



EMERGENCY RESPONSE GUIDELINES MADISON, CONNECTICUT

Prepared by the Madison Health Department

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North Madison Volunteer Fire Company
Department of Youth & Family Services
Madison Senior Services
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Department of Social Services

Madison, like other towns in Connecticut, has developed plans to deal with emergencies of many kinds. Planning for some kinds of events, such as adverse weather events or power outages are common enough to allow for specific response recommendations. Other emergencies such as environmental accidents or terrorist attacks allow for little more than the creation of communication and chain of command infrastructures that could be quickly assembled to address the consequences of the particular event.

This is a brief outline of actions residents can take to keep their family and pets safe and protect their property in various emergency situations. You can download it and keep it to read in the event of an emergency, but it would be far more effective to use it to develop a written Family Emergency Plan. We encourage all residents to have a sensible emergency plan. The Madison Health Department has prepared a [Family Emergency Plan](#) template for download. Paper copies are available at the Town Campus and at the E. C. Scranton Memorial Library

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

FIRE, POLICE, AMBULANCE 911

USE 911 ONLY FOR TRUE EMERGENCIES

POISON CONTROL HOTLINE 1-800-222-1222

IF YOU SMELL GAS:

**DO NOT IGNITE MATCHES OR LIGHTERS
DO NOT TURN LIGHT SWITCHES,
APPLIANCES, ETC. ON OR OFF
GET EVERYONE OUT OF THE BUILDING
THEN CALL 911 !!!**

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1. INVITATION TO VOLUNTEER

For many years emergency planning in Madison was primarily a volunteer effort. Recent events, including weather related emergencies and the increased threat of terrorist events, have given these issues greater urgency. As a result emergency planning at every level of government has become far more structured. Madison has been assigned to several overlapping regions within the state for addressing different kinds of emergencies.

The Town Government is committed to bringing Madison's emergency preparedness to a higher state of readiness. The Town has developed an Emergency Operations Plan, and continually updates and improves this plan. Unfortunately, the best-laid plans are of little value without people to do the work and small towns like Madison will always have limited resources to manage actual emergencies. As in so many other aspects of town life we will still rely on citizen volunteers to make the plans effective.

Part of the Town Emergency Plan is a database of emergency volunteers. We encourage you to add your name to the list of those we can turn to for help. A [Volunteer Application](#) form may be downloaded here.

2. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Some actions and planning are common to almost all emergencies, the most important of which is to get the best information available. The most common sources of local public information are listed below.

RADIO	AM Band	FM Band
	960 KHz – WELI	99.1 MHz – WPLR
	1420 KHz – WLIS	101.3 MHz – WKCI
	1300 KHz – WAVZ	
TELEVISION	CH 39 WCTX	(CH 59 – WCTX)
	CH 10 WTNH	(CH 8 - WTNH)
	CH 61 WTIC	
	CH 18, 19, 20 - Local School, Government & Public Access	
WEB	www.nws.noaa.gov	

3. FIGHT OR FLIGHT – FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

Each household is encouraged to have plans to deal with many kinds of emergency. In some cases the best course of action is to stay at home and prepare the space as well as possible. In other cases residents could be told to evacuate. Part of a good emergency plan will include emergency supplies for either scenario.

The Madison Health Department has created a [Family Emergency Plan](#) for download here, or you can download emergency plan checklists from the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Administration at the following websites.

www.redcross.org/static/file_cont36_lang0_23.pdf

www.fema.gov/rrr/empred.shtm

In the event of an evacuation, assuming there is sufficient time, you will want to do what you can to protect your home and property. The actions to take vary depending on the type of emergency and will be discussed below. **In no case should protection of property put you or your family in danger.**

4. EVACUATION PLAN

IF POSSIBLE, REAL TIME LOCAL EVACUATION INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE MADISON PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS

Emergency evacuation can run in size from a few isolated locations to wide areas of town and can come with warning periods from several days to as little as a few minutes. The most likely cause of a large evacuation, for example a hurricane or other severe large weather event, would come with some warning and would primarily involve residents South of Boston Post Road (US Route 1). The most probable small evacuation would be caused by a hazardous material spill on I-95 or along the railroad. Large evacuations are ordered by the First Selectman and small ones by the Incident Commander, usually the senior fire official on scene. Most of what follows will concern evacuations with some warning. Evacuation routes would normally be to the North on Rt. 79 or East/West on I-95 to another Northerly route. Traffic would probably be heavy and residents would be wise to leave early.

