

Charles County Government

Emergency Preparedness Guide



Charles County Government
Department of Emergency Services

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/ES/EM/Emergency-Management

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Charles County

Emergency Preparedness Guide

The Charles County Department of Emergency Services is pleased to provide the community with this Emergency Preparedness Guide. The information contained within is intended to educate citizens with tips and suggestions on preparing for disasters/ events that may affect them.

Charles County is not immune from severe weather, natural and/ or manmade disaster events. Such events include, but are not limited to, hurricanes, severe storms, power outages, fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, flooding, and snowstorms. We know that being prepared for emergencies can help save lives, reduce the impact an emergency has on our lives and help us deal with the stress that can occur during an emergency situation.

Please review and start preparing yourself and your family for emergencies now. Your life and the lives of your family and friends may depend on your preparedness.

Preparing For An Emergency

Disasters and emergencies disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year and can occur quickly and without warning. In a disaster situation, first responders and basic services may not be available. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Family preparedness that involves every member of the household is paramount to ensuring that your family is ready for a disaster, whether or not you are in the home. Preparedness keys to success is as follows:

1. Register to receive emergency, weather, and community notifications: www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/CNS.
2. Create a family disaster supply kit.
3. Develop a family emergency plan.
4. Identify a local and regional meeting place.
5. Practice your family plan.



Notification Methods

The first step to preparing is registering for the Citizen Notification System (CNS). The CNS program, is a free service that allows you to receive emergency, weather and community notifications via phone calls, text messages, email and more, for the locations you care about in Charles County. You can choose to receive notifications about events that may affect your home, your child’s school, your parent’s home, your workplace or other locations. Signing up keeps you informed!

The second method in receiving weather information is purchasing a NOAA All Hazards Weather radio. The weather radio is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. It broadcasts weather service warnings, watches, and forecasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Radio Stations		
Call Sign	Frequency	Tower Location
Western Shore		
WKIK FM	102.9 MHz	California
WKIK AM	1560 kHz	La Plata
WPRS FM	104.1 MHz	La Plata
WTOP FM	103.5 MHz	Frederick and DC
WMDM FM	97.7 MHz	Lexington Park
WPTX AM	1690 kHz	Lexington Park
WSMD FM	98.3 MHz	Mechanicsville
WGOP AM	540 kHz	Pocomoke
WRAR FM	105.5 MHz	Tappahannock
WNNT FM	100.9 MHz	Warsaw
Eastern Shore		
WCEI FM	96.7 MHz	Easton
WKHZ AM	1460 kHz	Easton
WCEM FM	106.3 MHz	Cambridge
WCEM AM	1240 kHz	Cambridge

Public Access Television Stations	
Channel 95 or FIOS 10	Charles County Government
Comcast Cable Channel 6	Calvert County Government
Channel 95	St. Mary’s County Government

Commercial Television Stations		
WRC-TV	NBC 4	DC/MD/VA
WTTG	FOX 5	DC/MD/VA
WJLA	ABC 7	DC/MD/VA
WUSA	CBS 9	DC/MD/VA
WBAL	NBC 11	DC/MD/VA

Disaster Supply Kits

GO KIT: What To Take

- Medications
- Non-perishable foods
- Several gallons of drinking liquids preferably water
- Bedding (blankets, pillows, etc.)
- Change of clothes
- Any infant or child necessities (wipes, diapers, bottles, etc.)
- Flashlight and portable radio with batteries
- Personal hygiene items
- Eyeglasses
- Games, toys or reading materials
- Important documents
- Cash

SURVIVAL KIT: Staying Home

- One week supply of non-perishable food
- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days. Water for pets
- Manual can opener
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- NOAA weather radio
- Portable battery-operated radio with extra batteries
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Infant and child necessities
- Pet necessities
- First aid kit
- Toilet paper, heavy garbage bag, and personal ties for personal sanitation

Do Not Forget Your Pets!

- Proper identification
- Current photo of pet
- Immunization records
- County license
- Food and water for at least three days
- Food and water bowls
- Carrier or portable kennel
- Medications
- Muzzle, collar, and leash
- Manual can opener
- Cat litter pan/scoop
- Grooming items
- Plastic bags for waste
- Personal item with your scent and a favorite toy



Document Checklist

Personal papers to take with you:

- Driver's license or ID card
- Important numbers and emergency contacts
- Computer usernames and passwords
- Credit cards and list of creditors
- Medical records and blood type
- Prescription information (list of medications, dosage, prescription number, etc.)
- Copies of insurance cards
- Doctor's contact information
- Cash and bank account numbers
- List of savings and investment, including
- CDs, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds
- Household inventory: photos, video tape, or computer disk, and list of items.
- List of insurance policies with name of company, type of policy and policy number
- Copy of wills, trust documents and living wills
- Titles for your house, car(s) and other property
- Birth, marriage, social security card, divorce, death, adoption certificates, and passports

Develop A Family Emergency Plan

Your family may not be together when an emergency or disaster strikes, so plan for how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations.

- Consider a plan where each family member calls, emails or sends a text message to the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency.
- Identify an out-of-town contact. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call. Make sure every member of your family knows the number and has the means to make a call or send messages (cell phone, or prepaid card).
- Create a paper copy of all contact information and other important people/offices such as; schools, daycare, etc. Make sure everyone carries it either in their backpack, purse or wallet.
- Choose multiple meeting places. Different disasters may require you to go to different places. Make sure



you choose a meeting place in your neighborhood, a meeting place just outside your neighborhood, and a meeting place out of town.

- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find ways out of each room.

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

Have regular meetings to discuss your plan and run practice drills.

.....

Residents With Functional Needs Should Have A Plan

Suggestions from the Maryland Department of Disabilities:

- Identify all the dangers in your home and any medical equipment that requires power.
- Determine basic survival needs in case of emergency for you and your household.
- Post emergency phone numbers in an accessible place, along with your family/friends/neighbors' contact information.
- Plan and practice how to evacuate your home in an emergency.
- Make sure you know all evacuation routes available in your area/home.
- Determine a place where you will meet with your contacts after an emergency or evacuation.
- Prepare essential disaster supplies and have them available in case of emergency. Make sure they cover the needs you identified.
- Keep your personal records in a waterproof container with your emergency supplies, so you can take it in case you must evacuate.
- Create and carry a personal emergency information card for emergency personnel/first responders.
- Register with the Charles County Department of Emergency Services if you have unique needs that hinder or prevent you from taking protective actions or require special assistance during an emergency or disaster. The registration form is available at www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/es/em/emergency-management or call 301-609-3430.

