

Emergency Preparedness Handbook



KNOW WHAT TO DO



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE, POISON TREATMENT - 911

or local emergency number:

MANITOBA HYDRO

Report an electric or natural gas emergency, or outage.

In Winnipeg

204-480-5900

Outside Winnipeg (toll free)

1-888-MB-HYDRO or 1-888-624-9376

Provide information to the call taker, stay on the phone and follow their instructions. Briefly explain what has happened, address or location of the emergency and if anyone is ill or injured.

MANITOBA EMERGENCY MEASURES ORGANIZATION

In Winnipeg 204-945-3050 or 204-945-5555

Outside Winnipeg (toll free) 1-888-267-8298

OFFICE OF THE FIRE COMMISSIONER 1-888-389-3473

HIGHWAY CONDITIONS 1-877-627-6237

WILDFIRES 1-800-782-0076

ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENTS 1-204-944-4888

WORKPLACE SAFETY & HEALTH 204-957-SAFE or 204-957-7233

Check with your municipality for other emergency numbers.

Important!

- Be sure everyone in your family knows how to make emergency calls.
- If 911 is called accidentally, do not just hang up - stay on the line and inform an operator that emergency help is not needed.

Available in accessible formats upon request.

Table of Contents

Message from Manitoba Hydro	1
Be Prepared	1
Emergency Kit	2
Severe Weather	4
Downed Power Line	4
If a Power Line is Touching Your Vehicle	5
Electrical Shock or Burn	5
Flood	6
Power Outage	7
Extended Power Outage	8
Standby Generators	10
Natural Gas Outage	11
Natural Gas Leak	12
Carbon Monoxide Gas	13
Hazardous Material Release	13
Shelter-In-Place	14
Evacuation	14

Message from Manitoba Hydro

Manitoba Hydro is the primary provider of electricity and natural gas across the province. When disasters or emergencies happen, Manitoba Hydro is often one of the first agencies to be involved.

Over the years, our experience in responding to crisis situations has taught us two key factors that aid in effective emergency response. First, the more prepared everyone is, the less severe the consequences. Secondly, it is imperative for everyone to combine efforts during an emergency.

The information in this handbook is offered as a tool to help you prepare your personal emergency response. It is important to plan for the unexpected, to lessen the impacts of any crisis on you, your family, and your home.

Be Prepared

- Develop an emergency plan with your family. Examples and tips on completing an emergency plan can be found at [getprepared.gc.ca](https://www.getprepared.gc.ca).
- Assemble an emergency kit containing basic items that will keep everyone in your residence self-sufficient for at least 3 days. Refer to the suggested list in this book to help you. Check your kit regularly to make sure it is well-stocked, any expired foods are replaced, clothing is suitable for the current season, and that all equipment is in working order.
- Plan for what you will do if there is a power or natural gas outage that may last a day or longer, especially during the winter months or in extreme heat. Know how to shut off your utilities (hydro, gas, and water) if you must leave your home during a power outage or an emergency.
- Install a smoke alarm, carbon monoxide alarm, and multi-purpose fire extinguisher on each level of your home. Test your alarms regularly, replace batteries every six months and check expiry dates. Know how to respond if your smoke or carbon monoxide alarm goes off.



Emergency Kit

An emergency kit can help you through an extended power outage or evacuation. Assemble basic items that will keep you self-sufficient for at least 3 days. Store your kit where it will be easy to find - even in the dark. Keep items dry by storing them in resealable bags. Your kit should contain:

Water

A three day supply of water is 12 litres per person. Don't forget to increase the water supply if you have pets. Break the supply down, or ration, into:

- Two (2) litres per person, per day for drinking.
- Two (2) litres per person, per day for cooking and sanitation.

Food

Store at least a three day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that are compact, lightweight, and require no refrigeration, preparation, cooking, and little or no water (replace once a year).

- Ready-to-eat foods (canned meats, fruits, vegetables, peanut butter, energy bars, trail mix, etc.)
- Comfort foods (cookies, favourite treats, juice, dried fruit, etc.)
- Paper plates, cups, utensils, trash bags
- Manual can opener and a pocket-knife

Personal Items

- One complete change of clothing per person - updated seasonally and as personal clothing sizes change
- Include a jacket, heavy socks, mitts, and a toque for everyone
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- Toilet paper, paper towels, wet wipes
- Soap, liquid detergent, hand sanitizer
- Personal hygiene items, toothbrush, toothpaste
- First aid kit, prescription medication
- Infant formula, baby food and supplies
- Pet supplies, including food and water
- Emergency plan and contact information
- Important family documents such as identification, insurance and bank records