In the event evacuation is ordered, the Town will provide two types of shelter. Short duration shelter from severe weather will be available at Daniel Hand High School on Green Hill Road (address) and at Brown Middle School on Rt. 79. Longer-term shelter will be at the Town Campus Gym Duck Hole Road (just north of I-95 Exit 62) or at the North Madison Congregational Church on Rte. 79 (just South of Rte. 80). Both are equipped with generators, cots, potable water and limited emergency food. These shelters will only be opened after an evacuation order has been issued. Once opened, the Madison Information Line 245-5600 will carry a recorded message to that effect. Services will be very limited at the shelters and residents should bring supplies with them (see the section on **Family Emergency Plans**).

Special Needs: Residents are reminded that they are responsible for their own safety. The Town will use its limited resources to help those with special needs. As soon as an evacuation order seems probable, the Town will initiate a Special Needs Hotline. Residents can call the hotline to request assistance in the event an evacuation is ordered. The Town will also be in contact with the VNA, houses of worship, the Department of Social Services, and local senior housing facilities to determine which residents need assistance.

**ONCE THE EMERGENCY HOTLINE IS ACTIVATED,
CALL 245-5627 TO REGISTER FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE
IN THE EVENT EVACUATION IS ORDERED**

5. RIDING IT OUT – SHELTER IN PLACE

If you stay at home during an emergency event you should have emergency supplies available, which may in some cases be the same as the evacuation supplies (see the **Family Emergency Plan**). The best actions to take will depend on the type of emergency and the severity of the event. Many of the topics below provide useful information to protect life and property in an emergency.

6. EPIDEMIC – SMALLPOX & OTHER MASS MEDICAL EVENTS

[Link to Region 21](#)

7. POWER OUTAGES

Power outages can occur for a variety of reasons and at any time, however they are most common during adverse weather events. Outages are usually of short duration but can run well over a week in some situations. When they occur, restoration priorities include critical infrastructure locations including hospitals, police and other emergency services as well as public water companies. Another priority is to eliminate hazards from downed wires, broken poles or damaged trees that could cause additional damage or injury. Thereafter restoration progresses from main lines, substations and branch networks before being restored to individual homes. For residents with overhead wire service, damage to the service line beyond its connection at the home is the responsibility of the homeowner and must be serviced by a qualified electrician.

Outages that are caused by weather events usually allow some time for preparation, however those caused by accidents or other events can arrive without warning. Any homeowner emergency plan should include a supply of drinking water, food and a properly vented heat source. It should also include procedures to prepare your home for your potential absence and provision for pets or domestic animals.

Large scale, long-term power outages may initiate opening of the Town emergency shelters at the Town Campus gym and the North Madison Congregational Church. Once opened the Madison Information Line (245-5600) will carry a recorded message to that effect.

Refrigerated or frozen food will remain safe far longer if refrigerator/freezer doors are opened only when absolutely necessary. See **Food Safety** section below. All refrigerated items should be assessed for safety after power has been restored. When in doubt, throw it out.

In most large power outages phones that are directly wired and not dependent on a separate power supply are the most reliable. More advanced telephone systems will not operate without grid power. If you have one of these systems it would be a good idea to have one traditional phone for emergencies. Cell phones may or may not work depending on conditions at the cell towers.

If drinking water is not available for an extended period of time, the town will make it available at either of the two volunteer fire stations. Water from a stream or pond can be used to flush toilets.

