

Midland
DAILY NEWS
ourmidland.com

MIDLAND COUNTY EMERGENCY!

Preparedness Guide 2017



Office of Emergency Management prepares community for disasters

Michigan law requires every county to have an emergency management coordinator. The Office of Emergency Management fulfills that requirement for Midland County, with the overall mission of preparing the community for disasters. Our goal is to organize community resources to respond to significant events and disasters, and to bring other resources into the community when needed.

Local public and private organizations cooperate with the Office of Emergency Management to develop an emergency operations plan. The emergency operations plan identifies tasks to be done when responding to a disaster.

Organizations are matched with tasks and responsibilities. Emergency response may include public warning, search and rescue, fire fighting, emergency medical care, evacuation and sheltering, and damage assessment. When needed, local officials gather at an emergency operations center (EOC) to coordinate disaster response and recovery efforts. The emergency management coordinator is responsible for maintaining the readiness of the EOC and training exercises are conducted regularly.

Other plans and procedures complement the emergency operations plan. There are separate emergency plans for flooding and chemical related emergencies. Sometimes hazards can be reduced or eliminated through community planning or federally supported programs. These issues are addressed in a hazard mitigation plan.



When needed, local officials gather at an emergency operations center (EOC) to coordinate disaster response and recovery efforts. The emergency management coordinator is responsible for maintaining the readiness of the EOC and training exercises are conducted regularly.

Local emergency management programs in Michigan are overseen by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Michigan State Police (MSP). FEMA and MSP set standards for planning and training. They also keep local programs

informed of regulatory and program changes, advances in technology, and lessons learned from disasters in other parts of the country. Since 2001 the Office of Emergency Management has been responsible for managing certain homeland security initiatives. These

include a coordinated effort to conduct community risk and threat assessments; develop plans; purchase equipment for local agencies with grant funding; provide training; and keep agencies informed of regulatory changes. Midland County is also a member of the

Region 3 Homeland Security Planning Board and has provided leadership in developing homeland security strategy for the 14-county region. For more information call (989) 832-6750 or go to <http://co.midland.mi.us/EmergencyManagement>

Midland County faces multiple potential hazards

Most communities in Michigan have many hazards in common. Some hazards pose risk to the entire community and others only to a local area. In Midland County the potential hazards are:

- Severe thunderstorms and tornadoes
- Severe winter weather
- Flooding
- Dam failure
- Excessive heat and humidity
- Public health emergencies
- Wildfire
- Infrastructure failure
- Terrorism and acts of violence
- Hazardous materials emergencies
- Transportation accident
- Pipeline accident
- Oil and gas well accident

Historical facts about state and local hazards

- Severe weather and winds have caused a number of widespread power outages, damages to barns, trees and utility poles across the area. Notable events in Midland took place June 17, 1992, May 31, 1998 and July 17, 2007. Ice and snow storms have also crippled our area in December 2000 and February 2006.

- The highest temperature ever recorded in Michigan was 112 degrees Fahrenheit, on July 13, 1936, in Mio. The lowest temperature ever recorded in Michigan was -51 degrees Fahrenheit, on February 9, 1934 in Vanderbilt.

- Approximately 6% of Michigan is flood-prone, including about 200,000 buildings. Midland has received Presidential Disaster Declarations for the following flood events; Sept 1986, June 1996 and April 2013. The National Weather Service has issued a Flood Warning for the Tittabawassee River 31 times since 1986.

- Michigan's annual flood-related damages are between \$60 and \$100 million.

- Michigan has over 3,100 hazardous material sites subject to EPA emergency planning requirements.

- Michigan was one of the first states in U.S. history to be the target of a major act of terrorism when a bomb was set off in a school in Bath on May 18, 1927, killing 38 children and 3 teachers, while injuring 58 others.

- Since 1950 Michigan has experienced more than 900 tornadoes causing more than 230 deaths. 10 of these tornadoes have been in Midland County.

- Midland County has experienced its share of wildfires with the most recent in 2003 burning a total of 156 acres in Jerome Township.



Daily News File

Severe thunderstorms are a potential hazard for Midland County residents.

Neighbors helping neighbors

In a disaster there will be a high demand for emergency response resources. Early in a disaster there may not be resources enough to immediately get to everyone who needs help. Knowing your neighbors and working with them in a disaster may help save lives and property, before emergency responders get there. Talk to your neighbors about emergencies. Plan how you could work together as a neighborhood when a disaster occurs. Plan how you might help each other until assistance from local authorities arrives.

If you're a member of a neighborhood organization consider introducing disaster preparedness as a new topic for the group. Make an inventory list of special skills possessed by people in your neighbor-

hood. Is there a nurse in your neighborhood? Is there a utility worker or building contractor? How might they be able to help in an emergency? Consider how you could help people in your neighborhood who have special needs such as the disabled or elderly. They may not have the ability to help themselves. Identifying and combining the talents and resources of your neighborhood will be rewarding and could prove to be essential during a disaster. Feel free to contact the Midland County Emergency Management Office at (989) 832-6750 if your group or club would be interested in a presentation on preparedness.

hood. Is there a nurse in your neighborhood? Is there a utility worker or building contractor? How might they be able to help in an emergency? Consider how you could help people in your neighborhood who have special needs such as the disabled or elderly. They may not have the ability to help themselves. Identifying and combining the talents and resources of your neighborhood will be rewarding and could prove to be essential during a disaster. Feel free to contact the Midland County Emergency Management Office at (989) 832-6750 if your group or club would be interested in a presentation on preparedness.

hood. Is there a nurse in your neighborhood? Is there a utility worker or building contractor? How might they be able to help in an emergency? Consider how you could help people in your neighborhood who have special needs such as the disabled or elderly. They may not have the ability to help themselves. Identifying and combining the talents and resources of your neighborhood will be rewarding and could prove to be essential during a disaster. Feel free to contact the Midland County Emergency Management Office at (989) 832-6750 if your group or club would be interested in a presentation on preparedness.

Preparing for emergencies at home

Planning ahead for your family's needs can make a big difference in your ability to cope with emergencies. Communications, transportation, utilities, and other essential services could be disrupted by disaster, forcing you to rely on your own resources for food, water, first aid, transportation, and shelter for a period of time. You can lessen an emergency's impact by knowing what to do before, during, and after one occurs.

BE INFORMED

Reading this emergency preparedness guide can serve as a first step in learning about disaster preparedness. Additional resources are available free of charge from the Midland County Office of Emergency Management. Disaster preparedness information is easily accessible on the Internet through a variety of websites. Consider visiting:

- www.co.midland.mi.us/emergencymanagement
- www.ready.gov
- www.redcross.org/prepare
- www.mcswa.com
- www.floodsmart.gov
- www.michigan.gov/msp
- www.facebook.com/MidlandCountyEmergencyManagement

- www.do1thing.com

Make sure you know how to receive emergency warning in your community, and if you have children, become familiar with emergency plans at their school and/or day care center.

Learn about the emergency plan at your workplace and make sure you know what to do if there is a fire, tornado, chemical release, or other type of emergency at your facility.

Make a Family Disaster Plan

- Meet as a family to work on a safety plan for severe weather, floods, fires, and chemical emergencies.

