

HIGH-RISE

Emergency Preparedness



VAUGHAN'S

Emergency **Management** **Program**

The Vaughan Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS) Emergency Planning Division provides executive leadership and policy direction to manage the strategic response to an emergency event by mobilizing necessary resources. The VFRS Emergency Planning Division also provides the City of Vaughan with an effective vehicle for developing and maintaining a comprehensive emergency management program, as well as managing emergency response activities.

The VFRS Emergency Planning Division oversees activities on behalf of the City of Vaughan to improve the safety and protection of Vaughan citizens and essential services during an emergency.

In case of an
emergency,
call **9-1-1.**

Contents:

- Preparing for an Emergency 4
- Prepare a Kit 5 – 6
 - Personal Preparedness..... 5
 - Go Bag 6
- Know your Risks 7 – 9
 - Power Failure and Utility Disruption 7 – 8
 - Food Safety..... 9
- Fires 10 – 13
 - To Go or Stay? 11 – 13
- Make A Plan 14
- The Importance of Insurance..... 15
- Emergency Medical Preparedness..... 16
- Special Considerations..... 17 – 19
 - Sheltering in place or evacuation-what’s the difference? 18
 - Evacuation 18 – 19
- Important Numbers 20
- In Case of Emergency (ICE) Information..... 21 – 22

Preparing for an Emergency

Emergencies can happen at any time or place. The City of Vaughan, led by Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service, is prepared to assist citizens during all types of emergencies. However, while the City is doing its part, residents also have an important role to play in emergency preparedness.

During an emergency, residents who live in high-rise buildings may be required to evacuate, asked to stay inside (shelter in place) or experience power outages for extended periods of time. There are steps you can take to help protect yourself, your loved ones and property in the event of an emergency.

Know your risks.

Make a plan.

Prepare a kit.

72 hours is a long time without food and water.

Being prepared for an emergency can significantly reduce the hardship you may experience during a local or city-wide emergency.

Prepare a Kit

Personal Preparedness

As part of emergency planning, all residents should have a 72-hour emergency kit that includes all the things you need, such as:

- drinking water for three days (four litres per person per day)
- battery powered or crank radio and flashlight
- batteries for flashlights and radios
- three-day supply of non-perishable food that meets your dietary needs, including food for infants, children, seniors and pets, if required
- manual can opener
- first aid kit
- hand sanitizer
- prescription drugs, medical supplies and special equipment
- games and toys
- “In case of emergency” information sheet about your special needs or disability including contact information for your healthcare provider(s), caregiver(s), emergency contact or personal attendant(s), or your service animals’ veterinarian, and a detailed list of all prescriptions and medications. (See the end of this guide for a template you can use.)



GO BAG

In addition to the 72-hours emergency kit, every member of your household should pack a Go Bag – a collection of items you may need in the event of an evacuation. A Go Bag should be packed in something sturdy and easy to carry, such as a backpack or suitcase on wheels. A Go Bag should be easily accessible in case you must leave your home in a hurry.

Everyone's Go Bag will be different and based on their individual needs. Consider including the following in yours:

- copies of important documents, such as passports, bank account numbers, credit cards, health card, social insurance card, family records, insurance policies, photo identification, proof of address
- copy of your "In case of emergency" information sheet
- list of all the medications you take and how often
- extra set of car and apartment keys
- credit and ATM cards, and cash, especially in small denominations
- bottled water and non-perishable food, such as energy or granola bars
- contact list and meeting place information for your household
- child care supplies or other special care items

You should also take these steps:

- Keep cell phone batteries charged, and have an alternate battery, car charger or portable battery bank.
- Keep flashlights where you can easily find them in the dark.
- Replenish food and water supplies every six months when you change your clocks.
- Use surge protecting power bars to protect sensitive electronic equipment.
- Replace medication in your Go Bag before it expires.

Know Your Risks

The City of Vaughan is prepared to assist citizens during all types of emergencies, including power outages, fires, severe storms, floods and outbreaks of infectious diseases.

The two most common types of emergencies that affect residents in high-rise buildings are power outages and fires.

POWER FAILURE AND UTILITY DISRUPTION

Power failures and utility disruptions can be caused by failures in the system and external events, such as severe weather. A power outage may last from a few minutes to a few days. Prolonged power outages in extreme hot or cold weather may put your health and safety at risk.