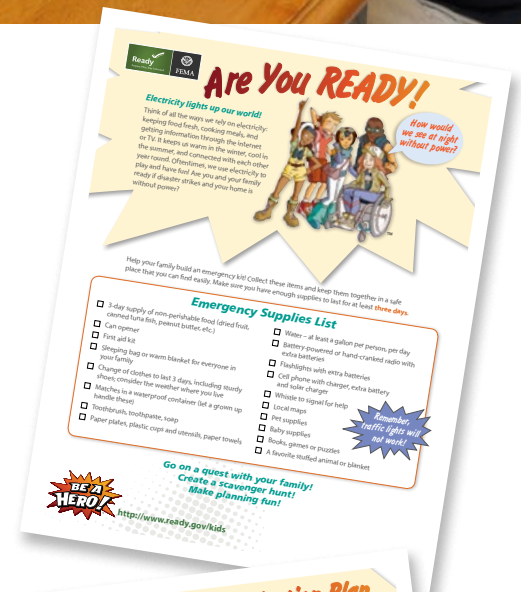


Keeping Kids Calm

Whether you stay home or evacuate, young children can feel extremely threatened and frightened by a storm. Parents and caretakers should extend greater patience and understanding to a child who is having difficulty coping with the situation. Consider how your children might react in a disaster, what your own reactions might be, and how the crisis could affect emotional and physical well-being.

- Involve children in emergency planning, such as checking supplies and writing a shopping list.
- Be ready with a hug or a box of supplies with games, books and hobby items.
- Store or pack kid-friendly food, items, and drinks.
- Have a favorite toy or stuffed animal around to help children feel more secure.
- Help reduce your children’s fears by remaining CALM yourself.
- Look for physical symptoms of anxiety that children may demonstrate during and after an emergency.
- Listen to fears and reassure children often and repeatedly.
- Encourage them to talk and ask questions, but limit discussion to basic facts.
- Do Not Lie to children about the dangers. Reassure them that you are focused on their safety.
- Be cautious of permitting young children to watch or listen to news.

Learn more with helpful brochures available at www.FEMA.gov, that provide you tools to help your family to prepare for emergencies.



Shelter In Place or Evacuation

During an emergency and depending on the type of incident, you may be asked to shelter-in place or evacuate. It is important to plan for both.

Shelter In Place

There may be situations in which it's best to stay where you are. Sheltering in place offers you and your family immediate protection. If you are told to shelter in place, stay indoors and go to an area of the house that is appropriate based on the danger. If your children are at school, do not leave your house to go get them unless the school notifies you to do so. Stay indoors until authorities say it's safe.

Evacuation

There may be situations that will require you to evacuate such as flood prone areas during a hurricane. The amount of time you have to leave will depend on the hazard. During emergencies, Charles County Emergency Services may open public shelter(s) for citizens. The location and determination of opening a shelter will depend on the nature of the situation.



In preparing your emergency plan, consider these questions:

Where would you go/stay?	Consider staying with friends, or relatives in adjacent counties or states.
What routes will you take?	Learn the route, and drive the route prior to an event. Also, have an alternative route.
How will you get there?	If you don't have reliable transportation of your own, you need to know in advance what options may be available through your neighbors, relatives, or friends.
What would you take?	Emergency kit.
What about your pets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make arrangements for alternative pet care should you not be able to take them with you.• If a public shelter is open in Charles County, staff will make arrangements for your pet(s).• Pet(s) may not be allowed in the public shelter.• Don't forget your pet emergency kit.

Evacuation Guidelines

- Before leaving your home, lock all doors and windows.
- If you have enough time, unplug all appliances and turn off utilities.
- Let your out-of-state contact know where you are going.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes.
- Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.
- Stay tuned to updates on a battery powered radio, Charles County Channel 95 or www.CharlesCountyMD.gov
- Plan for the possibility that an evacuation may result in you and your family members being in different locations.

Return and Re-Entry

Professional building inspectors will conduct a survey of homes for potential hazards. They will leave behind a placard to communicate the results of their inspection. The color of the placard indicates the condition of the structure, and how safe it is to enter.

	<p>An orange placard indicates that any damage sustained by a building is minor or superficial, and that the building is safe to enter and use. You will need to contact the building inspectors before making repairs.</p>
	<p>A yellow placard indicates that the building is declared unsafe for human occupancy or use.</p>
	<p>A red placard indicates that a building is seriously damaged, and is unsafe.</p>
	<p>A white placard is normally posted with the Danger and Condemned placard.</p>

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over the water and move toward land. Threats from hurricanes include high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, and tornadoes. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale classifies hurricanes into five categories.

The hurricane season is from June 1 to November 30. Charles County typically sees the most hurricane activity from August to October.

Watch out for:

- Flying debris such as signs, roofing material, small items left outside
- Falling trees
- Widespread power outages and downed power lines
- Flooded roads
- Structural damage

HURRICANE CATEGORIES				
Category	Winds MpH	Wind Knots	Storm Surge	Types of Damage
1	74-95	64-82	4 to 5 ft	Minimal
2	96-110	83-95	6 to 8 ft	Extensive
3	111-129	96-112	9 to 12 ft	Devastating
4	130-156	113-136	13 to 18 ft	Catastrophic
5	157+	137+	18+ ft	Catastrophic

Terms to know

HURRICANE OR TROPICAL STORM WATCH

Hurricane conditions are possible within the specified coastal area. The watch is issued 48 hours in advance of anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.