Equipment

- Flashlight, extra batteries
- Candles, matches or lighter (do not place near flammable materials or leave unattended)
- Mobile phone, charger, car charger, and an external battery compatible with your phone's charging port
- Radio (battery-powered or hand-crank)
- Paper and pen
- Multi-tool or small tool kit
- Whistle (to attract attention)
- Small fuel-operated stove and fuel (only operate outdoors)
- Household chlorine bleach or water purifying tablets
- Multi-purpose fire extinguisher
- Duct tape
- Cards, games, activities to keep everyone occupied
- Cash (in small denominations)

Severe Weather

Manitoba has experienced extreme weather events that have caused unprecedented damage to our electrical system. If you hear a storm is on the way, be ready to care for yourself and your family. Listen to local weather reports and follow safety recommendations.

BLIZZARD or HEAVY SNOWFALL: Stay indoors until the storm passes and avoid unnecessary travel.

ICE STORM or FREEZING RAIN: Stay indoors and avoid travelling. Call Manitoba Hydro to report any excessive ice buildup you see on power lines. Stay clear of downed, low, or sagging power lines. Stay away from workers as they remove the ice from lines.

THUNDERSTORM: Stay indoors. Thunderstorms bring lightning, heavy rainfall, high winds, hail, and tornadoes.

LIGHTNING: Stay indoors. Keep away from electrical appliances and equipment, windows, doors, fireplaces, and anything else that will conduct electricity, such as sinks, bathtubs and showers. Avoid using a telephone that is connected to a landline or touching devices that are plugged in for charging. It is safe to use a mobile phone.

If outside, take shelter in a building or hard-top vehicle with the windows rolled up. If caught in the open, do not lie flat. Crouch or kneel with your hands on your thighs and lean forward without touching your head to the ground. Stay away from objects that can conduct electricity such as trees, power lines and metal fences.

TORNADO: Stay inside. Go to the basement, or a small interior room or a closet on the ground floor. Sit under a sturdy table, crawl under a bed, or pull a mattress over top of you. Stay away from windows and exterior walls. Get as close to the ground as possible and cover your head to protect from flying debris.

If you're outdoors, take shelter immediately but avoid buildings with large roof spans such as shopping malls. Avoid staying in, or around, mobile homes or vehicles. If no other building is available, lie face down in a ditch.

Downed Power Line

A downed power line is an emergency - assume it is energized. Report a downed line to 911 or to Manitoba Hydro. Stay at least 10 metres away from a downed line and anything it is touching. This includes a tree, fence or puddle of water. Do not attempt to remove branches or debris from a downed line.

If a Power Line is Touching Your Vehicle:

- **Stay inside the vehicle!** The ground and the vehicle may be energized. Your tires will keep you safe.
- Warn others to stay at least 10 metres away (length of a bus).
- If it is safe to back the vehicle away from contact with the power line, then do so.
- From your mobile phone, call 911 or Manitoba Hydro to de-energize the line.
- **As a last resort** - if a fire or other immediate danger forces you to exit - do not step out of the vehicle. Your body will make a path for electricity to ground, resulting in serious injury or death. To exit safely, follow these steps:
 - a. Open the door wide and stand on the edge of the vehicle.
 - b. Hold your arms at your sides.
 - c. Jump clear of the vehicle and land with your feet together.
 - d. Don't run! SHUFFLE (keep both feet touching) or HOP (keep both feet together) and continue moving in this way for a distance of at least 10 metres away from the vehicle and the downed lines (length of a bus).
 - e. Do not return to the vehicle until Manitoba Hydro advises it is safe to do so.

Electrical Shock or Burn

If someone has been shocked or burned by electricity:

- Call 911 for help. Do not touch a person while they are in contact with electricity.
- Shut off the power at the main circuit panel or unplug the appliance or tool they are using.
- When the victim is no longer in contact with the source of electricity, begin first aid or CPR.
- Do not touch burns, break blisters, or remove burned clothing.
- Internal electrical burns will not be visible. Get medical attention immediately!

Flood

If a flood-related electrical or natural gas emergency occurs in your home, call Manitoba Hydro immediately. For your safety and to minimize flood damage to electrical and natural gas equipment, consider the following:

BEFORE FLOODING OCCURS:

- Take precautions to prevent sewer backup, have a working sump pump, and ensure water will drain away from your home by extending down spouts.
- If the basement floor is dry and it is safe to do so, turn off the main power switch.
- Move electrical appliances and equipment to upper floors, or at least raise equipment to a higher level using shelving and tables.
- If possible, remove furnace fan motors, oil burn motors, and pressure systems to keep them dry.
- If you have natural gas service, call Manitoba Hydro to shut off the main gas supply to your home.
- If time allows, consult a licensed gas fitter to disconnect and remove natural gas appliances for storage in a dry location.

