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Natural disasters can strike at any time. People in the path of such disasters can have their lives turned upside down in a matter of moments. Knowing what to do, including who to call, when a natural disaster strikes can help people get back on their feet.

**Family**
Call your family immediately after the storm to let them know you’re safe and sound and to confirm that they are as well. If you’re incapable of doing so due to downed phone lines or interrupted mobile or internet service, do so the moment you regain access to such services. If you’re having trouble reaching a family member who also was in the line of the storm, contact a government agency, such as FEMA in the United States or Public Safety Canada in Canada, for help finding a missing loved one.

**Local utility company**
If there are any downed power lines on or around your property, contact your local utilities provider immediately. Contact the company even if you suspect your neighbors might have already called. Downed power lines pose a dangerous threat to anyone within their vicinity, so avoid them until the company responds.

**Police**
Police can direct callers to shelters if they need lodging or food and water after a natural disaster. Police also can help people who were hurt during a storm or those who may be safe but incapable of getting out of their homes on their own. In addition, police might be able to conduct wellness visits to see if relatives you cannot reach are safe. Such visits may not always be possible, as police and other first responders tend to be busy in the wake of natural disasters, but the police may know that certain areas are dealing with a lack of electricity, even though residents are otherwise safe.

**Insurance agency**
Whether you own or rent your home or apartment, contact your insurance agency in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Agencies may send inspectors to assess the damage, and the earlier you call the more quickly such inspections can take place. Calling as soon as possible after disaster strikes can get your claim on the books and hasten the reimbursement process if inspectors find any damage that’s covered under the terms of your policy.

Drivers also should contact their insurance companies immediately if their vehicles were damaged during a natural disaster. Knowing who to call in the wake of a natural disaster can calm people’s nerves and start them on the path to recovery.
Few weather events are as impactful and widespread as flooding. Floods can happen anywhere, and because of their ferocity, they are not a force to take lightly. The National Weather Service says flooding typically occurs when prolonged rain falls over several days, or when heavy rain falls or snow melts in a very short period of time. In such instances, the soil cannot absorb water runoff fast enough to avoid flooding. Flooding also may occur due to the failure of a water control structure, such as a dam or levee. Storm surges from tropical and non-tropical storm systems are other leading causes of flooding, particularly in coastal areas. The U.S. Geological Survey says floods create billions of dollars in damage and have been known to kill hundreds of people each year. Some ways floods can wreak havoc include loss of housing, crop failure, damage to roadways and infrastructure, and contamination of drinking water. The Federal Emergency Management Agency warns that every community and person should be aware of the dangers of flooding and prepared to take action.

- Listen to radio and television reports about flooding and get to higher ground if you are in a low-lying area.
- Know your risk for flooding, assemble an emergency kit and have a plan for escaping or riding out flooding in your home. All household residents should learn and practice this plan.
- Flood water can damage electrical power, natural gas and propane gas systems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says to

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Recognize

From page 5

minimize fire hazards by turning off these utilities during or after a flood. But only do so if you can do this from a dry location.

• Always obey evacuation orders immediately. NOAA says a mere six inches of water can knock you off your feet. Try not to venture into flood waters on foot or by car. It only takes seconds to get swept away and potentially drowned.

• Flood water can be mixed with sewage and other hazardous substances, warns AccuWeather. It also could be hiding downed power lines or sharp objects. Avoid contact with flood water, as it may pose a risk for intestinal diseases or infections in open wounds.

• All dampened structures will need to be properly dried out, which often necessitates utilizing a professional service. Otherwise mold and mildew can fester and lead to serious structural issues, not to mention sickness.

• Use protective clothing and a mask when cleaning up after a flood to avoid respiratory problems.

• Never enter a flood-damaged home or building until it has been declared safe by authorities.

• If you are concerned about flooding, speak with an insurance representative about flood insurance. Flood losses typically aren’t covered under a homeowner’s or renter’s insurance policy. Damage can cause a catastrophic financial loss otherwise. Floods are intense and scary events that require extreme caution and care before, during and after the event.
In the event of an emergency, particularly weather-related disasters with high winds like hurricanes, safety officials urge homeowners to take shelter in the safest room in their homes. Determining where this might be depends on the structure itself. Generally speaking, look for an interior room that is near the center of the house. It’s often best to choose one that doesn’t have windows or with windows that are very small. Bathrooms or walk-in closets are typically the safest areas in one-story homes. In two-story homes, the strongest wall of the house is often near the stairwell. Therefore, a first-floor closet may be the best spot. The National Weather Service says that in the event of a tornado, being underground is best, so seek shelter in a storm cellar or basement. However, if no subterranean shelter is available, seek out shelter as far inside the structure as possible, ideally in a small space. Again, bathrooms, closets, under stairs, or in a hallway may be the best bets.
What is a standby generator?

