

# ***A Canton Citizens' Handbook for Emergency Preparedness***

**What Canton Residents Can Do To Be Prepared For the  
First 72 Hours of Any Emergency or Disaster**

**Prepared for the Citizens of Canton**  
by the Canton Board of Health

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# ***A Canton Citizens' Handbook for Emergency Preparedness***

## **Inside This Handbook**

- ✓ **A Brief Word**
- ✓ **Reasons for Family Preparedness**
- ✓ **Potential Types of Disasters and Emergencies**
- ✓ **Shelter-In-Place**
- ✓ **Most Important**
- ✓ **Being Prepared**
- ✓ **Food**
- ✓ **First Aid**
- ✓ **Miscellaneous Supplies**
- ✓ **Water Tips**
- ✓ **Maintaining Your Disaster Supply Kit**
- ✓ **Emergency Family Communications Plan**
- ✓ **Reverse 911**
- ✓ **Individuals with Special Needs**
- ✓ **Plan for Pets**
- ✓ **Utility Shut-off and Safety**
- ✓ **Maintain Your Plan**

## **A BRIEF WORD**

In recent years, particularly with an increase in warnings about terrorism threats and potential pandemic diseases looming on the horizon, and with the experiences of major natural and man-made disasters, it has become increasingly obvious that American households will need to be prepared to face such disasters and emergencies, and their aftermath, unaided until such time as help can arrive from first responders, relief workers, and governmental and nongovernmental agencies. Given the sometimes daunting tasks placed on such agencies after large catastrophic events, it may be some time before relief aid can arrive for everyone who will need it. As such, citizens may have to fend for themselves for a period of time until assistance comes. This handbook is a condensed, but thorough, set of instructions and plans which households should use to prepare for such events. With this in mind, the Canton Board of Health has prepared this handbook for distribution to Canton residents in order to present plans for households to prepare for any potential disaster or catastrophic emergency. It is hoped that the information contained in this handbook will help keep people as safe and comfortable as possible during such events. Hopefully, these plans will never need to be used, but if they do become necessary, Canton Citizens can be prepared.

John L. Ciccotelli, R.S., C.H.O.  
Director of Public Health  
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## **REASONS FOR FAMILY PREPAREDNESS**

In a disaster or emergency, you may need to survive on your own for some time before outside help will be available. Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for several days, or even a week or longer. This means having your own supply of water, food and emergency supplies for a period ranging anywhere from a minimum of a few days to possibly several weeks. Or, you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You probably will not have the opportunity to shop or search for the supplies you need. Assembling now the supplies you may need in a disaster or emergency is important in your family's disaster plan.

This Canton Citizens' Handbook for Emergency Preparedness has been prepared for Canton households by the staff of the Canton Board of Health in cooperation with other Town emergency response departments and personnel who also may be called upon to respond in the event of an emergency or disaster. This guide has been designed to help the residents of Canton learn how to protect themselves and their families against all types of potential hazards. It can be used as a reference resource or as a step-by-step manual. The focus of the content is on how to develop, practice, and maintain emergency plans that reflect what must be done before, during, and after a disaster to protect people and their property. Also included is information on how to assemble an emergency supply kit that contains the food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity for individuals and their families to survive following a disaster in the event they must rely on their own resources.

## **POTENTIAL TYPES OF DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES**

There are a number of different types and categories of disasters and emergencies. Different emergency events often require different responses.