IF YOUR BASEMENT FLOODS:

- Do not enter flooded basements or buildings. Serious injury may result from water mixed with energized electrical equipment.
- Call Manitoba Hydro to disconnect electrical and natural gas service.

AFTER A FLOOD:

- Contact a licensed electrician to service your home's electrical system and arrange for an inspection.
- Contact a licensed gas fitter to service natural gas appliances and equipment.
- Contact Manitoba Hydro to reconnect electrical and natural gas service.

BOAT TRAVEL DURING A FLOOD:

- Maintain a minimum clearance of 10 metres from power lines as normal clearances can be reduced.
- Avoid travelling at night as electrical wires will be impossible to see. In the daylight, be sure your route is clear. Do not deviate from this known route if travel in the dark is unavoidable.
- Be aware that currents can be swift and may change as water levels rise and fall.

Power Outage

Manitoba Hydro works to ensure you receive a reliable, continuous supply of electricity. However, in our climate severe thunderstorms, high winds, ice storms, blizzards, or heavy snow can cause an unexpected power outage. A fire, a traffic accident, or a fallen tree can cause damage to electrical lines or equipment failure.

Power can be disrupted for a few moments, an hour or two, or – in extreme cases – for more than a day. Although we cannot predict a power outage, it is important to be prepared and know what to do.

IF THE POWER GOES OFF:

- Stay calm – your home will stay warm for several hours.
- Check with your neighbours to see if they have electricity. If their power is still on, check your circuit breaker panel or fuse box. Contact a licensed electrician if you do not know how to change a fuse or reset the breaker.
- Contact Manitoba Hydro to report a power outage. This will help us determine the affected area.
- Lower the thermostat and turn off all appliances, especially those that generate heat. This helps prevent injury, damage, or fire when power is restored.
- Unplug electronic equipment to protect it from a voltage surge once power is restored.
- Turn off light switches except one inside and one outside your home. This lets you and our crews know when the power is back on.
- Report downed power lines to 911. Assume they are energized and stay 10 metres away from power lines and objects they are touching. Do not attempt to remove objects or debris from power lines.
- Never use a camp stove, barbecue, or portable fuel-burning heater indoors. Deadly carbon monoxide gas may result.
- Never plug a portable generator into an electrical outlet. This can cause serious injury or death to Manitoba Hydro crews working to restore power, and damage to your equipment.
- Use the items in your Emergency Kit to maintain your family's comfort.
- If you will be leaving your home during a power outage, turn off the main breaker on your electrical panel to reduce the chance of appliance damage or safety issue if the power is restored while you're away.

Many factors affect how long the power will be out. Be assured that Manitoba Hydro employees are working as quickly and safely as possible to restore your electrical service.

Important!

Use great care with fuel-burning appliances and equipment. Dangerous levels of carbon monoxide gas can build up very quickly. Adequate fresh air must enter the area where the appliance is used. Check each appliance manufacturer for ventilation requirements. Barbecues, camp stoves and fuel must be used and stored outside.

Extended Power Outage

If a storm has resulted in excessive damage to the electrical system, your power could be out for 24 hours or longer. Contact your city or municipality to find out if any warming or cooling shelters have been established.

COLD WEATHER:

- Conserve heat by keeping windows and doors closed. Dress warmly and in layers. Cover with blankets as needed.
- Use an alternate heating source like a fireplace or wood-burning stove if available. Many natural gas fireplaces will continue to work without power.
- Do not use propane or kerosene heaters or other fuel-burning equipment indoors, even with a window open. Deadly carbon monoxide gas can result.

TO PREVENT PIPES FROM FREEZING:

- Turn off the main water valve and drain the lines by running taps.
- Drain the hot water tank, washing machine, dishwasher, hot tub.
- Flush toilets and add plumbing/recreational vehicle antifreeze to toilet tanks and bowls, sinks, bathtubs and shower floor drains.

HOT WEATHER:

- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Close your blinds, take cool showers, seek shade and wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid vigorous activity or schedule unavoidable activity for the coolest part of the day.
- Check in on people most at risk like the very young or elderly, and anyone with a medical condition. Heat stroke is a medical emergency - call 911.

WATER

If your water system is powered by electricity it will be out of service during a power outage. Keep a supply of bottled water on hand for each member of your family. Enough for three days is recommended (twelve litres per person).