HURRICANE OR TROPICAL STORM WARNING

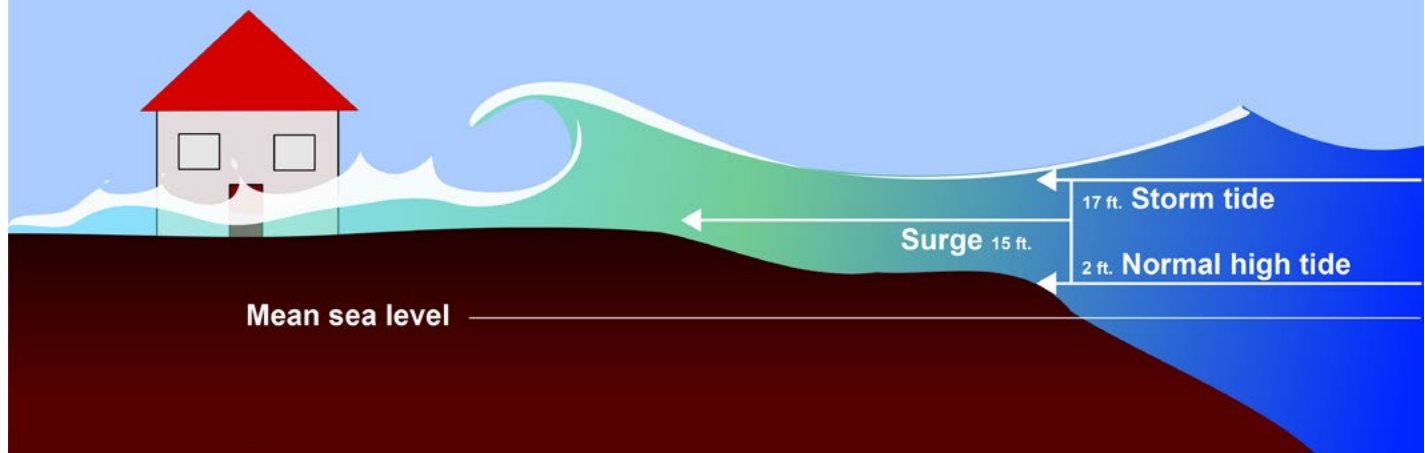
Hurricane conditions are expected in the specified area. The warning is issued 36 hours in advance of anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.

STORM SURGE

An abnormal rise of water generated by a storm, over and above the predicted astronomical tides. Storm surge is produced by water being pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds moving cyclonically around the storm.

Storm Surge vs. Storm Tide

A storm surge can washout buildings, trees, marinas, boats, roads and bridges. It is often the greatest threat to life and property from a tropical storm or hurricane.



BEFORE the Hurricane

- Determine safe evacuation routes inland.
- Review and practice emergency plans.
- Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators, and battery-powered NOAA weather radio and cell phones.
- Look at the expiration dates on the food and water stored in your emergency kit. If you don't have an emergency kit, this is the time to create one.
- Shutter your windows. Glass can be broken by flying debris. Protecting your windows can keep storm winds and rain out.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Trim trees and shrubbery.
- Decide where to move your boat in an emergency.
- Bring in all yard items such as furniture, toys, bird baths, bird feeders, and grills.
- Do not drain your pool. Super chlorinate the water and turn off all electricity to the pool for the duration of the storm.
- Fuel and service your vehicles.
- Get cash out.
- Fill bathtub and large containers/pots with water in case tap water is unavailable. Use water in bathtubs for cleaning and flushing only. DO NOT drink it.

DURING the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or NOAA weather radio for bulletins of a storm's progress.
- Make sure your emergency supplies are out and ready.
- Make any last minute preparations to secure yards, windows and vehicles.

AFTER the storm

- Keep listening to radio, TV or NOAA weather radio.
- Wait until an area is declared safe before entering.
- Watch for closed roads. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, **TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN!**
- Stay on firm ground. Moving water only six inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from power lines.
- Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until officials say it is safe unless you're able to boil it. Boiling is the most effective way to kill bacteria, viruses, and parasites in water.

**The stronger the storm,
the more severe the damage.**

Information Tidbits

Power outages:

- If your power goes out, use flashlights, battery-powered lanterns or chemical light sticks.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- Discard any perishable food that has been above 40 degrees F for two hours or more and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- Report any outages to SMECO at
- 1-877-747-6326 or www.smeco.coop

If winds become strong:

- Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered.
- If you are in a two story house, go to an interior 1st floor room.

Be alert for . . .

- Tornadoes: They are often spawned by hurricanes.
- The calm "eye" of the storm. It may seem like the storm is over but after the eye passes, the winds will change direction and quickly return to hurricane force.

Plan to evacuate if you:

- Live in a mobile or manufactured home. They are unsafe in high winds no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- Live on the coastline, an offshore island or near a river or flood plain. In addition to wind, flooding from storm surge waves is a major killer.
- Live in a high-rise. Hurricane winds can knock out electricity to elevators, break windows and more.

Thunderstorms

A thunderstorm affects a relatively small area when compared to a hurricane or a winter storm. A typical thunderstorm lasts an average of 30 minutes. Despite their size, **ALL** thunderstorms are dangerous!

Thunderstorms can feature damaging winds, lightning, hail, flooding, and an occasional tornado. Hail and lightning are explained in this section, while tornadoes and flooding are described later in this guide.

The National Weather Service considers a thunderstorm severe if it produces hail at least one inch in diameter, winds of 58 mph or stronger, or a tornado.

BEFORE thunderstorms and lightning

- Review your emergency plan. If you don't have one, this is the time to make one.
- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches.
- Think about postponing outdoor activities.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Get inside a hard building or hard top vehicle.
- Unplug any electronic equipment well before the storm arrives.

DURING thunderstorms and lightning

- Listen to radio, TV or NOAA weather radio for updates.
- Avoid contact with corded phones and devices including those plugged in. Cordless and wireless phones not connected to wall outlets are OK to use.
- Take shelter in a sturdy building.

AFTER thunderstorms and lightning

- Never drive through a flooded roadway. **TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN!!**
- Stay away from downed power lines and report them immediately.
- Stay away from storm-damaged areas.

If You Are...

In a forest:	In an open area:	On open water:
Seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees.	Go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.	Get to land and find shelter immediately.

Understanding Severe Thunderstorm Risk Categories

www.spc.noaa.gov

NWS defines a severe thunderstorm as measured wind gusts to at least 58 mph, and/or hail to at least one inch in diameter, and/or a tornado. All thunderstorm categories imply lightning and the potential for flooding. Categories are also tied to the probability of a severe weather event within 25 miles of your location.