### **NATURAL**

Natural disasters are generally caused by unusual weather patterns, natural phenomena, or geologic movements of, or within, the earth's crust. In New England, they may include:

- Hurricane
- Flood
- Blizzard
- Tornado
- Earthquake
- Fire
- Ice storm



## MAN MADE (Accidental and Terrorism)

### Chemical

A chemical emergency occurs when a hazardous chemical has been released and the release has the potential for harming people's health. Chemical releases can be unintentional, as in the case of an industrial accident, or intentional, as in the case of a terrorist attack. Types of Chemical hazards include:

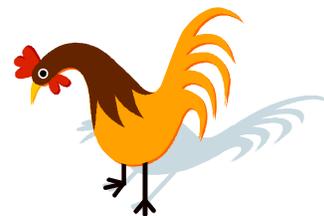
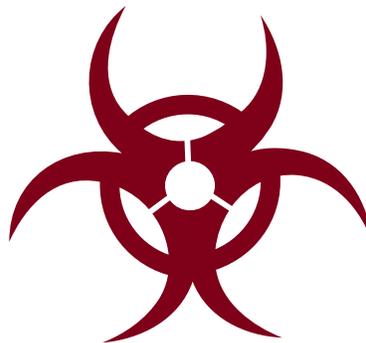
- Biotoxins—poisons that come from plants or animals
- Blister agents—chemicals that severely blister the eyes, respiratory tract, and skin on contact
- Blood agents—poisons that affect the body by being absorbed into the blood
- Caustics (acids or strong alkali substances)--- chemicals that burn or corrode the skin, eyes, and mucus membranes on contact
- Pulmonary (breathing) agents—chemicals that cause severe irritation or swelling of the respiratory tract (lining of the nose, throat, and lungs)
- Incapacitating agents—drugs that make the victim unable to think clearly or that cause unconsciousness
- Anticoagulants—poisons that prevent blood from clotting properly, which can lead to uncontrolled bleeding
- Metals—agents that consist of metallic poisons often affecting the nervous system
- Nerve agents—highly poisonous chemicals that work by preventing the nervous system from working properly, often applied as a “nerve gas”

- Organic solvents—agents that damage the tissues of living things by dissolving fats and oils
- Tear gas—highly irritating agents which act on contact with skin, eyes and mucous membranes
- Toxic alcohols—poisonous alcohols that can damage the heart, kidneys, and nervous system
- Vomiting agents—chemicals that cause nausea and vomiting



## Biological

- Anthraxis
- Botulism
- Brucellosis
- Cholera
- Pandemic Influenza
- Plague
- Ricin
- Smallpox
- Tularemia
- Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers
- Other as yet unknown diseases



**A Word about Pandemics:** Pandemic diseases are widespread contagious epidemic diseases spread by biologically active microorganisms such as bacteria or viruses. They can be spread from person to person, animal to person, through the air (airborne), or other more insidious ways. An example of a viral pandemic would be that of a worldwide influenza (flu) outbreak such as Avian H5N1 Influenza (“Bird Flu”). A pandemic can be either caused naturally or, less likely, man made.

## **Radiological (radiation)**

- Dirty bombs
- Nuclear power plant accident
- Nuclear waste spill
- Nuclear fission bomb

**Q.)** What is potassium iodide (KI)?

**A.)** Potassium iodide (KI) is a compound used as an “antidote” to block thyroid radioiodine uptake after a radiological exposure. When administered in the recommended dose, KI is effective in reducing the risk of thyroid cancer in individuals or populations at risk from nuclear radiation exposure of the thyroid. KI floods the thyroid with non-radioactive iodine and prevents the uptake of the radioactive molecules, which are subsequently excreted in the urine. Emergency or medical personnel will likely provide government-supplied KI if it becomes necessary.

**NOTE:** Radiation cannot be seen, smelled, felt, or tasted by humans. Therefore, if people are present at the scene of a radiological accident or explosion, they will not necessarily know whether radioactive materials were released at the time of the incident.



## **What to Do In a Radiological Incident**

If people are not too severely injured by an initial blast or exposure, they should:

- Leave the area on foot. Do not panic. Do not take public or private transportation because if radioactive materials were involved, they may contaminate cars or the public transportation system.
- Go inside the nearest building. Staying inside will reduce exposure to radioactive material that may be on dust at the scene. If indoors stay there (Shelter-in-place).