- Consider all family members; young children, elderly relatives and pets.

- Select an outdoor meeting place to use if a sudden emergency like a fire forces you out of your home.

- Select a meeting place to use if an emergency happens while the family is away from home and cannot return. Make certain that each family member knows the address and telephone number of the chosen location. Usually the home of a relative or friend is best.

- Make arrangements with someone outside of the community to act as a central point of contact for your relatives and friends who may attempt to call you following a disaster. In a disaster it's often easier to call long distance than to call locally. As soon as possible after a disaster get word of your situation to your contact person. Each family member should know your contact person and telephone number in case the family is separated. Family members can each call the contact person and tell him or her where they are. Make certain that all your close friends and relatives know who your contact person is, and how to reach him or her.

BUILD A KIT

In a disaster situation food, water and electricity can be cut off for days. Families should be prepared to take care of themselves for up to 72 hours. Build a kit to meet the essential needs of your family. There are six basics: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items.

Water Store one gallon of water per family member per day. A family of four should store at least 12 gallons of water. Use for drinking, food preparation and sanitation.

Food Store a supply of non-perishable food that require no refrigeration, cooking or preparation. Some examples are: ready to eat canned meats and fish; fruits and vegetables;

The Federal Office of Emergency Management has tools to help families plan for disasters, such as making a family communication plan.

smoked or dried meats; crackers; nuts; health food bars; hard candy; vitamins. Rotate food and water out of the kit at least every six months.

First Aid Keep first aid kits in your home and in each vehicle. The American Red Cross is a good source for pre-assembled first aid kits containing a variety of supplies.

Tools and Supplies Some key supplies for your 72-hour kit include:

- Flashlight
- Battery operated radio
- Extra Batteries
- Multi-function Knife
- Lantern
- Spare Keys for car and home
- Matches
- Toolbox
- Fire Extinguisher
- Money
- Paper and Pencil
- Toilet paper
- Toothpaste and Toothbrush
- Clothing and Bedding
- Boots, rain gear, hats, gloves, blankets and sleeping bags are all good items to include in your emergency kit.

Special Items These items are specific to the needs of your family. They may include prescription drugs, eyeglasses, baby formula, diapers, games, books, magazines, and copies of important family docu-

ments.

The 72-hour kit should be as compact as possible. Select and pack items carefully in a duffel bag or plastic storage container. Many supplies can be placed inside waterproof plastic storage bags for extra protection. Personalize your kit so it meets the unique needs of your family.

Be Ready To Evacuate

- Keep a list of prescription medications for all family members with the name and telephone number of your doctor. This information is easily kept in a calendar book, planner or electronic device that you may normally carry with you.

- At home have a 72-Hour emergency supply kit stocked and ready to "grab and go".

- Keep vital family records such as mortgage papers, medical records, insurance policies, birth certificates, marriage licenses, wills, stock and bond certificates, tax records, and other irreplaceable items in one easily accessible location so they can be transported if you must leave quickly. Important papers should be stored in a water and fireproof container.

- Keep your car fueled. Don't let the gas tank fall below half-

full during winter months.

- Listen to radio or television broadcasts for emergency instructions. Follow instructions of local authorities promptly and carefully.

- When leaving, post a note indicating when you left and where you are going. Be specific.

- Once in a shelter or safe area stay there until authorities give you permission to return.

BUILD A CAR EMERGENCY KIT

Cars should be equipped with emergency supplies. Consider the following for your car:

- Battery operated radio with extra batteries
- Blanket
- Booster cables
- A-B-C Fire extinguisher
- First aid kit with manual
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Non-perishable snack food
- Maps
- Shovel
- Tool kit
- Flares
- Water
- Extra clothing
- Cell phone

It may not be necessary to carry all of these supplies at all times, however when traveling between cities or taking a long trip it is recommended to have as many of these items as possible.

SAFETY ITEMS EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE

- Smoke Detectors in every room. Make sure to check batteries every 6-12 months.

- Carbon Monoxide Detector and test monthly.

- To help emergency responders, make sure house number is clearly visible from road. Reflective numbers on mailbox and end of driveway is ideal.

- If you have trees along your driveway, be sure that they are trimmed so that emergency vehicles can make their way to your home.

Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities and special needs

While each person's abilities and needs are unique, every individual can take steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies. Consider how an emergency might affect your individual needs. Plan to make it on your own for at least three days. It's possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a drugstore. It's crucial that you and your family think about what kind of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if those resources are limited or not available.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

If you take medicine or use a medical treatment on a daily basis, be sure you have what you need on hand to make it on your own for at least a week. Keep a copy of your prescriptions as well as dosage or treatment information. If it's not possible to have a week's supply of medicines and supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should do to prepare.

If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital or if you receive regular services such as home health care, treatment or transportation, talk to your service provider about their emergency plans. If you use medical equipment that requires electricity to operate, talk to your health care provider about a backup plan for use during a power outage.

If you use eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries, or oxygen, be sure you always have extras in your home. Keep medical insurance information readily available. If you have a service animal, be sure to include food, water, and collar with ID tag.

Keep information in your emergency kit about how to operate medical equipment or life-saving devices that you rely on. Make sure that a trusted friend or family mem-

ber has copies of these documents. Include names and numbers of everyone in your personal support network, as well as your medical providers. If you have a communication disability, make sure your emergency information list notes the best way to communicate with you.

MAKE A PLAN

During a disaster you will likely not have access to everyday conveniences. If there are people who assist you on a daily basis, list who they are and how you will contact them in an emergency. Create your own personal support network by identifying others who will help you in an emergency. Think about what modes of transportation you use and what alternative modes could serve as back-ups. If you require handicap accessible transportation be sure your alternatives are also accessible. If you have tools or aids specific to your disability, plan how you would cope without them. For example, if you use a communication device, mobility aid, or rely on a service animal, what will you do if these are not available? If you are dependent on life-sustaining equipment or treatment such as a dialysis machine, find out the location and availability of more than one facility. For every aspect of your daily routine, plan an alternative procedure. Make a plan and write it down. Keep a copy of your plan in your emergency supply kit and a list of important information and contacts in your wallet. Share your plan with your family, friends, care providers and others in your personal support network.

CREATE A PERSONAL SUPPORT NETWORK

If you anticipate needing assistance during a disaster, make a list of family, friends and others who will be part of your plan. Talk to these

people and ask them to be part of your support network. Share each aspect of your emergency plan with everyone in your group, including a friend or relative in another area who would not be impacted by the same emergency who can help if necessary. Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home, school or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster. Make sure that someone in your personal support network has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies. Teach them how to use lifesaving equipment or administer medicine in case of an emergency. If you use a wheelchair, oxygen or other medical equipment, show friends how to use these devices so they can move you if necessary or help you evacuate. Practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your personal support network.

Inform your employer and co-workers about what assistance you will need in an emergency. This is particularly important if you need to be lifted or carried. Talk about communication difficulties, physical limitations, equipment instructions and medication procedures. If you are hearing impaired, discuss the best ways to alert you in an emergency. If you have a cognitive disability, be sure to work with your employer to determine how to best notify you of an emergency and what instruction methods are easiest for you to follow. Always participate in exercises, trainings and emergency drills offered by your employer.