THUNDERSTORMS (no label)	1 - MARGINAL (MRGL)	2 - SLIGHT (SLGT)	3 - ENHANCED (ENH)	4 - MODERATE (MDT)	5 - HIGH (HIGH)
No severe* thunderstorms expected	Isolated severe thunderstorms possible	Scattered severe storms possible	Numerous severe storms possible	Widespread severe storms likely	Widespread severe storms expected
Lightning/flooding threats exist with <u>all</u> thunderstorms	Limited in duration and/or coverage and/or intensity	Short-lived and/or not widespread, isolated intense storms possible	More persistent and/or widespread, a few intense	Long-lived, widespread and intense	Long-lived, very widespread and particularly intense
					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winds to 40 mph • Small hail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winds 40-60 mph • Hail up to 1" • Low tornado risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or two tornadoes • Reports of strong winds/wind damage • Hail ~1", isolated 2" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few tornadoes • Several reports of wind damage • Damaging hail, 1 - 2" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong tornadoes • Widespread wind damage • Destructive hail, 2" + 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tornado outbreak • Derecho



WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS!

- STOP all activities.
- Seek shelter in a substantial building or hard-topped vehicle.
- Wait 30 minutes after the storm to resume activities.

Thunderstorms: Lightning

Lightning is one of the most underrated severe weather hazards, yet ranks as one of the top weather killers in the United States. If thunder is heard, then the storm is close enough for a lightning strike.

What You Might Not Know About Lightning

- **All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.** In the United States, in an average year, lightning kills about the same number of people as tornadoes and more people than hurricanes.
- **Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall.** Many lightning deaths occur ahead of storms or after storms have seemingly passed.
- **If you hear thunder, you are in danger.** Don't be fooled by blue skies. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat.
- **There is NO safe place OUTDOORS.** Almost all fatalities related to lightning have occurred during outdoor activities such as swimming, camping, fishing, golfing, sporting events, etc.

Avoid the lightning threat

- **Have a lightning safety plan.** Know where you'll go for safety and how much time it will take to get there. Make sure your plan allows enough time to reach safety.
- **Postpone outdoor activities.** Before going outdoors, check the forecast for thunderstorms. Consider postponing activities to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- **Monitor the weather.** Look for signs of a developing thunderstorm such as darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind.
- **Get to a safe place.** If you hear thunder, even a distant rumble, immediately move to a safe place. **When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!** Fully enclosed buildings with wiring and plumbing provide the best protection. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do not protect you from lightning. If a sturdy building is not nearby, get into a hard-topped metal vehicle and close all the windows. Stay inside until 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.
- If you hear thunder, don't use a corded phone. Cordless phones, cell phones, and other wireless handheld devices are safe to use.
- Keep away from electrical equipment, wiring, and water pipes. Sensitive electronics should be unplugged well in advance of thunderstorms. Don't take a bath, shower, or use other plumbing during a thunderstorm.

Chapter 2: Weather Hazards

Thunderstorms: Hail

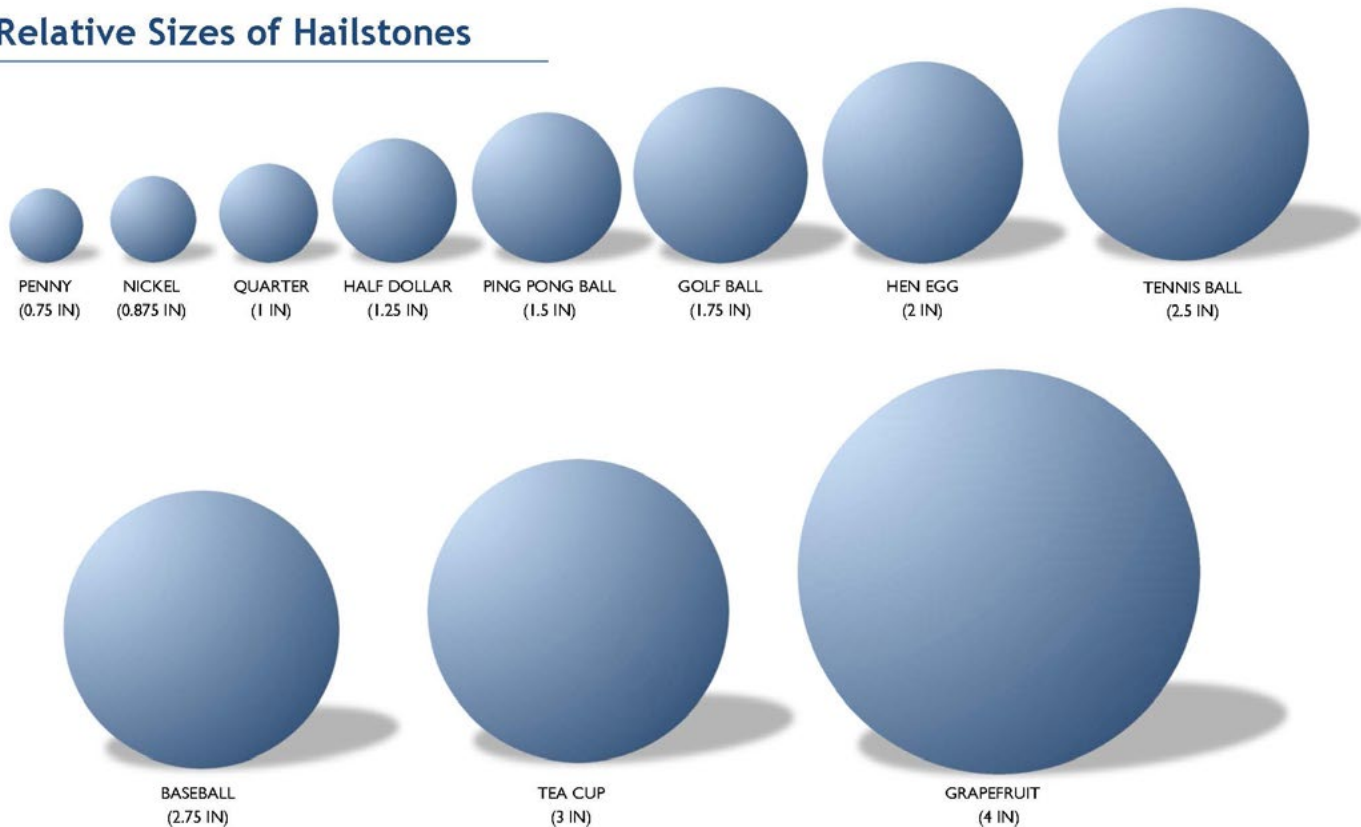
Hail is precipitation that is formed when updrafts in thunderstorms carry raindrops upward into extremely cold areas of the atmosphere. It falls when the thunderstorm's updraft can no longer support the weight of the ice. Hail can be as small as the size of a pea or as large as a softball.