- Remove all clothes as soon as possible, place them in a plastic bag, and seal it. Removing clothing will remove most of the contamination caused by external exposure to radioactive materials. Saving the contaminated clothing would allow testing for exposure without invasive sampling.
- Take a shower or wash completely with lots of water as soon as possible and as best as possible (Do not take a bath). Washing will reduce the amount of radioactive contamination on the body and will effectively reduce total exposure.
- Be on the lookout for information. Once emergency personnel can assess the scene and the damage, they will be able to tell people whether radiation was involved and what to do. Information will be available on local television, radio, and cable.

Even if people do not know whether radioactive materials were present, following these simple steps can help reduce injury from other chemicals that might have been present in the exposure.

### **SHELTER-IN-PLACE**

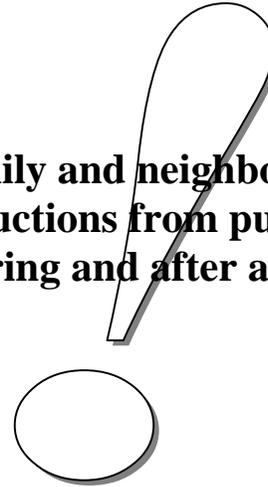
When an emergency or disaster occurs, evacuation may not be an option. In the event of an emergency situation, health or safety officials may direct all people in an area to immediately take shelter indoors wherever they happen to be. This is referred to as sheltering-in-place. Officials would request this protective action to continue until such time as the danger is over. Sheltering-in-place is when individuals retreat indoors at the location they are in when an emergency situation arises. Once indoors, residents should:

- Close and lock all exterior doors and windows.
- Turn off all air conditioning/heating systems/fans.
- Turn off clothes dryer and any venting fans from the kitchen, bathroom, etc.
- Insure that family pets are indoors and/or livestock are inside their barns with the doors and openings closed.
- Have your household emergency preparedness kit handy.
- Stay inside until advised otherwise by emergency responders or public officials.

- Residents should use the telephone (including cell phones) for emergency calls only.
- Stay tuned to TV or radio stations for further information and instructions.
- Additionally, you should safely try to make sure your neighbors are aware of any directive to shelter-in-place.
- **Don't panic.**

## **MOST IMPORTANT**

**For the health and safety of yourself, your family and neighbors, it is critically important to follow any and all instructions from public officials and emergency response personnel before, during and after any emergency or disaster.**



## **BEING PREPARED**

### **Prepare a 72-Hour Emergency Home Preparedness Kit**

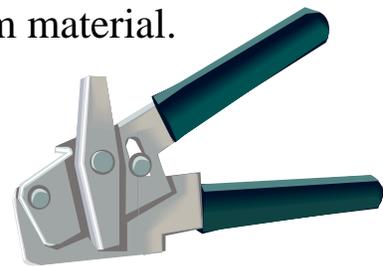
There are many types of potential emergencies or disasters: floods, fires, blizzards, earthquakes, hurricanes, even tornados to name but a few in the New England area. It is estimated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that after a major emergency or disaster, it may take up to 72 hours (3 days) or more for relief workers to reach some areas. To be properly prepared for an emergency or disaster scenario, a 72-Hour Emergency Home Preparedness Kit is the minimum that should be made ready with enough supplies for all family members and guests living in a single residence. If possible, it is advised to stock enough emergency supplies to last for a week or more while the area recovers and life begins to return to normal.

### **Assemble a Disaster Supply Kit**

You may need to survive on your own after a disaster. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days.

A disaster supply kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of an emergency or disaster. It is strongly suggested that you plan your Emergency Home Preparedness Kit with at least the following items:

