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# Why Prepare for Disaster?

Disasters can strike without warning disrupting hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, you could be forced to go for days without basic necessities or to evacuate your home; people are seriously injured some are even killed. Beyond that disasters can produce billions of dollars in property damage, loss of essential services, significant disruptions of community and business activities, serious environmental damage and mental anguish.

In the occurrence of a disaster relief workers will be on the scene working as hard and fast as they are able, but may not be able to reach you immediately. **YOU** need to be prepared. Knowing the steps to take during a disaster can greatly reduce the danger and distress you and your family may face.

Throughout this guide it will help you to have a better understanding about how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from most disasters natural and man-made. This guide also provides you with the numbers and websites to obtain further information and help with any other questions this guide may not provide for you and your family.

**BE PREPARED**; share this reference with your household. Include everyone in the planning process so they know how to react and what to expect. Understanding this information and taking steps to reduce those risks can reduce the damage that is caused by disasters.

# Warning Systems

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## 911

How does 911 work? Grand County uses the 911 system for emergencies, when calling 911 our trained dispatchers handle police, fire, EMS, and Search and Rescue through their center. It is VERY important to not call 911 and tie up the phone lines unless there is an emergency. When disasters in the county occur you are able to listen to the local radio station, go to the office of emergency management website, watch the news stations on the television, or wait for direction from authorities; by using these other resources it allows the 911 lines to be open for other emergencies. 911 works in the following ways:

### *From a landline phone*

1. The call is routed to the sheriff's department.
2. The 911 dispatcher answers your call and looks at the display on their computer screen that gives them information regarding the location of your phone and what district you are in.
3. The dispatcher will not assume that the information displayed is correct. They will ask you some questions such as your name, address, and telephone number to confirm that you are at the same location the screen is displaying and the phone number is correct in case you get disconnected during your call.
4. The dispatcher will then ask the nature of your emergency and activate the proper agencies to respond to your location.
5. Depending on the nature of the call and whether you can safely remain on the line, the dispatcher will keep you on the line until

help arrives to ensure they find your location and possibly give you further instruction depending on the emergency.

### *From a cellular phone*

When you dial 911 from a cellular phone, the process is similar except that the dispatcher's computer screen will display the cellular tower your phone is calling through. It is very important when you call from a cellular phone that you are able to provide an accurate location and the number of the phone.

*Remember do NOT call 911 unless it is an emergency!*

## **EPN/ Reverse 911**

### *What is EPN/ Reverse 911?*

Emergency Preparedness Network (EPN) is a system public safety officials can use to call landline phones NOT cellular phones to inform you of impending dangers.

This is how it works:

1. A brief message is recorded by the agency that answers 911 calls in your area (in Grand County this is our Sheriff's Department).
2. The EPN System allows the agency to limit who is called by defining an area on a map or by inputting a range of addresses.
3. The message is then "launched." The EPN system calls each number on the list, playing the message when the phone is answered.
4. If the phone is busy, the system will re-try. If an answering machine is encountered, the system will attempt to leave a message.

5. If a TDD signal is encountered, the system will leave a TDD message.

### *Receiving an EPN/ Reverse 911 call*

When you receive an EPN call, listen very carefully to the information in the recorded message. The message will contain:

- The **name of the agency** that recorded the message.
- **Details** as to the nature of the impending danger.
- What **action** you need to take.
- Whether or not you need to call the agency that launched the message.

Please don't call the agency unless directed to do so. They will be busy coordinating the response to the situation. As additional information becomes available it will be shared with the radio stations, possibly the news channels and through the [www.gcemergency.com](http://www.gcemergency.com) website.

### *What you need to know if the EPN System is Activated*

1. If your telephone number is blocked, or you have a zapper to block out telemarketers the EPN message will not go through.
2. Do NOT call 911 after you are alerted by the EPN system unless the message directs you to do so, as this jams the 911 lines for other emergencies.
3. You may repeat the EPN message, just follow the prompts.
4. Don't hang up in the middle of the EPN message.

### **CODE Red**

Code red is a system that the Grand County Office of Emergency Management has now instituted; it allows ultra high speed cellular phone or text messaging to inform registered participants during an emergency or disaster affecting the county.

This system will only be used for emergency purposes. Registration to receive emergency notifications can be done via the web link on the Grand County Emergency Information Portal, <http://www.gcemergency.com>.

## **National Weather Service**

The most comprehensive weather information is obtained by listening to a NOAA weather radio. Weather radio is operated by national weather service offices across the country and broadcasts frequently updated recordings containing current weather conditions, local forecasts, recreational and climatological data. During threatening weather, live broadcasts are made of warnings for high winds, large hail, tornadoes, flash floods, and winter storms. Specially built receivers or a tone-alert (these can be bought at many electronic stores) can be set to audibly warn when one of these weather warnings is broadcasts.

### *NOAA Weather Radio Stations near our community in Colorado*

Colorado Springs	162.475 MHz
Denver	162.550 MHz
Longmont	162.475 MHz

## **Office of Emergency Management**

In Grand County the best way to obtain up-to-date information in the case of a disaster is to go online and logon to:

**[www.gcemergency.com](http://www.gcemergency.com)**

# Basic Emergency Planning

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In the event of an emergency essential services may be cut off and disaster relief workers may not be able to immediately reach you and your family. Knowing what you can do to protect you and your household is essential.

## *Creating a Basic Emergency Plan*

Having a plan is one of the most important steps you can take to prepare for an emergency. Knowing WHAT to do and HOW to do it can help you and your family manage disasters with less worry, fear, and uncertainty.