8. HURRICANES

Connecticut is subject to hurricanes and at least four serious hurricanes have come ashore in the state since 1900. Hurricanes bring very strong and destructive wind, heavy rainfall as well as potential coastal flooding due to storm surge and tides. Significant portions of Madison's shorefront could be flooded during a hurricane, including the Middle Beach Road and Middle Beach West areas, the Neck Road area and areas along the Neck, East and Hammonasset Rivers. Expect far greater flooding if the storm arrives at high tide. Houses near Long Island Sound could experience significant damage due to both wind and water. Numerous trees would be downed, resulting in large-scale loss of electrical service. Evacuation may be ordered in vulnerable areas in order to save lives. Please refer to the [Family Emergency Plan](#) to know what to take with you.

ARE YOU READY? **Review your Family Emergency Plan** **Or**

Before the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web (www.nws.noaa.gov) for updates
- Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first-aid supplies, drinking water, baby supplies and medications (fill up a bathtub with water for toilet flushing)
- Charge cell phones
- Check condition of generator, if available
- Secure or bring indoors light-weight objects that may get blown around and cause additional damage
- Prepare to cover windows with plywood if possible
- Determine if you are in a flood-prone zone and how you will leave if necessary
- Prepare to evacuate inland if told to do so by local officials (local radio, TV, Madison Community TV, Town website www.madisonct.org) may all have information
- Fuel family vehicles
- If evacuation is ordered, leave early. Stay with friends, relatives or in motels inland. Notify a family member or friends outside the danger zone of your evacuation plans. Temporary shelters are located at the Gym at the Town Campus and the North Madison Congregational Church at the Route 79/80 traffic circle. Shelters will be opened and operated by volunteers and/or Red Cross personnel if there is sufficient need. Once opened the Madison Information Line (245-5600) will carry a recorded message to that effect.

During the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web, as above, for updates
- Stay indoors, away from windows and doors, take refuge in a small interior first-floor room
- Turn off propane tanks, unplug small appliances, turn refrigerator to its coldest setting

After the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web, as above, for updates
- Stay away from downed wires and standing water
- Do not attempt to drive through or across water or on roads that are closed
- Be alert for falling trees or limbs, unsafe buildings, gas leaks or other unsafe conditions
- Report power outages to Northeast Utilities at (860) 286-2000
- Use flashlights, not candles or other open flames indoors for emergency purposes
- If your drinking water well has flooded, do not use for drinking or cooking unless you boil it for 15 minutes or the well has been sanitized with chlorine. Please refer to the **How to Chlorinate Your Well** below.
- If fresh or canned food has come into contact with flood waters, throw out
- Refrigerated food that has been above 45° for more than 4 hours should be thrown out; thawed food that is still below 45° can be eaten, but not re-frozen. Refer to the **Food Safety** section below.

9. WINTER STORMS

Connecticut is subject to winter storms and the combination of cold temperatures and heavy snow, freezing rain or ice can cause numerous difficulties for residents. Winter storms can bring very strong and destructive wind, heavy snowfall as well as potential coastal flooding due to storm surge and tides. Heavy snow, freezing rain or ice can accumulate on power lines and trees. This can result in the downing of numerous trees, blocking of roads and large-scale loss of electrical service. The combination of loss of electrical service for an extended period and low temperatures make winter storms very severe.