- Water, 1-2 gallons per person per day, should be stored for sanitation and drinking. More water should be stored if your personal situation warrants it. Don't forget pets will need additional water.
- A method of water purification in case it becomes necessary (adequate water purification tablets or bleach)
- Food (Should be non-perishable). Include special dietary needs. (**See recommendations below**)
- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Manual can opener (**VERY IMPORTANT!**)
- Warmth and shelter/tent
- Wool-blend blanket or other moisture proof warm material.
- Sheets and sleeping bags, pillows and bedding
- Emergency reflective blanket
- Sunglasses
- Sanitary items (**see suggestions below**)
- Women's personal items
- Personal toiletries kit (include soap, toothbrush and gel, comb, tissue, deodorant, razor), and other needed items
- Portable toilet
- Extra eye glasses
- Extra Clothing including warm and waterproof clothing and footwear. Include extra socks, underwear, hat, sturdy shoes, and gloves
- Sewing kit
- Waterproof matches or matches in a waterproof container, butane lighters
- Lightweight stove and fuel
- Poncho
- Light sources, candles, flashlights (with extra batteries) or light sticks
- Tools (**see recommendations below**)
- Pocket knife
- Shovel



- Hatchet or Axe
- Portable water proof containers and storage containers
- 50-foot soft nylon rope
- First Aid kit and supplies. (**See first aid kit supply recommendations below**)
- Communications devices – cell phones, walkie-talkies, ham radio
- Portable radio with batteries or radio with alternate power source
- Whistle with neck cord
- Money - At least \$50 in small bills, well hidden in your kit or on your person. Be sure to include quarters and dimes for phone calls
- Insect repellent
- Sun block
- Stress reliever games, books, hard candy, inspirational reading. For children: small toys, paper and pen, favorite small security items
- Important papers, identification and other documents (Copies of documents important to your family such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, wills, insurance forms, phone numbers you might need, credit card information), kept in secure waterproof containers or zip-lock plastic bags
- Camp stove mess kits and other cooking equipment
- Firewood for warmth, if appropriately prepared to build a fire in an approved fireplace.
- Grill and charcoal for cooking outdoors (**NEVER cook with charcoal indoors**)
- Durable water resistant duffel bag, frame pack or day pack
- And, yes, duct tape

## **FOOD**

The following are suggested foods to store in your Preparedness Kit. Other non-perishable, non-refrigerated foods can also be added.

- Stews and soups (dry or canned)
- Tuna fish, caned beef, Spam, and other canned meats
- Canned vegetables, beans, fruits
- Canned milk
- Miscellaneous canned foods that do not require cooking
- Health foods, nuts and trail mixes, oatmeal bars, chocolate



- Dried fruit and canned fruit juice
- Hard candy
- Cookies, crackers
- Dry boxed foods
- Peanut butter, jelly, salt, sugar, honey
- Whole grain cereals
- Staples—sugar, salt, pepper
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons with special dietary needs
- Comfort/stress foods

If enough water has been stored, then the following items are appropriate:

- Dry soup
- Powdered milk, tea, coffee or instant coffee
- Rice, dried pasta

**NOTE:** Avoid foods that will make you thirsty.

### **Cooking**

- Indoor alternative cooking sources in times of emergency include candle warmers, chafing dishes, fondue pots, or an approved fireplace.
- Charcoal grills and camp stoves are for outdoor use only.
- Commercially canned food may be eaten out of the can without warming.
- To heat food in a can:
  1. Remove the label
  2. Thoroughly wash and disinfect the can. (Use a diluted solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.)
  3. Open the can before heating.

### **FIRST AID**

#### **First Aid Kit**

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. A first aid kit should include:

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape

- Triangular bandages (3)
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pair/person)
- Sunscreen
- Burn gel and dressings
- Bottle of potassium iodide tablets if available
- Special medications and prescription drugs for any ongoing medical conditions of family members



### **Non-prescription drugs**

- Aspirin and non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Laxatives
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

### **Learn First Aid and CPR**

Take a first aid and CPR class. Local American Red Cross chapters can provide information about this type of training. Official certification by the American Red Cross provides, under the “good Samaritan” law, protection for those giving first aid.

## **MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES**

### **Clothing and Bedding**

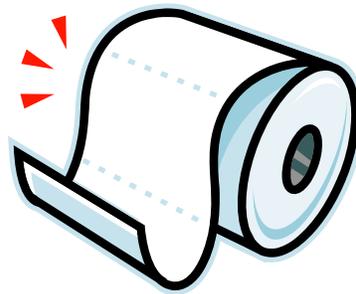
Living in a cold climate, you must think about warmth. It is possible that you will not have heat. Include at least one extra change of warm clothing and footwear per person.