- Decide what you and your family would do in each potential emergency situation.
- Check with employers and school officials to see how their emergency response plans work.
- Draw a floor plan of your home showing all possible escape routes.
- Choose a place away from your neighborhood where family members can meet in case you are separated and cannot return to your home due to a disaster.
- Choose a friend or relative who lives out of the area for family members to contact if you are separated or to call and say you're okay.
- **Post emergency numbers** by every phone and teach children how and when to call 911.
- Know how to shut off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves in your home.
- Plan how to help elderly or disabled neighbors, or small children in a disaster.

- Take a CPR and First Aid class. In Grand County classes are offered quarterly throughout the year, check with your local EMS, Fire, or American Red Cross agencies.
- Protect your family's health, financial wellbeing, and property by making sure your insurance policies are in place and meet your current needs. Make copies of any important legal documents and keep in a safe place such as a security deposit box.
- Set up an emergency savings account for times of crisis. Keep a small amount of cash or travelers checks in a safe place where you can get to it easily.

### *Emergency planning for people with special needs*

If you, a family member, or neighbor has a disability or special needs, you should take additional steps to protect yourself and your household. Some examples include:

- Contact 211 Reister
- Hearing impaired: Person(s) may need to make special arrangements to receive a warning.
- Mobility impaired: Person(s) may need assistance in getting to a shelter.
- Single parent households: May need help from others to plan for disasters and during an emergency.
- Non-English speaking: Person(s) may need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. Community and cultural groups may be able to help these person(s) informed.
- Person(s) without vehicles: May need help in making arrangements for transportation.
- Person(s) with special dietary needs: Should ensure they have an adequate emergency food supply.

Create a network of family members, neighbors, friends, and co-workers to help one another during emergencies. This is also a good



way to learn or inform others you are close with about any special needs or issues you may have in the event of an emergency.

# In Case of Evacuation

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In a disaster situation, it may be necessary to evacuate your home for several days or even longer. Because disasters sometimes come with no warning you need to be prepared to leave at a moment's notice. When community evacuations become necessary, local officials provide information to the public through the media, or other warning methods such as sirens or telephone calls. Evacuations are more common than many people realize, knowing the steps to take in the event of one can make a big difference.

- You should designate at least two evacuation routes from your home or place of work. Sometimes disasters can be very large and affect your entire neighborhood or even the whole town. Determine **Where** you will go if your community is evacuated.
- Learn your child's school evacuation policy.
- Discuss with your family the possibility of evacuation.
- Check that your disaster supply kit is assembled and ready to go; you should have enough water, food, clothing, and emergency supplies to last **At Least** 3-5 days.
- Make sure your car is filled up; fuel may be in short supply during a disaster.

## *When Authorities Tell You to Evacuate*

- ***Bring your disaster supply kit***
- ***Wear sturdy shoes and clothing***
- ***Secure your home***

1. ***Unplug home electronics***
  2. ***Lock your doors and windows***
  3. ***If freezing temperatures are a risk turn off the main water line and drain your faucets. Turn off the internal valves to external faucets and open the faucets to drain.***
  4. ***Turn off the main valves for gas, water, and electricity if instructed.***
- Let others know where you are going by leaving a note or calling. Be sure to try and inform a friend or relative of your route.
  - **Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do NOT take shortcuts as they may be blocked, power lines down, or other danger.**

## ***Pets***

- Pets should not be left behind during a disaster, but do NOT risk YOUR own safety attempting to find them if you must evacuate quickly.
- Attach ID tags to your pet(s) with your name and address.
- Make a list of pet shelters and hotels that permit animals in the area you would evacuate to.
- Put together an emergency supply kit for your pet. Include things like a first aid kit, food dishes, a litter box, a leash or pet carrier, medication, food, veterinary records, and water.

## ***If You're Going to a Public Shelter***

- Be aware that alcoholic beverages, pets (with the exception of service animals), and weapons are not allowed at all public shelters.
- Practice patience and cooperation, disaster situations can be intense, stressful, and confusing. Sharing space with others can be a challenge.
- Stay in the shelter until authorities advise you that it is safe to leave.

Remember in the absence of evacuation instructions from your local authorities, you should evacuate if you feel you and your household are threatened or endangered.

# In – Place Sheltering

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In some cases disasters make it unsafe to leave your home for extended periods of time. This may mean you become isolated and make it necessary for you to take care of yourself and family for days at a time. Stay in your shelter until local authorities say it's okay to leave. Make sure you maintain a 24- hour communications and safety watch. Take turns listening to the radio for updates and special broadcasts. The length of your stay can vary so listed below are some ways to help you manage your resources.

## *Water*

- Water is crucial for health and survival. If a disaster is nearing or strikes fill pitchers, jars, buckets, water bottles, and your bathtub in case your community water supply is cut off.
- If your drinking water supply is running low you can use other sources for water such as ice cube trays, the water heater and toilet tanks (not bowl), liquid from canned goods. Do NOT use water from radiators, waterbeds, or swimming pools as it is not safe.
- The amount of water you need varies based on things such as age, physical activity, physical condition, and time of year. On average most people need AT LEAST two quarts a day. NEVER drink less than one quart.

## *Food*

You should ration food supplies for everyone **EXCEPT** children or pregnant women. Most healthy people can survive on half their normal food intake or go an extended period of time without. Some food items to consider include:

- Ready-to-eat meats
- Fruits and Vegetables

- Canned or boxed juices, milk, and soup
- Peanut butter, Jelly, Low-sodium crackers, granola bars, and trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants or persons on special diets or with allergies
- Cookies / hard candy
- Instant coffee, cereal, and powdered milk
- Use pre-prepared formula for babies

Avoid eating any food from dented or swollen cans or food that looks or smells abnormal. You should check and/or replace items in your food supply every six months. Date all food with some type of permanent marker.

