

How prepared are you for an emergency?

**BE AWARE
& BE PREPARED**

So you think it won't happen to you?

It's the middle of the night and a smoke alarm wakes you... you smell smoke, what do you do?

How prepared are you?

Test yourself on the following pages.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This guidebook is provided as a community service by the City of Melbourne to help disseminate information in regards to community emergency management education. It is not and does not purport to be a complete guide.

The City of Melbourne accepts no responsibility to you or anyone else arising from any use or reliance on the information contained in this booklet.

The information contained in this booklet is based on the law at the time of its publication and is liable to change. We do not and cannot guarantee its currency.

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Residents Emergency Management Checklist

Check out just how well prepared you are

Have you...

(tick only if yes) **Yes**

1. Developed an emergency plan involving everyone who lives in your home?
2. Practised your emergency plan at least twice a year?
3. Discussed all possible exit routes from each room in the home or the building?
4. Installed working smoke alarms in your home?
5. Decided where to meet household members during an emergency?
6. Purchased adequate insurance?
7. Identified a contact person - someone unlikely to be affected by the same emergency you are dealing with - who can keep family and friends informed of your situation?
8. Copied important documents and kept an extra copy at a location other than your home?
9. Made an inventory of your valuables in writing and with photographs video or CD?
10. Kept a battery-operated radio handy so you can keep in touch with news of what is happening around you?
11. Undertaken a first-aid course in the past two years?
12. Found out what emergency plans your children's school, crèche or kindergarten has in place?
13. Found out how emergency services in your community will operate in the event of an emergency?

If you live in a house or single level dwelling add up your scores now.

Continue the questions on page 3 ONLY if you live in a high-rise, multi-level dwelling.

Add up your total at the end of the second series of questions.

Check your results. Each tick is one point.

If your score is 10-13: Congratulations! You are better prepared than most people living in Australian cities, but there is still more that you could do with the help of this guidebook. The five-step process on pages 6-8 provides more useful advice on how to be fully prepared.

If your score is 6-9: You've made a good start but if there is an emergency that impacts directly on your home, chances are you won't have anticipated all the potential consequences or be fully prepared to cope. Consider the benefits of putting more priority on emergency management planning and go through the five-step process on pages 6-8 of this guidebook.

If your score is less than 5: You are not well prepared for an emergency event and chances are an emergency would have a greater impact on you and would take much longer to recover than someone who is better prepared. You should take immediate action. Do the five step process on pages 6-8 of this guidebook and then retest yourself. Contact details for Emergency Services are included in this guidebook to help you seek further assistance.

To help us improve our guidebook, go to www.melbourne.vic.gov.au and fill out the online questionnaire.



Residents Emergency Management Checklist cont. (Highrise, multi-story dwellings only)

(tick only if yes) **Yes**

14. Has the body corporate manager, or someone nominated, developed an emergency evacuation plan?
15. Does the building have an audible and visual alarm for emergencies?
16. Do you know what it sounds like?
17. Do you know what to do if it is activated?
18. Does the building have clearly marked exit signs and floor plans with fire escapes shown?
19. Are all entry/exit points and doorways clear of rubbish and obstructions?
20. Does the body corporate manager or someone nominated have a list of phone numbers of all residents/owners to be contacted?
21. Is there someone responsible for door knocking neighbours on your own floor?
22. Are there regular meetings / newsletters to keep residents updated on the latest developments?
23. Is there a noticeboard or main contact point for information?
24. Are you aware of people with special needs and disabilities in your building?
25. Does your building/floor have a safe area set aside for people with a disability?
26. Are there signs in other languages to cater for non-English speaking residents in the building?

Check your results

If your score is 22-26: Congratulations! Your apartment building is definitely one of the best in the area of emergency planning, but don't be complacent, things change every day. Maintenance and communication of updates are always needed.

If your score is 17-21: Your apartment building is more prepared than most but if there is an emergency it could have an impact on you and the residents and chances are you won't have anticipated all of the potential consequences or be adequately prepared. Put emergency planning on your agenda. Complete the five step process on pages 6-8 of this guidebook and then retest yourself.

If your score is less than 16: Your apartment building is not well prepared and needs to take immediate action or the consequences could be drastic in an emergency. If after, completing the five-step process on pages 6-8 of the guidebook you are not satisfied with your building's level of preparedness you may also consider getting some expert help.

Contact details for Emergency Services, particularly the Metropolitan Fire Brigade are included in this guidebook to help you seek further assistance.

To help us improve our guidebook, go to www.melbourne.vic.gov.au and fill out the online questionnaire.



What is an emergency?

People have personal emergencies every day - you lock yourself out of the house; loose a wallet or perhaps the car won't start. But for the purpose of preparing for an emergency, it can be defined as:

Any incident that can cause death, or significant injuries or that can cause significant damage or disruption to your property and belongings, or poses an environmental threat to your family that requires sudden and urgent action by individuals and agencies.

Emergency events include:

- Fires;
- Hazardous material spills;
- Flooding;
- Severe storms;
- Earthquake;
- Explosion; and
- Loss of telephone, electricity, water or gas supply disruption.

The Coode Island chemical fire, the Longford gas crisis, and the frequent devastating stories of fatal fires in people's homes, illustrate the serious impact emergencies can have on people, their homes, possessions and safety.

www.idro.com.au/disaster_list/default.asp lists emergencies that have taken place in Australia since 1967.

Unfortunately emergencies can happen without warning. Through proper planning you can help yourself and your family to better respond to and quickly recover from an emergency.

Prepare yourself and your property in five steps

Whether you live in a high-rise or a house/single level-dwelling, by following some simple steps you can prepare yourself for any event - large or small.