- Jacket or coat
- Long pants and thermal underwear
- Long sleeve shirt
- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Hat, mittens, gloves and scarf
- Rain gear
- Extra blankets (wool is suggested) or sleeping bags for each person

Be sure to account for growing children and other family changes. You may want to add some special items to your basic disaster supplies kit depending on the specific needs of your family.

### **Sanitation**

- Toilet paper
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach



### **Tools**

- Canton Citizens' Handbook for Emergency Preparedness
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Hammer, nails, pliers, flathead and philips-head screwdrivers
- Compass
- Aluminum foil
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil

- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)



## **SPECIAL ITEMS**

Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

### **For Baby**

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Pacifiers
- Powdered milk
- Medications



### **For Adults**

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin and syringes, alcohol wipes
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses
- Hearing aid batteries

## **WATER TIPS**

### **How Much Water do I Need?**

You should store at least one gallon of water per person per day. A normally active person needs at least one-half gallon of water daily just for drinking. Additionally, in determining adequate quantities, take the following into account:

- Individual needs vary, depending on age, physical condition, activity, diet, and climate.
- Children, nursing mothers, diabetics and other ill people need more water.
- Very hot temperatures can double the amount of water needed.
- A medical emergency might require additional water.

### **How Should I Obtain and Store Water?**

To prepare the safest and most reliable supplies of emergency water, it is recommended you purchase commercially bottled water. Keep bottled water in its original container and do not open it until you need to use it.

### **Preparing Your Own Containers Of Water**

It is recommended you purchase food-grade water storage containers from military surplus or camping supply stores to use for water storage. Before filling with water, thoroughly clean the containers with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely so there is no residual soap. Follow directions below on filling the container with water.

If you choose to use your own storage containers, choose two-liter plastic soft drink bottles – not plastic jugs or cardboard containers that have had milk or fruit juice in them. Milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be adequately removed from these containers and provide an environment for unwanted bacterial growth when water is stored in them. Cardboard containers also leak easily and are not designed for long-term storage of liquids. Also, do not use glass containers, because they can break.

### **If Storing Water in Plastic Soda Bottles**

Thoroughly clean the bottles with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely so there is no residual soap. Sanitize the bottles by adding a solution of 1 teaspoon of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water. Swish the sanitizing solution in the bottle so that it touches all surfaces. After sanitizing the bottle, thoroughly rinse out the sanitizing solution with clean water.

### **Filling Water Containers**

Fill the bottle to the top with regular tap water. If the tap water has been commercially treated from a water utility with chlorine, you do not need to add anything else to the water to keep it clean. If the water you are using comes from a well or water source that is not treated with chlorine, add two drops of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Tightly close the container using the original cap. Be careful not to contaminate the cap by touching the inside of it with your finger. Place a date on the outside of the container so that you know when you filled it. Store in a cool, dark place. Replace the water every six months if not using commercially bottled water.

If water quality becomes questionable during an emergency and no reliable source can be found, add two drops of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach per gallon of water or use commercial water purification tablets (follow direction on container). This should only be used as a last resort.



## **MAINTAINING YOUR DISASTER SUPPLY KIT**

### **KIT LOCATIONS**

Keep kit in a safe stable location.

**In the home:** Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept. Additionally, you may want to consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks.

**In the car:** In case you are stranded, keep an abbreviated kit of emergency supplies in your car. This kit should contain food, water, first aid supplies, flares, jumper cables, and seasonal supplies.