### *In Case the Power Goes Out*

- You should try to practice energy conservation to help your power company avoid rolling blackouts.
  - Always keep your car's fuel tank at least half full; gas stations use electricity to operate pumps.
  - Know how to manually release your electric garage door.
  - Protect your home electronics with a surge protector.
  - If the power does go out, check your fuse box or circuit breaker, and contact your neighbors to see if the outage is limited to your own home.
  - Turn off any appliances or electronics you were using when the power went out, however you should leave one light turned on so you know when the power is restored.
  - Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer to keep it as cool as possible.
  - If the power is expected to be out for several days consider relocating to a shelter or friends/relatives house.
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# Dealing with Specific Disasters

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Throughout this booklet you have read about the importance of having an emergency plan and a disaster supply kit which will help you manage in almost every kind of crisis whether natural or caused by humans. However, each situation requires specific preparation and action. In this following section you will be able to familiarize yourself with a variety of hazards that could potentially occur in our community and what to do in case of them.

Some disasters that we may be faced with in our community that you will read about in the following pages are:

- Winter Storms
- Fire / Wildfire
- Rockslides / Avalanches
- Disease Outbreak
- Hazardous Materials
- Thunderstorms / Lightening
- Floods
- Tornadoes
- Earthquakes
- Terrorist Attacks

## Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Winter storms can bring heavy snowfall, high winds, and extreme cold temperatures that can affect our entire community. Things that can occur when this happens are closed highways, blocked roads, downed power lines and trees, and medical emergencies such as hypothermia. By planning ahead you can protect yourself and family.

**Prior to a winter storm** terms you should be aware of that are used by weather forecasters are:

- **Freezing rain** -This refers to rain that freezes when it hits the ground causing icy roads, walkways as well as frozen trees and power lines.
- **Sleet**- Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground which also causes icy and freezing conditions.
- **Winter storm watch**- A winter storm is possible in your area.
- **Winter storm warning**- A winter storm is occurring or going to occur soon in your area.
- **Blizzard warning**- Sustained winds and/or frequent gusts of 35 miles per hour or more and a considerable amount of falling and/or blowing snow (which reduces visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to last for a period of three hours or more.
- **Frost/Freeze warning**- Below freezing temperatures are expected.

Prepare to survive on your own for at least three days (72 hours) in case of a winter storm. Assemble a disaster supplykit, be sure to include winter specific items such as rock salt to melt ice on walkways, sand to improve traction, snow shovels/ snow removal equipment and keep a stock of extra drinking water and food. You may also have to prepare yourself for isolation in your home; a key item to remember during a winter storm is to always have an alternative heating source to protect you and your family from experiencing a cold related emergency. Winterize your home to help contain the heat for longer periods by:

- Insulating walls and attics.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows.
- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic.

If you have medical conditions make sure you have a sufficient supply of medications you need. If you are undergoing medical treatments for serious medical conditions such as dialysis or chemotherapy or are due to undergo a medical procedure make appropriate plans ahead of time to ensure you will make it or make special arrangements with your caregiver to come to you if possible.

**During a winter storm** it is important to keep up with what is going on in your surrounding area. To do this you may listen to the radio; watch the television for weather reports; and in our community you can log onto [www.gcemergency.com](http://www.gcemergency.com) for updated information. Make sure you dress for warmth, eat regularly and drink ample fluids, be careful when shoveling snow as over-exertion can bring on a heart attack, and watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

**When driving in the winter** try to only travel if you have to, travel in the daytime when possible, avoid traveling alone at all costs, always keep others informed of your traveling schedule, and **stay on main roads avoid taking shortcuts.**

Things to consider when driving in winter conditions are:

- **Winterizing your car**
  - This includes a battery check, antifreeze, wipers/windshield washer fluid, ignition system, thermostat, lights/flashing hazard lights, exhaust system, heater, brakes, defroster, oil levels, and tires. Snow tires are recommended for winter driving. Chains may be required in certain conditions and areas. **Always keep the gas tank FULL.**
- **Carry a winter car kit in the trunk of your car, which includes:**
  - Shovel, Windshield scraper, Battery-powered radio, Flashlight, Extra batteries, Water, Snack food, Mittens, Hat, Blanket, Tow chain or rope, Tire chains, Bag of road salt and sand, Fluorescent distress flag, Booster cables, Road maps, Emergency reflectors, and a Source of communication i.e.: cell phone or two-way radio.
- **If a blizzard traps you in your car:**
  - Pull off the highway- turn on your hazard lights and hang a distress flag from your window.
  - Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you- do not set out on foot unless you can see a building close by where you know you can take shelter and arrive safely, remember if you can't see others on the road will most likely NOT be able to see you.

- Run the engine and heater ten minutes each hour to keep warm- when the engine is running, open a window slightly for ventilation. This will protect you from possible carbon monoxide poisoning. Periodically clear snow from the exhaust pipe.
- Exercise to maintain body heat but avoid over-exertion- use blankets, seat-covers and other persons for insulation.
- Take turns sleeping- make sure one person is awake at all times to keep a look out for rescue teams.
- Drink fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Be careful not to waste battery power- balance electrical needs i.e.: lights, heat, and radio with supply.
- At night turn on an inside light to make yourself more visible.
- Once the blizzard passes you may have to leave your vehicle and travel by foot.