No one wants to imagine losing power in their homes. But homeowners and renters face such situations every day. For those who aren’t prepared to confront power outages, doing so can be a nuisance in the best of situations, and potentially very dangerous, if not fatal, in the most dire instances. Thankfully, no one has to go long without power. Standby generators are backup electrical systems that operate automatically. Once the generator senses a power loss, which can occur within seconds of a utility outage, its automatic transfer switch essentially gives the generator a wakeup call, commanding it to begin supplying power to the circuits in a home. Some transfer switches may be automated, requiring no effort on the part of homeowners when the power goes out. Others may need to be flipped on like one might flip a light switch. Seniors and/or people with mobility issues may benefit from standby generators with automated transfer switches, as they may find it difficult to manually turn the switches themselves. That’s especially true if the power goes out overnight, when visibility inside a home with no power is compromised. Standby generators are typically connected to the circuits throughout a home, which means they can kick in and run HVAC systems, refrigerators and security systems, among other devices. That helps people stay comfortable and sleep well during power outages, while also ensuring they won’t have to throw away any groceries or spend times in their homes without functioning security systems. Standby generators can help people prepare for and overcome storms and natural disasters, making them an invaluable addition to any home.
The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, notes that it’s important for parents of school-aged youngsters to familiarize themselves with the emergency response plans established by their children’s schools. Such plans typically include how the school will respond if school is in session during snowstorms or natural disasters, as well as the protocol surrounding lockdown situations where children may be in danger. In such situations, knowledgeable parents who are familiar with emergency response plans and how to communicate with school officials and how those officials will disseminate information to concerned parents can help first responders and educators focus on their responses, which may involve protecting children. Knowledge of these plans also can calm parents’ nerves and reduce the likelihood that school campuses will become chaotic in the wake of potentially dangerous situations, including storms or natural disasters. In addition to learning about schools’ emergency response plans, parents can discuss these plans with their children. Such discussions should emphasize the importance of following educators’ instructions during both practice drills and when the plans are implemented in response to disasters or other threats.
chaos can quickly set in when natural disasters strike. People who are in the eye of the storm or those with loved ones who are potentially in danger may spend hours, if not days, trying to get in touch with friends and family to determine if everyone is alright. However temporary it may be, the period between a storm touching down and speaking with loved ones can be agonizing. But there is a way to facilitate communication with loved ones during a natural disaster, and all it takes is some simple planning. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, often referred to as FEMA, notes that people need to send and receive information from their families during disasters. Unfortunately, there’s no guarantee that communication networks like mobile phones and computers will be reliable during disasters, when electricity may be interrupted and mobile towers might be compromised. As a result, it’s imperative that people develop communication plans with their families so they can reach one another in the wake of natural disasters. Three simple steps can help families as they begin devising their emergency communication plans.
Fayette County emergency numbers:

Fayette County EMA: 740-335-8264
Fayette County Sheriff: 740-335-6170
Fayette County EMS: 740-335-6137
Wayne Twp. Fire Rescue: 740-636-0656
Concord-Green Twp. Fire Department: 740-335-4370
Bloominburg Paint Marion Joint Fire District: 740-437-7226
Tri-County Joint Fire District: 740-869-2643
Jefferson Twp. Fire Department: 740-426-6330
Pic-A-Fay Joint Fire Department: 740-495-5643

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Emergency (937) 383-5713
Clinton County emergency numbers:

For all emergencies, dial 9-1-1

Other key non-emergency numbers:

Wilmington Police Dept.: 937-382-3833

Clinton County Sheriff’s Office: 937-382-1611

Blanchester Police Dept.: 937-783-2431

Sabina Police: 937-584-2441

Ohio State Highway Patrol, Wilmington: 937-382-2551

Blanchester Police: 937-783-2431

New Vienna Police: 937-987-2116

Port William Police: 740-606-3659

Wilmington Fire Dept. & EMS: 937-382-2244

Blanchester-Marion Twp. Fire District: 937-783-4925

Chester Twp. Fire & EMS: 937-283-1616

Clark Twp. Life Squad, Martinsville: 937-685-4455

Clinton-Warren Joint Fire District & EMS, Clarksville: 937-289-3427

Clinton-Highland Fire District, New Vienna: 937-987-2713

Jefferson Twp. Fire Dept., Midland: 937-783-6043

Martinsville/Clark Twp. Fire Dept.: 937-685-4455

Port William/Liberty Twp. Joint Fire & EMS: 937-486-5300

SRWW Joint Fire District & EMS, Sabina: 937-584-4132

Clinton County Dog Warden: 937-382-8388

Clinton County Emergency Management Agency: 937-725-5146

Clinton County Health Dept.: 937-382-3829
Highland County emergency numbers:

