

# Fact Sheet

## Feuille de renseignements



Ministry of Community Safety  
and Correctional Services

Ministère de la Sécurité communautaire  
et des Services correctionnels

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### Evacuation

Evacuation is a protective action that may be ordered by emergency officials when there is a significant threat posed to a specific area or community. Causes of an evacuation could include a natural, accidental or human-caused disaster such as a chemical release, nuclear incident or severe weather.

#### When you should evacuate:

- Evacuate only when instructed to do so by your local emergency officials. In some cases it may be safer to remain inside (*shelter-in-place*).
- If ordered to evacuate listen to media reports to learn about areas being evacuated and which routes are safest to take.

#### How will I know to evacuate?

- Evacuation orders are typically broadcast through the media or delivered directly to homes and businesses by emergency responders, such as the police. Some areas are equipped with public alerting systems such as automated phone calling or in-home tone-alert radios. To learn more about notification in your community, please contact your local emergency management coordinator.

#### What should you do if ordered to evacuate?

- Offer to assist neighbours who may not be able to evacuate on their own. If possible, make these arrangements in advance.
- Take your family emergency survival kit, important documents (e.g., medical and vaccination records) and your personal valuables (e.g., cash, credit cards and jewellery). For more details on preparing your family's emergency survival kit, please refer to [www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo)

- Evacuate the area affected by the emergency exactly as directed. Remain calm, do not speed and obey official directions as some roads may be closed or rerouted.
- Don't take shortcuts. Doing so might lead you to a blocked or dangerous area.
- If evacuating during a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incident, keep your car windows and vents closed and air-conditioner turned off.
- During some evacuations, you may be asked to report to a reception centre. These may be set up to check people and vehicles for contamination, record evacuee contact information or arrange for temporary housing.
- Avoid using the telephone unless you are reporting an emergency or it is absolutely necessary. Emergency responders and those who need immediate emergency assistance will need all available lines.
- Listen to media reports to stay informed about further announcements from your local emergency officials.

### **What to expect at a reception centre:**

- Upon arrival at a reception centre you may be asked to sign in and supply personal information. Supplying this information assists in contacting you, reuniting you with your family and loved ones and/or notifying you of when it will be safe to return home.
- Depending on the emergency, you may be checked for exposure to hazardous materials.
- In the event of radiological exposure, you may be provided with Potassium Iodide (KI) pills. KI pills can help block the thyroid gland's uptake of radioactive iodine and can help prevent thyroid cancer and other thyroid related diseases caused by radiation exposure.
- For additional information on reception centre locations in your community, please contact your local emergency management coordinator.

### **Evacuation checklist (if time permits):**

- Before you leave your home, close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Turn off all fans, vents and heating/air conditioning systems and close the fireplace damper.

- If evacuating your home for a prolonged period during a winter power failure, drain water from the plumbing system. Turn off the main water supply and then, starting at the top of the house open all taps, flush toilets several times and open the drain valve in the basement. Drain your hot water tank by attaching a hose to the tank drain valve and running it to the basement floor drain. Turn off the pilot light if draining a gas-fired water tank. (Remember you will need a professional to turn the gas back on.)
- Before leaving your home, check on your neighbours, friends or family members in the area that are without transportation and consider offering them a ride.

### **Pets and Evacuations:**

- Many evacuation centres, used for temporary shelter or housing during an emergency, will not accept pets (with the exception of service animals, such as guide dogs, that are permitted).
- It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals during an emergency. It is best to make arrangements in advance. You may wish to check with your local emergency management coordinator for more information on arrangements in your community. You might also consider arranging with friends or relatives who live outside your community to care for your pets in the event of an evacuation.
- Whether or not your pets can remain with you, you should consider having an emergency pet kit ready to accompany your pet.
- For information on emergency pet kits and additional tips on pets and evacuations visit [www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo) and refer to the Pets and Emergencies Fact Sheet or contact the Ontario Society For The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) at [www.ospca.on.ca](http://www.ospca.on.ca) or 1-888-ONT-SPCA.

Contact:

Emergency Management Ontario

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*Disponible en français à [www.ontario.ca/gdu](http://www.ontario.ca/gdu).*