- Large hailstones can fall at speeds faster than 100 mph!
- Hail causes more than \$1 billion in crop and property damage each year in the United States.
- Hail is larger than sleet, and forms only in thunderstorms.

Diameter	Description
.25 inches	Pea
.50 inches	Marble
.75 inches	Penny
1.00 inch	Quarter (Severe Thunderstorm Warning Threshold)
1.25 inches	Half Dollar
1.50 inches	Walnut
1.75 inches	Golf ball
2.00 inches	Lime
2.50 inches	Tennis Ball
2.75 inches	Baseball
3.00 inches	Apple
4.00 inches	Grapefruit
4.50 inches	Softball



Relative Sizes of Hailstones



Tornadoes

- In an average year, 1,200 tornadoes cause 60-65 fatalities and 1,500 injuries nationwide.
- Tornadoes can occur at any time of day or night, any time of the year.
- A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from a cumuliform cloud, such as a thunderstorm, to the ground.
- Tornadoes may appear nearly transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms within the funnel. The average tornado moves from southwest to northeast, but tornadoes can move in any direction and can suddenly change their direction of motion.
- The strongest tornadoes have rotating winds of more than 200 mph.
- Tornadoes can accompany tropical storms and hurricanes as they move onto land.
- Waterspouts are tornadoes that form over warm water. Water spouts can move onshore and cause damage to coastal areas.

Enhanced Fujita Scale for Tornadoes		
The Enhanced Fujita Scale (EF), introduced in 2007, provides estimates of tornado strength based on damage surveys. The original scale was developed by Dr. Theodore Fujita and implemented in 1971.		
Wind Speed	EF Scale	Typical Damage
65-85 mph	0	Peels surface off some roofs, some damage to gutters or siding
86-110 mph	1	Roof severely stripped, mobile homes overturned or badly damaged, loss of exterior doors, windows and other glass broken
111-135 mph	2	Roofs torn off well-constructed homes; foundations of frame homes shifted; mobile homes completely destroyed
136-165 mph	3	Entire stories of well-constructed homes destroyed; severe damage to large buildings such as shopping malls
166-200 mph	4	Well-constructed houses and whole-frame homes completely leveled
200+ mph	5	Strong frame houses leveled off foundations and swept away; high-rise buildings have significant structural deformation

Terms to know:

TORNADO WARNING

A tornado is occurring or will shortly. SEEK SHELTER NOW!

TORNADO WATCH

Weather conditions favor thunderstorms capable of producing tornadoes.



Watch for tornado danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish sky.
- Strong, persistent rotation in the cloud base.
- Whirling dust or debris.
- Hail or heavy rain followed by either dead calm or a fast, intense wind shift. Many tornadoes are wrapped in heavy precipitation and can't be seen.
- Loud, continuous roar similar to a freight train.

Tornado Safety Rules

The safest place to be is an underground shelter, basement, or safe room.

- **At home with basement:** Go to the basement. Avoid windows. Know where heavy objects rest on the floor above such as refrigerators, pianos, etc., and avoid hanging out in those areas. They may fall through the floor.
- **At home with no basement, a dorm, or an apartment:** Go to the lowest floor, small center room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell, or an interior hallway with no windows. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down and cover your head with your hands.
- **In an office building, hospital, or nursing home:** Go to an enclosed, windowless area in the center of the building on the lowest floor possible. Stay off the elevators.
- **In a mobile home:** GET OUT! Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes. Go to the nearest sturdy building immediately.
- **At school:** Follow the drill! Go to the interior hall or windowless room. Stay away from windows and large open rooms like gyms and auditoriums.
- **Outdoors:** If possible, seek shelter in a sturdy building. If not, lie flat and face down on low ground. Cover your head with your hands. Get as far away from trees and cars since they can blow on you. Sheds and storage facilities are not safe.
- **In a shopping mall or large store:** Don't Panic. Move quickly to an interior bathroom, storage room or other small enclosed area away from windows.
- **In a church or theater:** Don't Panic. Move quickly to an interior bathroom or hallway away from windows.
- **In a vehicle:** Vehicles are extremely risky in a tornado.
 - » Immediately seek shelter in a sturdy building if you have the time.
 - » If you are caught with extreme winds or flying debris, park the car. Keep your seatbelt on, put your head down below the windows, and cover your head with hands, blanket, coat or cushion.
 - » If you can safely get out of your vehicle, lay in a low lying area that's lower than the level of the roadway, such as a ditch or ravine. Cover your head with your hands.

Flooding

A flash flood is a rapid rise of water along a stream or low-lying area. Flash floods and floods are the #1 cause of deaths associated with thunderstorms.

BEFORE the flood:

- A watch is issued when flooding is possible. When a flood watch is issued, you should be aware of potential flood hazardous.
- Review your emergency plan. If you don't have one, this is the time to make one.
- Know your flood risk and the elevation above which flooding occurs. Know your evacuation routes.
- Determine if the roads you normally travel to reach your home or job have the possibility of flooding. If so, look for alternative routes to travel.
- Fill up your vehicle.

DURING the flood:

- DON'T drive through a flooded road. The depth of the water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out.
- Never try to walk, swim, drive, or play in flood waters. You may not be able to see how fast the flood water is moving or see holes or submerged debris.
- DON'T drive around a barricade. Barricades are there for your protection.
- Children should NEVER play around high water, or storm drains.

Terms to Know:

FLASH FLOOD WARNING:

- A Flash Flooding Warning is issued when a flash flood is imminent or occurring. A flash flood is a sudden violent flood that can take from minutes to hours to develop.

