



HEADQUARTERS
READING FIRE DEPARTMENT
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Resident Guide For Emergency Preparedness

Town of Reading Emergency Management:

One of the many responsibilities of the Reading Fire Department is Emergency Management. The Fire Department is responsible for disaster response planning, coordination of a multi-agency response and coordination of the recovery phase for all disasters in the community.

Over the last several years the Town of Reading has undergone an extensive planning and training process to ensure a coordinated response of local, State and Federal resources to any type of disaster in the community. For example plans have been developed for responding to releases of hazardous materials, terrorist incidents, natural disasters, communicating critical information to the public, opening and staffing emergency shelters and for ensuring the safety of children in the schools. We have also been involved with regional planning with surrounding communities and work closely with State agencies such as the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

This guide has been developed with input from the Town Manager, Department of Public Works, Health Department, Housing Authority, Municipal Light Department, and Police Department. The purpose of this guide is to assist members of the community in preparing for all emergencies. By following the steps below you and your family will be as prepared as possible in the event of an emergency incident.

Emergency Response Training and Resources:

To ensure the Town of Reading is prepared in the event a person comes in contact with a hazardous substance, the Reading Fire Department has undergone an extensive training program. This training has been augmented with a limited amount of funding received from a State Grant to purchase specialized equipment. This equipment and training will enable Fire personnel to properly decontaminate a person exposed to certain hazardous chemicals.

"We're your friends for life"



Reading Firefighters undergoing decontamination training

How Residents May Prepare for an Emergency:

By keeping the following items on hand you will be prepared for emergencies:

- A 3 to 5 day supply of non-perishable food and water (1 gallon of water per person per day, self bottled water has a 3-6 month shelf life and sealed bottles have a 2 year shelf life).
- Prescription medicine and First Aid Kit
- Firewood (for wood stove or fireplace)
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Portable radio and extra batteries
- Blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothes
- Tools and a manual can opener
- Diapers and baby formula
- Plastic ware and paper plates
- Fire extinguisher
- *If you use a portable generator use extreme caution. To prevent a deadly buildup of carbon monoxide gas, the generator must be located outside your home in a well-ventilated location. Appliances should be connected directly to the generator, not to your homes electrical system.*

Develop a Family Communication Plan:

Since after a disaster it is often easier to call long distance outside the disaster area, ask an out-of-state friend or relative to serve as the “information contact” for your family. In an emergency family members would call or e-mail this contact person who serves as a communications link for the whole family. Make sure all family members know the name, address, telephone number and the e-mail address of the contact person.

How will I know there is an emergency situation in the Town of Reading?

You may hear of an emergency event through the media or others from your home, workplace or school. The Fire Chief as Emergency Management Director has the ability to make announcements over cable television. When this occurs the television screen will be dark and only voice instructions will be heard. It is also possible that traveling police and fire vehicles could make announcements over their loudspeaker systems.

The Town of Reading’s emergency siren system may be activated. This system consists of three sirens located in the following locations:

1. The Reading Public Library, 64 Middlesex Avenue.
2. The West Side Fire Station, 267 Woburn Street.
3. 1249 Main Street.

The emergency siren system has the ability to sound three signals as follows:

- Take Cover: **The sirens will activate for 8 seconds on and 4 seconds off. This is repeated for a 3-minute cycle.** This signal used to warn residents of the need to take cover and seek further information via radio and television.
- Alert: **The sirens will operate for a 3-minute steady blast.** This signal is used to alert residents to seek information via radio and television.
- Test: **The siren will activate for approximately 30-second steady blast.** This periodic testing is essential to ensure the system will operate in an emergency.

What should I do?

First, follow the instructions of emergency personnel and then tune into any Boston television or radio station for further information.

If I lose power how will I receive information?

Always keep a battery powered portable radio on hand equipped with extra batteries. Keep this radio tuned into to any Boston news radio station.

What does shelter in place mean?

“Shelter-in-Place” means to go indoors and close all doors and windows. Turn off all window fans; clothes dryers, kitchen and bath exhaust fans, air conditioners and other sources of outside air. If you are traveling in an automobile, close the windows and air vents. Continue to monitor the news media for further instructions.

Where is my emergency shelter?

For most incidents the safest shelter is in your own home, or if the emergency is a localized incident such as a power outage you could seek shelter with a neighbor or

relative. In certain emergencies you may need to evacuate to an emergency shelter. The Town of Reading's emergency shelters are as follows:

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| <u>Primary Shelter:</u> | <u>Coolidge Middle School located at 89 Birch Meadow Drive.</u> |
| <u>Secondary Shelter:</u> | <u>Reading Memorial High School located at 62 Oakland Road.</u> |

What should I bring to a shelter?

If you need to go to an emergency shelter you should bring your medications, toiletries, pillow and a blanket and any other needed personal items.

How can I help?

If you know of a person who is elderly, has a disability or a language barrier you could develop a neighborhood plan to assist them.

What if I receive suspicious mail?

If you receive a suspicious envelope or package the following procedure should be followed:

- **Do not open the item**
- Leave the room
- Call 9-1-1

If you open an envelope or package that contains a suspicious material the following procedure should be followed:

- Remain calm
- Wash any contaminants from your skin using soap and water
- Call 9-1-1 and report the incident

Child Safety Tips During an Emergency:

For parents, the physical and emotional safety of children is especially important during any emergency situation. Make sure your child:

- Carries the names and numbers (home, work, pager, cell phone, e-mail) of family and your families out of town contact.
- Knows the family emergency procedure, including how to call 9-1-1.
- Knows where to meet in case of an emergency.
- Knows how to recognize danger signals, such as fire alarms.