ARE YOU READY? **Review your Family Emergency Plan** **Or**

Before the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web (www.nws.noaa.gov) for updates
- Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first-aid supplies, drinking water, baby supplies and medications (fill up a bathtub with water for toilet flushing)
- Secure or bring indoors lightweight items that might be blown around, causing additional damage
- Charge cell phones
- Check condition of generator, if available
- Check emergency heat source and fuel supplies, if available (only use properly-vented heating devices)
- Determine if you are in a flood-prone area, and if so, how you will leave if necessary
- Prepare to evacuate inland if told to do so by local officials (local radio, TV, Madison Community TV, Town website www.madisonct.org) may all have information
- Fuel and winterize family vehicles and snow blowers
- Protect indoor water supply pipes from freezing or drain them if you will lose heat
- If evacuation is ordered, leave early. Stay with friends, relatives or motels inland. Notify a family member outside the danger zone of your evacuation plans. Temporary shelters are located at the Gym at the Town Campus and the North Madison Congregational Church at the Route 79/80 traffic circle. Shelters will be opened and operated by volunteers and/or Red Cross personnel if there is sufficient need. Once opened the Madison Information Line (245-5600) will carry a recorded message to that effect.
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During the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web, as above, for updates
- Stay inside, off roads, if possible
- If you are stuck in your vehicle during a storm, stay in your vehicle, run engine 10 minutes each hour, open the window a little for fresh air, ensure exhaust pipe is not

blocked, tie a cloth to your antenna or door, turn on the dome light at night when running the engine

- Drain plumbing in areas of the home that will have no heat
- Avoid overexertion such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a car or walking in deep snow, wear layers of clothing to avoid perspiration and a hat

After the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web, as above, for updates
- Stay away from downed wires and standing water
- Do not attempt to drive through deep snow or on roads that are closed
- Be alert for falling trees or limbs, unsafe buildings, gas leaks or other unsafe conditions
- Report power outages to Northeast Utilities at (860) 286-2000
- Use flashlights, not candles or other open flames indoors for emergency purposes
- Refrigerated food that has been above 45° for more than 4 hours should be thrown out; thawed food that is still below 45° can be eaten, but not re-frozen. Refer to the **Food Safety** section below.

10. FLOODS

Madison is subject to flooding from both Long Island Sound and the several rivers that flow through town. Heavy rain can cause water to rise along these rivers and inundate local streets and properties as well as cause more widespread flooding. Hurricanes and other coastal storms bring very strong and destructive wind, heavy rainfall and coastal flooding due to storm surge and tides. Significant portions of Madison's shorefront could be flooded during a hurricane or coastal storm including the Middle Beach Road and Middle Beach West areas, the Neck Road area and areas along the Neck, East and Hammonasset Rivers. Houses near Long Island Sound could experience significant damage due to both wind and water.

There are dams at Guilford Lakes on the East River & Lake Hammonasset on the Hammonasset River. These should be a concern only to those living very near these two rivers

ARE YOU READY? **Review your Family Emergency Plan** **Or**

Before the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web (www.nws.noaa.gov) for updates
- Determine if you are in a flood-prone area, and if so, how you will leave if necessary
- Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first-aid supplies, drinking water, baby supplies and medications (fill up a bathtub with water for toilet flushing)
- Charge cell phones
- Check condition of generator, if available
- Secure or bring indoors objects that may float in a flood and crash into homes or clog catch basins
- Prepare alternative heat source (properly vented) if appropriate.
- Prepare to evacuate inland if told to do so by local officials (local radio, TV, Madison Community TV, Town website www.madisonct.org) may all have information
- Fuel family vehicles
- If evacuation is ordered, leave early. Stay with friends, relatives or motels inland. Notify a family member outside the danger zone of your evacuation plans. Temporary shelters are located at the Gym at the Town Campus and the North Madison Congregational Church at the Route 79/80 traffic circle. Shelters will be opened and operated by volunteers and/or Red Cross personnel if there is sufficient need. Once opened the Madison Information Line (245-5600) will carry a recorded message to that effect.

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During the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web, as above, for updates
- Stay indoors and off roads, don't drive or walk through flooded areas

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- Turn off propane tanks, unplug small appliances, turn refrigerator to its coldest setting

After the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web, as above, for updates
- Stay away from downed wires and standing water
- Do not attempt to drive through or across water or on roads that are closed
- Be alert for falling trees or limbs, unsafe buildings, gas leaks or other unsafe conditions
- Report power outages to Northeast Utilities at (860) 286-2000
- Use flashlights, not candles or other open flames indoors for emergency purposes
- If your drinking water well has flooded, do not use for drinking or cooking unless you boil it for 15 minutes or the well has been sanitized with chlorine. Please refer to the **How to Chlorinate Your Well** below.
- Throw out food that that has come into contact with floodwater.
- Refrigerated food that has been above 45° for more than 4 hours should be thrown out; thawed food that is still below 45° can be eaten, but not re-frozen (see **Food Safety** section below).