FLOOD WARNING:

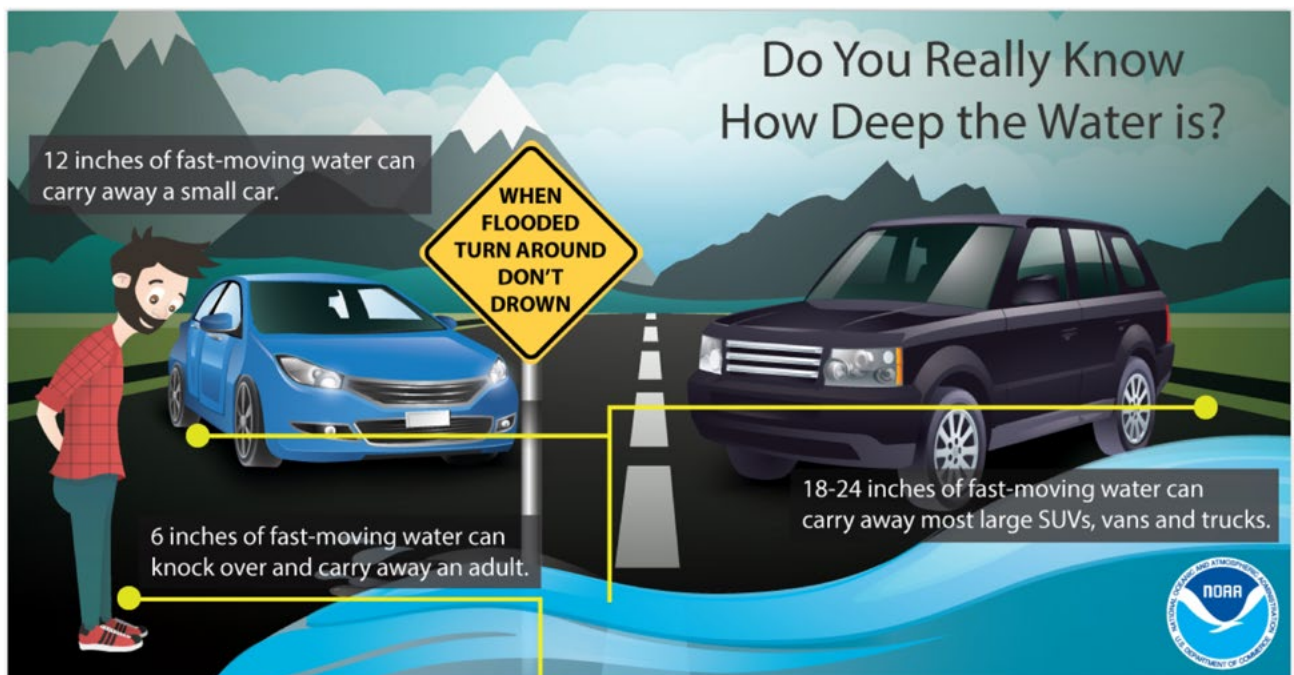
- A Flood Warning is issued when the hazardous weather event is imminent or already happening.

FLOOD WATCH:

- A Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for a specific hazards to occur.

AFTER the flood:

- If fresh or canned food has come in contact with flood waters, throw it out.
- Take steps to reduce your risk of future floods.
- Watch out for debris. Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways.
- Avoid standing water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.



Extreme Heat

Safety Tips

- **Drink plenty of water.** Avoid caffeine or sugary drinks.
- **Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.** Avoid dark colors since they absorb the sun's rays.
- **Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day.** Take frequent breaks.
- **Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles.**
- **Postpone outdoor games and activities.**
- **Stay indoors** as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun.

HEAT EXHAUSTION		OR	HEAT STROKE	
Faint or dizzy			Throbbing headache	
Excessive sweating			No sweating	
Cool, pale, clammy skin			Body temperature above 103° Red, hot, dry skin	
Nausea or vomiting			Nausea or vomiting	
Rapid, weak pulse			Rapid, strong pulse	
Muscle cramps			May lose consciousness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to a cooler, air conditioned place • Drink water if fully conscious • Take a cool shower or use cold compresses 			<h1>CALL 9-1-1</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives 	
Weather.gov/socialmedia Weather.gov/heat			@SacramentoOES SacramentoReady.org	

LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK!

Please Keep Children Safe... Nearly 40 children die every year when they are left in vehicles. All these deaths can be prevented.

Terms to Know

Excessive Heat Warning

Issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions. The heat index temperature is expected to be 105° F or higher for at least 2 days and night time air temperatures will not drop below 75° F.

Excessive Heat Watch:

Issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24 to 72 hours.

Heat Advisory:

Issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions. The heat index temperature is expected to be 100° F or higher for at least 2 days and night time temperature will not drop below 75° F.

Winter Weather

BEFORE snowstorms or extreme cold

- Add rock salt, sand, snow shovels, sufficient heating fuel, and adequate clothing and blankets to your emergency kit at home.
- Update your vehicle emergency kits for winter items.
- Review generator safety. You should NEVER run a generator in an enclosed space.
- Winterize your vehicle.
- Have your chimney cleaned and inspected.

DURING snowstorms or extreme cold

- Stay indoors during the storm.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.
- Keep dry. Change wet clothing frequently to prevent loss of body heat.
- Dress warmly with layers.
- Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep them at least three feet from flammable objects.

AFTER snowstorms or extreme cold

- Black ice is patchy ice on roadways that cannot easily be seen. Even if roadways have been cleared of snow following a storm, any water left on the roadways may freeze resulting in a clear sheet of ice.
- Potholes are a common road hazard and can be difficult to see.
- Brush all the snow or ice off the car so it doesn't fall on your windshield or fly onto other vehicles.
- Leave extra time for blocked, closed or icy roads.



Terms to Know

WINTER STORM WARNING:

Snow, sleet or ice expected. Confidence is high that a winter storm will produce heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain and cause significant impacts.

WINTER STORM WATCH

Snow, sleet, or ice possible. Issued 12 to 36 hours in advance of a potential severe storm.

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY

Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous.

FREEZING RAIN

Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees, and power lines.

SLEET

Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.

WIND CHILL

The temperature it “feels like” when you’re outside. A measure of how cold people feel due to the combined effect of wind and cold temperature.

