

# EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS AND OLDER ADULT AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

A TOOLKIT FOR SERVICE COORDINATORS IN OHIO



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK



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## Acknowledgements

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Several volunteers, facilitators, interpreters, researchers, research assistants, students, community practitioners, community members, and, importantly, service coordinators shared their time, experiences, expertise, concerns, and aspirations with us.

To all service coordinators: We hope this toolkit becomes a resource you can adapt to meet your needs and work more closely with the communities you serve as we face more extreme weather events. You and your work inspire us every day.

The W.A.R.M team



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## Overview

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Extreme weather events are now a reality wherever we are, including here in Ohio. This toolkit is designed for service coordinators and other human services professionals working in low-income housing properties in Ohio to increase their knowledge and to provide informational tools to support disaster preparedness and response related to extreme weather events. Informed by existing scholarship and best practices, as well as insights from our research project, the **Weather and Aging Resilient Model (W.A.R.M.) for Affordable Housing**, this toolkit is a first step in documenting and presenting the information needed for concerted action to safeguard communities in our nation’s subsidized housing.



## Background

Based on an intervention study conducted by the Age-Friendly Innovation Center (AFIC) in collaboration with the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA), the information in this toolkit has been collated through engagement with residents of subsidized housing buildings, service coordinators, and available scientific literature. It draws on shared experiences, information exchange, research data collection, and scenario planning activities specific to Ohio. In this project, we engaged with “experience experts”—older adults and persons with disabilities—and incorporated best practices from local emergency management agencies and response professionals.

In our research and community engagement with older residents in low-income housing and service coordinators, we found that many residents remain under-prepared for disasters. Further, service coordinators don’t feel informed or comfortable connecting issues of climate change and extreme weather with their work with older adults and community members. This occurs despite deep concern about the health and safety impacts of these extreme weather events on themselves and for the communities they serve. Findings underscore the need for action designed to safeguard residents in HUD subsidized housing buildings across the Midwestern United States as they continue to experience an increase in dangerous extreme weather events.

This toolkit provides guidance that can inform action plans for subsidized housing communities for older adults and guide service coordinators in better preparing for extreme weather events. Our hope is you will use this toolkit as a resource to educate yourself and the residents you work with in subsidized housing communities about disaster preparedness and response and as a workbook for your own planning regarding the communities you serve, own, and operate. We welcome your feedback as we continue to learn and to respond to our changing climate reality.

## Key Terms

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We will begin by defining a few key terms that you should know before exploring this toolkit.

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**Climate change:** Climate change refers to large-scale changes in global climate over the last 150-plus years due to human greenhouse gas emissions, which caused temperatures across the world to increase. This has led to significant changes in our climate, with extreme weather events and disasters being explicitly linked to this warming trend.

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**Disaster preparedness:** Disaster preparedness refers to actions at multiple levels that are taken to reduce the impact of disasters and extreme weather on yourself, your family, your neighborhoods, your communities, and larger scales.

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**Disaster response:** Disaster response refers to actions that are taken because of an event that can cause harm to people, buildings, and the environment.

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**Extreme weather:** Extreme weather refers to severe weather events that cause damage to property, harm people and animals, and the environment.

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**Affordable, Low-income, and Subsidized housing:** Affordable housing is a broad term that refers to housing that an individual or household can reasonably afford. Subsidized housing, often also called low-income housing, refers to government programs at all levels aimed at reducing the costs for residents with low to medium income. In this toolkit, the terms subsidized or low-income housing are used interchangeably and primarily refer to rental housing that is subsidized based on tenant income.

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**Service coordinators:** Service coordinators are human services professionals who assist individuals with accessing services and support for residents living in affordable/low-income housing.

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# Climate Change Impacts in Ohio

Preparing for extreme weather events should begin by identifying the specific risks present in your geographic area. Because our past experience with extreme weather is not necessarily a good predictor of future events any longer, it is important for you to revisit the ranking of your identified risks on an annual basis.

Ohio is at the highest risk of severe weather outcomes such as superstorms, winter storms, and tornadoes, extreme heat, power outages, and flooding. We are also increasingly seeing more drought conditions. This toolkit includes information on the four highest extreme weather-related risks and extreme cold. Our participants (experience experts) identified cold weather risks as an additional area of concern.

1. **Severe Weather** includes dangerous and unusual weather events such as tornados, significant precipitation like rain, snow, or hail, and damaging winds. For the first time in history, Ohio is experiencing more tornadoes than many other states.
2. **Extreme Heat** refers to multiple days of high temperatures and humidity (over 90 degrees Fahrenheit), and risks increase when there is a loss of electricity. The frequency of extreme heat events is increasing in Ohio, exerting further pressure on the power grid.
3. **Power Outage** occurs when the supply of electricity is cut off. This is happening more frequently in Ohio than in the past because of aging infrastructure and increased demand for power due to extreme weather conditions.
4. **Flooding** is the overflow of water on land/spaces that are normally dry. This can occur as the result of rivers or creeks rising above their banks or from existing municipal drainage systems not being able to handle heavy precipitation or storm surges (flash floods). Flooding is the most frequently occurring hazard in homes and communities in Ohio, including in areas that have never experienced this hazard before.
5. **Extreme Cold** refers to dangerously low temperatures and wind chill that can be hazardous to people and animals. Risks are heightened when there is a loss of power, and individuals must go outside to meet their needs. With snow or ice, the risk of falling, particularly among older adults, is elevated.



## Key Contacts

As a service coordinator, you are tasked with ensuring that your residents are connected to the appropriate services that they may need such as healthcare, transportation, food, and financial assistance, among other responsibilities. Efforts to maintain social connectedness, health, and well-being of residents are also often top priority, and these factors influence residents' ability to prepare for and respond to extreme weather events. However, emergency preparedness is often not factored into traditional service coordination resources despite older adults being significantly more likely to be impacted by extreme weather events and limited requirements by HUD for emergency planning..



## Building Contacts

Contacting individuals involved in operating and maintaining services and infrastructure in your building quickly is important in case of weather emergencies. The [sample worksheet](#) included in this toolkit is one resource you could use to ensure you have all the critical building contacts in one document. Plan to update your contact list at least once per year. Here is a list of key contacts you should include.

1. Service coordinator supervisor
2. Property manager
3. Maintenance
4. Elevator maintenance (if applicable)
5. Utility companies (water, electricity and gas)

## External Contacts – State and Local

There are a variety of state and local organizations that provide services and support in case of an extreme weather event or other emergency. Our study was conducted in Franklin County, Ohio so we provide statewide resources and Franklin County resources as an example. Create a list of external contacts that are specific to the county in which you work.



## STATE LEVEL RESOURCES – Ohio

# Emergency Resources

### **Ohio Emergency Management Agency \_\_\_\_\_ (614) 889-7150**

Responsible for disaster response, recovery, and mitigation in Ohio. Resources and education on emergency preparedness and communications at <https://ema.ohio.gov>.