11. TORNADO

Tornados are rapidly spinning, and usually rapidly moving, funnel shaped clouds that move from southwest to northeast. They are accompanied by high winds and often trail very large thunderstorms. Tornados usually affect smaller areas than other weather related events, but the damage they can cause can be devastating. Weather forecasting has improved to the point that there is usually some warning, but it cannot predict the exact path the storm will take.

ARE YOU READY? **Review your Family Emergency Plan** **Or**

Before the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web (www.nws.noaa.gov) for updates
- Open windows facing northeast to equalize air pressure
- Bring in light-weight objects that may get blown around and damage houses
- Take refuge in the lowest level near the center of your house. Stay away from doors and windows
- Turn off gas and propane tanks
- If driving, seek refuge inside a building, or park car under an underpass or some other large structure.
- If walking, get inside a building or lie down in a low area such as a ditch and protect your head from flying debris

During the Storm

- Stay in your refuge area, under heavy furniture if possible
- Listen to radio, TV or Web (www.nws.noaa.gov) for updates

After the Storm

- Listen to radio, TV or Web, as above, for updates
- Stay away from downed wires and standing water
- Be alert for fallen trees or limbs, unsafe buildings, gas leaks or other unsafe conditions
- Report power outages to Northeast Utilities at (860) 286-2000

12. HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILLS

Trucks and railroads passing through Madison, if involved in accidents, could release any number of hazardous materials, including radioactive substances, volatile liquids and poisonous gases. The degree and area of danger to nearby residents would depend on the nature and size of the spill, its location and the weather, especially the wind speed and direction.

If there is sufficient warning it would be best to get out of the area affected until the danger has abated. This assumes you know which area will be affected. Listen to radio for bulletins.

It may be that the only warning you get will be physical symptoms such as:

- Difficulty breathing,
- Irritation of skin, eyes nose or lungs
- Changes in skin color
- Headache or blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Lack of coordination
- Cramps or diarrhea

If the spill is indoors, leave the building immediately. If it is outdoors, get indoors immediately.

- Close and seal windows and doors
- Turn off all ventilation systems
- Cover fireplaces or other openings
- Prepare to leave the area as soon as you know it is safe

13. NUCLEAR EMERGENCIES OR RADIATION EXPOSURE

The initial response is the same as for Hazardous Material spills above. If possible, get below ground or behind dense material. Once the extent of the problem is known, evacuate to a safe area, remove contaminated clothing and wash yourself thoroughly to remove any contaminated particles.

14. EARTHQUAKES

Damaging earthquakes are rare but not impossible in the shoreline region and warning is highly unlikely. At the first sign of shaking, if you are indoors drop to the floor and take shelter under and hold on to any solid furniture or curl up next to a wall. Cover your face and neck with your arms. Stay where you are until the dust settles. If you are trapped, cover your nose and mouth with clothing, move as little as possible and try to make noise to help others find you. If you are outdoors, get into open space, away from buildings, trees and power lines, drop to the ground and stay there until the shaking stops. Beware of downed wires, broken water pipes or gas lines.

Earthquakes often have after-shocks, so remember to stay out of dangerous areas following the initial quake.

15. FOOD SAFETY IN EMERGENCIES

Food safety usually becomes an issue in homes during a power outage and the longer and wider the outage, the more of an issue it becomes. Those who are forewarned and take the time to plan ahead will lower their risk of having too little food or getting food poisoning. Most widespread power outages of significant duration come with some advance notice and what follows are some things to think about and actions to take to prepare for and safely endure a power outage.