BLIZZARD WARNING

Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow are expected to prevail for a period of 3 hours or more.

Chapter 2: Weather Hazards

If your car gets stuck during a storm:

STAY IN YOUR VEHICLE!

- If you leave your vehicle, you will become disoriented quickly in wind-driven snow and cold.
- Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- While running the motor, open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Clear snow from the exhaust pipe to avoid gas poisoning.

Be visible to rescuers:

- Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine.
- Tie a bright colored cloth, preferably red, to your antenna or door.
- After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

If your heat goes out:

- Close off unneeded rooms to avoid wasting heat.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Close blinds or curtains to keep in some heat.
- Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Drink lots of water and other non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic drinks to prevent dehydration.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration and subsequent chill.

BUILDING AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT FOR YOUR CAR

WHY?
BECAUSE YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU WILL ENCOUNTER WINTER WEATHER OR AN EMERGENCY ROAD CLOSURE.

- CELL PHONE, CHARGER
- FIRST AID KIT
- JUMPER CABLES
- FLARES
- WATER, SNACKS
- FULL TANK OF GAS
- FLASHLIGHT
- TOW ROPE
- BOOTS, GLOVES, WARM CLOTHES
- BLANKET
- SHOVEL, ICE SCRAPER, SNOW BRUSH
- BAG OF SAND OR CAT LITTER
- TIRE CHAINS OR SNOW TIRES

Source: How to Prepare for a Winter Storm, **America's PrepareAthon!**, www.ready.gov/prepare



Charles County Snow Removal

- Plowing generally begins when snow becomes 1 to 3 inches deep and temperatures indicate snow will not melt. Primary county roads and major residential neighborhood streets are the concentrated areas that are plowed first.
- Private roads with 911 addresses are marked with a small diamond in the upper right corner of the sign. The maintenance of these roads is the responsibility of the homeowner and/or the Homeowner's Association (HOA) and are not plowed by the county or state.
- If you do not have a driveway, park as close to the curb as possible on ONE SIDE OF THE STREET. Park your car on the EVEN NUMBERED side of the street. Move to the other side of the street after the plow has cleared it.
- Keep your neighborhoods safe for emergency personnel, pedestrians, and cyclists by clearing sidewalks of snow and ice.
- Clearing driveways and entrances of snow is the responsibility of the property owner, homeowners' association or business.
- Snow removal information is available on the County's website at www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/pw/roads/snow-removal

Earthquakes

Earthquakes are sudden rolling or shaking events caused by movement under the earth's surface. Earthquakes happen along cracks in the earth's surface called fault lines. Earthquakes cannot be predicted.

What to do during an earthquake:

If you are inside a building:

- Do Not run outside. Do Not get in a doorway, as this does not provide protection from falling or flying objects, and you may not be able to remain standing.
- **Drop** down onto your hands and knees so the earthquake doesn't knock you down. Drop to the ground.
- **Cover** your head and neck with your arms to protect yourself from falling objects.
- If you are in danger from falling objects and you can move safely, crawl for addition cover under a sturdy desk or table.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors, and walls, and anything that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.
- **Hold** on to any sturdy covering so you can move with it until the shaking stops.

If getting safely to the floor to take cover won't be possible:

- Identify an inside corner of the room away from windows and objects that could fall on you. People who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices should lock their wheels and remain seated until the shaking stops. Protect your head and neck with your arms, a pillow, a book, or whatever is available.

If you are in bed when you feel the shaking:

- Stay there and cover your head and neck with a pillow. At night, hazards and debris are difficult to see and avoid; attempts to move in the dark could result in more injuries.

If you are outside when you feel the shaking:

- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires. Once in the open. **"Drop, Cover, and Hold On."** This might not be possible in a city, so you may need to duck inside a building to avoid falling debris.

If you are in a moving vehicle when you feel the shaking:

- Stop as quickly and safely as possible and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that the earthquakes may have damaged.





Fire

Did you know that if a fire starts in your home, you may have as little as two minutes to escape?

Tips for fire safety

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.
- Test smoke alarms every month and change the batteries every six months. Newer smoke alarms may have a 10-year lithium battery that doesn't need to be replaced every six months.
- Make sure you have a fire extinguisher.

In case of a fire:

- Crawl low under any smoke to exit.
- Shout "FIRE" as you're exiting to signal to others.
- If closed doors or handles are warm or smoke blocks your way out, use a second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch.
- If you can't get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around the doors with cloths or tape.
- GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL 9-1-1.
- Let 9-1-1 know if there are people still inside.
- If you have pets inside the home, tell firefighters as soon as they get there.

If your clothes catch on fire:

- **STOP** what you're doing.
- **DROP** to the ground and cover your face.
- **ROLL** over and over or back and forth until the flames go out.
- Once the flames are out, cool the burned skin with water for three to five minutes. Call 9-1-1.

STOP

DROP

ROLL

Preventing House Fires

Cooking: This is the number one cause of house fires. Try to prevent grease from splashing, Keep paper products, and pot holders away from stove.

Heating Equipment: Yearly have your fireplaces, chimneys and heating unit inspected and clean. Keep portable heaters away from flammable items such as bedding, curtains, etc.

Smoking: Never smoke in bed. Use an ashtray not paper products.

Electrical: Check cords and wires for tears or frays. Do not overload circuits.

Candles: Do not light candles close to curtains, table cloths or paper items. Make sure the candles are high enough in which a pet or child can't knock over. Before leaving the house or going to bed, check the house for lit candles.

Children: Explain the danger of fire to your kids. Make sure lighters and matches are not in reach of children.

Flammable Liquids: Keep them stored in an approved container. Do not use near flames.

Hazardous Materials

A hazardous material is any item or agent (biological, chemical, radiological, and/or physical), which has the potential to cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment, either by itself or through interaction with other factors.



Hazardous Household Items

Cleaning Products

- Bleach
- Ammonia
- Tub, tile, shower, toilet cleaners
- Wood and metal cleaners and polishes
- Laundry detergent
- Pool chemicals

Beauty Products

- Hair spray
- Nail polish and removers
- Perfume, cologne
- Aerosol deodorants

Garden, Garage Products

- Repellents
- Baits
- Bug spray
- Fertilizer
- Oil, gasoline, diesel, kerosene
- Batteries
- Paint, varnish, thinners, stain
- Lighter fluid

If you are:

Caught outside

- Stay upstream, uphill, and upwind. In general, try to go at least a half mile away.
- Do not walk into or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists, or condensed solid chemical deposits.
- Try not to inhale gases, fumes, and smoke. Cover your mouth with a cloth.
- Go into a sturdy building.