### **Central & Southern Ohio Region of the American Red Cross**

### **Northern Ohio Region American Red Cross \_\_\_\_\_ (800) 733-2767**

Provides disaster preparedness training, shelter, food, health services and emotional support to victims of disasters at <https://www.redcross.org/local/ohio/northern-ohio.html>.

### **Ohio Trauma System**

The Ohio Trauma System provides information and resources for trauma & burn centers, trauma resources, and a list of Ohio hospitals at <https://ems.ohio.gov/programs-services/trauma-system/trauma-system>.

### **Suicide & Crisis Helpline \_\_\_\_\_ 988**

Active mental health or substance abuse crisis.

### **Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline \_\_\_\_\_ +1 (800) 273-8255**



## Fire Services

### **Ohio State Fire Marshal \_\_\_\_\_ +1 (888) 276-0303**

Fire code enforcement and investigations, fire safety training, permits and licensing information at <https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/state-fire-marshal/state-fire-marshal>.

### **Ohio State Local Fire Department List**

Search for local fire departments across the state of Ohio at <https://ohiofireceb.com.ohio.gov/FrontPortal/Page/RenderPage?tabId=173>.



STATE LEVEL RESOURCES – Ohio

## Non-Emergency Response

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### Pets and Service Animals

#### Ohio Animal Advocates

Statewide directory of pet food pantries, low-cost veterinary care, and other emergency resources

#### Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities \_\_\_\_\_ +1 (800) 282-4536

Rules and rights for service animals during an emergency

### Transportation

#### OHGO

Get real time traffic updates and information on travel advisories in Ohio <https://ohgo.com/>

#### OSU Wexner Medical Center Transportation Resource Guide

Provides an extensive list of Ohio public transportation services by county. [Learn More](#)

### Emergency Housing

#### Coalition on Homeless & Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) Resource Guide

The link includes an interactive map of Ohio that can assist in finding homelessness and housing services in your community.

### Aging Services and Support

#### Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging \_\_\_\_\_ (614) 481-3511

Provides contact information for local area agencies on aging, education, and referral services.



## **COUNTY-LEVEL RESOURCES: FRANKLIN COUNTY**

Note: The following pages include information on key resources in Franklin County as an example. You can use this template to identify local resources as relevant to your County context.



## COUNTY LEVEL RESOURCES – FRANKLIN

# Emergency Resources

**Franklin County Emergency Management** \_\_\_\_\_ **(614)-794-0213**

**Text FCReady to 888777** for countywide emergency management alerts

Coordinates and prepares for all-hazards disaster planning, education, warning, response and recovery efforts before, during and after disasters.

**Central & Southern Ohio Region of the American Red Cross**\_(800) 733-2767

Provides disaster preparedness training, shelter, food, health services and emotional support to victims of disasters.

## Mental Health Support

**Netcare Access** \_\_\_\_\_ **(614) 276-2273 / (614) 276-CARE**

24/7 Call, Text, and Chat services.

**Netcare 988 Suicide & Crisis Helpline** \_\_\_\_\_ **988/ (614) 221-5445**

Active mental health or substance abuse crisis.

## Public Health

**Columbus Public Health Helpline** \_\_\_\_\_ **(614) 645-6807**

\_\_\_\_\_ **or [health@columbus.gov](mailto:health@columbus.gov)**

Link above for neighborhood social services & local health resource list. Call or email to access the helpline.

**Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline** \_\_\_\_\_ **+1 (800) 273-8255**

**Fire and Public Safety Services** \_\_\_\_\_ **Call 911**



## COUNTY LEVEL RESOURCES – FRANKLIN

# Non-Emergency Response

**Non-Emergency Response Line \_\_\_\_\_ (614) 645-4545**

The phone number above is provided for situations where police may be required but there are not any immediate threats of harm to an individual, community, or property.

### Contact 311 for non-emergency city services such as:

Street maintenance & repair; water leaks; sewer issues; snow removal; bulk item pickup; reporting zoning or city code violations; missed trash collection; etc...

## Utilities & Maintenance

**Water Emergency \_\_\_\_\_ 311 or (614) 645-7788**

More information in the event of water emergencies such as broken or frozen pipes.

**Sewer Emergency \_\_\_\_\_ 311 or (614) 645-7102**

**Electric Emergency \_\_\_\_\_ 311 or (614) 645-7627**

**AEP customer service line \_\_\_\_\_ +1 (800) 672-2231**

## Central Ohio Utilities Guide

**Extensive utilities guide provided by COAAA** that includes services for older adults and people with disabilities. Items related to home energy assistance; utility payment plans; winter & summer crisis programs; at [https://coaaa.org/cms/images/docs/guides/Central\\_Ohio\\_Utilities\\_Guides.pdf](https://coaaa.org/cms/images/docs/guides/Central_Ohio_Utilities_Guides.pdf).

## Service Animals & Pets

**Columbus Humane Society \_\_\_\_\_ (614) 777-7387**

Resources for low-cost vet care, pet food assistance, emergency vet care, emergency boarding.

### Columbus Humane Society: [Help my Pet Resource List](#)

List of local resources including veterinary care, emergency boarding, and pet food pantries at <https://www.columbushumane.org/helpmypet>.

**COUNTY LEVEL RESOURCES – FRANKLIN****Non-Emergency Response**

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**Transportation****Franklin County Mobility Manager \_\_\_\_\_ (614)-233-4181**

Assist with accessing county transportation options, coordinate with other transportation providers.

**Emergency Housing****Community Shelter Board \_\_\_\_\_ (614)-274-7000**

24-hour homelessness hotline and community guide available online.

**Food Assistance****Mid-Ohio Food Collective \_\_\_\_\_ (614)-277-3663**

Assists with finding food, food benefits and family services.

**Aging Services and Support****Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging \_\_\_\_\_ (800)-589-7277**

Arranges and coordinates home and community-based services, provides education, information and referral and emergency support.

**Franklin County Office on Aging \_\_\_\_\_ (614)-525-6200**

Provides information and referral, case management services, adult protective services and emergency support.



## Building Details

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### *Background*

The foundation of this toolkit is based on our team's pilot research with one subsidized housing complex in Columbus, Ohio, Jaycee Village. With the use of focus groups, scenario planning exercises, space assessments, informational flyers, and the most relevant literature available, the toolkit put together by our team outlines the key aspects to consider when developing an emergency preparedness plan. The physical structure and features of the building, both inside and outside, become important to consider here as they might offer several points of

consideration and action. These features include but are not limited to the number of common spaces available, elevator accessibility, exits & signage, emergency contact information, power outages & generator reliability, availability of first aid, proper outdoor lighting, shaded spaces, reliable alternative transportation, service animals & pets, and safety concerns.



### *Considerations for Service Coordinators*

Before developing your emergency preparedness plan, you should consider your building from indoor and outdoor perspectives. [The Space Assessment Worksheet](#) can be a helpful tool for your assessment.

