

Prince William County Emergency Services

Preparation will help to optimally help you, your family, and others while also minimize any unwanted consequences. Please review and consider how you can be ready for those unexpected emergencies.

The following information comes from the Prince William County Emergency Services website (<https://www.pwcva.gov/department/office-emergency-management>).

1 Build an Emergency Kit:

After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. An emergency supply kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the items on the checklist below. Most of the items are inexpensive and easy to find, and any one of them could save your life. Once you take a look at the basic items, consider what unique needs your family might have, such as supplies for pets, or seniors. Headed to the store? Download and share this [“Build a Kit Checklist” with family and friends.](#)”

1.1 Basic Emergency Kit Supplies

Collect these essential supplies for each member of your family. Plan to live off your kit for at least 3 days:

- **Food** – Food that won't spoil and doesn't need electricity to prepare.
- **Water** – One gallon of water per person, per day for drinking and hygiene.
- **Plan** – A written family emergency plan.
- **Power** – A battery-powered and/or hand crank radio and a flashlight with extra batteries.
- **Charger** – A portable and/or vehicle charger and cable for your cell phone.
- **Shelter** – If you have to evacuate, take your kit. Keep it in an easily portable container, in an easily accessible place.

Once you have collected the essentials, complete your kit with additional items listed below.

1.1.1 For Individuals and Families

1. Manual can opener
2. Snacks
3. Personal hygiene items
4. First aid kit
5. Trash bags
6. Disposable gloves
7. Flashlight and extra batteries
8. Blankets
9. Food for pets
10. Whistle
11. Tools to turn off utilities

12. Protective Mask
13. Glasses or contact lenses
14. Backpack
15. Critical documents on a USB drive
16. Prescription medications and supplies for any medical equipment
17. Games/books
18. Electronic device chargers
19. Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes

1.1.2 For Infants:

1. Baby food
2. Hygiene products
3. Powder milk and formula
4. Toys
5. First-aid kit
6. Trash bags
7. Baby wipes
8. Diaper bag or backpack
9. Shot records
10. Diapers

1.1.3 For Pets:

1. Name tags and leash
2. Food and one gallon of water per pet, per day
3. Medications and first-aid kit
4. Recent pictures of you with your pet
5. Snacks
6. Vet contact info/shot records
7. Pet carrier
8. Litter box
9. Toys

1.2 Maintaining Your Kit

After assembling your kit, remember to maintain it so it's ready when needed.

Keep canned food in a cool, dry place.

Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.

Replace expired items as needed.

Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

1.3 Kit Storage Locations

Since you do not know where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supplies for home, work and vehicles.

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.

Work: Be prepared to shelter at work for at least 24 hours. Your work kit should include food, water and other necessities like medicines, as well as comfortable walking shoes, stored in a "grab and go" case.

Vehicle: In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.

2 Make A Plan:

Emergencies and disasters can happen anywhere, anytime, to anyone. They can happen quickly and without warning. Understanding how emergencies and disasters can impact your family is critical. Each person's and family's needs are different, but everyone can take steps to put a plan in place to prepare for the unthinkable. Does your family know who to call, where to meet, and what to take if you have to leave your home? Download and share this "[PWC Emergency Preparedness Handbook](#)."

2.1 How To Make a Plan

Your family may not be together if a disaster occurs, so it is important to plan in advance. The following tips are critical to consider when making your plan:

1. Know which types of disasters could affect your area. The types of hazards that most frequently affect Prince William County are flooding/flash flooding, severe weather including thunderstorms and straight-line winds, winter storms, and hurricanes.
2. Consider how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. Make sure every member of your family knows all critical phone numbers and keep both digital and hard copies in all of your emergency kits and on your person.
3. Ask an out-of-town friend or family member to serve as a point of contact for all the members of your household. Often during an emergency, long-distance calls will go through when local networks are overwhelmed.
4. Establish a family meeting place that's familiar and easy to find. Identify one in your neighborhood and one outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
5. Consider your specific individual and family needs.
6. Inquire about the emergency plans for places where your family spends time: work, daycare, school, and other extra-curricular activities.
7. Make back-up plans for children in case you cannot get home.
8. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together during an emergency.
9. Identify the safest areas in your home if you are told to stay inside. For example, in a tornado you want to be on the lowest level, in an interior space and away from windows.

2.2 Specific Individual and Family Needs

As you prepare your plan, tailor your plans and supplies to your specific daily living needs and responsibilities. Discuss your needs and responsibilities and how people in the network can assist each other with communication, care of children, business, pets, or specific needs (like the operation of durable medical equipment). Create your own personal network for specific areas where you need assistance. Keep in mind some these factors when developing your plan:

1. Different ages of members within your household
2. Responsibilities for assisting others
3. Locations frequented
4. Dietary needs
5. Medical needs including prescriptions and equipment
6. Disabilities or access and functional needs including devices and equipment
7. Languages spoken
8. Cultural and religious considerations
9. Pets or service animals
10. Households with school-aged children

2.3 Fill Out a Family Emergency Plan

Once you have all of your information, you need to write it down in one place and give copies to everyone on your communications list. You can utilize the following resources to complete your plan.

- For an online planning tool: go to www.readynova.org. This planning toolkit was developed to assist residents and business owners in Northern Virginia to develop a Family Emergency Plan or a Business Emergency Plan through an easy-to-use online tool. The final plan can be saved as a PDF document and emailed to family, friends and colleagues.
- For a printed guide, download the [PWC Emergency Preparedness Handbook](#).
- Other planning tools can be found at <https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>.