Considerations

Water: If your home is supplied by a private well, you won't have water when the electricity goes out unless you have a generator (and know how to use it). If you have a public water supply, you will probably have an ongoing supply of potable water. The key word in the last sentence is "probably." In case of extended emergencies, potable water will be available at either of Madison's volunteer fire companies. Water from streams or ponds can be used to flush toilets.

Cooking

You can cook in a properly vented fireplace or on a properly vented wood stove, but it is not easy. Lacking either of these, do not attempt to cook anything indoors. Charcoal or propane grills or various types of camp stoves work well, but all potentially produce carbon monoxide and can poison people if used in a poorly ventilated space, including garages, basements etc. (In all cases, it would be wise to have extra fuel available for any emergency – starting a charcoal fire for your morning coffee is woefully inefficient.)

What is Safe to Eat

Commercially prepared food that doesn't need refrigeration is always safe and may be safely eaten without heating, although it may not be very palatable. Fresh, uncut fruits and vegetables (with the exception of vegetable sprouts) do not require refrigeration but will keep better if kept cold. Cut fruits and vegetables pose some risk and foods of animal origin are high risk if not kept below 45° F. High-risk foods (meat, dairy and other high protein foods) that have been above 45° for more than four hours should not be considered safe. Frozen food that has completely thawed should not be re-frozen, however it may be re-frozen if it still contains some ice crystals and has no parts that have become warm. The discoloration and strong odor associated with aging food are not reliable indicators of whether it is safe to eat because the things in food that make people sick are often not detectable by sight, taste or smell. When in doubt, throw it out.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE SEVERE WEATHER

- Secure your water supply for drinking, cooking, washing and flushing the toilet.
- Fill your freezer full – a full freezer stays frozen longer. Fill unused space with containers of water, as long as there is enough time for it to fully freeze before the emergency.
- Pack contents of refrigerator close together near bottom of unit.
- Wrap food in layers of blankets or other insulating material.

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- Turn refrigerator to coldest setting and don't open door unless absolutely necessary.
 - Pack cooler and freezer so that items that will be needed first are quickly retrieved.
 - Keep some foods (prepared, opened and leftover food) in portable picnic coolers on ice.
 - Wrap entire refrigerator in layers of insulating materials. Sleeping bags work well.
 - Lay in a supply of food that needs no refrigeration.
 - Lay in a supply of cooking fuel.

THINGS TO DO DURING AND AFTER EXTENDED POWER OUTAGES

- Decide, item by item what food to save, what to cook immediately and what to discard.
- Discard any food that has been in contact with floodwater.
- Chlorinate your well if the well cap or cover was under water. See the **How to Chlorinate Your Well** section below.

16. PETS

If you have family pets, you need to provide for them in emergencies. For proper planning refer to the **Family Emergency Plan** above. In case of evacuation, shelters do not permit pets.

17. FIRE

This section under development

18. TERRORISM

This section under development

19. HOW TO CHLORINATE YOUR WELL

- 1.) You will need 1 cup of household bleach for every 50 feet of 6-inch diameter well (most common size) depth, or about 6 cups for a shallow well (three feet in diameter).
- 2.) Mix the bleach with a few gallons of water and pour down your well, being sure to wet the sides of the casing. Let the solution sit for 1-2 hours.
- 3.) After the 1-2 hours, open each faucet, including showers, clothes and dishwashers, ice makers and outdoor spigots, until you smell bleach. Then turn the faucets off and let the bleach water sit in the pipes overnight or at least for several hours. If your system is equipped with a filter, or treatment system, be sure it is not bypassed.
- 4.) The next day, open all the faucets and run the water at each tap for several minutes. Run the clothes and dish washers without loads and run the outdoor spigots until the bleach smell is gone.
- 5.) Have your well re-tested in 1-2 weeks for coliform bacteria.
- 6.) Consider having a watertight well cap installed to reduce potential for bacterial contamination in the future. These caps are available from well drillers and are a good investment.
- 7.) Seriously consider having your well casing raised above the ground (eliminating the well pit) if your well casing is now below the ground. Well pits represent a significant risk of contamination to the well water.