### *Indoor:*

## **Building Accessibility & Common Spaces:**

### **Designated Safe Zones**

Assess what indoor areas inside the building could be used as a central space for residents to meet in the event of an emergency. (e.g., the Community Room, Hallway, Dining hall, etc.)

### **Shelter Areas**

Check the accessibility of each floor, bathroom accessibility, and number of community spaces.

Identify a dedicated space for residents to meet inside (or outside) your building in case of an emergency. (e.g., power outage, tornado, fire, etc.)

### **Exits & Signage**

Ensure there are exits & signage throughout the building on every floor, working alarms, and locks on doors.



## Emergency Preparedness Inventory & First Aid:

### Dedicated Storage & Inventory Easy Access

Identify areas for storing disaster supplies such as food, water, medical supplies, batteries, blankets, etc. This area should be easily accessible, and the supply should be large enough to accommodate all residents.

### *Other Inventory Items to Include:*

Check to see there are adequate and functional first aid kits; AED; fire extinguishers for electric, chemical, and grease fires; emergency resource stock; reliable generators.

### Emergency Routes

Identify tested and reliable emergency routes that residents are aware of. If the building has multiple levels, this might necessitate a floor plan in addition to a common plan.

## Power Outages & Accessibility:

### Resident Safety Plan

**Plan.** Before a power outage occurs it is important to assess the number of residents with medical assistance devices and refrigerated medications; alternative power sources (such as generators for the building, individual or group portable chargers); fire safety procedures for lighting and heating; food safety when outages last more than 4 hours; damage to devices and appliances from power surges; adequate temperature control in extreme heat or cold.

**Implement.** In event of a power outage, it is important to ensure residents are aware of what to do to safely navigate the building in an outage.

## Reliable Generator:

Having a reliable generator is a necessary component to consider adding to your inventory items as power outages can cause irreparable damage to buildings, spoil food or medicines, and potentially even be life-threatening to resident's dependent on critical medical equipment.

## Elevators:

Assess elevators for potential trip or fall risks for people with mobility issues especially possible in an emergency; knowledge of elevator maintenance contact information availability and consistency are steps to take before a disaster event.

## Air Conditioning:

Evaluate and maintain HVAC systems and assess backup cooling options in case air conditioning fails due to a power outage (or other cause), especially in extreme heat situations.

## Outdoors:

### Common Spaces and Outdoor Accessibility:

#### Designated Safe Zones

Assess what outdoor areas around the building could be used as a central space for residents to meet in an emergency. This should be clearly marked and made known to all residents.

#### Shelter Areas

Identify outdoor areas that are sheltered from inclement weather which might look different for different situations (e.g. protected awnings for storms, under trees for excessive heat).

### Signage & Entrances:

Ensure entrances and exits are clearly marked at all times. It is especially important to have these signs lit up including adequate lighting in all pathways, sidewalks, and key areas outdoors to ensure residents can find their way (or be assisted) without additional challenges.



### Transportation:

Consider the closest bus stop locations; taxi and ride share services; any other additional alternative transportation options available in the area should be identified.



### Service Animals & Pets:

Know and provide resources to residents about taking care of their service animals and pets. This might include recognizing the differences in space access guidelines for pets, service animals, or emotional support animals, considering how access might impact evacuation procedures, and providing contact information for local animal shelters. This will also need an inventory or list of how many companion animals live in the building and whether both residents and companion animals can safely navigate the building.





## Disaster preparedness

Disaster preparedness refers to a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, evaluating, and taking corrective action to ensure effective coordination during incident response. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) outlines three steps for disaster preparedness among older adults:

1. **Assess needs**
2. **Make a plan**
3. **Engage your support network**

In the context of affordable housing, this can occur at multiple levels— individual, building, and community levels. Encourage residents to consider:

1. **Self-Help – What can I do for myself?**
2. **Mutual Help – What can I do for my neighbors?**
3. **Communal Help – What can I do for my community?**



## *Individual preparedness*

Preparedness of individuals in the community ranges from being informed about local and community risks, participating in training on preparedness, and discussing and practicing response skills. It also involves building (and updating) a kit and making a plan on your own or with members of your network. A disaster preparedness kit should include essential supplies such as packaged food, bottled water, a basic first aid kit, a flashlight, clothing, extra medicine, and key financial documentation in a go bag. If the resident has a pet or service animal, their needs should also be considered.

As a service coordinator, create a **Resident Risk Log** and update it at least two times per year. This log should include information such as resident name, apartment number, reliance on power for medical needs, mobility limitations, language spoken and any other specific needs.



## *Mutual preparedness*

Preparedness also means knowing who your neighbor is, having and discussing a plan with them, and outlining who will carry out what aspect of the plan. In subsidized housing, informal groups that stay together and/or look out for each other can be leveraged to discuss and, in the event of a disaster, implement a pre-determined plan.

## *Communal preparedness*

In affordable housing communities, there is also a need for disaster preparedness at the community level. This might involve identifying who in the community requires additional help, conducting a risk assessment of related aspects within the community, and discussing the potential formation of a disaster response team among informal leaders including building staff, and residents. Training staff and community members is crucial, as is ensuring that all residents have access to reliable and accurate information, along with emergency kits. Additionally, it may involve devising an evacuation plan and posting important signs that are easily understood by all members of the community.

At the building level, a better understanding of the structural and design aspects of the built environment that might cause harm or serve as protective factors across different disasters is essential. Understanding the space residents are dwelling in and its physical features, along with having an easily accessible plan for emergency personnel to provide support during a disaster, are elements that can be addressed at the building level.

## *Social Connection and Communication*

Throughout these different levels, social connection and communication remain the most important factors that can strengthen preparedness. Learning from each other, caring for our neighbors, and supporting community members will ensure that we are not on our own when a disaster hits.