Contact Alectra to report power failures, wires down, power quality problems, or to speak with their customer service.

PHONE: 1-877-963-6900, press 1

WEB: powerstream.ca/power-outages/report-a-power-outage.html

Your patience is needed and appreciated during power outages. During a power outage, elevators may not work and water pressure may be affected. Alectra will work to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

DURING AN OUTAGE

- Unplug any appliances (e.g. space heaters, toaster ovens, griddles) or anything that may have been on at the time of the outage that will come back on when power is restored and be a possible source of ignition.
- Ensure that your stove cook top and oven are turned off.
- Turn off water to the clothes washer and dishwasher. if they are in use when the power goes out.
- Fill your bath tub and some containers with water so you can use it to flush your toilet.
- Leave a light or radio on so you will know when power is restored.
- Unplug computers, televisions, stereos and other electronics to prevent damage caused by power surges.
- Never use barbecues, propane or gas heaters, or portable generators indoors.
- Never leave candles unattended.

After power is restored, try to limit electricity use to help relieve potential strain on the system. Follow these steps to conserve energy:

- Turn off all non-essential lighting.
- Set air conditioners to at least 25°C.
- Use fans as an alternative to air conditioners and closing curtains or blinds to keep out the sun and retain cooler air inside.
- Plug in only the most essential appliances first, and waiting 10 to 15 minutes to give the electrical system time to stabilize before connecting everything else.

During an extended power outage, your building's property management staff or community organizations, such as the Canadian Red Cross, might visit you at home to see if you need any help.

FOOD SAFETY

During a power outage, food kept in the refrigerator or freezer may become unsafe to eat. The following tips can help ensure food is stored safely in the event of a power outage:

- Keep your refrigerator door closed (if possible) to maintain the temperature inside. Without power, the refrigerator section will keep food cool for four to six hours, if the door is kept closed.
- Keep a fridge thermometer in your refrigerator so you know if the temperature goes above 4°C.
- Throw out perishable foods, such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs and leftovers, that have been at temperatures above 4°C for more than two hours.
- Keep your freezer door closed to maintain the temperature inside. Without power, an upright or chest freezer that is completely full will keep frozen for about 48 hours, if the door is kept closed. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours.
- Foods that have thawed in the freezer may be refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 4°C or below – evaluate each item separately.
- Partial thawing and refreezing may reduce the quality of some food, but it will remain safe to eat.
- If possible, add bags of ice to the refrigerator and freezer to keep temperatures cooler for a longer period.
- Discard any items in the freezer or refrigerator that have come in contact with raw meat juices.
- If you are in doubt about whether a food item has spoiled, throw it out.
- Contact your doctor or pharmacist for information about proper storage of medication that requires refrigeration, such as insulin.

For more information about when to keep or throw out refrigerated foods, visit the Food Safety at Home section on the York Region Public Health website at **york.ca/foodsafety**.

Fires

High-rise buildings are designed to be more fire-safe than the average single-family dwelling. Floors and ceilings are constructed with fire-resistant materials and are separated into fire compartments. However, in the event of a fire, there are a number of things you can do to protect your family and property.

Follow these steps if there is a fire in your unit:

- Tell everyone in your unit to leave.
- Close, but don't lock, all doors behind you.
- Pull the fire alarm on your floor and yell "fire."
- Leave the building using the nearest exit stairway.
- **DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.**
- Call the fire department at 9-1-1 from a safe location – never assume this has been done.
- Meet family members in your pre-determined assembly location.
- Meet the firefighters when they arrive and tell them where the fire is.



TO GO OR STAY?

Most of the time, the best thing to do in a fire is leave the building as soon as possible. But in some cases, you may not be able to leave and you may have to stay in your unit. In either case, you must act quickly as seconds count. The longer you wait, the more risk there is that heavy smoke will have spread into the stairways and corridors, and your chances of survival are less. No matter what your decision, you must protect yourself from the smoke.