## Fire/Wildfire

Fire affects approx. 350,000 homes in the U.S. every year. There are some easy steps you can take to reduce the chance that your home will be damaged or anyone injured in a blaze whether it starts inside or outside you home.

### *Practice home fire safety*

- Make an emergency escape plan and practice it at least twice a year in the day and at night.
- Make sure to never open doors that are hot to the touch, use the back of your hand to feel for heat when coming across a closed door feeling the top of the door, the doorknob, and the crack of the door to ensure there is no fire on the other side.
- Make sure any security bars or window coverings you may have are able to release.
- Get a home escape ladder especially if you live in a multi-level home or apartment complex.
- Leave the house immediately, do NOT waste time saving property and always take the safest exit route. Remember **ONCE OUT-STAY OUT!**



## *Prepare Before Fire Strikes*

- Make sure to have smoke detectors and fire extinguishers on every level of your home.
- Test and clean smoke detectors monthly and replace the batteries at least twice a year.
- Check fire extinguisher pressure gauges monthly. Make sure extinguishers are located near an exit and know how to use them.
- With everyone in the house you live in plan two escape routes from every room in the residence and practice it.
- Clean out storage areas to ensure that trash such as paper and magazines don't accumulate.
- Check the electrical wiring in your house and your appliances. Repair or replace any damaged cords. Make sure to not overload electrical outlets or run cords underneath rugs.
- Never use gasoline, benzene, naphtha, or similar liquids indoors. Be sure to store any flammable household materials and chemicals safely away from heat sources.
- Check heating sources, have your furnace, chimneys, wood stoves, and all other home heating sources inspected and cleaned annually by a specialist. Also remember when spring time comes and the snow begins to melt off check your outside gas meters, ventilation systems, and any other pipes such a gas/propane lines that run to your home for any damage; if damage is found contact the appropriate person immediately to have it fixed DO NOT try and fix it on your own.
- Keep alternative heat sources such as space heaters, wood, coal and kerosene heaters a safe distance (at least three feet) away from drapes and furniture.
- Keep matches and lighters up high out of reach and away from children.
- Know the locations of and how to shut off gas valves and fuse or breaker circuit boxes in the case of an emergency. If you

have to shut off your main gas valve for any reason only allow a representative from the gas company turn it back on.

## What to do During a Fire

- Use water or a fire extinguisher to put out small fires.
- Never use water on an electrical fire.
- Smother oil and grease fires in the kitchen with baking soda or salt or put a lid over the flame if it is burning in a pan. Never use water due to the danger of the grease or oil splattering onto you, and never try and take the pan outside due to the high danger of you burning yourself.
- If your clothing catches on fire, STOP, DROP, and ROLL until the fire is extinguished. The fire will spread more quickly if you decide to run.
- Remember to use the back of your hand to check for heat if you come across a closed door when escaping. NEVER open a door if fire is detected on the other side. Close doors behind you as you escape to delay the spread of the fire.
- If you are escaping through smoke remember to stay low to the ground. Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect along the ceiling.
- Once you are safely out call 911 and do not re-enter the home.

## How to Protect Your Home from Wildfire

Taking small steps to protect your home and property will make it more able to withstand wildfire. If you live near forests and grasslands, use fire resistant materials for roofing, not wood or shake shingles. One of the most effective means of protection is to take steps to make your home and your household safe from the potential effects of disasters such as fire, floods, and tornados. Ideally, mitigation measures are implemented before disaster strikes, however even after disasters strike actions can be taken to avoid or

reduce the impact of the next disaster. There are four mitigation strategies that can help reduce your vulnerability to the hazards in your community.

**The four strategies are:**

1. **Alter the Hazard:**  
Act to reduce or eliminate the frequency and intensity of occurrence; for example reducing fuel or ignition sources in the urban / wild land interface.
2. **Avert the Hazard:**  
Redirect the impacts away from vulnerable areas; for example using a levee to redirect water flow.
3. **Adapt to the Hazard:**  
Reduce your vulnerability by installing a roof that is hail, fire, and wind resistant.
4. **Avoid the Hazard:**  
Remove people and structures from risk areas. Creating open space and buffer zones in the urban / wild land interfaces is an example of avoiding a hazard.

**If a Wildfire Threatens your Home**

- Shut off the gas at the meter.
- Hook up a garden hose and place lawn sprinklers on the roof.
- Wet or pull up vegetation within 15 feet of your home.
- Submerge water-resistant valuables in a pool or pond.
- Move patio furniture inside.
- Close windows and doors.
- Prepare to evacuate immediately, if necessary. Park the car facing your escape route and leave the doors unlocked and the keys in the ignition.

The following checklist will help you to prepare and reduce the risk of wild land fire around your home and injury to you and your family.

**This list should be completed annually.**

- Trees and shrubs are properly thinned and pruned within the defensible space (this is the space created when you treat, clear, or reduce vegetation such as dead / fallen trees and debris around your home). Slash from the thinning is disposed of PROPERLY.
- Roof and gutters are clear of debris.
- Branches overhanging the roof and chimney are removed.
- Chimney screens are in place and in good condition.
- Grass and weeds are mowed to a low height.
- An outdoor water supply is available, complete with a hose and nozzle that can reach all parts of the house.
- Fire extinguishers are checked and in working condition.
- The driveway is wide enough; the clearance of trees and branches is adequate for fire and emergency equipment. (Check with you local fire department.)
- Post your house number where it is easily visible from the road.
- There is an easily accessible tool storage area with rakes, hoes, axes, and shovels for use in case of fire.
- You have practiced family fire drills and your fire evacuation plan.
- Your escape routes, meeting points, and other details are known and understood by all family members.
- Attic, roof, eaves, and foundation vents are screened and in good condition. Stilt foundations and decks are enclosed, screened or walled up.
- Trash and debris accumulations are removed from the defensible space.
- A checklist for fire safety needs inside the home have also been completed. This should be available at your local fire department.