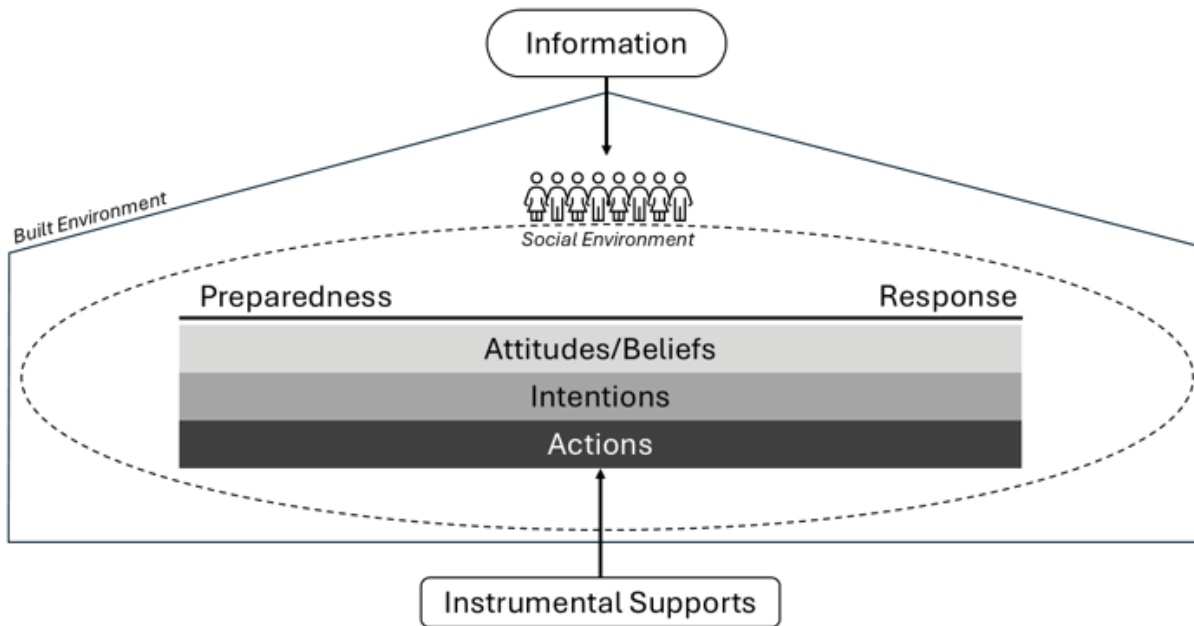
**“We’re a close community, so we do check on each other and make sure everybody knows what’s going on.”**

**– Housing Resident**





Figure 1: Extreme weather preparedness and response in affordable senior housing



*Conceptual diagram illustrating a unique built environment and social environment influencing community preparedness and response. Arrows from outside coming in indicate flow of information and instrumental supports.*

Residents in the subsidized housing complex who were members of the pilot study described a unique built (solid line in Figure 1) and social (dashed line in Figure 1) environment in which preparedness and response manifested in their community. Attitudes and beliefs about themselves, the building, and the weather shaped their intentions and actions related to extreme weather preparedness and response. Information about weather, resources, and best practices moved through the social environment and changed or reinforced attitudes, intentions, and actions. Instrumental support, characterized as practical and tangible supports such as transportation access and family and friends living outside of the building informed the actions residents took to prepare and respond to extreme weather.

Service Coordinators can use this model to consider the influences on emergency preparedness and response among their residents such as what information is being shared and how is the social environment contributing to the information being shared and used. Recognizing that attitudes/beliefs, intentions to act, and action influence the resilience of their residents during extreme weather events is also important. Finally, considering the instrumental supports such as resources, services, and informal support networks available impacts individual resident and community vulnerability.



## **Informational flyers**

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### *Flyer Development*

To develop these informational flyers, our team identified relevant information crucial for disaster preparedness and response based on the best available evidence. Recognizing the unique needs of older adults living in low-income housing communities, we tailored the content to be easily understandable and relevant to their circumstances. An initial draft of the flyer was presented during an educational feedback session at Jaycee Village, where we actively engaged with the older adults to gather their insights and suggestions. Based on the valuable feedback received, we made necessary adjustments to the flyer, ensuring the final content was both accurate and user-friendly.



### *Recommendations for Flyer Use and Distribution*

We encourage you to share these flyers as part of an informational session for residents. In these sessions, the group can review the flyer content together and discuss any comments or concerns about each topic. This approach ensures an opportunity for any necessary clarifications and provides a space for residents to voice their thoughts on emergency preparedness in the building. This collaborative method fosters a better understanding and encourages active participation in safety measures.

We recommend sharing these resources at different times throughout the year before each hazard is most likely to occur. Sharing these flyers just before each hazard arrives can help keep residents well-informed and prepared for weather events.

- **Tornado preparedness flyer:** Share before or during Ohio's peak tornado season typically from April to June (although this has shifted in recent years).
- **Heat preparedness:** Share in the late spring or early summer.
- **Cold weather preparedness:** Share in the fall and winter months.
- **Pets and service animals' preparedness and response:** Share at least once annually.

### **Why is this important?**

Older adults are among the groups at highest risk in an extreme weather event but often report being underprepared. Providing reliable, accurate, and timely preparedness and response information in a format that is tailored to the needs of older adults is essential in increasing awareness and preparation for extreme weather events.



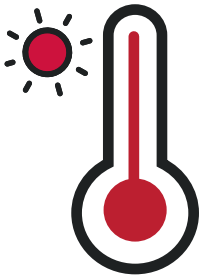
## Tornado preparedness



**Why is this important?** In recent years, Ohio has experienced an increase in extreme weather events due to climate change. In 2024, 74 tornadoes touched down in Ohio, surpassing the state's previous record of 62 tornadoes in 1992. Unfortunately, this trend is expected to continue, making it crucial to ensure that residents are prepared for tornado events.

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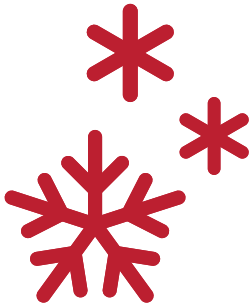
## Heat preparedness



**Why is this important?** Ohio averages between 14 and 21 days where temperatures are above 90 degrees each year. However, as global temperatures rise, this average is expected to increase across the state. Older adults are often more affected by high temperatures due to age-related changes in the way our bodies respond to and regulate heat. Extreme temperatures can also worsen existing health issues and contribute to life-threatening heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Providing information tailored to the needs of older adults can help ensure residents know how to stay cool, recognize symptoms of heat-related illnesses, and take life-saving preventive measures.

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## Cold preparedness



**Why is this important?** Despite the trend that winters have become warmer, Ohio still experiences bomb cyclones, ice storms, and other severe winter weather. The risk of falling increases in colder temperatures as ice on sidewalks and roads can be difficult to see, and snow may limit visibility of uneven surfaces. Significant disruptions with transportation options, including walking, driving, and utilizing public transit are common and may make it difficult to access food and medical care. Certain medications can increase your risk of cold-related illnesses, and as temperatures drop, and more groups congregate indoors, cases of life-threatening influenza and pneumonia increase. Checking in on residents during wintery weather is important for their safety and well-being.

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## Pets and service animals



**Why is this important?** Whether it's a pet, ESA, or service animal, our furry friends are like family, with some even having specific jobs they perform! However, they cannot take care of themselves and are reliant on you. Making sure you are accountable for their health and safety is an important task for all owners.



## Response procedures

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### Power outages

When preparing for power outages, it is essential to follow best practices to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents, especially those with medical conditions.