MAKE A FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situa-

tions. Consider a plan where each family member calls or sends an email to the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.

DECIDING TO STAY OR GO

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you stay or go. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information to determine if there is immediate danger. In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should monitor television or radio news reports for information or official instructions as they become available. If you're specifically told to evacuate or seek medical treatment, do so immediately. If you require additional travel time or need transportation assistance, make these arrangements in advance.

CONSIDER YOUR SERVICE ANIMAL OR PETS

Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your service animal and pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals. If you must evacuate, take your pets with you, if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that the law requires only service animals be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your animals; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area, pet-friendly shelters and

veterinarians who would be willing to take in you and your pets in an emergency.

STAYING PUT - SHELTERING IN PLACE

Whether you are at home or else-where, there may be situations when it's simply best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty outside. Consider what you can do to safely shelter-in-place alone or with friends, family or neighbors. Also consider how a shelter designated for the public would meet your needs. There could be times when you will need to stay put and create a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside. This process is known as "sealing the room." Use available information to assess the situation. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to take this kind of action.

EVACUATION

There may be conditions in which you will decide to get away or there may be situations when you may be ordered to leave. Plan how you will get away and know where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency. Ask about evacuation plans at the places where you spend time including work, school, community organizations and other places you frequent. If you typically rely on elevators, have a backup plan in case they are not working.

FIRE SAFETY

In case of fire, plan for at least two ways to exit every room. Check for items that could fall and block your escape path. Check hallways, stairwells, doorways, windows and other areas for hazards that may keep you from safely leaving a building during an emergency. Secure or remove furniture and objects that may block your path.

Sources of emergency notification and information

When emergencies and disasters happen, quick access to information and instructions is important for everyone. Read on to learn about ways you can receive emergency notifications and information.

NIXLE - RECEIVING MESSAGES FROM MIDLAND COUNTY 9-1-1

In the early stages of an event, alerts and emergency instructions are distributed as quickly as possible. As activities change from emergency response to recovery operations other messages are shared with the public about such things as sheltering, damage assessment and disaster assistance. The most effective way of providing information to you is to reach you right where you are by sending a text message to your cell phone. Are you working on your computer most of the day? Email and Facebook postings may also be a good way to reach you. If receiving emergency warnings and information by text message, email or Facebook sound good to you, then you should sign up for Nixle.

Nixle is like Twitter, only Nixle is for public safety, not social networking. Midland County 911 and other local agencies can distribute text messages and email to you using Nixle. Messages can range from general information to alerts with emergency instructions. In order to receive messages through Nixle you first must register on the system. The easiest way to register is to go to www.midland911.org and follow the instructions you find there. Please note that the standard fees normally charged by your wireless network provider for text mes-

saging will apply to messages received from Nixle.

FACEBOOK

Facebook users can receive postings from a variety of sources just by "Liking" them. To receive local information you should "Like" Midland County 911 on Facebook. When Midland County 911 sends a message using Nixle it automatically posts to Facebook. Other recommended "Likes" are:

- Midland County Emergency Management
- U.S. National Weather Service Detroit/Pontiac
- National Terrorism Advisory System
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Midland Police Department

CITY OF MIDLAND

NOAA Weather Radio
NOAA Weather Radio is provided as a public service by the National Weather Service (NWS). It broadcasts official NWS forecast information 24 hours a day. A radio transmitter at Central Michigan University broadcasts on a frequency of 162.525 MHz into Midland County. Weather radios typically sit quietly unless you choose to listen to the forecast, or a special alarm tone is sent by NWS to alert you that a message is coming about a potentially life-threatening situation, such as a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Radios can be purchased through local retailers and through a variety of sources on the Internet. Most weather radios provide Specific Area Message Encoding, which allows you to choose the counties for which you want to receive alerts. Every county

Midland County Emergency Information

1-888-TELL-MORE
(1-888-835-5667)

MGTV Charter Cable Channel 188

To Receive Emergency Texts Or Emails Via Nixle Go To: www.midland911.org

Midland County 9-1-1 On Facebook

has a code that can be programmed into the weather radio. So if you only want to receive watches and warnings for one county you enter its six-digit "county code". Midland County's code is 026111. Some radios have the codes pre-programmed and only require you to select a county name. Every home and business should have a NOAA Weather Radio.

TELEVISION AND RADIO

Midland County sends emergency messages to local television and radio stations and they distribute them in a variety of ways including through their regular broadcast channels, websites, Facebook pages, Twitter, and text alerts. Check with your favorite stations to find out how they can be a source of information for you. Also, regular programming on the City of Midland's Charter cable channel 188 MGTV is interrupted in order to display information.

2-1-1

If you don't have Internet access or would like to talk directly to someone, you may call 2-1-1 of Northeast Michigan. 2-1-1 will be provided official information that they will pass along to anyone making an inquiry with them.

National Terrorism Advisory System

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security abandoned the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System and replaced it with the much simpler National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS). Alerts are issued when there is a credible terrorist threat. Alerts are either for an imminent threat or an elevated threat. Alerts provide a concise summary of the potential threat, information about actions being taken to ensure public safety, and recommended steps that you can take to protect yourself. NTAS Alerts will be issued in a variety of ways, including directly to the public via the following channels:

Department of Homeland Security NTAS webpage - www.dhs.gov/alerts

Email signup at - www.dhs.gov/alerts

Facebook at - <http://facebook.com/NTASAlerts>

Twitter at - www.twitter.com/NTASAlerts

1-888-TELL-MORE (1-888-835-5667)

Another place to find information about an event is through 1-888-TELL-MORE. When you become aware of

an emergency or disaster situation in Midland County, call this toll free number to find out more about it and to learn what you and your family should do to protect yourselves. After the danger has passed, if follow-up information is needed it will also be provided to you through 1-888-TELL-MORE.

A NOTE OF CAUTION

In the early stages of an incident emergency responders probably have many of the same questions you do, like:

- What's happened?
- Who does it affect?
- What needs to be done?

Responding to and assessing a situation takes time – longer than it takes to send a text message or put a post on Facebook. So don't be surprised if you receive text messages or see information posted on social media about an emergency before you see information from official sources. It can and does happen. Gathering accurate information is essential in order to be able to provide accurate information to the community. The information we have early in an event may be limited, but it will be communicated quickly and then expanded upon as more becomes available. Information you receive in text messages or see posted in social media by friends, family members and other unofficial sources may or may not be correct. Rumors start quickly and spread quickly. You can help local officials greatly by waiting for information from official sources and then forwarding it and posting it for others in your social network.

Emergency planning for business

How quickly your company can get back to business after an emergency is determined by planning done today. Emergency planning will help support employees, customers, the community, and the local economy. It also gives your company a better chance for survival. Be prepared to assess the emergency, use common sense and available resources to take care of yourself, your co-workers and your business.

Be Informed: Assess the risk to your business. The type, size, and scope of your company will determine your risk assessment needs.