If you decide to leave the building

1. Check the door to your unit.
 - a. If smoke is entering from around the door, do not open it.
 - b. Feel the door and door knob. If the door or knob are hot, do not open it. Protect yourself from smoke inside your unit.
 - c. If there is no smoke or heat, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly.
 - d. If you see smoke or feel heat, close the door quickly and protect yourself.
2. If the corridor is clear, take your keys, close the door behind you and go to the nearest exit stairway.
 - a. **DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR.**
3. Open the nearest exit stairway door carefully.
 - a. If there is no smoke, travel down the stairs to leave the building.
 - b. If there is smoke, do not enter. Close the door.
Go to another exit stairway and open the door carefully.
 - c. If there is no smoke there, travel down the stairs to leave the building.
 - d. If there is smoke, do not enter. If there are other stairways, try them. If there are not, return to your unit and protect yourself from smoke.

When you are inside the stairway

If you encounter smoke on your way down the stairs, do not continue. Follow these safety tips:

- Exit the stairway at the closest available floor and proceed to an alternate stairway. Open the door carefully and if there is no smoke, continue down the stairway and leave the building.
- If you cannot use any stairway to exit the building, return to your unit if possible, or enter another floor and bang on unit doors until you are able to take shelter inside.
- Never go to the roof – smoke rises! Doors to the roof are locked and you could become trapped.
- Remember to stay low to the ground if you are in a smoke-filled environment. The air is clearer near floor level.
- Once out of the building, stay out. Do not go back into the building until the fire departments tells you it is safe.





If you remain in your unit

You must protect yourself from smoke. Stay in your unit until you are rescued or until you are told to leave. Keep all windows and doors closed.

Keep smoke from entering your unit. Use duct tape to seal cracks around the door and place wet towels at the bottom. Seal vents or air ducts with duct tape, wet towels or aluminum foil.

If smoke enters your unit

- Call the fire department at 9-1-1 and tell them where you are. Move to the balcony and close the door behind you.
- If you don't have a balcony, go to the most smoke-free room and seal the door with tape and towels. If necessary, open the window for fresh air. Hang a piece of material (e.g. sheet, towel) from the window or balcony to show emergency personnel where you are.
- Keep low to the floor where the air is clearer.
- Listen for instruction from authorities.

Make a Plan

There are specific steps that high-rise residents can take to plan for emergencies.

Know information about your building, such as:

- the building superintendent's name and phone number
- locations of fire extinguishers, automated external defibrillator units and oxygen tanks
- location of emergency evacuation devices
- location of emergency exits
- who conducts your building's evacuation drills and how often
- who the floor monitors are (if the building has floor monitors)
- where to assemble if the building is evacuated

Make a plan for your family:

- Get the emergency plan at your children's school/childcare centre/or day program facility.
- Create a plan for your family in case you are separated. Include who your children could call for help or information.
- Determine a meeting place outside of your building.

Residents are encouraged to set up a buddy system to check in on neighbors, especially the elderly and residents that may have special needs. Communities/neighborhoods should identify vulnerable people in their area and do checks on them.

The Importance of Insurance

It is recommended that tenants in high-rise buildings have home or rental insurance. Tenants are responsible for the harm they cause to any of the building. For example, if there is an electrical fire in the home caused by a faulty toaster, the tenant would be legally responsible for any damage caused by the resulting fire.

For more information, visit the Insurance Bureau of Canada's website at **ibc.ca/en**.





Emergency Medical Preparedness

Here are some tips to be prepared for unexpected medical emergencies:

- Have your medical history and medications written down and easily accessible for paramedics.
- Fill out the “In case of emergency (ICE)” form at the end of this guide or on **vaughan.ca**. Put a copy on your fridge, in your purse and give one to a family member for safekeeping.
- Write your apartment/condo number, address and apartment access code on a sticker or sticky note and post it near your phone in case you are not the one calling 9-1-1.
- Keep your medications in one location so they are easy to find in the dark.
- Make sure your medications are always stocked – do not let them run out or expire.
- Know where your health card is.
- Have a back-up source to power electronic medical devices like oxygen machines and feeding pumps.
- Have a first aid kit.