## Rockslides

Rockslides are natural hazard that can occur almost anywhere in the United States. They sometimes present a threat to human life, but most often result in a disruption of everyday services, they can block roadways, rail ways, water ways, drainages, and can even contaminate water supplies.

### During a rockslide

If inside a building:

- Stay inside.
- Take cover under a desk, table, or other piece of sturdy furniture.

If outdoors or in your car:

- Run or drive to the nearest high ground in a direction away from the path.
- If rocks and/or other debris are approaching, run for the nearest shelter such as a group of trees or a building.
- If escape is NOT possible, curl into a tight ball and protect your head.

### After a rockslide

- Remember that flooding may occur.
- Stay away from the slide area, there may be danger of additional slides.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide area, and give first aid where needed.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance; infants/children, elderly persons, and people with disabilities.
- Use radio, television, or the OEM website for emergency information.
- Check for damaged utility lines and report to the company if any are found.
- Check the building, and surrounding area for any damage that may require attention.
- Replant damaged ground as soon as possible; erosion caused by loss of ground can lead to flash flooding.

## Avalanches

Avalanches are caused by a type of slope failure and can reach speeds of up to 200 mph. They can potentially exert enough force to destroy buildings, uproot large healthy trees, and force vehicles off the roadway. They can sometimes become deadly very quick and unexpectedly. Avalanches can sometimes be predicted, but due to the weather here in the county they can happen unexpectedly and create unpredicted paths. It is important that during the winter seasons here in Grand County that while driving and participating in recreational sports in the back country you are aware of the dangers of avalanche occurring and blocking a roadway, trail, or a fresh broken path. Some things to help you stay prepared:

### **While Driving**

- Stay alert while driving in known avalanche pathways.
- Check for and pay attention to hazardous roadways before and during travel.
- Always be prepared for the worst case scenario; if you were to ever be trapped in or witness to an avalanche trapping other vehicles on the roadway an emergency travel kit kept in your car would be very useful. Some things to consider are:
  - ❖ A travel shovel
  - ❖ Blankets
  - ❖ Hat, gloves, snow boots
  - ❖ Extra warm clothing

### **While in the backcountry**

- Make sure EVERYONE in your group comes fully prepared.
- Get the correct training, avalanche awareness classes are offered in many different locations throughout the state.
- Always have the proper equipment with you at all times. Some things to consider taking with you into the back country:
  - A travel shovel and an avalanche probe.
  - The proper clothing for all of the different types of weather; the weather is always changing in Colorado.

- An avalanche beacon that yourself and others in your group have had the proper training on.
- Try to always have someone with you; never travel alone.
- Have a source of communication such as a cell phone or two way radios.

### **After an avalanche**

Contact the appropriate authorities to let them know what occurred, useful information to relay would be your approximate location, if the roadway or path of travel is blocked, if it is known that anyone is trapped, if first aid is being administered. Remember that you are now dealing with unstable ground that could very easily break free again, if possible go to a location away from the path of travel. If persons are buried and you are safely able to look for them do so and administer necessary first aid.

### **Disease Outbreak**

The epidemic hazard for humans may be considered somewhat greater than that of most other communities in the state due to the steady stream of visitors here in Grand County. Many of these visitors travel frequently and widely. Fortunately, there has been no major disease outbreak in the area in recent memory; however the county and municipalities have implemented plans and protocols to enable rapid response to, and control of outbreaks identified. To report a concern of a potential disease outbreak contact your local public health officials. If in Grand County there was such an event as an outbreak of disease the best way to find out information on what is occurring, and what is going to occur is to follow the direction of our local public health officials. To get information, listen to the local radio, watch the television, or visit the office of emergency website. Do NOT call 911 unless you have an emergency; by calling to try and get information you may be using up valuable time that others are trying to get through to report an actual emergency.

## Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials can be a number of things, such as industrial chemicals and toxic waste to household detergents and air fresheners. Hazardous materials are part of our everyday lives affecting urban, suburban, and rural areas. Hazardous materials are defined as substances that, because of their chemical nature pose a potential risk to life, health, or property if they are released. Hazards can exist during production, storage, transportation, use or disposal. Chemical manufacturing plants are one source of hazardous materials, but more commonly there are others such as local gas stations, hospitals, and big companies that use hazardous materials that we have potential to come in contact with on a daily basis.

### *Before a Hazardous Materials Incident*

1. Learn the emergency alert plan for our area, if you have questions contact the Grand County Office of Emergency Management or visit the website for details. Different types of alert systems may include:
  - Emergency Alert System (EAS), this is information provided via radio or television.
  - The EPN or Code Red system.
  - News Media
  - Door to door information / alert if necessary from authorities.
2. Attend community meetings or ask your local resources about community plans in the case of a hazardous materials emergency.
3. Always pay close attention to labels on bottles of household products regarding storage and use.
4. Be prepared to evacuate with little or no notice.