Continuity Planning: Determine the staff, materials, procedures and equipment that are absolutely necessary to keep the business operating. Identify operations critical to survival and recovery. Include emergency payroll and accounting systems to track and document costs related to the emergency. Establish

procedures for succession of leadership. Include employees from all levels of your business in emergency planning and as members of your emergency team. Make a list of your most important customers and proactively plan ways to serve them during and after a disaster. Identify key suppliers, shippers, resources and other businesses you must interact with on a daily basis. Develop professional relationships with more than one company in case your primary contractor cannot service your needs. A disaster that shuts down a key supplier can be devastating to your business. Plan what you will do if your facility is not accessible. Talk with your staff about emergency plans and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency.

Emergency Supplies: Think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and heat. Encourage everyone to have a portable kit custom-

ized to meet their personal needs. Talk to employees about emergency supplies the company can provide, if any, and which ones individuals should consider keeping on hand. Keep copies and backup files of important company records in a waterproof, fireproof portable container. Store a second set of records at an off-site location.

Planning to Stay or Go: Shelter-in-place or evacuate? You should plan for both and follow instructions provided by local authorities. Monitor news reports or call 1-888-TELL-MORE for official information. Use common sense and available information to determine if there is immediate danger.

Make an Evacuation Plan: Some disasters will require employees to leave the workplace quickly. Having a plan to evacuate workers, customers and visitors can save lives. Be able to account for who is in your building, including customers and visitors. Decide in

advance who has the authority to order an evacuation. If local officials tell you to evacuate, do as instructed. Identify who will shut down critical operations and lock the doors. Create a chain of command so that others are authorized to act in case your designated person is not available. Label emergency exits. Post evacuation route maps. Identify at least two ways out of the building. Establish a way to communicate warning to people in your facility including people who have disabilities or don't speak English. Designate an assembly area. Pick one location near your facility and another in the general area in case you have to move farther away. Account for all workers, visitors and customers as people arrive at the assembly site. Determine who is responsible for providing an all clear or return-to-work notification.

Make a Shelter-in-Place Plan: There may be situations

when it's best to stay where you are to avoid any uncertainty outside. How and where you take shelter can be a matter of survival. You should understand the different threats and plan for all possibilities.

Review your Plans Annually: Just as your business changes over time, so do your preparedness needs. When you hire new employees or when there are changes in how your company functions you should update your plans and inform your people.

Practice the Plan: Practice what you intend to do during a disaster. Include disaster training in new employee orientation programs. If you rent, lease or share office space, coordinate and practice evacuation and other emergency plans with other businesses in your building or facility. Evaluate and revise processes and procedures based on lessons learned and keep training records.

Adequate insurance coverage key before emergencies

Most property owners have homeowners insurance. Does your policy meet all the needs you have today? Before a disaster, make sure you have adequate insurance coverage. The value of your property may have increased. Improvements may have increased the value of your home. Review your policy and be aware of coverage limits. Consider increasing your homeowner's insurance if you discover it no longer adequately covers your property's value.

Check your policy for flood and windstorm coverage. A standard homeowner's policy doesn't cover flood damage. If you live in a flood prone area you should talk to your insurance agent about obtaining flood insurance. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a federal government program that makes flood insurance available in a community that is enrolled

in the program. Most areas of Midland County are enrolled. NFIP insurance is available through local insurance agencies. Your property doesn't have to be in the floodplain to qualify. Standard homeowner's policies usually cover damage caused directly from wind or hail. Check your policy to make sure windstorm coverage hasn't been excluded. If you have questions about whether your policy covers wind damage contact your insurance agent.

Check your policy for coverage of special items. Certain valuable possessions may have only limited coverage on a standard homeowner's policy. Review your policy to determine coverage on items like jewelry, art, antiques, and luxury or collector's items. You may need or desire to have additional insurance coverage for these articles. Also, it's a good idea to keep

valuables or personal effects in a fire safe. Storing the safe in the basement may also protect it from fire. If your home were ever struck by a tornado the fire safe is more likely to be found if it was stored in the basement. If your basement is prone to flooding, take that into consideration as well when storing your fire safe.

Make a list of personal belongings. Include each item's cost, date of purchase, and serial number if applicable. Insurance companies may require proof of value on any item for which a claim is made. Photographs and videotapes of each room of your house also help to establish evidence of possessions in the home and the value of those possessions.

Important insurance records should be safeguarded. Keep copies of each of your insurance policies, along with your inventory of personal belong-

ings in a safe deposit box or with a friend or relative. If possible, store an electronic copy of this information on a flash drive or computer disk. If your property is damaged it is to your advantage to have access to this information.

The only way to be certain you have adequate insurance coverage is to contact your agent for a policy review. Your insurance agent can provide information about rates and coverage and can assist you in making necessary policy changes. Your agent can also provide additional advice on how to document your possessions, so if necessary you can document loss.

After a disaster make emergency repairs and document them. Your insurance policy may require that you make emergency repairs to prevent further damage to your home and its contents. Keep all

receipts and take photographs of the damage before and after the emergency repairs. Present this information when submitting your claim to the insurance company.

Take precautions if you must leave your home. Secure your property. Remove valuable items. Lock windows and doors. Contact your insurance agent and leave a telephone number where you can be reached.

When damage occurs, immediately report it to your insurance agent. Your agent should provide you with claim information and arrange for an adjuster to visit your property.

When preparing to make repairs to your property after a disaster, take care to hire reputable contractors and service people. Local companies are almost always your best choice. Make sure that each business you hire has the appropriate occupational license.

Midland County prone to flooding

Midland County with its network of rivers and streams is quite vulnerable to flooding. The Tittabawassee River is our primary river with the Chippewa, Pine, and Salt Rivers its major tributaries. Other creeks and streams such as the Snake and Sturgeon are also branches of the Tittabawassee. Midland typically experiences flooding of low lying areas in the spring when the ground is saturated and rainfall runs off into the river system. An unusually large amount of precipitation received in a short period of time as occurred in September 1986 will cause flooding too. Local authorities maintain a watch on the county's river system. River assessment information is gathered by the Detroit/Pontiac National Weather Service Office which then issues flood watches and flood warnings as needed.

FLOOD TERMS

- **Flood Watch:** Flooding is possible. Tune to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio and television for information and on the Internet check www.weather.gov

- **Flash Flood Watch:** Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground and seek additional information.

- **Flood Warning:** Flooding is occurring or will occur soon. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

- **Flash Flood Warning:** A flash flood is occurring. If in an area at risk of flooding seek higher ground immediately.

The National Weather Service distributes flood warning information on NOAA Weather Radio. For customers of Charter Communications, specific flooding information is broadcast on Midland Government Television (MGTV) channel 188. Information related to flooding is distributed through 1-888-835-5667,

A home on Whitman Drive is surrounded by flood waters in this 1986 photo.

land911.org, 2-1-1, through Midland County Emergency Management on facebook, and through local radio and television stations.

FLOOD SAFETY

Before The Flood

- Determine if you are located in a flood prone area
- Consider the purchase of flood insurance
- If you are in a flood prone area, consider keeping sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting and other flood protection materials on hand.

- Have a basic emergency supply kit

During The Flood

- Avoid areas subject to flooding.

- Do not attempt to go across flowing water.

- Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road you can be stranded or trapped. The depth of water is not always obvious.

After The Flood

- Do not use fresh food that has come in contact with floodwaters.