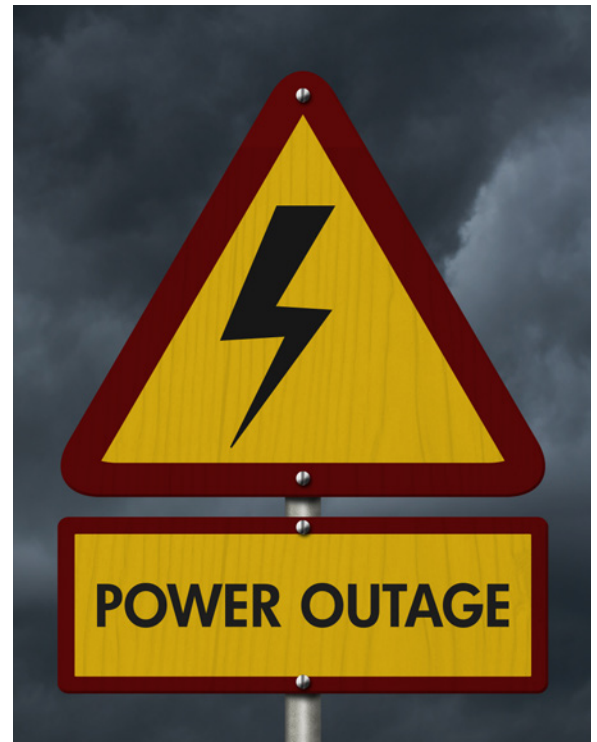
#### *Preparing for a power outage:*

1. **Emergency Kits:** Create emergency “go bags” with the following:
  - a. At least a three-day supply of water and non-perishable food items.
  - b. Prescription medication and first-aid supplies.
  - c. Important documents, including birth certificates, passports, or medication lists. Identification/Driver’s license, insurance cards, social security card, and contact information for important people and care providers. File of Life, if they have one.
  - d. Some cash in small bills.
  - e. Updated emergency contact lists.
  - f. Flashlights and batteries.
  - g. A battery-operated or hand-crank radio.
  - h. Personal hygiene items.

#### **Additional items to consider:**

- i. Non-prescription medication
- j. Pet food and extra water
- k. Batteries and chargers

Note: Individual needs may differ. It’s always best to have these conversations before and discuss what else individuals might need for the go-bag in addition to these items.



**“Whether it’s a power outage or it’s extreme weather. It feels like there are a lot of players involved, but I don’t always know who those players are and what all of our roles are.”**

**– Housing Resident**



- 2. Keep updated emergency contact lists:** Work with residents to create a list of emergency contacts that includes family members, healthcare providers, and local emergency services and numbers.
- 3. Have a communication plan:** Identify key contacts, establish how to communicate during an emergency, and ensure everyone knows the plan and has important contact information readily available.
- 4. Assess medical needs:** Identify any medications and specialized medical equipment residents require and make sure plans are in place to maintain access to necessary supplies and support during an emergency.
- 5. Back-up power sources:** Check if your building has access to a generator, portable chargers, or other alternative power sources for use when the power goes out. Make sure residents are aware of these resources and how they could be used in an outage.

### *During a power outage*

- 1. Conserve battery power:** Only use battery-powered devices like cell phones for essential communication and updates.
- 2. Avoid damage to appliances:** Unplug appliances to prevent damage from electrical surges when the power is restored.
- 3. Fire safety:** Use flashlights or battery-powered light sources instead of candles, and avoid using gas-powered stoves to heat living areas.
- 4. Food safety:** Keep doors to refrigerators and freezers closed to keep food from spoiling.
  - If doors are kept closed, food will be safe for up to four hours in a refrigerator or 24 hours in a full freezer. If power outages last longer than four hours consider moving perishable items to a cooler with ice.
- 5. Stay connected:** Check on residents and neighbors, especially those with medical assistance devices.

### *After a power outage*

- 1. Food safety:** Check for safety and throw out any perishable food items after four hours without power if they were not kept on ice. Check the temperatures in your refrigerators, freezers, and coolers. If the temperature is above 40°F, food should be discarded.
- 2. Check for damages:** Power surges may damage appliances and electrical devices. Electrical devices may need to be repaired or replaced after outages.
- 3. Review and update emergency plans:** Set aside time to reflect on your experiences during the power outage and update emergency plans as needed.



# Evacuation

There may come a time when residents must evacuate their apartments because of extreme weather conditions. Supporting residents in making individual, mutual, and group plans for themselves and their pets or service animals is important for a safe evacuation and finding a safe destination. As a service coordinator, consider the unique needs of each resident and the features of your property and how they may impact a resident's ability to evacuate.

The space assessment, resident risk log, and the pet/service animal flyer are important worksheets included in this toolkit to support you and your residents in preparing for the possibility of evacuation. Remember: Most of the planning occurs before an actual disaster occurs and the need to evacuate arises.

## Individual Plans

**At the individual level, consider:**

### What residents should bring

1. Important documents: Identification/Driver's license, insurance cards, social security card, and contact information for important people and care providers. File of Life, if they have one.
2. Medications and any specialized medical or mobility devices
3. Phone or other mobile technology devices and charging cords
4. Food, water, and any essentials for pets or service animals
5. Two changes of clothing and comfortable closed-toed shoes

### How to get out

1. Prior to the need to evacuate, make sure each resident has a plan on how to exit their apartment and building.
2. Identify what devices and support people need to safely exit the building.

### Where to go and how to get there

1. Prior to the need to evacuate, make sure each resident has a plan for where they can go in case of evacuation and how they will get there.
2. Prior to the need to evacuate, ensure the resident has communicated their plans to family, friends, neighbors, or other people important to them.

**“If the elevator is out, I don’t know how I’m gonna get my neighbors down the stairs. A lotta of ‘em can’t go up and down the stairs. That’s the one thing I do worry about, gettin’ my neighbors outta the building.”**

**– Housing Resident**

# Building Plans

**Some considerations at the building level would be to:**

## *Identify residents who are at the highest risk*

1. Complete the Resident Risk Log in a portable printed or electronic format with resident permission, including a roster of residents at highest risk of challenges in evacuating due to physical limitations, lack of social support, and apartment location in building.
2. Ensure that you have their name, apartment number, contact information, and any pertinent information to support their evacuation.



## *Identify building features that might hinder evacuation*

1. Complete a Building Assessment before the need to evacuate to identify challenges for evacuating during an emergency, including if an elevator is not available/working.
2. Identify resolutions to these barriers for individual residents and/or for the building as a whole

## *Deploy communication plan*

1. Prior to the need to evacuate, identify a plan to communicate with all residents, your organization, building owners and operators, and relevant community service providers that your residents must evacuate.
2. Initiate the communication plan as soon as possible. Include information about who the point of contact will be for the building and how to communicate with that individual.

## **Social connection and communication**

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Maintaining social connections is always crucial for older adults, and this is especially true in planning for and during extreme weather events. It allows for improved communication, ensuring residents receive important information quickly. Older adults with strong social networks report less stress and anxiety and a greater likelihood of having someone to check in on them in an emergency. Communication is also a key part of emergency procedures, such as gathering supplies, accessing medical care, and evacuating. It contributes to both individual and community resilience and aids in disaster recovery. By staying connected and having a communication plan, older adults are better protected from the impacts of extreme weather and emergency events.

# Pets and service animals

## *How are service animals, emotional support animals, and pets different?*

Service animals are animals, usually dogs or, in some cases, miniature horses, trained to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. Unlike pets and emotional support animals (ESAs), service animals have public access rights.