## *During a Hazardous Materials Incident*

1. Call 911 if you witness or are involved in a spill or accident.
2. Once notified of a hazardous materials release by public safety officials, listen to local radio or television stations for further information and follow any instructions carefully.
3. Stay away from the incident site to minimize the risk of contamination, if possible go or stay inside a permanent building close all vents and windows, shut off and close any cooling / heating sources, close all curtain and shades; if possible and safe take your pets inside with you. If unable to get inside during an incident try to stay uphill, upstream, and upwind as hazardous materials can be transported very quickly by water and wind. As a general rule try to go at least one-half mile from the danger area.
4. If you get caught while traveling in your vehicle stop and seek shelter in a permanent building if possible. If unable to find structure and you must remain in your vehicle keep all windows and vents closed and shut of the air conditioner and heater.
5. If asked to evacuate your home, do so IMMEDIATELY; close all windows and vents, and turn off any heating / cooling systems to reduce contamination.
6. Do **NOT** eat any food or drink any water that may have been contaminated.

## *After a Hazardous Materials Incident*

1. If you've been evacuated do NOT return home until local authorities say it is safe.
2. After returning to your home, open windows, vents, and turn on fans to provide ventilation.
3. If you were contaminated, **follow instructions from local authorities.**
4. Find out and follow instructions from local authorities how to clean up your property and land.
5. Make sure to report any lingering vapors to local authorities.

## Thunderstorms / Lightning

Thunderstorms and lightning are very common in Colorado and they are dangerous; every thunderstorm produces lightning. There are other natural disasters associated with thunderstorms such as tornadoes, strong winds, hail, and flash flooding.

### *Before Thunderstorms Approach*

#### *Key terms used by forecasters regarding thunderstorms:*

Severe Thunderstorm Watch. Tells you when and where severe thunderstorms are likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to the radio or television in case a warning is issued.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning. Indicates imminent danger to those in the path of the storm. These warnings are issued when severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar.

#### **Thunderstorm facts:**

- Thunderstorms may occur singly, in clusters or in lines.
- To determine how close a thunderstorm is to you, count the seconds between the lightning flash and the next rumble of thunder. Divide that number by five. The answer is the number of miles away the storm is.
- Some of the most severe weather occurs when a single thunderstorm affects one location for an extended period of time.
- About 10% of the thunderstorms that occur annually in the United States are classified as severe.

#### **Before thunderstorms strike:**

- Cut down dead trees and clear branches from around your house.
- Secure loose outdoor objects such as patio furniture.
- Shutter the windows and secure the doors.

## **During a thunderstorm:**

- Get or stay inside if, after seeing lightning you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder.
- Do NOT shower or bathe. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures as well as water can conduct electricity.
- Do NOT use a corded telephone, except in an emergency. Cordless or cellular phones are safe to use.
- Unplug electronics, appliances and turn off air conditioners.
- If outside during a thunderstorm...in a forest, take shelter under a thick grove of small trees...in an open area, move to a low spot such as a ravine or valley, but watch for flash flooding...NEVER stand under a tall isolated tree, on a hilltop, in an open field, on the beach, or near the open water. Stay away from metal equipment and apparatus such as fences, tractors, pipes, and bicycles. If swimming or boating get out of the water immediately.

## **Lightning**

Lightning is very unpredictable which increases the risk to people and property. There are about 300 people injured and 80 people killed by lightning in the United States every year. Although the majority of lightning victims survive, they report long term debilitating effects such as memory loss, attention deficits, sleep disorders, numbness, dizziness, and others. Lightning occurs during all thunderstorms, and often strikes outside of heavy rain. It may occur as far as 10 miles away from heavy rainfall.

## **What to do if you are about to be, or if someone is struck by lightning:**

- Feeling your hair stand on end means lightning is about to strike nearby, make yourself a small target; squat down on the balls of your feet, do NOT lie flat on the ground. Place your hands over your ears and tuck your head between your knees.
- Lightning-strike victims do NOT carry an electrical charge and should be attended to immediately. If breathing has stopped, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. If the heart has stopped, a trained person should administer CPR. If the person is breathing and has a pulse look for other injuries including but not limited to: burns, broken bones, loss of hearing, and loss of feeling in limbs.

## Floods

Floods occur regularly throughout the country causing evacuations, massive damage, and even death. Persons who live near waterways or other low-lying areas are most at risk, but anyone in a community susceptible to flooding can be affected. Flooding can range from deadly flash-floods, to contamination of water, to damage of gas lines or sewer pipes.

### **Terms to know regarding floods from the National Weather Service:**

**Flash Flood Watch**: Heavy rains are occurring or may occur; and may cause flash flooding in certain areas. Be alert, a pending flood may require immediate action.

**Flash Flood Warning**: Flash flooding is occurring or imminent on certain streams or designated areas. If you live in the warning area you should act immediately.

### **Before a Flood**

- Know how to get to higher ground from your home.
- Learn your communities flood evacuation routes.
- Ask local officials how you can protect your home.

### **During a Flood**

- Listen to the local radio stations, watch the local television channels, follow direction from local authorities, and you can visit the OEM website.
- Avoid low-lying areas such as canyons and drainage channels.
- Never walk through flooded areas
- If your vehicle stalls in the water, exit and move to higher ground.
- Evacuate if instructed by authorities, and only return home once it's safe.

### **After a Flood**

- Stay out of flooded buildings.
- Be careful in areas where floodwaters have receded.
- Watch for downed electrical lines, and weakened roads and bridges.
- Avoid coming into contact with flood water as it may be contaminated.
- Throw out any food that has been in contact with flood water.

## Tornados

A tornado is defined as a violent, rotating storm with winds that can exceed 300 miles per hour in contact with the ground and capable of producing tremendous damage. It appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends to the ground from the base of a thunderstorm. A tornado spins and has a very loud roaring like sound. They are the most violent short lived storms of the atmosphere and over a small area can be very destructive. Due to the high mountainous area we live in tornados are not often heard of, but it is not impossible that we here in Grand County could experience one.