- Boil drinking water before using.

- Stay away from disaster areas; you may endanger yourself or hamper emergency responders

- Stay away from electrical equipment in wet areas; electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.

- Seek emergency information and instructions.

FLOOD INSURANCE

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) estimates that 90 percent of all natural disasters involve flooding. A small amount of water can bring a tremendous amount of damage, and many property owners are unaware that they are at risk of flooding. Just an inch of flood water can cause the replacement of carpet, drywall, floor boards, moldings, and doors. A home located in the 100-year floodplain has a four times greater risk of flooding than experiencing a fire during the course of a 30-year mortgage. Unfortunately many prop-

erty owners don't realize that their homeowners' or property owners' insurance doesn't cover flood damage. To be covered from flood damage you must purchase flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program through your local insurance agent.

There is a 30-day waiting period before a new or modified flood insurance policy becomes effective. You do not need to live in a floodplain to purchase flood insurance coverage. It is available to anyone in a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. About 30% of flood insurance claims come from property outside of the 100 year floodplain. If



Currie Stadium experienced severe flooding during the flood of 1986.

your property is outside the floodplain your insurance premiums will be discounted. Coverage for water back up in basements (drains/sewers) is excluded from the flood insurance policy. Although basement water back up is excluded under most homeowners' insurance policies, coverage can be obtained by purchasing an endorsement. Most insurance companies offer sewer and drain back up as

optional coverage. Coverage and limits vary by insurance company, so check with your agent/company about specifics. Some insurers include full coverage for sump pump failure while others specify items that are covered.

Since 2012 the NFIP has experienced some legislative reform known as the Biggert-Waters Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (BW-12) and the Homeowner Flood

Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (HFIAA). The reforms push insurance policies to provide coverage to reflect full flood risk of structures. Full flood risk can be determined by having an elevation study done and providing the documentation to your insurance agent. In the event that the elevation certificate indicates that you are above elevation of the floodplain, you can apply through FEMA for a Letter of

Map Amendment (LOMA) which indicates that you are not within the floodplain and could eliminate your need to have flood insurance. If you are a homeowner that is in the flood area and are thinking of selling your home, you should consider having an elevation study done prior to marketing your house and provide it with your seller disclosure to help for a smoother sell of your home. If you are

in the market to buy a home, you should make use of the online tools available to you and take time to educate yourself. Flood map layers can be found at the City of Midland's website: <http://www.cityofmidlandmi.gov> and the County of Midland's website: <https://co.midland.mi.us>, both utilizing the interactive map. More information on the NFIP can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/nfip>.

Preparing for and dealing with power outages

Every day we rely on energy being delivered to our homes, businesses and schools. When power is interrupted we can literally be left in the dark and without the means to carry out normal tasks. A power outage is never convenient, but things can be made better by having a plan.

CONSUMERS ENERGY INFORMATION

When the power goes out, if you have a battery-operated device with Internet access you can find power outage information at the Consumers Energy Outage Center at www.consumersenergy.com. By using the Outage Center map you can see where power is out and get a time estimate of when the power is expected to be restored.

PREVENTING DAMAGE FROM POWER SURGE

When the power has gone out there is potential for the power to surge when it comes back on. A power surge could damage electronic devices in your home. Unplug computers and other electronic equipment that could be damaged when the power comes back on.

DEALING WITH EXCESSIVE HEAT OR COLD

Often times power outages occur as a result of severe weather. Thunderstorms and tornadoes in the summer or ice storms in the winter can result in prolonged power outages. Plan how you will deal with the heat of summer or the cold of winter if the power is out. In the summer your basement or a lower level of your home will be cooler than the top floor. Sitting outside may be cooler than staying indoors. In the winter you should wear several layers of clothing to help keep you warm. If you have a well-maintained fireplace, it can also be a source of heat. Consider going to a shelter or staying with friends or family who have power until yours is restored. If you leave your home use caution to avoid downed power lines, trees and other hazards that may have resulted from the

storm.

COMMUNICATING

Most of us who still have land line phone service in our homes use cordless phones. Cordless phones don't work when the power is out. Keep an inexpensive corded phone for power outage situations. Corded phones are powered by the phone line itself. Much of the land line phone service is buried in the ground and is operational even when the power is out. If cellular service is out or your cell phone battery is dead, the corded land line phone may be your only means of communication.

FOOD SAFETY

If the power is out for less than 2 hours, then the food in your refrigerator and freezer will be safe to consume. While the power is out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep food cold longer.

If the power is out for longer than 2 hours, follow the guidelines below:

- For the Freezer section: A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. Do not open the freezer door if you can avoid it.

- For the Refrigerated section: Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice. Inexpensive foam coolers are fine for this purpose.

- Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

WATER

Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. Here are some general rules concerning water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene. Remember:

- Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash your hands, make



Daily News File

City of Midland signal shop employee Darin Alderton guides a string of traffic lights into position with the help of his coworker Jason Holzinger and a Consumers Energy crew while working to instal a new utility pole at the intersection of Rodd and Buttles.

ice, or make baby formula.

- If you use bottled water, be sure it came from a safe source. If you do not know that the water came from a safe source, you should boil or treat it before you use it. Use only bottled, boiled, or treated water until your supply is tested and found safe.

- Boiling water, when practical, is the preferred way to kill harmful bacteria and parasites. Bringing water to a rolling boil for 1 minute will kill most organisms.

- If you don't have clean, safe, bottled water and if boiling is not possible, you often can make water safer to drink by using a disinfectant, such as unscented household chlorine bleach, iodine, or chlorine dioxide tablets. These can kill most harmful organisms, such as viruses and bacteria.

TO DISINFECT WATER:

- Filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel, or coffee filter OR allow it to settle.
- Draw off the clear water.

When using household

chlorine bleach:

- Add 1/8 teaspoon (or 8 drops; about 0.625 milliliters) of unscented liquid household chlorine (5- 6 percent) bleach for each gallon of clear water (or 2 drops of bleach for each liter or each quart of clear water). Add 1/4 teaspoon (or 16 drops; about 1.50 milliliters) of bleach for each gallon of cloudy water (or 4 drops of bleach for each liter or each quart of cloudy water).

- Stir the mixture well.
- Let it stand for 30 minutes or longer before you use it.

- Store the disinfected water in clean, disinfected containers with tight covers.

When using iodine:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Store the disinfected water in clean, disinfected containers with tight covers.

When using chlorine dioxide tablets:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Store the disinfected water in clean, disinfected contain-

ers with tight covers.

GENERATORS

Emergency power generators are a great option for homeowners. A properly used generator can provide for essential lighting, heating, and refrigeration. It can also provide electricity for your television or radio so you can receive emergency information. In considering the use of a generator, consult a licensed electrician to determine the proper size generator for your needs and to ensure your home electrical equipment is wired correctly and safely to accommodate a generator. Generators should be run only outdoors in a well ventilated area so exhaust fumes don't enter your home, creating a carbon monoxide hazard. Fuel for generators should be stored in approved safety containers in your garage, storage shed, or other outbuilding. Know that there are other options other than a whole house generator. Something smaller and more cost-efficient can still support your basic needs.