Step 1. Develop an Emergency plan

Involve all family and household members in planning. Don't forget to include babysitters and other household help.

1. Discuss the potential emergencies that may exist or impact on your family and
2. Work out what you could do in each type of emergency and consider ways to protect your family.
 - a. Discuss all possible exit routes from each room, the building, and from your surrounding neighbourhood.
 - b. Clear hallways and exits for easy evacuation.
3. List emergency numbers beside each telephone.
4. Locate the water, electricity, and gas shut-off points near the metre of your home and learn how to switch them off safely.
5. Decide where to meet after an emergency.
6. Ensure you have adequate household insurance.

For information on how to adequately insure your home and contents visit www.ica.com.au
7. If you live in a high-rise/multi-level building:
 - a. Find out if any neighbours are elderly, wheelchair bound or non-English speaking and would need extra help in an emergency.
 - b. Check with the body corporate manager or your real estate agent to ensure all exit signs, floor plans and evacuation information is on notice boards and in other languages.
 - c. Organise the body corporate or building manager to test your building plan. Walk through your plan with your family or household members; check (within your own apartment) your smoke detectors and change the batteries yearly. Schedule to change batteries on the days when clocks are either put forward or put back each year.
 - d. If you are an owner, check with the body corporate manager to ensure the building has adequate building insurance. Ensure you have sufficient contents insurance whether you are an owner occupier or tenant.
 - e. Review and practise your emergency plan.

Step 2. Copy important documents

Keep extra copies of your important documents away from your home, either with a family member, trusted friend or consider buying a safe or renting a safety deposit box. Examples of these documents include:

- Birth Certificate
- Drivers Licence
- Social Security/ Medicare/Healthcare card
- Insurance information: car, health, home etc.
- Financial information: credit cards, account numbers, financial plans, etc.
- Marriage Certificate
- Passport
- Will
- Prescriptions

Step 3. Designate an out-of-area contact person

It's difficult to contact everyone you know when you're in the middle of an emergency. Try to choose somebody who is unlikely to be affected by the same emergency. Give that person the names and contact information of people you would like to keep informed of your welfare in an emergency situation.

Step 4. Know your local community resources and become one yourself

Get to know your neighbours, create your own community where you can help each other. Find out where other buildings in the area intend to evacuate, to avoid people evacuating to the same area.

Step 5. Put together a 'Go Bag'

A 'Go Bag' would be used in the event of an evacuation. It should be easy to carry and have an identity tag. Make one for your home and consider preparing one for your workplace and vehicle.

What should go in the bag? Think of what you would need if you suddenly had to evacuate.

- Your tear off household template for important information is attached to the back cover of this book;
- a bottle of water;
- a torch, AM radio and extra batteries (check the batteries shelf life);
- walking shoes, a jumper and trousers and a lightweight rain coat;
- a roll of toilet paper, a plastic bag, other personal hygiene supplies;

- a pen and note pad;
- a phone card; and
- first aid and personal medications.

Remember, in an emergency some ATM machines may not be working and banks could be closed, so consider including a small amount of money in small denominations in the bag. Limit items to essentials only.

During an emergency:

- Stay calm;
- Listen for instructions by tuning into radio ABC 774 (AM) band;
- Cooperate fully with the emergency services and authorities involved in responding to the emergency. Sometimes staying inside your home is safer than leaving. Ensure you listen to authorities' advice;
- If you are told to evacuate take your 'go bag' and use travel routes specified by the authorities to the designated assembly or relief areas.

Emergency Relief Centres

During an emergency the City of Melbourne activates a number of sites to serve as Emergency Relief Centres to support the community. Listen to radio ABC 774 (AM) for information on Emergency Relief Centre locations.

Consider the safety of your pets

Cats and dogs – have a sturdy carry case and a leash on hand. Even if your pets are not usually on a lead, you don't want to lose them in an emergency. If you do not have a sturdy carry cage for your cat, use a cotton pillow case to carry them in.

Birds – keep them in their cage to make transportation easier.

Freshwater fish – empty them into a plastic bag with the water from their fish bowl.

For all pets we suggest that you learn how to look after them if they are removed from their habitat for extended periods of time.

Review the checklist

Try the test again. By regularly testing your emergency plan and keeping it updated you will give yourself and your family a better chance of recovering quickly from any unforeseen incident.

Recovering from an emergency

Any kind of emergency can be stressful and everybody will react differently. Coping after an emergency can be difficult but a number of organisations offer services and assistance.

The Department of Human Services provides fact sheets covering topics such as:

- Stress after emergencies;
- Emergency and / or temporary accommodation information and advice;
- Financial assistance;
- Personal support services;
- Temporary accommodation;
- Material aid; and
- Information provision.

Department of Human Services

1300 650 172

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Australian Red Cross national office

155 Pelham Street Carlton Vic 3053

Telephone: 9345 1800

Postal: PO Box 196 Carlton Vic 3053

Facsimile: 9348 2513

For emergency police attendance call 000 (police, fire or ambulance)

Police

www.vicpolice.vic.gov.au

Metropolitan Fire Brigade

www.mfbb.vic.gov.au

Metropolitan Ambulance Service

www.ambulance.vic.gov.au

SES

www.ses.vic.gov.au

Lifeline – **13114**

www.wesley.org.au

City of Melbourne – **9658 9658**

www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Insurance Council of Australia

www.ica.com.au

Acknowledgements



Do you have a question for the Melbourne City Council? Call and speak to us.

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9280 0717	廣東話
9280 0718	Ελληνικά
9280 0719	Bahasa Indonesian
9280 0720	Italiano
9280 0721	普通話
9280 0722	Somali
9280 0723	Español
9280 0724	Türkçe
9280 0725	Việt Ngữ
9280 0726	All other languages
9280 0727	English



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