- By law, service animal handlers are not required to provide documentation that shows the animal is a service animal.
- Service animals are not required to wear a vest or other identification, labeling them as service animals. However, many handlers choose to use vests or other gear to indicate their animal companion is a service animal.



**Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)** provide comfort and support for individuals with mental health conditions. They do not require special training and do not have public access rights. However, ESAs are permitted to live with their owners in housing residences with no pet policies, and landlords cannot charge pet fees for ESAs.

- ESAs require a letter from a licensed healthcare provider that states a need for the animal.
- Pets are domestic animals kept for companionship and pleasure. They do not have special training or public access rights.

Pets do not have public access or housing rights and are subject to pet fees.

## *Access Rights and Emergencies*

**Service Animals:** In emergency situations, service animals are permitted to travel with their humans in an ambulance and enter medical facilities, evacuation shelters, and other public spaces.

**Pets and Emotional Support Animals:** Pets and emotional support animals do not have the same access rights as service animals in an emergency. This means that evacuation centers and medical facilities may not permit pets or ESAs to enter facilities in an emergency. Individuals with ESAs should keep updated contact information for local animal shelters and identify friends or neighbors who can care for companion animals in an emergency.

## *Emergency Preparedness for Companion Animals*

1. Encourage residents to keep updated identification and veterinary records for companion animals.
  - a. Highlight the importance of keeping updated identification tags for companion animals. Additional forms of identification could be microchipping or licensing animals with the county auditor's office.
2. Identify the number of service animals, emotional support animals, and pets in your community, and consider companion animals when creating and discussing emergency plans.
3. Communicate evacuation procedures for companion animals and provide contact information for local animal shelters when possible.

## **Additional Extreme Weather Resources and Key References**

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### **Cold Weather**

#### *Ohio Resources*

Ohio Department of Health. (2024). Cold Weather Tips. <https://odh.ohio.gov/media-center/feature-stories/cold-weather-tips-120624>

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#### *National Resources*

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National Institute on Aging. (2024, January). Cold Weather Safety for Older Adults. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/cold-weather-safety-older-adults>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024a, February). Preventing Hypothermia. Winter Weather. <https://www.cdc.gov/winter-weather/prevention/index.html>

### **Extreme Heat**

#### *Ohio Resources*

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Perry, A. (2024, June). Ohio weather records: Most consecutive 90-degree days in Cincinnati, Columbus. The Cincinnati Enquirer. <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2024/06/24/ohio-weather-heat-records-cincinnati-columbus-akron-cleveland/74172514007/>

## *National Resources*

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National Institute on Aging. (2022, September). Hot Weather Safety for Older Adults. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/hot-weather-safety-older-adults>



## **Tornadoes**

### *Ohio Resources*

Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness. (n.d.). Tornado Safety. <https://weathersafety.ohio.gov/weather-safety/tornado-safety/02-tornado-safety>

Thompson, C. & Spectrum News Staff. (n.d.). This day last year kicked off a record year of tornadoes. Spectrum News 1. <https://spectrumnews1.com/oh/columbus/news/2025/02/26/2024-tornadoes-one-year-later>

### *National Resources*

American Red Cross. (n.d.). Tornado Safety Tips. <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/tornado.html>

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). Tornadoes. Ready.Gov. <https://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>



## **Service Animals and Pets**

### *Ohio Resources*

Disability Rights Ohio. (n.d.). Service Animals. <https://www.disabilityrightsohio.org/service-animals>

Ohio Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). Risk Analysis. <https://ema.ohio.gov/mitigation-plan/risk-analysis>

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. (n.d.). Service Animals. Accessible Ohio. <https://ood.ohio.gov/accessible-ohio/ao-resources/service-animals>

### *National Resources*

ADA National Network. (n.d.). Service Animals in Emergency Situations. <https://adata.org/service-animal-resource-hub/emergencies>

BYU Emergency Management. (n.d.). Emergency Preparedness for Owners of Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and Pets. Brigham Young University. <https://emergencymanagement.byu.edu/00000177-4569-d4ef-ad77-ffef767d0001/emergency-preparedness-for-service-animals-and-pets>

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2024, June). Prepare Your Pets for Disasters. Ready.Gov. <https://www.ready.gov/pets>

Office of Disability Employment Policy. (n.d.). Aiding Individuals with Service Animals During an Emergency. U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/reports/aiding-individuals-with-service-animals-during-an-emergency>

Resnick, M. (2023, June). Service Animal Awareness in Disaster Response. Domestic Preparedness. <https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/emergency-management/service-animal-awareness-in-disaster-response>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024b, April). Be Prepared: Pet Safety in Emergencies. Healthy Pets, Healthy People. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-pets/emergency-preparedness/index.html>

## **Social Connection**

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U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, February). Improving Social Connectedness. Social Connection. <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/improving/index.html>

## **Emergency Preparedness, Climate Variability, and Older Adults**

### *Ohio Resources*

State Climate Office of Ohio. (2023, November). Climate Change in Focus: Assessing Regional Impacts and Strategies in Ohio. <https://climate.osu.edu/news/climate-change-focus-assessing-regional-impacts-and-strategies-ohio>

### *National Resources*

AARP. (2022, July). AARP Disaster Resilience Tool Kit. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2022/aarp-disaster-resilience-tool-kit.html>

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2025a, February). Older Adults. Ready.Gov. <https://www.ready.gov/older-adults>

National Institute on Aging. (2022, October). Protecting older adults from the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/protecting-older-adults-effects-natural-disasters-and-extreme-weather>

Aiding Individuals with Service Animals During an Emergency

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/publications/reports/aiding-individuals-with-service-animals-during-an-emergency#:~:text=During%20an%20emergency%2C%20service%20animals,health%20or%20safety%20of%20individuals>

Service Animal Awareness in Disaster Response

<https://domesticpreparedness.com/emergency-management/service-animal-awareness-in-disaster-response>

Service Animals in Emergency Situations

<https://adata.org/service-animal-resource-hub/emergencies>

Emergency Preparedness for Owners of Service Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and Pets

<https://emergencymanagement.byu.edu/00000177-4569-d4ef-ad77-ffef767d0001/emergency-preparedness-for-service-animals-and-pets>

Ready Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults

<https://www.ready.gov/older-adults>

AARP Disaster Resilience Tool Kit

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2022/aarp-disaster-resilience-tool-kit.html>

2.01 Risk Analysis Overview

**Ohio EMA. (2025). Risk Analysis Overview.** <https://ema.ohio.gov/mitigation-plan/risk-analysis>

Ready Power Outages

<https://www.ready.gov/power-outages>

<https://climate.osu.edu/news/climate-change-focus-assessing-regional-impacts-andstrategies-ohio>

# Winter Ready: Staying Safe in Cold Weather ❄️❄️❄️

Staying safe in cold weather can be challenging, and it's important to take steps to stay healthy as temperatures drop.