Winter storm safety

A snowstorm is a period of rapidly accumulating snow, often accompanied by high winds, cold temperatures and low visibility. An especially intense storm is called a blizzard.

It doesn't take a blizzard or even a winter storm to create unsafe winter conditions.

Being Informed

The first step in winter safety is to stay informed about the weather and make plans accordingly. Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or check weather reports on local television or radio. Weather information is readily available 24 hours per day from many sources. Here are important terms to understand:

Winter Storm Warning:

Issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

Winter Storm Watch: Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Winter Storm.

Winter Storm Outlook: Issued prior to a Winter Storm Watch. The Outlook is given when forecasters believe winter storm conditions are possible and are usually issued 3 to 5 days in advance of a winter storm.

Blizzard Warning: Issued for sustained or gusty winds of 35 mph or more, and falling or blowing snow creating visibilities at or below ¼ mile; these conditions should persist for at least three hours.

Wind Chill Warning: Issued when wind chill temperatures are expected to be hazardous to life within several minutes of exposure.

Wind Chill Advisory: Issued when wind chill temperatures



Daily News File

It doesn't take a blizzard or even a winter storm to create unsafe winter conditions.

are expected to be a significant inconvenience to life with prolonged exposure, and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to hazardous exposure.

Winter Weather Advisories: Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and sleet which will cause significant inconveniences and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to life-threatening situations.

Sleet: Rain drops that freeze into ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet usually bounces when hitting a surface and does not stick to objects. However, it can accumulate like snow and cause a hazard to motorists.

Freezing Rain: Rain that falls onto a surface with a temperature below freezing. This causes it to freeze to surfaces, such as trees, cars, and roads, forming a coating or glaze of ice. Even small accumulations of ice can cause a significant hazard.

Preparing for a Winter Storm

At home keep a battery-powered flashlight, radio, extra food that requires little or no preparation, and bottled water. Have extra blankets and lots of warm clothes. Be aware of fire and carbon monoxide hazards if you use an emergency heating source like a fireplace, wood stove or space heater. In a vehicle, keep a shovel, blankets, windshield scraper, container of sand, booster cables, tow rope, flashlight, battery-operated radio, first aid kit, a change of clothing, and high-energy snacks. Make a "travel emergency kit" that contains these items. Put the kit in your vehicle when you're going to be traveling a long distance or if hazardous conditions have been predicted. Keep a cell phone with you when traveling so you have a way to call for emergency help.

During a Winter Storm

At home to save heat close off unneeded rooms, cover windows at night and block

cracks under outside doors with draft guards. If stranded in a vehicle, call for help with your cell phone. Attach a brightly colored cloth to your antenna or somewhere on the vehicle to attract attention. Run the engine 10 minutes per hour for heat. Open your window slightly for fresh air and make sure your exhaust pipe isn't blocked with snow. Turn on your emergency flashers when the engine is running to attract attention. Exercise by moving arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep blood circulating and to keep warm. If stranded outside, try to stay dry and cover all exposed parts of your body. Prepare a windbreak or snow cave for protection from the wind. If possible, build a fire for heat and to attract attention. Don't eat snow. It will lower your body temperature. Melt it first.

Be Prepared

Chances are you've never been stranded or have experienced a true winter emergency. A few simple steps can

help keep you from ever having to. Check weather reports before traveling. If a winter storm is forecast, seriously consider changing or delaying your travel plans. Keep winter emergency supplies at home and in your vehicle. Dress appropriately for the weather. Never take unnecessary chances with winter weather.

Winter Storm Safety Rules

- Stay ahead of winter storms by keeping up with the latest weather forecast.

- Make sure battery powered radios or televisions have fresh batteries and are working properly. They could be your only source of information during a storm.

- If you live in a rural area, make sure you have an adequate supply of heating fuel. Also, make sure you have plenty of food and essential supplies on hand.

- Have food supplies that are non-perishable and require little or no preparation.

- Stay indoors during a blizzard. Don't go out unless it is absolutely necessary.

- In extremely cold weather wear loose fitting, light weight, warm clothing in several layers. Body heat is trapped between each layer to keep you warm. If necessary, layers of clothing can be removed to prevent perspiring and chills. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent and hooded. Mittens that are snug at the wrist are better hand protection than gloves.

- Winterize your car in the fall. Keep the tank full of gas. Keep a car emergency kit with blankets, flashlight, booster cables, snack food, first aid, extra clothes and a snow shovel.

- If you get stuck in your car stay with the vehicle. Run your engine periodically to stay warm until help arrives.

- Don't overexert yourself. It is easy to do if you are not used to vigorous exercise.

Preparing the community for chemical emergencies

Chemicals have been produced, stored, transported and used in the Midland area for over 100 years. Each day they are handled safely in our community. Even so, there is the potential for a chemical accident to occur, so it makes good sense to have an emergency plan.

NOTIFICATION OF A CHEMICAL EMERGENCY

When a harmful chemical release occurs the outdoor warning siren system is activated. This warning system covers Midland, Midland Township, northern sections of Ingersoll Township and areas near Midland in Williams and Tittabawassee Townships. The wail of the siren is your signal to move indoors and seek emergency information and instructions. In areas of Midland County where there are no outdoor warning sirens, notification is made through local radio and television, Nixle, and by door-to-door contact from Deputy Sheriffs, fire department personnel, and volunteers. In some cases public address systems on emergency response vehicles may be utilized for notification. Emergency broadcasts on radio and television will describe the emergency and advise you of appropriate actions.

WHEN A CHEMICAL EMERGENCY OCCURS

In the event of a chemical release, highly trained teams respond to the source of the emergency with the goal of stopping the release in a safe and timely manner. Emergency Operations Center staff members work to assess the situation and keep the public informed with emergency instructions and information. You should do the following as appropriate.

- If you're not in the area affected by the chemical release, stay away from it.
- If you are in the affected



DAILY NEWS FILE

Members of the Midland fire department decontaminate their fully encapsulated HAZMAT suits after investigating a hazardous material leak during a training exercise. The fire department along with Dow Chemical Emergency Response Team, Dow Corning Emergency Response Team, Regional Response Team 31, 51st Civil Support Team, Midland County Central Dispatch Authority and Air Gas USA trained together on the hazardous material exercise.

area or downwind from it, shelter-in-place. Even poorly sealed buildings provide protection. If you are outside, gather your family and pets together and go indoors or get into your automobile. Once inside, close all windows and doors; turn off pilot lights; and shut down all ventilation equipment such as heating and air conditioning units and put out fireplace fires and close dampers.

- Stay inside unless asked by local authorities to do otherwise. Remain tuned to local radio or television and wait for the "All Clear" announcement. Nixle and Facebook will also be used to provide alerts and

updated information.

- If fumes appear to be entering the building and you feel you are in danger, a wet cloth or towel over your nose and mouth will act as a filter and offer some protection.

- If you are outside and can't possibly get indoors, move cross-wind (so the wind is blowing on the side of your face). This offers the best advantage for getting out of the path of the chemical release and into a safe area.

- When the all clear is given move outdoors and stay outdoors for 15 to 30 minutes. In addition, open all windows and doors, and start

up heating and ventilation systems to aid in removing any contaminated air that may have entered during the emergency.

