate traction.

Snow Response Target Time for County Roads

<u>Roads Designation</u>	<u>Snow Accumulation</u>	<u>Targeted Response Time</u>
Primary Roads and Major	3 to 4 inches	Passable within 12 hours
	5 to 7 inches	Passable within 18 to 24 hours
Residential Roads	8 to 10 inches	Passable within 24 to 36 hours
	11 to 15 inches	Passable within 36 to 48 hours
	24 inches	Passable within 48 to 60 hours
<hr/>		
Minor Residential Roads and	3 to 4 inches	1 Pass made within 12 hours
	5 to 7 inches	1 Pass made within 18 hours
Cul-de-sacs	8 to 10 inches	1 Pass made within 24 hours
	11 to 15 inches	1 Pass made within 36 hours
	24 inches	1 Pass made within 40 hours

The type of snow (wet or powdery), temperatures, and wind conditions following a storm can alter this schedule. In some cases where snow is drifting and blowing, snow plows will concentrate on snow emergency routes and primary roads. This may decrease response time to residential or neighborhood roads. If you live in the town of La Plata or Indian Head, call 301-934-8421 or 301-743-5511, respectively, for snow removal information.

How You Can Help

Clearing driveways and entrances is the responsibility of the property owner. All residential and business owners are responsible for clearing sidewalks on their own property. When a storm is predicted, always park your vehicles in your driveway so trucks can plow through.

Fire Prevention

Fire prevention is of special importance during an emergency. To prevent fires in your household from starting: Don't let junk accumulate. Clean out attics, basements, closets, and garages frequently.

Fire Hazards

- ☑ Check electrical wiring and appliances. Replace worn or frayed cords. Don't overload circuits with too many appliances. Don't string extension cords under rugs. Use irons, curling irons, and other heat appliances with caution.
- ☑ Store explosive or flammable materials outside. Never use flammable fluids such as gasoline, benzene, naphtha, etc. indoors or near flames. They ignite readily from a spark. Don't leave rags soaked with oil or turpentine lying around. They may spontaneously ignite.
- ☑ Check furnaces and stoves for cracked or rusted pipes, and sooty chimneys.
- ☑ Don't put papers or magazines on radiators, or near stoves or fireplaces.
- ☑ Don't let light bulbs touch lamp shades.
- ☑ Develop a safe escape route for your family in case of fire. Plan two ways of escape in the event one path is blocked by fire. Establish a meeting place outside for everyone. You can tell if someone is missing. This will help firefighters know who is or is not safe.
- ☑ Conduct regular fire drills.



Fire Safety

In case of fire:

- ☑ Stay low. Don't stand up. If you are in bed, roll out and crawl low on the floor under the smoke.
- ☑ Crawl to the door, use the wall as a guide. Check the door for heat with the back of your hand before opening.

Fire Prevention

- ☑ If the door is cool to the touch, crack it open so it can be shut quickly if flames or smoke are on the other side.
- ☑ If the door is hot or smoke is seeping underneath, do not open the door. Put a blanket, towel, robe, or heavy clothing in the crack.
- ☑ Take short breaths to avoid breathing in fumes and smoke.
- ☑ Signal others in the house by pounding on the walls, floor, and door.
- ☑ Shout, “*Fire*,” but do this once outside the heavy smoke.
- ☑ Using the wall as a guide, crawl to a window and open it. Take a sheet or large piece of cloth and wave it and shout for help if unable to climb out of the window to the ground to safety.
- ☑ Once out of the fire, don’t go back in. Let the firefighters know if anyone is missing.
- ☑ Escape first. If firefighters are not at the scene, call or tell someone to call 911. Don’t go back inside to make the call.

Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors can warn that there is a fire. Keep detectors in proper working order. Check and replace batteries twice a year. A good way to remember is to change the batteries every daylight savings time change. Some units beep when the batteries need to be replaced.

Clean the detector annually to keep out dust that can damage the unit. Test the detector at least once a month by pushing the test button.

Fire Extinguishers

A fire extinguisher is a storage container for a fire extinguishing agent such as water or chemicals. Fire extinguishers are labeled according to the type of fire they are intended for. There are four types of extinguishers: A: for ordinary combustibles (paper, cloth, wood, rubber, and many plastics); B: for flammable liquids (oils, gasoline, paints, etc.); C: for electrical equipment; and D: for combustible metals. Using the wrong type of extinguisher on a fire can make the situation much worse. If you plan to buy only one type of extinguisher, a multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher labeled ABC puts out most types of fires. **Recharge or replace the extinguisher after any use or before expiration date.** Install extinguishers near escape routes away from potential hazards.

Disaster Tips for the Hearing Impaired Community

Hearing Aids

Store hearing aids in a strategic, consistent, and secure location so they can be found and used after a disaster. For example, consider storing them in a container by your bedside, which is attached to a night stand or bed post using a string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a disaster.

Batteries

Store extra batteries for hearing aids or implants, your TTY, and light phone signaler. If available, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies. Consult owner's manual for information on proper battery maintenance.

Alarms

Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery-operated.

Communication

- ☑ **Determine** how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter, or if you don't have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose. Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as: "I speak American Sign Language and need an ASL interpreter"; "I do not write or read English"; and "If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed."
- ☑ **Obtain a battery-operated television, if possible**, that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.
- ☑ **Determine** which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Arrange so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on-camera emergency duty.
- ☑ **Have a light source.** Without light, movements and the ability to participate in any communication is impossible.
- ☑ **Maintain a list of qualified interpreters** that can be contacted. Secure more than one source for this information.
- ☑ **Use the Maryland Relay Service TTY/TDD: 711 or 1-800-735-2258.**

Other Information Sources

Get more information on preparing for emergencies from the following web sites:

- ☑ American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
- ☑ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- ☑ Dept. of Emergency Services: www.charlescounty.org/es/
- ☑ Charles County Sheriff's Office: www.ccsso.us
- ☑ Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
- ☑ MD Emergency Management Agency: www.mema.state.md.us
- ☑ MD Department of the Environment: www.mde.state.md.us
- ☑ Maryland State Police: www.mdsp.maryland.gov
- ☑ MD Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene: www.dhmd.state.md.us
- ☑ United States Postal Service: www.usps.gov
- ☑ Weather Channel: www.weather.com

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality of service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility.

Vision Statement

Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount; where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation.

**Equal Opportunity County
Say No To Drugs**

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