Special Considerations

- If you require an emergency evacuation chair, request that one be installed on the floor you live on, preferably close to the stairwell (if applicable).
- If you rely on any life-sustaining equipment or apparatus, develop an emergency back-up plan that will ensure the equipment or apparatus is operable in the event of a power outage.
- If you or a loved one depends on electrically-powered medical equipment, such as a ventilator or kidney dialysis machine, contact Alectra at 1-877-963-6900 to be placed on the Life Support Notification Registry.
- Label your equipment and attach instructions on how to use and transport it.
- Arrange in advance for someone to check on you in the event of an emergency and develop a plan with your health care provider.
- Wear a MedicAlert bracelet or carry an identification card.
- Ensure your neighbors, property managers and community associations are aware of your conditions so that they can check on you in the event of an emergency.



SHELTERING IN PLACE OR EVACUATING. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

During an emergency, you may be asked to stay inside (shelter in place) or evacuate. In the event of an emergency, officials will advise you on whether you should stay or leave.

Shelter in place

If you are asked to shelter in place, use these items to protect your family and property:

- an emergency kit and non-perishable food and water ready and on hand
- a personal alarm or whistle that emits a loud noise that will draw attention to your whereabouts if you need help
- white material to hang up in a window and/or a balcony to identify your location if you need to signal for help
- a marker to write messages on doors, windows or cloth if you need to signal for help
- aluminum foil, plastic sheeting and duct tape to cover vent openings, and cracks around windows and doors
- a damp towel to roll up and place at the base of your main door

Evacuation

Follow these steps if you must evacuate:

- Follow the directions of emergency personnel.
- Let someone know that you've left and where you can be found.
- Turn off your lights and appliances (except your refrigerator and freezer).
- Turn off or reduce your heat or air conditioning.
- Lock your doors.

Remember to bring the following with you, if it is safe to do so:

- your Go Bag
- cell phone, laptop, tablet, chargers and battery banks
- clothing and toiletries for each family member
- formula, bottles, diapers, favourite books, games and toys for infants and children

Do not leave your pets or service animals behind:

- Pets may become lost and/or not survive on their own.
- Bring food and water, medications, favourite toys, identification tags and licenses for your pets.
- Bring your leash/harness and pet carrier.
- Vaughan Animal Services works with residents during emergencies to provide options for dealing with pets. Call them at 1-855-227-7297.

AFTER AN EMERGENCY:

- Contact other family members to let them know that you are safe.
- Check your apartment for damage.
- Dispose of any spoiled or contaminated foods, especially after a power outage. If you're not sure, throw it out.
- Encourage family members, especially children, to talk about their experience and feelings.



Important Numbers and Websites

CITY OF VAUGHAN

- City of Vaughan website: **vaughan.ca**
- Access Vaughan: 905-832-2281
- Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service: 905-832-8506

During a major emergency, follow these Twitter accounts for up-to-date information:

- @VaughanFire
- @City_of_Vaughan



In Case of Emergency (ICE)

CONTACT INFORMATION:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt.: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Main Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____

Health Card: _____ Birth Date: _____

Primary Language(s): _____ Gender ☐ M ☐ F

Advanced Care Directive (personal or religious request or other medical order) on file with:

Emergency Contact 1:

Main Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____

Emergency Contact 2:

Main Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____

Primary Care Provider (the name and position of the person who provides you the most frequent medical care):

Phone: _____

RELEVANT MEDICAL HISTORY:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alzheimer | <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer (high blood pressure) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma | <input type="checkbox"/> Hypertension |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COPD (emphysema, bronchitis) | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatric |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiac (angina, heart attack, bypass, pacemaker) | <input type="checkbox"/> Seizure (convulsions) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congestive Heart Failure | <input type="checkbox"/> Stroke/TIA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetic (insulin/non-insulin dependent) | _____ |



MEDICATIONS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

MEDICAL ALLERGIES:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASA | <input type="checkbox"/> No known allergies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Codeine | <input type="checkbox"/> Penicillin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Sulpha |
- _____

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- ☐ Communicable Infection/Disease: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Hospital Affiliation: _____

_____ ☐ Extensive History

☐ Specialty (Dialysis, neuro, etc.): _____

MOBILITY/SENSORY:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dentures | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility issues (cane/wheelchair/walker/motorized scooter/prosthetic limb) | | |

Completed by: _____

Date: _____





**For more information on fire
prevention, call 905-832-8506 or
email firerescue@vaughan.ca.**

In case of emergency, call 911.