### **Kit Maintenance**

Just as important as putting your supplies together is maintaining them so they are safe to use when needed. Here are some tips to keep your supplies ready and in good condition:

- Keep canned foods in a dry place where the temperature is cool.
- Store boxed foods in tightly closed waterproof plastic or metal containers to protect from pests and to extend its shelf life.
- Throw out any canned good that becomes swollen, dented, or corroded.
- Use foods before they go bad, and immediately replace them with fresh supplies.
- Rotate foods. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in the front.
- Periodically change stored food and water supplies. Be sure to write the date you stored it on all containers.
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family needs change.
- Keep items in sealed airtight pest-proof plastic containers and put your entire disaster supply kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as an unused trashcan, camping backpack, or duffel bag.

## **EMERGENCY FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another. Think about how you will communicate in different situations.

Complete a contact information card for each family member. Have family members keep these cards handy. You may want to send one to school with each child to keep on file. Pick a friend or relative who lives out-of-state for household members to notify they are safe.

Your Emergency Family Communications Plan should be completed and posted in the home so the contact information is readily accessible to all family members. A copy should also be included in your family disaster supplies kit.

Other Important Phone Numbers & Information:

**Family Communications Plan**

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Out-of-State Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting Place Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies!**

**Example of a Contact Information Card**

Keep a completed Contact Information Card readily available for all household members.

## **Your Emergency Family Communications Plan Should Include:**

- Where to meet away from your home in case of destruction of the home (like a neighbor's house or the corner of the street)
- Where to meet outside your neighborhood if you must evacuate. You should pick a friend or relative's house
- Where to call to "check in" if you become separated from your family during a disaster. You should memorize the phone number of a favorite aunt or family member who lives in another state. You would call there to report where you are so your family can find you.

You can also talk with your whole neighborhood about preparedness plans. Find out if someone in your neighborhood has a special skill—like being a doctor or a nurse.

## **REVERSE 911**

Canton has a town-wide reverse 911 telephone system. This system allows public officials handling emergency situations to contact all Canton residents who possess an operating landline telephone with a Canton exchange by calling all such households with any important emergency instructions or information. **For the sake of safety to individuals, their neighbors and the community, it is critically important that people heed the directions of public officials during an emergency.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** It is extremely important that non-emergency personnel use both their telephone and their cell phones as little as possible during an emergency or disaster so that lines and networks can remain open for emergency response work. Busy lines are useless lines to emergency responders.



## **INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

If you or someone close to you has a disability or a special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family in an emergency.

Visually impaired - May be extremely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings when the request for evacuation comes from a stranger. A guide dog could become confused or disoriented in a disaster. People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their dog, to safety during a disaster.

Hearing impaired - May need to make special arrangements to receive warnings.

Mobility impaired - May need special assistance to get to a shelter.

Single working parent - May need help to plan for disasters and emergencies.

Non-English speaking persons - May need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. Community and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed.

People without vehicles - May need to make arrangements for transportation.

People with special dietary needs - Should take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply.

People with medical conditions - Should know the location and availability of more than one facility if dependent on life-sustaining medical equipment or treatment. Also may need to make arrangements for adequate medications.

People with mental disorders - May need help responding to emergencies and getting to a shelter.

If you or a family member have special needs, register **BEFORE HELP BECOMES NECESSARY** with the Canton Board of Health or the Canton Fire Department for assistance so needed help can be provided in the event of an emergency.

## **Be Ready To Evacuate**

Have a plan for getting out of your home or building (ask your family or friends for assistance, if necessary) and/or evacuating the area. Also, plan two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

- Wear or carry personal identification at all times.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify any disability.
- Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

## **Where to Meet**

If separated, establish a place to meet in the event of an emergency, especially in the event of a fire or if your home is destroyed. Record the locations and be sure every household member is aware of the designated meeting place.

### **Location**

- Near the home
- Outside the immediate area

### **Where to meet (example)**

The next door neighbor's telephone pole  
The neighborhood grocery store parking lot or church

## **PLAN FOR PETS:**

Carefully plan for pet needs during an emergency or in case of a disaster.