Visit with your child's school and talk with school officials:

- Know your child's school emergency procedures.
- School Officials will not release your child to anyone who has not been authorized by a parent or guardian.
- Make sure the school has the correct personal emergency numbers (home, work, pager, cell phone and e-mail).
- Keep information current on how to reach the child's parent or other caregiver.
- Know the type of authorization your child's school requires to release your child to someone other than a parent.

Also, take these precautions:

- Make sure your baby-sitter knows your emergency procedures, including contact name and numbers and how to summon emergency assistance if needed.

Tips for Those with Special Needs and Disabilities:

If you or a family member has a special need or a disability, consider these issues as you are preparing your family's emergency plan:

- Carry a health information card.
- Evaluate truthfully your capacities, limitations, needs and surroundings.
- Determine the type of help you might need during an emergency, and make appropriate plans.
- List the information you might need, such as your doctor, medications, and allergies.

Tips for Caring for Pets and Service Animals During an Emergency:

For many, pets are an important part of our family. For their safety you must have an emergency plan for their care.

- Keep your pet's license and identification tags current with your telephone number and the number of your out of town contact.
- Make arrangement with neighbors to rescue or care for your pets if you cannot be at home.
- For evacuation: keep your pet on a leash or in a carrying case. Pack supplies that include food, water bowl, blanket, and plastic bags for disposing of feces.
- Plan on how you will care for your pet after an evacuation. Pets, in contrast to service animals (such as seeing eye dogs), will not be allowed in shelters because of health regulations.

Understanding the Homeland Security Advisory System

The world has changed since September 11, 2001. We remain a nation at risk to terrorist attacks and will remain at risk for the foreseeable future. At all Threat Conditions, we must remain vigilant, prepared, and ready to deter terrorist attacks. The following Threat Conditions each represent an increasing risk of terrorist attacks. Beneath each Threat Condition are some suggested Protective Measures, recognizing that the heads of Federal departments and agencies are responsible for developing and implementing appropriate agency-specific Protective Measures:



1. Low Condition (Green).

This condition is declared when there is a low risk of terrorist attacks.

Federal departments and agencies should consider the following general measures in addition to the agency-specific Protective Measures they develop and implement:

- Refining and exercising as appropriate preplanned Protective Measures
- Ensuring personnel receive proper training on the Homeland Security Advisory System and specific preplanned department or agency Protective Measures
- Institutionalizing a process to assure that all facilities and regulated sectors are regularly assessed for vulnerabilities to terrorist attacks, and all reasonable measures are taken to mitigate these vulnerabilities

2. Guarded Condition (Blue).

This condition is declared when there is a general risk of terrorist attacks.

In addition to the Protective Measures taken in the previous Threat Condition, Federal departments and agencies should consider the following general measures in addition to the agency-specific Protective Measures that they will develop and implement:

- Checking communications with designated emergency response or command locations
- Reviewing and updating emergency response procedures
- Providing the public with any information that would strengthen its ability to act appropriately

3. Elevated Condition (Yellow).

An Elevated Condition is declared when there is a significant risk of terrorist attacks.

In addition to the Protective Measures taken in the previous Threat Conditions, Federal departments and agencies should consider the following general measures in addition to the Protective Measures that they will develop and implement:

- Increasing surveillance of critical locations
- Coordinating emergency plans as appropriate with nearby jurisdictions
- Assessing whether the precise characteristics of the threat require the further refinement of preplanned Protective Measures
- Implementing, as appropriate, contingency and emergency response plans

4. High Condition (Orange).

A High Condition is declared when there is a high risk of terrorist attacks.

In addition to the Protective Measures taken in the previous Threat Conditions, Federal departments and agencies should consider the following general measures in addition to the agency-specific Protective Measures that they will develop and implement:

- Coordinating necessary security efforts with Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies or any National Guard or other appropriate armed forces organizations
- Taking additional precautions at public events and possibly considering alternative venues or even cancellation
- Preparing to execute contingency procedures, such as moving to an alternate site or dispersing their workforce
- Restricting threatened facility access to essential personnel only

5. Severe Condition (Red).

A Severe Condition reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks.

Under most circumstances, the Protective Measures for a Severe Condition are not intended to be sustained for substantial periods of time. In addition to the Protective Measures in the previous Threat Conditions, Federal departments and agencies also should consider the following general measures in addition to the agency-specific Protective Measures that they will develop and implement:

- Increasing or redirecting personnel to address critical emergency needs

- Assigning emergency response personnel and pre-positioning and mobilizing specially trained teams or resources
- Monitoring, redirecting, or constraining transportation systems; and
- Closing public and government facilities

Where to find more information:

Town of Reading - www.ci.reading.ma.us

Massachusetts Emergency Management – www.mass.gov/mema

Massachusetts State Government – www.mass.gov

Massachusetts Department of Public Health – www.mass.gov/dph

Massachusetts Department of Education - www.doe.mass.edu

Federal Emergency Management Agency – www.fema.gov.

Center for Disease Control & Prevention – www.cdc.gov

Department of Homeland Security – www.dhs.gov

Disaster Help – www.disasterhelp.gov

Federal Government – www.firstgov.gov

Federal Bureau of Investigation – www.fbi.gov

The President – www.whitehouse.gov

U.S. Postal Service – www.usps.gov