In a vehicle

- Stop and seek shelter in a sturdy building.
- If you must remain in your car, keep windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner or heat.

Asked to stay indoors

- Bring pets inside.
- Close all windows, vents, fireplace dampers, and interior doors.
- Turn off ventilation system.
- Go to a room above ground that has the fewest openings to the outside.

Asked to evacuate

- Do so immediately.
- Follow the routes recommended by the authorities.
- Return home only when authorities say it's safe.

Household Chemical Emergencies

Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222

Nearly every household uses products containing hazardous materials or chemicals.

Guidelines on storing and using

- Keep products containing hazardous materials in their original containers and never remove the labels.
- Never mix household chemicals with other products such as bleach or ammonia.
- Never smoke while using household chemicals.
- Don't use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products, or pesticides near an open flame.
- Clean up any chemical spill immediately. Use rags to clean up the spill. Dispose of the rags by placing them in a sealed plastic bag.
- Take household hazardous waste to a local collection program.

Active Shooter

Active shooter incidents are often unpredictable and evolve quickly. An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area, typically through the use of firearms.



Coping:

- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers.
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit.
- If you are in an office, stay there and secure the door.
- Attempt to take the active shooter down as a last resort.

How To Respond:

RUN

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Keep your hands visible.

HIDE

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view.
- Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors.
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager.

FIGHT

- As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger.
- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
- Act with physical aggression and throw items at the active shooter.

Responding when police arrive:

- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Put down any items in your hands (bags, jackets, etc.).
- Raise hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times.
- Avoid quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming, or yelling.
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating.

Call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so.

Chapter 4: Emergency Information



9-1-1 What Is Your Emergency?

Call takers are trained, certified professionals who can help you during an emergency, but there are also a few simple points to follow to help the call taker help you.

Tips for Calling 9-1-1

- Provide the call taker with the location, landmarks, or cross streets of the emergency, the phone number that you're calling from, and a brief description of what happened.
- Pay attention to the call taker's questions and respond clearly, answering all questions. 9-1-1 call takers are trained to ask the questions necessary to determine the type of medical, police, or fire response for your emergency.
- Help is already on the way as the call takers are still asking you questions.
- Be prepared for the call taker to give you immediate lifesaving instructions over the phone until help arrives. Do Not hang up the phone until the call taker advises you to.
- If you dial 9-1-1 by mistake, stay on the line until a call taker answers and advise them that you contacted them by mistake. Otherwise, first responders may be sent unnecessarily to check on the disconnected call.

Teaching Children to Call 9-1-1

- Do Not use the term "nine-eleven" since there is no 11 (eleven) key on the telephone pad.
- **Explain the purpose of 9-1-1** and give them examples and scenarios when to dial 9-1-1.
- Make sure your children know their **address and phone number**.
- Teach your children their **full name and the full names of their parents**.
- Instruct your children to **look at their surroundings** when they're not home. Looking at street signs, and street numbers on buildings and homes, etc.
- Make sure they know **how to use a landline and cell phone**. Especially holding the correct end to their ear and mouth.
- Advise the children during a fire or burglary to **get out first** and then call 9-1-1.
- Make sure your children know to **follow the instructions** of the call taker. Tell them to stay on the phone until they are told to hang up.
- If they dial 9-1-1 by mistake, **stay on the line until a call taker answer**. They should let the call taker know it was an accident and not an emergency.
- Instruct children to call only when there is an **actual emergency**.

9-1-1 calltakers are trained to ask the questions necessary for your particular emergency. Your answers to ALL of their questions will help them quickly provide the best possible response for your situation.

Important Contact Information

Organization	Phone Number	Website
Charles County Government	301-645-0550	www.CharlesCountyMD
Charles County Emergency Communications Center	Non-Emergency 301-609-3599	www.CharlesCountyMD/es/communications/fire-and-ems-communications
Charles County Emergency Services	301-609-3400	www.CharlesCountyMD/es
Charles County Animal Control	301-609-3425	www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/es/animalcontrol/animal-control
Charles County Sheriff's Office	Non-Emergency: 301-932-2222	www.ccsso.us
Town of La Plata Police Department	301-934-1500	www.townoflaplata.org
SMECO	1-877-747-6326	www.smeco.coop
Maryland State Police – La Plata	301-392-1200	www.msp.lapata@maryland.gov
Maryland Transportation Authority Harry Nice Bridge Headquarters	410-537-6800	www.mta.maryland.gov
Maryland Department of Natural Resources	1-877-620-8367	www.dnr.maryland.gov
Maryland State Fire Marshal – Southern Maryland Region	443-550-6820	www.mdsp.maryland.gov
Maryland State Highway Administration – Charles County	1-888-460-7669	www.roads.maryland.gov
Maryland Poison Center	1-800-222-1222	www.mdpoison.com
Charles County Public Schools	Info. Line: 301-932-6656	www.ccboe.com
Charles County Health Department	301-609-6900	www.charlescountyhealth.org
Maryland Center for Missing Children	1-800-843-5678	www.missingkids.com
Maryland Relay Service	7-1-1 or 1-800-552-7724	www.mdrelay.org

**EMERGENCIES:
DIAL 9-1-1**

Other Emergency Preparedness Sources

- Maryland Emergency Management Agency: www.mema.maryland.gov
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
- Ready: www.ready.gov
- National Weather Service (Baltimore/Washington Forecast): www.weather.gov/lws
- Department of Disabilities: www.mdod.maryland.gov



**Charles County Government
Department of Emergency Services**

P.O. Box 2150 • 200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, Maryland
301-645-0550 • Maryland Relay: 7-1-1 (Relay TDD: 1-800-735-2258)

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov



About Charles County Government

The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility. We support and encourage efforts to grow a diverse workplace. Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount; where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation.

It is the policy of Charles County to provide equal employment opportunity to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religious or political affiliation or opinion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other status protected by law.