Ohio's winters have trended warmer, increasing our tornado risk year-round. Despite these trends Ohio still experiences ice storms and other severe winter weather threats.

Cold, wet conditions make it harder for our bodies to maintain heat. Older adults, children, and people with disabilities are especially vulnerable to colder temperatures.

## Tips for Staying Safe in Cold Weather



Watch for signs of illness.



Limit time outside.



Cover up and wear layers.



Stay hydrated.



Pack an emergency kit.



### Stay Connected

Create a communication plan and check in on family, friends, and neighbors before and after extreme weather events. Staying connected can help you and members of your community stay safe.

## Transportation Challenges: Cold Weather and Winter Storms



### Walking

Limited visibility, ice or snow-covered walkways, and low temperatures can impact your ability to navigate your surroundings.



### Public Transit

Delayed or canceled services, inaccessible bus stops, and crowded vehicles may prevent you from accessing transportation.



### Driving

Reduced traction and changing visibility due to snow, ice, and slush can decrease your control over your vehicle.



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## What cold-related illnesses should I look out for?

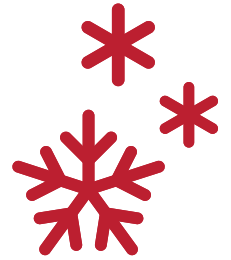
**Hypothermia:** A life-threatening condition where body temperature drops dangerously low from prolonged cold exposure.

**Symptoms:** shivering, exhaustion, confusion, slurred speech.

**Frostbite:** Damage to skin and tissues from prolonged freezing exposure, often affecting the fingers, toes, ears, and nose.

**Symptoms:** Numbness, a change in skin color to red, gray or blue.

**Call 9-1-1** If you or someone you know are showing signs of hypothermia or frostbite and seek medical attention immediately.



### Know your medications

Ask your healthcare provider if your medications increase the risk of hypothermia, frostbite, or other cold-related illnesses.



### Get the flu shot

As temperatures drop, flu and other illnesses rise due to more indoor time and close proximity. Getting a flu shot helps protect you and others from getting sick this flu season.

## Are falls more common in colder temperatures?

- **Yes**, 1 in 4 older adults report falling each year and the risk of falling is often higher in the winter.
- Ice can be hard to see and snow can hide uneven surfaces, increasing your risk of falling.
- Cold weather can increase joint stiffness and limit mobility, leading to balance issues and higher fall risk.



## How can I keep my living space safe in cold weather?

- Keep windows and curtains closed to help trap in heat.
- Avoid smoking indoors and use kitchen vents or exhaust while cooking to prevent carbon monoxide build-up.
- When temperatures drop below 20°F let your faucets drip to avoid frozen pipes.
- If the power goes out or you do not have heating visit local warming centers.

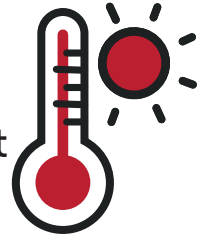
**Call 2-1-1** for assistance and referrals to warming centers. Check with local news sources on opening hours of select warming centers.

## How do I keep my animals safe in cold weather?

- Limit your animal's time outdoors as much as possible.
- Check your animal's paws for damage caused by the cold, ice, or salt.
- Never leave animals unattended in parked cars even for a few minutes.



# Beat the Heat: Staying Safe in Hot Weather



Staying safe in hot weather can be challenging, and it's important to take steps to stay healthy as temperatures rise.

On average the city of Columbus experiences 18 days per year where temperatures reach 90 degrees or higher.

**What is a heat event?** A heat event is when temperatures remain above 90 degrees for at least two to three days.



## Heat Warning

High temperatures and humidity are a dangerous combination for people of all ages because our bodies need to work harder to maintain a healthy temperature. Older adults, persons with disability, those with chronic illnesses, and very young children are among groups that are especially at risk.

## Tips for Staying Safe in Extreme Heat



Watch for signs of heat-related illness.



Limit time outside during the day.



Wear loose-fitting clothes.



Drink lots of water.



Seek shade if outside.



## Stay Connected

Create a communication plan and check in on family, friends, and neighbors before and after extreme weather events. Staying connected can help you and members of your community stay safe.

## Remember to Wear Sunscreen



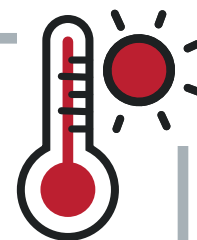
- Apply sunscreen and make sure to reapply every 2 hours, even on cloudy days.
- Make sure your sunscreen has an SPF of 30 or higher.
- Ask your medical provider if any of your medications increase your risk of sunburn, dehydration, or other heat illnesses.



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## What is the Difference Between Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion?

### Heat Exhaustion

A condition where your body can no longer keep cool. Heat exhaustion may lead to heat stroke.

#### Symptoms to look out for:

- Dizziness
- Extreme thirst
- Excessive Sweating
- Nausea
- Lack of Coordination

### Heat Stroke

A medical emergency where your body temperature rises above 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

#### Symptoms to look out for:

- Headache
- Confusion or dizziness
- Not Sweating
- Strong and rapid pulse
- Fainting

#### Other Heat-Related Illnesses:

**Heat Edema:** Swelling of legs and ankles.

**Heat Cramps:** Painful tightening of muscles.

**Heat Syncope:** Sudden dizziness.

## What can I do to keep my living space cool without air conditioning?

- Using ventilation techniques like opening windows and doors especially at night.
- Turn on fans to help increase airflow and lower temperatures.

*While ventilation and fans are helpful, make sure to stay hydrated, limit physical activity, and seek out cooling centers if necessary.*



## When should I go to a cooling center?

- If you do not have air conditioning or are having difficulty staying cool during a heat event you should go to your local cooling center.

**Call 2-1-1** for assistance and referrals to cooling centers. Check with local news sources on opening hours of select cooling centers.



## What should I do to keep my pet or service animal safe during extreme heat events?

- Keep your animals in cool, shaded areas with access to fresh water.
- Never leave animals unattended in parked cars even for a few minutes.
- Avoid walking animals on hot asphalt or concrete to prevent burns.

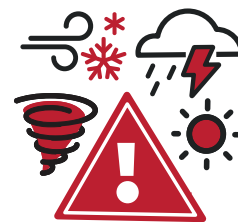


# Emergency Preparedness: Pets and Service Animals



Planning for the care of pets and service animals during an emergency is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of both you and your animals.

## How can I keep my pet or service animal safe before, during, and after an extreme weather event?



### Before an extreme weather event

- Have a plan for where you will go and how you will transport your animals.
- Create an emergency kit with your companion animal's food, water, and medication.
- Make an emergency contact list that includes your veterinarian and local animal shelters.
- Check to see if your companion animal has up to date identification or a microchip.
- Identify trusted pet sitters who can care for your pet if needed.

### During an extreme weather event

- Keep companion animals indoors and bring them with you if you need to evacuate or go to a safer location.
- Keep pets and service animals hydrated and make sure they have a fresh source of water.
- Avoid leaving companion animals alone in cars or vehicles, even for a few minutes.