FOOD STORAGE

Keep the doors of your refrigerator and freezer closed as much as possible.

Refrigerator:

- Refrigerated food will keep fresh for 4 hours. Place bags of ice in the refrigerator or pack food with ice in a cooler. In colder months a cooler can be kept outside for a few hours before it freezes.

Freezer:

- Food will stay frozen for 48 hours in a full freezer, or 24 hours if the freezer is half-full. Cover the freezer with blankets, quilts or sleeping bags to further insulate the freezer and help keep food frozen longer. Be careful not to cover vents or the motor area.

WHEN POWER IS RESTORED:

- Wait a few minutes before plugging in the appliances or equipment you need most.
- Wait 15 minutes for the power supply to stabilize before plugging in others.
- Be sure your water heater is full before turning it on.
- If needed, flush toilets to dispose of antifreeze and flush each sink and floor trap.
- Check food in your refrigerator and freezer for signs of spoilage. If in doubt – throw it out!
- Restock your emergency supplies for the next unexpected power outage.

STAY INFORMED

Find up-to-date outage information at hydro.mb.ca/outages or follow us on **Twitter**. Call **1-888-MB-HYDRO (1-888-624-9376)** if your outage isn't listed.

Standby Generators

Some customers prepare for the possibility of outages by installing a standby generator to keep appliances or life-support devices running until Manitoba Hydro can restore service. Business and farm operators may use a standby or portable generator to help maintain operations during inclement weather. When operating a generator, always consider your safety and the safety of Manitoba Hydro crews.

SAFE OPERATION OF A STANDBY GENERATOR:

- Ensure your generator has a transfer switch that isolates the generator from the main power grid. This prevents back-feed onto power lines protecting Hydro crews from serious injury or death. It also protects your equipment from damage or fire. A transfer switch must be installed by a licensed electrician.
- If the power goes off, wait 10 minutes to check if the utility restores power before starting a generator.
- The output cables of a standby generator can be deadly. Use extreme caution and use only in dry areas.
- Be sure the transfer switch and all breakers are correctly positioned before you start the generator.
- Never plug a generator into an electrical outlet.
- Only plug essential devices into the generator.
- Never operate a generator indoors or within enclosed spaces. Poisonous carbon monoxide gas may result.
- Review the instruction manual and start your generator periodically to ensure it is in good running condition.

SURGE SUPPRESSORS

Protect your electronic equipment with surge suppressors. You can purchase point-of-use surge suppressors, or a licensed electrician can install one at your main service panel. A surge suppressor will not protect your equipment from damage resulting from a lightning strike.

Tip: A power strip and a surge suppressor are different. A power strip is a multi-outlet device that is an extension of a wall outlet and doesn't offer any protection from electrical issues.

Natural Gas Outage

When natural gas service is disrupted, Manitoba Hydro acts quickly to restore it. Although disruptions are rare and usually short, a gate station or pipeline may require complex repairs causing natural gas service to be out several hours. If you experience a natural gas outage in the winter months:

- Stay calm – your home will stay warm for several hours.
- Conserve heat by keeping doors and windows closed. Dress warmly and in layers.
- Use a portable electric heater, wood-burning stove, or fireplace for supplemental heat.
- Never use kerosene/propane heaters, camp stoves, or barbecues in your home or garage as they can generate dangerous levels of carbon monoxide gas very quickly.
- Follow Manitoba Hydro on social media or stay tuned to your local radio station for updates.
- If you leave or are forced to evacuate your home, notify Manitoba Hydro or attach a note to your door with your contact information. Once repairs are completed, natural gas service will be restored.

WHEN NATURAL GAS IS RESTORED:

- Call Manitoba Hydro to re-light your natural gas equipment. Do not re-light equipment yourself.
- Be sure the water heater is full before turning it on.
- Turn up the thermostat and turn off portable electric heaters.

TO PROTECT PIPES FROM FREEZING DURING AN EXTENDED NATURAL GAS OUTAGE:

- Cover valves and inlet pipes with blankets.
- Shut off the main water inlet, open all taps to drain the water lines, and flush the toilets.
- Add a small amount of recreational vehicle antifreeze to all sinks and toilets.

Natural Gas Leak

Recognize, React, Report!

Leaks from gas pipelines, although rare, can be a fire hazard. Warning signs of a natural gas leak include:

- a strong sulphur-like or "rotten egg" odour;
- a hissing sound;
- dirt blown into the air;
- continual bubbling in a ditch, pond or waterway;
- patches of dead vegetation among healthy plants.