### **Terms to know from the National Weather Service:**

**Tornado Watch:** Tornados are possible in or close to the area. Listen to the radio, or watch your local television stations, also listen to direction from your local authorities for further information.

**Tornado Warning:** A tornado has been spotted in or close to the area. Take shelter immediately to protect yourself and your family.

### **During a Tornado**

- If you are at home, go to your basement if you have one. Take shelter under the basement stairs or a very sturdy piece of furniture. If you do not have a basement, take shelter in the center of your home, on the lowest floor in small rooms such as a closet or bathroom, or under sturdy furniture. Stay away from windows or other things that may turn into flying debris.
- Do not remain in a trailer or mobile home.
- If you are at work or school, follow the direction of proper authorities.
- If you are outside and cannot get to shelter, take cover and lie flat in the nearest depression such as a ditch, but be aware of the possibility of flooding.

After a tornado, follow any instructions you may receive from local authorities. Make sure to watch for debris such as broken glass, and downed electrical lines. When re-entering a damaged structure, make sure the walls and roof are in place and that the floors and foundation are sound.

## Earthquakes

Earthquakes typically occur in smaller scale, but do occur in the mountains. In Grand County we live very close to the continental divide which increases the chances of experiencing an earthquake. Earthquake damage can extend for miles from the origin of these traumatic shifts in the earth's crust, resulting in collapsed buildings, roadways, bridges, and overpasses; downed power lines, broken gas lines, fires, explosions, and landslides.

### During an Earthquake

- If inside a building or your home stay there.
- Hide under a large sturdy piece of furniture, or crouch in a corner or against a wall.
- Stay away from windows or heavy objects that can fall.
- If outside, stay there; just make sure to stay away from power lines, buildings, or anything else that can fall.
- If you are in a vehicle stay there; make sure to stay off bridges, away from power lines and large trees, or under overpasses.

### After an Earthquake

- Aftershocks can occur and cause further damage to weakened structures.
- Stay off the streets.
- Listen to the authorities, and local radio and television stations for emergency information.
- Before re-entering your home inspect for structural damage, broken pipes, and make sure to be careful when opening closets and cabinets.

## Terrorist Attacks

Terrorism is described as the use of force or violence against people or property in violation of criminal laws of the United States with the intent of intimidation, coercion, or ransom. Terrorism is a type of national security emergencies that can range from bombings to chemical or biological attacks. Although terrorists often use threats to spread fear throughout the public, the actual damage they cause can often be decreased by being prepared and taking quick action.

### **How to protect yourself when dealing with terrorism**

- Being prepared for terrorism is much like being prepared for other disasters that may occur, always keep your emergency kit readily available and up to date; make sure to have an extra supply of food and water in the house.
- Be aware of your surroundings; know where emergency exits are located, always keep in mind how to evacuate a building, train/subway, or high traffic public areas as you may have little or no warning when terrorism strikes.
- Take precaution while traveling, never leave your luggage unattended.
- Leave the area immediately if you have a bad feeling or not unusual behavior.
- Never accept suspicious packages, especially if you do not know who they are from.

### In an Explosion

- Always make sure to protect yourself and watch for falling debris.
- Be sure to crawl underneath any smoke present and exit the area as quick as possible; try to safely get as far away as possible from the site, but always stay somewhere local authorities would be able to find you to gather information and assist you if injured.
- If you become trapped in the debris, try to move as little as possible and cover your nose and mouth with some sort of cloth. Tap on a pipe or something that's makes a solid noise to help rescuers locate you. NEVER use a match or a lighter as it may increase the chances of another explosion occurring.

If you are ever exposed to a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack you have a good chance of survival with appropriate immediate medical attention. Some guidelines to follow are:

- Early notification of the occurrence can save you as well as others things that will help emergency response to be prepared upon their arrival are: the location of the incident, the approximate number of victims, any symptoms that persons exposed to the attack are experiencing, if there was an explosion or if there is a fire, the time of the incident, current weather conditions, a place you can meet emergency responders away from the site if possible, and if obtainable at the time what type of container, device, or vehicle was used in the attack.
- STAY CALM and DO NOT PANIC.
- Do NOT taste, eat, smell, or touch any substance.
- Get as far away from the site as possible in a quick manner.
- Remove your outer clothing if possible and follow the direction of authorities.

### Chemical Agents

Chemical agents can be poisonous gases, liquids, or solids that have a toxic effect on a living organism. They can be spread through many different ways such as bombs, sprayed from an aircraft, boats, or vehicles, or used as a liquid to contaminate the environment. Some chemical agents are odorless and tasteless, but all can have an immediate or a delayed effect. If exposed some immediate symptoms one may experience are; blurred vision, eye irritation, difficulty breathing, and nausea.

### Biological Agents

Biological agents can be bacteria, viruses, or toxins used to produce illness in humans, livestock, and crops. They can be spread through aerosols, animals (including insects), food and water contamination, and person to person. In many biological attacks, people will not know that they have been exposed to an agent right away due to them being hard to detect, and sometimes they may take time to grow. In some cases of wide-spread biological attacks the local government has inside information and may give you specific instructions to either stay where you are at or evacuate to specific locations. If you are alerted about a potential exposure, pay close attention to all official warnings and instructions on how to proceed.