- Remember, when you are alerted of a chemical emergency the first step is always to go indoors. If local authorities determine that an evacuation is necessary they will provide you with instructions via radio, television and the Internet, but until you receive those instructions stay indoors. Don't go outside or open doors and windows until you are told it is safe to do so.

- Do not call 9-1-1 to get information. 9-1-1 lines must

be kept open for citizens to report police, fire or medical emergencies. You can call 1-888-TELL-MORE throughout the duration of the emergency to receive updated information.

A NOTE ABOUT SCHOOLS

Local schools have plans for sheltering-in-place during a chemical emergency. A school building with doors and windows closed and the HVAC system shut down is a safer place for students than outdoors where they may be exposed to a chemical. Talk to school officials about their emergency plans and familiarize yourself with them.

Wildfires possible in Midland County

Around the Great Lakes region of the U.S. and Canada more than 6,000 wildfires occur every year. The most famous wildfire in Michigan's past is the 1881 fire that burned 1 million acres and took 169 lives. In May 1990 a fire near Grayling traveled 8 miles in a little over 4 hours, burning 5,916 acres and destroying 76 homes, 125 other buildings and 37 vehicles. In 2012 the Duck Lake Fire in Luce County burned over 21,000 acres, destroying 48 cabins, 1 motel, 1 store, 23 garages, 38 out-buildings, and 26 campers. Fires in Midland County have been much smaller than these, however the potential consequences where urban areas interface with wild land and forest are far greater.

There are things you can do to protect your buildings and property before a wildfire starts.

- Keep a defensible space of at least 30 feet around your home by clearing flammable materials away from your home and outbuildings. Defensible space helps protect your home in the critical minutes it takes a fire to pass and gives fire fighters an area to work in. Fire fighters must focus on homes they can safely defend. Make yours one of them.

- Landscape with fire resistant material and plants. Green lawns and rock gardens are good fuel breaks. Stone, brick or masonry walls, free of vegetation, are good fire barriers. Ask your favorite home and garden center about which varieties of plants are fire resistant and can be used in your landscaping. Some examples of fire resistant ground covers are: lily-of-the-valley, periwinkle, bugleweed, and Japanese spurge. Native bearberry and lilac are examples of fire resistant shrubbery.

- Trees within the 30-foot

defensible space should have all branches removed up to a height of about 7 feet. Keep trees pruned, and space them so their crowns are at least 10 feet apart.

- When possible keep grass watered and cut low, especially during times of high fire danger.

- Keep stacks of firewood, brush piles and other flammable material at least 30 feet away from any structure.

- Keep your roof, rain gutters, and yard clear of pine needles, leaves and other yard debris. A single spark in dried materials like these can start a serious fire.

- Make sure your home is accessible to emergency vehicles. Your address should be easily identifiable from the road. Driveways should be wide enough for fire vehicles and clear of low, overhanging branches that could also impede access.

- Recycle your yard waste through mulching and composting. Don't burn it.

- Keep firefighting equipment handy, including garden hoses and fire extinguishers. Have a family emergency plan and practice it.

- Report fire immediately by calling 9-1-1.

If you choose to burn leaves, brush or yard waste you must have a permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Midland County residents may receive a burning permit by visiting www.michigan.gov/burnpermit

There is no burning allowed in the Village of Sanford or within 1400 feet of the City of Midland. When the fire danger is high, no burning permits will be issued. Inquiries to the MDNR can be made by calling (989) 687-7771.

Additional fire safety information is available at www.firewise.org



DAILY NEWS FILE

This is the aftermath of a fire in Homer Township that was potentially started accidentally. Around the Great Lakes region of the U.S. and Canada more than 6,000 wildfires occur every year.

Handling stress during a disaster

Families who prepare for disaster will cope better than those who don't. Consider how your children will react to a disaster and what your own reactions will be. Make family emergency plans, discuss them, and practice them with family members. Help your children and other dependents understand the emergency procedures that you've developed. Doing these things will help family members make decisions when an emergency occurs. Having a plan to follow can eliminate the stress caused by not knowing what to do.

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH DISASTER

Disasters can strike quickly and without warning. Events can be traumatic for adults and frightening for children. Children may have to leave their homes and daily routines. They may become anxious, confused or scared. You'll need to cope with the disaster and also give love and support to your children. Children depend on daily routines. When a child's routine suffers a major disruption from a disaster or emergency the child may become distressed. Children will look to their parents and other adults (teachers, daycare supervisors, etc) for help. How you react to an emergency gives them clues about how to react. If you don't stay calm,

children under your care may become more anxious than they already may be. Children's fears may result from their imagination. Take these feelings seriously. A child who feels afraid is afraid whether the cause is real or imagined. Through words and action you can comfort and reassure. A favorite toy or book or something familiar will help a child as well. Keep control of your situation. Guide and reassure any children under your care. When you're certain that danger has passed, concentrate on the emotional needs of your children. Talk to them. Ask them to tell you how they feel. How you act in response to the disaster and how you interact with your children may have a lasting impact on them. Most children aren't capable of understanding the size and severity of a disaster. Be understanding and patient. Children will commonly be concerned that the event will happen again; someone will be injured or killed; they will be separated from the family; or they will be left alone.

A CHILD'S TIME FOR RECOVERY

There are things you can do after a disaster to reduce your child's anxiety.

- Keep the family together. You may be tempted to leave children with a relative

or friend while you attend to business. Keep the family together as much as possible. There is security for a child in being with parents.

- Calmly and firmly explain the situation. As best you can, tell children what you know about the disaster. Explain what will happen next. For example, if you will be staying in a shelter explain that to your children. Hold them, hug them and talk to them eye to eye.

- Encourage children to talk. Let children talk about the disaster. Encourage them to describe their feelings. Listen to them carefully. If possible include the entire family in discussion.

- Include children in recovery activities. Give children chores or other responsibility. This will help them feel they're part of the recovery. Having a task will help kids understand that things will get better.

- Nothing can replace the healing power of love. In the midst of disaster you can become focused on many things. Undoubtedly many things will need your attention. But don't lose sight of your children and their needs. They will require your attention more than anything else. Make certain children understand that they're more important than any lost possessions. Kindness, understanding and

love, supported with lots of hugs are great medicine for disaster recovery. If a child does not respond to all that has been suggested here, seek help from a mental health specialist.

VENTING EMOTIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

In time of trouble many people need someone who will just listen. No more, no less. Talking about the experience helps ease the burden the person is feeling. If you're feeling "blue" or "down" you may wish to contact a close friend or neighbor, a relative, your pastor or rabbi, or someone else you feel comfortable talking with. If you're called upon to listen to a friend or neighbor who just wants to talk, then just listen. Some people will feel very much alone and afraid; others will blame themselves and wonder, "Why me?" They are not really looking for an answer to that question but in reality are saying, "How can I endure this situation?" or "How can I possibly go on after this?" In many instances, solutions, answers and advice are not necessary. Just listen and allow the troubled friend to talk. They are venting emotion.

There is no shame in crying. This is also a release of emotion and of sadness. Sometimes people are angry or frustrated. It's okay to vent

these emotions as well if done so within reason. If a friend is venting anger, remember it is not directed at you, but reflects a feeling of loss: loss of control over the situation, loss of material possessions or loss of home or business.