If you suspect a natural gas leak, remember the 3 R's:

RECOGNIZE	Natural gas itself is odourless, so to assist you in being able to recognize a gas leak mercaptan is added which gives it a strong sulfur-like or "rotten egg" odour.
REACT	Evacuate the building immediately and leave the door open as you exit. Do not light matches, smoke, operate electrical switches, vehicles, phones, or create any source of ignition. An explosion may result.
REPORT	From outside or from a neighbour's home, call the natural gas emergency number to have the odour investigated: 204-480-5900 in Winnipeg, or 1-888-624-9376 (1-888-MBHYDRO) toll free.



Carbon Monoxide (CO) Gas

Carbon monoxide gas cannot be detected by human senses which is why it is called THE SILENT KILLER. It is a highly toxic gas produced by the incomplete combustion of fuel-burning equipment. To prevent CO buildup in your home:

- Install, test, and maintain carbon monoxide alarms on each level of your home, especially near sleeping areas.
- Have a licensed heating contractor regularly maintain your fuel-burning equipment.
- Never operate portable fuel-burning equipment indoors or in enclosed spaces.
- Never leave a vehicle running in a garage, even with the garage door open.

IF A CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM GOES OFF:

1. Open all doors and windows. Leave the building immediately.
2. Call Manitoba Hydro for an emergency inspection.
3. If anyone has symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning - symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are like the common flu but without a fever, call 911 and get them to fresh air. Prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide can lead to death.

Hazardous Material Release

Hazardous materials are chemicals that are harmful to humans and to the environment. The hazardous material may or may not be seen or have an odour. It can occur if there is a fire or an accidental spill. If it is in the air or on your skin, it may enter your body and cause you harm. Take action to protect yourself and your family. Listen to a local radio station and if actions are required by the public, you will be given instructions on what to do.

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS RELEASE OF A HAZARDOUS MATERIAL:

- Stay away from the accident site and surrounding area.
- Follow instructions provided by emergency response personnel.
- Be prepared to shelter-in-place or evacuate.

Shelter-In-Place

Shelter-in-place is a safe response to an airborne hazardous material release that is not flammable. If you see a chemical cloud outdoors or you can smell it indoors, you will be safer inside. Stay indoors unless told by emergency responders to evacuate.

HOW TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE:

- Stay indoors or seek shelter indoors immediately.
- Close all doors and windows.
- Turn off appliances and equipment that circulates air into or out of your home (furnace, air conditioner, hot water tank, fireplace, ventilation fans, clothes dryer, etc.).
- Listen to the local media for updates.
- For added protection you may also seal cracks around windows and doors with wide tape and a rolled-up damp towel at the floor space.

Evacuation

In some emergency situations it may become necessary to leave your home and move to a safer location. Emergency response personnel and local authorities will make every effort to keep people informed of the situation. This may be handled door-to-door; by telephone; through local media; by pamphlets; or on city, town, or municipality websites.

BE PREPARED FOR AN EVACUATION:

- Know where you will go and have multiple options pre-determined.
- Know how to check if your evacuation route is safe to travel, check Manitoba511.ca.
- Prepare an EMERGENCY KIT
- Evacuation reception centres will accommodate pets, so bring them with you and supplies for their basic needs.

IF YOU MUST EVACUATE:

It is important to leave your home when advised – ignoring a warning to leave may jeopardize your safety.

- Follow the instructions provided by local authorities.
- Shut off appliances if you were cooking.
- You may need to shut off the main power switch, water heater, and water supply.
- If you have a hot water or steam boiler system, turn off the power and/or natural gas supply and drain the boiler and system according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wear protective clothing and comfortable walking shoes.
- Take your EMERGENCY KIT, and pet supplies.
- Leave a note on your door for authorities indicating when you left, your destination, and contact information. Lock your house.
- Listen to local media for the location of evacuation reception centres.
- Follow the routes specified by officials only. Do not drive through flood waters or off-road, unless advised to do so.
- If your car stalls in fast-rising water, leave it behind - always consider your personal safety first.
- Register with the reception centre so that you can be contacted or reunited with family members.
- Notify your out-of-area or emergency family contact of your situation.

Refer to the following websites for more information:

Manitoba Hydro
hydro.mb.ca

Get Prepared Canada
getprepared.gc.ca

Office of the Fire Commissioner
firecomm.gov.mb.ca

Manitoba Emergency Measures
Organization
manitobaemo.ca

Road and Traveler Information
manitoba511.ca



This information is available in French.

Publication Date 05/2021