## **What to do in case of a chemical or biological attack:**

- Listen to the radio, watch local television stations, or follow direction from officials for instructions such as whether you need to stay where you are or evacuate.
- If you are told to stay at your current location you should turn off all ventilation, seek shelter in an internal room such as a room without windows and seal all doors with some sort of plastic and tape, and remain in a protected area where toxins are reduced or eliminated.
- Always maintain a way of communication such as taking a portable radio with you to listen to and having a phone readily available in the case of an emergency.
- If you are caught in an unprotected area try to get and stay upwind from the contamination, attempt to find shelter, and listen for further instruction from authorities.
- If exposed, quickly remove all clothing or other items in contact with the body. Cut shirts off to reduce contact with the face and leave them behind if you were to carry around the clothing you remove you will continue to spread the contamination.
- Flush eyes with large amounts of water.
- Wash your hands and face with soap and water; use a wet soapy cloth to blot all other exposed skin and then rinse with clean water.
- Seek medical help as soon as possible, and follow the decontamination process as instructed by emergency responders.

## **Nuclear and Radiological Attack**

Nuclear explosions can cause deadly effects; they can produce blinding light, intense heat (thermal radiation), instant nuclear radiation, blasts, fires started by heat pulses, and secondary fires caused by destruction. They also produce what is called fallout, or radioactive particles that may be carried by the wind for many miles. The most common type of device used in a terrorist attack is known as a radiological dispersion device or better known as a “dirty bomb” due to the simple nature and accessibility. These devices are a combination of conventional explosives and radioactive material that is designed to scatter dangerous and lethal amounts of radioactive fallout.

**To best protect yourself during a nuclear and radiological attack:**

- If inside a building, use a basement or underground area as a shelter, or a central room on the lowest floor. The main thing to think about while taking shelter is you're in protected spaces that have a thick dense walls and a roof to be able to absorb the radiation given off from the fallout particles.
- Take shelter even if you are miles away from the site an explosion. If you see the flash from the explosion fallout material can reach you within 20 minutes.
- Remain in shelter until instructed otherwise by authorities to maintain your safety. This is another important reason to always be prepared for a disaster as you may have to remain in shelter anywhere from two days to four weeks.

# After a Disaster

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It is important to take certain steps to recovery after disaster strikes. The order in which you should prioritize things to get your life back to normal are:

## You and your households health and safety

- Be aware of new hazards that may have been created by the disaster such as; washed out roads, contaminated buildings, contaminated food and water, gas leaks, down and/or damaged power lines and wires, and broken glass.
- Don't try and do too much at once, this will decrease the risk of exhaustion remember you have just been through a lot.
- Make sure to drink lots of clean water, eat enough, and get adequate rest.
- Wear protective and sturdy work boots and gloves. Wash your hands well with soap and clean water often.
- Inform the proper authorities of any health and safety hazards you may discover such as chemical spills, downed or damaged power lines, washed out roads, smoldering insulation, and dead animals.

## Returning to your damaged home

- Before going inside, walk carefully around the perimeter of the building. Inspect for loose power lines, gas leaks, structural damage, and if flood waters remain around the structure. Do NOT re-enter your home if any of these items are discovered without proper inspection from officials.
- Do NOT re-enter your home if it was damaged by fire until inspected by appropriate authorities.
- Use a battery powered flashlight to inspect your home. Do NOT use oil, gas lanterns, candles or torches, smoke, or turn on the lights due to the risk of a flammable substance being present.
- When entering a home do it CAREFULLY. Check for damage to the floors, roof, and chimney; if the building appears to be unstable get out immediately. If you smell gas or hear hissing open a window and leave immediately turning off the main gas valve if possible, and call the gas company from a neighbor's house or other safe place away from the home. Check the electrical system for any

abnormalities, and for any wet appliances; if anything is found shut of the main electricity and call the electric company. Check the water and sewage, if pipes are damaged turn off the main water valve and check with authorities before using water due to the risk of contamination.

- Once safe to re-enter your home go through everything, throw away any contaminated food (remember to never re-freeze any thawed food), medications, or daily household used products. Clean up spilled substances such as bleach, gasoline, and other cleaning products. Open your windows to get air moving through to protect your home from any further damage.
- Call your insurance agent, take pictures of the damage, and keep good records of any cleaning and repair costs.

Throughout the recovery period make sure to listen to local radio stations, watch local television, and for announcements throughout the community to get information on additional assistance if needed such as food and water, shelter, clothing, first-aid, and financial. The assistance programs also may be helpful in providing information with the steps to help recover from a disaster.

## Basic First Aid & CPR

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During a disaster it may be necessary to provide basic first aid and/or CPR until emergency responders can arrive at your location. It is possible that response may be delayed due to the amounts of emergencies that can occur during a disaster spreading emergency response thin. The best way to learn and prepare yourself to administer first aid and CPR is to take a class. In Grand County many different agencies offer these classes. To obtain more information on dates/times, locations, and cost you can contact:

- Grand County EMS – 970-887-2732
- American Red Cross – 202-303-5000
- Grand Lake Fire – 970-627-5400

# Emergency Preparedness Checklist

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## Preparedness Kit

- Battery powered radio and batteries
- Non-perishable food
- Manual can opener
- Water (1 gal. per person per day)
- Flashlight and batteries
- Emergency candles & matches
- Essential medications & First Aid Kit
- Extra glasses or contact lenses
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Waterless hand cleaner
- Toilet paper & paper towels
- Baby supplies
- Paper cup and plates
- Plastic Utensils
- Garbage bags
- Money (cash in small amounts)
- Important addresses and phone numbers
- Utility knife, basic tools & work gloves
- Extra clothing
- Some entertainment such as board games and cards

# Notes

# Notes