FIRE/EMS
Paint Creek Joint EMS/Fire District (Greenfield, Hillsboro and elsewhere): 937-981-3394
Highland County North Joint Fire and Ambulance District (Leesburg): 937-780-4001
Lynchburg Area Joint Fire and Ambulance District (Lynchburg): 937-364-2915
Southern Highland Volunteer Fire Department (Mowrystown): 937-442-1172
Brushcreek Township Volunteer Fire Department (Sinking Spring): 937-588-3023
Clinton-Highland Joint Fire District (New Vienna): 937-987-2713

HOSPITALS
Highland District Hospital (Hillsboro): 937-393-6100
Adena Greenfield Medical Center (Greenfield): 937-981-9400

LAW ENFORCEMENT
Highland County Sheriff’s Office: 937-840-6263
Hillsboro Police Department: 937-393-3411
Greenfield Police Department: 937-981-4466
Lynchburg Police Department: 937-364-6659
Mowrystown Police Department: 937-442-3815

ANIMALS
Highland County Dog Pound: 937-393-1421
Highland County Humane Society: 937-393-2110

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Buddy up for safety

The buddy system is a popular and effective safety measure. The “buddy system” involves teaming up with a partner to prevent the safety risks of being alone. Both parties are then responsible for ensuring the other person’s safety. The buddy system is effective in various situations. For example, someone who works in a remote location or with hazardous substances can benefit from having a teammate nearby in the event something goes awry. That buddy can then call for help or even administer help on his or her own. Office fire evacuation plans often pair employees up so that each is responsible for making sure the other has evacuated and reached safety. In that instance, the buddy system reduces confusion and makes for a more organized system.

The buddy system also may be utilized in emergencies or instances when there is increased risk for injury, such as during a natural disaster or while engaging in certain risky activities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that buddies can each look out for hazardous conditions, safety demands and stressors. Buddies can be utilized when a person is swimming, surfing, hiking, biking, or camping in the wilderness. Many schools also utilize buddy systems so that students are never alone. This is handy during school trips or when students are not on campus. The buddy system helps instill a sense of responsibility. Buddies help make sure their partners get back on the bus and are accounted for when there may not be enough adult chaperones. Children who walk home from school or wait at a bus stop may be paired with a buddy for increased safety against strangers and other hazards. The Holts Summit Police Department in Missouri says that a child alone could become a much easier target if a predator drove by than if a child were with a buddy or in a group. Buddies can be a friend, an older sibling or an adult approved by parents or guardians. Buddies also may be friends who are asked along when another wants to enjoy a night out on the town or use a rideshare or taxi service, but wants to minimize the risks that could arise if he or she goes it alone. Using the buddy system can make various situations safer than going it alone, even for adults.
Plan

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1. Collect all necessary information. Gather and jot down the names and contact information of all family members, making sure to create a paper copy that will be accessible whether the electricity or mobile tower goes out or not. Include names, phone numbers and addresses of nearby friends and family members, as well as anyone who lives close enough to potentially offer temporary shelter should your home be damaged or pose a threat. Include the names, phone numbers and addresses of medical facilities, doctors, schools, or service providers on the list as well. Elderly men and women can include the names of all medications they take next to the names of the doctors who prescribed them.

2. Distribute the copies. Make copies of your list and distribute them to everyone in your family, including people who do not live close. Faraway relatives can use the list to try to find you should they be unable to communicate with you in the wake of a disaster. Make sure everyone in your home keeps a printed copy of the list on them at all times, whether it’s in a backpack, purse or wallet. FEMA notes that those who complete their family communication plan online can print their plans onto wallet-sized cards by visiting ready.gov/make-a-plan. Keep a copy of the list in a central location in your home as well, such as on the refrigerator.

3. Practice your plan. FEMA advises holding regular household meetings where families can go over their contact information and practice what to do should they need to communicate with one another during an emergency. Planning is an essential component of disaster preparedness that can save lives and help families find one another in the wake of emergencies.
ER+SDC

EMERGENCY ROOM VS. SAME DAY CARE CLINIC

When every minute counts, feel confident in where to go for your healthcare needs.

- Sudden shortness of breath
- Chest pain or pressure
- Severe and sudden stomach pain
- Broken bone
- Severe burn or bleeding
- Crushing intense headache
- Open wounds
- Uncontrolled bleeding

Cold, flu or sinus pain
- Sprain
- Rashes and minor burns
- Sore throat
- Ear pain
- Insect bite
- Fever over 100.5

When to call 911

In a medical emergency or in doubt, call 911.

- Do not drive to the hospital if you have severe chest pain or bleeding, feel like you might faint or if you vision is impaired or have symptoms of heart attack or stroke.
- Taking an ambulance is safer, especially if you are suffering a heart attack. Ambulance staff provide care on the way to the hospital.
- Emergency responders are trained to stabilize patients before they get to an emergency room.

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