2.4 Practice Your Plan

Once all of your planning is done, be sure to practice your plan with your entire family. Ensure all family members know and understand all components of the plan, including family meeting places, critical phone numbers, and emergency contacts. Plan to exercise as many components of the plan at least twice a year around the same time you change your smoke detector batteries.

3 Emergency Alerts and Notifications

Do you know how to receive alerts about hazardous weather or developing emergency situations? During a major emergency or disaster, Prince William County government posts information in the following places:

- **County Emergency Information Portal**
- **County Social Media Pages** on Facebook and Twitter

- **PWC Alerts** is an emergency notification system used by Prince William County government to send emergency alerts, non-emergency updates, as well as automated weather notifications to you through voice calls, texts, and/or emails before, during, and after a major crisis. This highly customizable system allows you to receive only those alerts that you are interested in receiving (examples include: severe weather watches & warnings, traffic alerts, etc.). For more information and to register, go to alerts. Please note that Prince William County Schools uses a separate alerting system.

You may also receive alerts from authorities in the following ways:

- **Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)** are emergency alerts sent by authorities to wireless devices (predominantly cell phones).
- **The Emergency Alert System (EAS)** overrides television and radio broadcast stations with emergency messages.
- **NOAA Weather Radios** can be programmed to broadcast alerts about all types of hazards for your specific area
- **Local television and radio stations** often provide information before, during, and after disasters. WTOP (FM 103.5 and AM 1500), and WMAL (FM 105.9 and AM 630) are the designated Emergency Broadcast Stations for this area. Authorities will use these and other media sources to broadcast emergency alerts and test alerts through the EAS (Emergency Alerting System).

You should look for local, up-to-date information and follow instructions from local officials about:

- Weather watches and warnings
- How to safely stay where you are
- Evacuation orders
- Shelter openings and locations
- Where to get help
- Major road closures

3.1 Watch Vs. Warning

Do you know the difference between a Watch and Warning issued by the National Weather Service?

A Watch means be prepared! Hazardous weather is possible near the area where a watch has been issued. Stay informed and be ready to act if a warning is issued.

A Warning means take action! Hazardous weather has been reported by trained spotters, first responders, or indicated by radar. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life or property. Follow the instructions in the warning to keep you and your loved ones safe.

For a list of the different watches, warnings, or advisories that may be issued in our area, view the National Weather Service Sterling Weather Forecast Office definitions at <https://www.weather.gov/lwx/WarningsDefined>.

3.2 Be Prepared to Shelter in Place or Evacuate

Depending on the situation, local officials may tell you to stay where you are and take steps to protect yourself, or you may be told to leave the area immediately. Being informed about your options is critical to being prepared.

- If you are able to stay in your home:
- Gather your emergency supplies
- Check for damage to your home
- Know how to shut off any damaged utilities
- Check in with your emergency contact
- Check on your neighbors

Officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk. If you have to evacuate the area:

- Listen carefully and follow directions
- Shut off water and electricity but leave natural gas on unless officials advise you to turn it off
- Wear clothing that will protect you such as long-sleeve shirts, long pants and sturdy shoes
- Take any special supplies you may need such as medications, special food, or assistive device.
- Take a collar, harness, identification tags, vaccination records, medications, veterinarian contact and food for your service animal or pet
- If you are driving, make sure you have local maps and a full fuel tank
- Listen to local radio stations for traffic information
- Lock your home when you leave
- Notify your emergency contact of your plans

Be Prepared to evacuate if:

- Flood water is rising
- Hazardous materials have been released
- Your home is significantly damaged or without all utilities

4 Emergency Information

Get the latest information on County emergencies, closures and delays.

[PWC Alerts](#)

[Weather Advisories](#)

[Report Damage](#)

[Prince William County Schools](#)

5 Resources

5.1 Roads & Transportation

- [PWC Road Closures and Incidents](#)
- [511 Virginia \(VDOT\)](#)
 - To report trees or debris in a public roadway, call 1-800-367-7623 or submit a report online at <https://my.vdot.virginia.gov/>
- [VDOT Snow Plowing Status](#)
- [VDOT Northern Virginia Snow Updates](#)
- [VDOT Northern Virginia Streets](#)
 - To determine if a street or road is maintained by VDOT.
- [Omniride Service Updates](#)
- [Virginia Railway Express Service Updates](#)

5.2 Utility Information

5.2.1 Dominion Energy

- 866-DOM-HELP (866-366-4357)
- Outage Map / Report an Outage

5.2.2 Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC)

- 703-335-0500
- Outage Map / Report an Outage

5.2.3 Washington Gas

- 703-750-1400 or 1-800-752-7520

5.2.4 Columbia Gas

- Gas Emergency: 1-800-544-5606
- Customer Service: 1-800-543-8911

5.2.5 Prince William Water

- Emergency Dispatch: (703) 335-7990
- Customer Service: (703) 335-7950
- Website: www.PrinceWilliamWater.org

5.2.6 Virginia American Water

- 1-888-452-6863
- Website: <https://amwater.com/vaaw/>

5.2.7 Verizon

- 1-800-837-4966

- Report an Outage

5.2.8 Comcast

- 1-800-934-6489
- Report an Outage