### After an extreme weather event

- Check your companion animal for injuries and seek medical attention if necessary.
- Make sure your environment is free of any hazards before allowing your companion animal to proceed.



### Stay Connected

Create a communication plan with friends, family, and neighbors and work together to coordinate plans to keep you and your companion animals safe in extreme weather events.

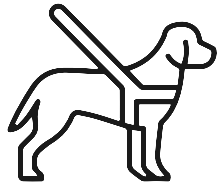


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## What is the difference between a pet and a service animal?



### Service Animals

- Trained to perform specific tasks to assist individuals with disabilities.
- Allowed in most public places, including restaurants and on public transportation.
- Protected under laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### In an emergency...

- Service animals can accompany their owners in ambulances and medical facilities.
- Service animals can travel with their owners and enter evacuation shelters.



### Pets

- Primarily kept for companionship and enjoyment.
- Basic training for behavior and obedience.
- Limited access to public places.
- Fewer legal protections compared to service animals.

### In an emergency...

- Pets are typically not allowed to travel in an ambulance or enter medical facilities.
- Public shelters and evacuation sites may not allow pets inside.

## How service animals can help



Retrieving medication



Guiding people who are blind or visually impaired



Alerting to seizures



Pulling wheelchairs



Assist with panic or symptoms of PTSD

## Do service animals need to have paperwork or documentation?

There is no required documentation for service animals, but their handlers may be asked two questions:

- Is this a service animal required because of a disability?
- What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?



# Tornado Preparedness: Staying Safe in Extreme Weather



A tornado is a rotating funnel-shaped column of air that extends to the ground, often as a part of a thunderstorm.



**71 tornadoes have touched down in Ohio between January 1st, 2024 and June 18th, 2024.**

This breaks Ohio's record from 1992 of 62 tornadoes in one calendar year.

## What should I know before, during, and after a tornado hits my housing location?



### Before a Tornado

- Make an emergency kit with food, water, medication, and important documents.
- Create a tornado safety plan.



### During a Tornado: TAKE SHELTER

- Take shelter in your tornado safe space. This may be in your apartment, away from windows and outside walls.
- Protect your head and neck. Avoid being close to windows and doors.



### After a Tornado: PROCEED WITH CAUTION

- Do not enter damaged buildings.
- Avoid fallen power lines.
- Check in with family members and neighbors.



### Stay Connected

Create a communication plan and check in on family, friends, and neighbors before and after extreme weather events. Staying connected can help you and members of your community stay safe.



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## What is the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning?

### Tornado Watch

Tornadoes are possible in your area. Pay attention to changes in the weather and prepare to take quick action and know where you will take shelter.

### Tornado Warning

A tornado has been seen or detected in the area. There is imminent danger to life and property- move to an interior room or the lowest floor.



### Tornado Emergency

The highest level of alert. A violent tornado has touched down with severe threat to life and property; take shelter in safe location immediately. Call friends and family in the area to ensure they are aware.

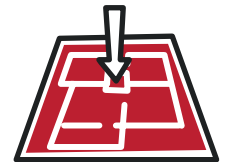
## How can I protect my head and neck while sheltering from a tornado?

- Sit as low to the ground as possible, protecting the back of your head and neck with your hands
- Consider using pillows or a helmet for more protection.



## Where should I go during a tornado if I do not have a basement or lower level?

- Take shelter in a small, interior room near the center of your living space.
- Avoid windows and doors when possible.



## Where should I go during a tornado if I am driving or in a vehicle?

- If driving, don't stop under an overpass or tree.
- If you can't leave the vehicle, stay buckled, low, and in the brace position.



## How can I keep my pet or service animal safe in a tornado?

- Keep animals indoors and bring them with you to your tornado safe space.
- Include food and supplies for animals in your emergency kit.
- Make sure your animals have proper identification like a collar with your contact information.



# Key Building Contacts



Staying safe in hot weather can be challenging, and it's important to take steps to stay healthy as temperatures rise.

## Your residential information

Name of facility: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

## Telephone number(s)

### Service coordinator supervisor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary contact #: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Property manager

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary contact #: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Building maintenance

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary contact #: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Elevator maintenance (if applicable)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Utility companies

#### Water Company

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Electricity Provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Natural Gas Provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Internet Provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_



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Weather and Aging  
Resilience Model



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# Space Assessment Survey



**Overview:** This guide is designed to help us effectively evaluate and improve the safety and preparedness of our community spaces.

**Purpose:** As you consider preparing and responding to more frequently occurring extreme weather events, it can be helpful to conduct a space assessment of the building to identify opportunities for improvement and response. If possible, space assessments are most effective when conducted with residents who can identify unique individual needs and structural features as part of their living experience. Inviting your local fire department, property management, or local Emergency Management Agency to join you can also be an effective way to learn how to best prepare for and respond to weather emergencies.

**Note:** The space assessment should be regularly updated through the worksheet as layout or usage changes.

## PROPERTY – EXTERIOR FEATURES

1. Is there adequate lighting around the property?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are there signs that identify the entrance doors that are easy to read and navigate for first responders? Make sure any directional arrows are clearly posted.

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is there a designated outside meeting area in case of an emergency? Are residents aware of it? Is it clearly marked?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are there places for residents to sit in the shaded areas (such as trees, overhangs, pavilions)?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## PROPERTY -- INTERIOR FEATURES

10. Are the exits easily accessible for residents using mobility devices (e.g. free of clutter, wide enough, automatic door)?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Are the exits lighted and clearly marked?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Is emergency lighting installed in hallways, stairwells, and exits?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Are there handrails along the walls to assist those with mobility impairments?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Are there automatic doors? Can the doors be opened without electricity?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Are the doorways 32 inches wide with the door open 90 degrees?

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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16. Number of elevators in the building? \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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**17. Are elevators functioning? Are the buttons reachable for those in a scooter/wheelchair?**

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**18. Does the elevator operate when the power is out?**

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**19. Are there emergency evacuation chairs available by each stairwell? Are instructions related to use posted?**

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**20. How often are fire/smoke alarms tested?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**21. Are hallways/travel routes unobstructed and free of clutter?**

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**22. Inspecting areas with electric cords and wires – are they secured and covered?**

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**23. Are there internal designated areas for residents to go who need power for life sustaining and/or mobility devices?**

Yes       No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. Are there group areas with controlled temperatures where residents can go? Are the areas large enough to accommodate residents?

Yes  No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25. Does the building have a generator?

Yes  No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

26. Do residents know what areas of the building are provided with power if the generator is on?

Yes  No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST AID AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES

27. Is there a well-stocked first aid kit available?

Yes  No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28. Are AED (Automated External Defibrillator) devices accessible and maintained? (Add comments as needed)

Yes  No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

29. Are staff and community members trained in basic first aid and CPR?

Yes  No

If not, consider:

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