If you evacuate your home, **do not leave your pets behind unless instructed to do so by emergency personnel or public officials!** Pets most likely cannot survive on their own, and if they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

- Identify a shelter for animals. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. Find out which hotels or motels in the area you plan to evacuate to allow pets—well in advance of needing them. There are also a number of guides that list hotels or motels that permit pets and could

serve as a starting point. Include your local animal shelter's number in your list of emergency numbers—they might be able to provide information concerning pets during a disaster. Do this BEFORE an emergency arises.

- Take pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter/pan, can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other supplies with you in case they're not available later. Consider preparing a "pet survival" kit which could be easily deployed if disaster hits.
- Make sure identification tags are up to date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If possible, attach the address and/or phone number of your evacuation site. If your pet gets lost, its tag is its ticket home. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Make sure you have a secure pet carrier, leash or harness for your pet so that if it panics, it can't escape.
- If you are ordered to leave pets behind, be sure to leave plenty of food and water out for the pet to last for an extended period of time. Check back on the pet regularly and as soon as possible.

For additional information, please contact The Humane Society of the United States at <http://www.hsus.org/>

## **UTILITY SHUT-OFF AND SAFETY**

In the event of a disaster, you may be instructed to shut off the utility service at your home. Below is some general guidance for shutting off utility service. You should modify the information provided to reflect your shut off requirements as directed by your utility company.

### **Natural Gas**

Natural gas leaks and explosions are responsible for a significant number of fires following disasters. It is vital that all household members know how to shut off natural gas.

If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out quickly. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home.

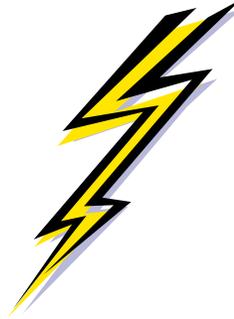
**CAUTION** - If you turn off the gas for any reason, a qualified professional must turn it back on.

**NEVER** attempt to turn the gas back on yourself.

### **Electricity**

Electrical sparks have the potential of igniting natural gas if it is leaking. It is wise to teach all responsible household members where and how to shut off the electricity.

- Locate your electrical circuit box.
- Teach all responsible household members how to shut off the electricity to the entire house.



**NOTE:** If you plan to use a generator, be absolutely sure that the connection to the street electrical supply wires has been disconnected. It is strongly recommended that you have a professional electrician do this type of work.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY:** Always shut off all individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker.

### **MAINTAIN YOUR PLAN**

Once you have developed your plan, you need to practice and maintain it. For example, ask questions to make sure your family remembers meeting places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct drills and create theoretical scenarios and see how family members respond.

**Do not wait for a disaster or emergency to occur. Plan and prepare now so that when an unplanned disaster or emergency does occur, you and your family will be ready.**

**DON'T BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE!**

## SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks to all of Canton's first responders, public safety personnel, volunteer medical reserve corps members, government officials, and other volunteers who plan, prepare, and train regularly for the time when they will be called upon in the face of a disaster or emergency to help keep Canton and its residents healthy and safe.

This booklet was assembled from information on emergency preparedness obtained from official State and Federal resources. It is in no way a guarantee that following the steps outlined within this booklet will prevent harm or injury to anyone during a particular disaster or emergency event.

### **For Sources or More Information**

This guide has been prepared for direct dissemination to the general public and is based on the most reliable hazard awareness and emergency education information available at the time of publication from such sources as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Homeland Security, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

No publication can cover every factor, situation, or difference in buildings, infrastructure, or other environmental feature that might affect a particular individual, family or group of people in every emergency or disaster scenario. To help you explore your interest in family preparedness issues, visit the following websites:

- Town of Canton Homepage: <http://www.town.canton.ma.us/>
- Canton Health Department: <http://www.town.canton.ma.us/health/health.htm>
- FEMA: <http://www.fema.gov/>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):  
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:  
<http://www.hhs.gov/American>
- Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org>
- Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.ready.gov>, or call 1-800-BE-READY for printed information.
- Massachusetts and Rhode Island Poison Control Center:  
<http://www.maripoisoncenter.com/>