PROVIDING SUPPORT

Sometimes people who are very upset are embarrassed about expressing their feelings. They may feel weak or insecure. Reassurance in expressing emotions will help to support them. Reinforce the fact that you're available to listen.

One of the most effective ways of coping with disaster is to look at difficult situations from a positive perspective. After you've listened to a friend vent frustrations, point out any positive things that have come from the experience (such as closer friendships or closer family relationships). Encourage friends and family to look to the future and to not be disheartened by their current circumstances. If you become concerned that someone is very depressed and you don't feel adequate to help, be sure the individual gets assistance from a trained professional. Suggest local programs and people that are available to help such as counselors, churches, social-workers or support groups.

In time of trouble many people need someone who will just listen. No more, no less. Talking about the experience helps ease the burden the person is feeling. If you're feeling "blue" or "down" you may wish to contact a close friend or neighbor, a relative, your pastor or rabbi, or someone else you feel comfortable talking with.

New wireless emergency alerts available

WEA is a new public safety system that allows people who own an enabled mobile device to receive geographically-targeted, text-like messages alerting them of imminent threats to safety in their area. The technology ensures emergency alerts will not get stuck in congested user areas, which can happen with mobile voice and texting services. WEA enables officials to target emergency alerts to specific geographic areas.

HOW DOES WEA WORK?

Authorized government officials send alerts regarding public safety emergencies to the wireless emergency alert system. WEA then authenticates the alert, verifies and sends it to participating cellular providers. The cellular companies push the alert from cell towers to mobile devices in the affected area. The alert appears like a text message on mobile devices. The alert message will be no more than 90 characters in length and should contain the following:

- What is happening (e.g., Tornado)
- Area affected (e.g., in this area)
- Time (e.g., until 4:15PM EST)
- Recommended action (e.g. take shelter)
- Sending agency (e.g., National Weather Service)

Who will receive the alerts?

Alerts are geographically targeted, so a customer who lives in Midland would not receive a threat if they happen to be in Traverse City when the alert is sent. Similarly, someone visiting Midland from Traverse City on that same day would receive the alert. This requires a WEA enabled mobile device and participation in the program by the cellular provider.

How much will I pay to receive alerts?

Alerts are free.

DO I HAVE TO SIGN UP TO RECEIVE ALERTS?

WEA allows officials to send emergency alerts to all subscribers with WEA-capable devices if their wireless carrier participates in the program. There is no sign up required for this service.

WHAT TYPE OF ALERTS CAN I EXPECT?

Alerts from WEA cover only critical emergencies. Consumers will receive only three types:

1. Alerts issued by the President
2. Alerts involving imminent threats to safety or life
3. Amber Alerts

What will I experience when I receive an alert?

A WEA alert will be accompanied by a unique attention signal and vibration.

WILL I BE ABLE TO RECEIVE ALERTS ON A PREPAID PHONE?

Yes. Prepaid phones can receive alerts as long as their provider participates in the program and you have an enabled device.

WILL WEA TRACK MY LOCATION?

No. WEA is not designed to track the location of anyone receiving an alert.

Are the alerts text messages?

No. Alerts are transmitted using a technology separate and different from voice calls and text messages. This technology ensures emergency alerts will not get stuck in congested user areas.

Will I need a new phone or a smart phone to receive alerts?

Some phones may require only software upgrades to receive alerts, while in other cases you may need to purchase a new WEA-capable device. Check with your wireless carrier.

WILL WEA BE AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE?

Participation by wireless carriers is voluntary. Some carriers will offer WEA over all or parts of their service areas or over all or only some of their wireless devices. Other carriers may not offer WEA at all. Check with your carrier to determine the extent to which they are offering WEA.

CAN I BLOCK WEA?

Participating wireless carriers may offer the ability to block alerts involving imminent threats to safety of life and/or AMBER Alerts; however, you cannot block emergency alerts issued by the President.

Homeland Security

An act of terrorism or violence is possible anywhere. While the federal government works to prevent terrorism, agencies in Midland County have planned, trained, and equipped for responding to terrorism. The federal government has assisted with grant funding. Midland County actively participates on the Region 3 Homeland Security Planning Board with representatives from thirteen other Michigan counties. Together we have partnered in training, emergency response planning, and resource management.

NATIONAL TERRORISM ADVISORY SYSTEM

When Federal agencies become aware of a possible terrorist threat, the Secretary of Homeland Security will decide whether an NTAS Alert should be issued. NTAS Alerts are issued when threat information is determined to be credible. These alerts include a clear statement that there is either an imminent threat or an elevated threat. The purpose of the alert is to provide a concise summary of the threat, information about actions being taken to ensure public safety, and recommended steps that individuals, communities, businesses and governments can take to help mitigate or respond to the threat. NTAS Alerts are based on the nature of the threat: in some cases, alerts are sent directly to law enforcement or affected areas of the private sector, while in others, alerts are issued more broadly to the American people through both official and media channels.

NTAS Alerts contain a sunset provision indicating a specific date when the alert expires. If threat information changes for an alert, the Secretary of Homeland Security may announce an updated NTAS Alert. All changes, including the announcement that cancels an NTAS Alert will be distributed the same way as the original alert.

SIGN-UP FOR NTAS ALERTS

NTAS Alerts will be issued in a variety of ways, including directly to the public via the following channels:

Department of Homeland Security NTAS webpage - <http://www.dhs.gov/alerts>

Email sign up at - <http://www.dhs.gov/alerts>

gov/alerts

Facebook at - <http://facebook.com/NTASAlerts>

Twitter at - <http://www.twitter.com/NTASAlerts>

SEE SOMETHING - SAY SOMETHING

You can help protect our community by learning to recognize indicators of terrorism and reporting suspicious activity. As part of your daily routine be observant and report anything out of the ordinary to local authorities by calling 9-1-1. Your report of suspicious activity could be the crucial first step in revealing a possible terrorist plot or threat. Keep an eye out for these types of activities:

Surveillance Someone recording or monitoring activities, including the use of cameras, note taking, drawing diagrams, writing on maps, or using binoculars or any other vision-enhancing device.

Elicitation This is an unusual or suspicious attempt to gain information by mail, fax, telephone, or in person about people, a workplace facility, military operations, or important areas of the community.

Tests of Security This is an attempt to measure reaction times to breaches of security or to penetrate physical security barriers or procedures.

Acquiring Supplies This could be the purchasing or stealing of explosives, weapons, ammunition, uniforms, decals, flight manuals, passes or badges (or the equipment to make them), or other controlled items.

Suspicious Persons These are people who appear to be out of place. They don't seem to belong where they are and may be acting suspiciously.

Dry Run This is putting people into position and moving them about to "practice" an act such as a bombing or kidnapping. An element of this activity could also include mapping out routes and determining the timing of traffic signals.

Deploying Assets This is the final step of putting people and supplies into position to commit the act. This is the last opportunity to alert authorities before the terrorism occurs.

Watch for suspicious behavior. Report what you see. Protect by observation and action.

The safety and security of our employees and our community is Dow's number one priority.



Dow Emergency Services & Security Department



**Living.
Improved daily.**