

**GREENE COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
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HOW TO BE PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY: A GUIDE FOR CITIZENS

VISION STATEMENT

To support our community's disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation needs through the coordination of information and resources.

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PURPOSE

Greene County is exposed to a variety of natural and man-made hazards such as tornadoes, flooding, severe spring and winter weather, and hazardous materials incidents. The Greene County Office of Emergency Management (hereafter OEM) is responsible for coordinating the County's preparation and response to all-hazard emergency situations. The purpose of this booklet is to inform the public on what to do and how to be prepared for an emergency.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GREENE COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Publishing and updating an All-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan.
- Planning and conducting training exercises with agencies both within and outside Greene County.
- Activating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during a hazardous event.
- Coordinating with Local, State, and Federal entities.
- Working closely with amateur radio groups, the American Red Cross, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) and other groups/organizations essential to emergency operations.
- Providing information to County employees and Greene County citizens.
- Complying with new State and Federal programs.
- Acquiring appropriate equipment.
- Communicating with other Emergency Management Coordinators/Directors in the region/state/nation to ensure fresh insight and to maintain relationships with geographic neighbors.

The Greene OEM uses Federal Homeland Security and Emergency Planning funds to improve the County's overall disaster and terrorism mitigation, prevention,

preparedness, response and recovery activities to help protect those who live, work, and visit Greene County, Arkansas.

Greene County has also established close working relationships with neighboring counties including Randolph, Clay, and Craighead counties to ensure mutually beneficial response and resources in times of need.

WHAT IS A DISASTER?

A disaster:

- Involves the destruction of infrastructure, property, injury or loss of life
- Is relatively sudden
- Adversely affects a relatively large group of people
- Is “public” and shared by members of more than one family
- Is out of the realm of the ordinary experience
- Involves the coordination of help provided by Local, State, and Federal Agencies.

HOW TO BE PREPARED

- For evacuation purposes, know all escape routes within your home
- Designate a family meeting place and make sure everyone is accounted for.
- Make a list of your emergency contacts, including out of state relatives/friends to advise them of your current status and location
- Know how to turn off water, gas, and electricity
- Listen to radio news broadcasts on a battery-operated radio
- Prepare an emergency kit that you can easily carry with you
- Don’t forget your pets and their supplies

HOME READINESS KIT

A Home Readiness Kit is a vital precaution for every family in case of an emergency.

Assemble the following items to last at least **THREE DAYS FOR EACH MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY** and store them in a portable bin or bag for use at home or to quickly take with you in the event of an evacuation.

WATER: One gallon per person per day. Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Identify the storage date and replace every six months. Have purifying agents available.

FOOD: Non-perishable, packaged or canned food that will not spoil and a manual can opener. Powdered or canned milk, hard candy, sugar, salt and pepper as well as canned heat (such as Sterno brand). Don't forget to bring along food for your pets.

CLOTHING: A change of clothing, rain gear, sturdy shoes, hats, gloves, sunglasses, rubber boots, extra blankets or sleeping bags.

SUPPLIES: A battery-powered radio, matches and lighter, candles, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries. Plastic plates, utensils, plastic storage containers, pens or pencils, paper, and duct tape.

FIRST-AID KIT: Bandages, gauze, tape, alcohol and/or peroxide, aspirin, or non-aspirin pain relief, antacid, laxative, anti-diarrhea medication, antiseptic, and eye wash.

MONEY: Credit cards and cash.

DOCUMENTS: Essential family documents, vital records, physician contact information, and contact names and telephone numbers, placed in a fireproof, waterproof container.

SPECIAL NEEDS: Baby items, formula, medication, toys and books. Items for the elderly and those with special needs.

PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC FROM LARGE-SCALE THREATS

Certain threats to the public such as tornadoes, hazardous materials events, earthquakes, etc. can't be stopped prior to their contact with the public.

Emergency Management, in coordination with Public Safety (Fire and Law Enforcement) routinely plans for such events. Plans are adjusted according to location, direction of travel and type of population. Due to the large number of variables quick, on-the-scene decisions must be made by on-scene commanders on how to best protect the public.

Certain types of threats are best handled by advising the public to stay (shelter in place), while other may require movement (evacuation). Each type of evacuation has advantages depending on the type of threat. In each incident, the public needs to be ready to follow instructions as directed by Public Safety officials.

SHELTER IN PLACE

- Notification of the event
- Notice of what to do (instructions on securing your home)
- Notice of how to monitor for further instructions

EVACUATION

- Notification of the event
- Notice of proper routes to take and which routes to avoid
- Notice of where to go (collection points)
- Notice of how to monitor for further instructions

NOTIFICATION TO THE PUBLIC

The Greene County OEM will notify the public via:

- Television News Reports
- Radio News Reports
- Utilization of the Greene OEM Facebook page
- Emergency Alert System (scroll bar at the bottom of television)
- Auto-dial emergency phone system
- In critical events, all of the methods above will be utilized along with door-to-door notification by Public Safety officials as well as broadcasts by Public Safety vehicle loudspeakers.

BE PREPARED TO EVACUATE

You may be asked to prepare to evacuate if a situation has the potential of escalating to the point where evacuation is required. During this time, authorities will take action to alleviate the emergency and will prepare for an orderly evacuation, should it become necessary.

Listen to news broadcasts on radio and/or television for further evacuation information. If you are at home, you should gather any clothing and medication you will need for a few days away from home. You do not need to leave your home at this state.

The following is an example of the type of announcement you may hear:

“At (time) today, local officials reported a potentially serious condition involving (description of situation). The incident is occurring at (location). All persons in (names of areas) should stay indoors and prepare to evacuate. If you are in your home, gather all necessary medications and clothing. You do not need to evacuate at this time. Stay tuned for further instructions.”

The next report will be given at prescribed intervals as necessary. This message will be repeated until conditions change.

EVACUATION

An evacuation will be ordered if the community is threatened and there is time to evacuate safely and in an orderly manner. Make sure that this order applies to your area.

Radio and Television broadcasts will specify which areas of the community must evacuate. The following is an example of the type of message you may hear at the evacuation stage:

“At (time) today, officials reported an incident involving (description of situation and ORDER OF EVACUATION). The incident occurred at (location). If you have children in school, they will be taken to the reception center for their school as specified in their school’s emergency response plan. Lock your house, the area where you live will be guarded while you are away. Use your own car if you can.

Take neighbors who need a ride, if you have room. If you have no ride, ask one of your neighbors for a ride. If you cannot do that, go to one of the pickup points along a main road. You can get a ride there. Keep all car windows and vents closed and drive (or walk) to the nearest main route in your area. Turn on your car radio for information. Authorized personnel will be stationed along main routes to direct you away from the emergency area toward a reception area. When permitted, police will patrol the evacuated areas to prevent looting, vandalism, etc. You may return to your home as soon as the emergency is declared over and it is safe to return. If the emergency involved a hazardous material cloud, at the instructions of authorities, open the windows and doors, ventilate the building and go outside.”

SPECIAL HELP

If you are bedridden, wheelchair bound, handicapped, or medically unable to evacuate and you are without assistance or need help evacuating, please call 911 and request assistance for evacuation during an emergency. (Please be ready to provide information about your medical condition or mobility problem).

Source: www.phila.gov/ready/evacuation.html

Local government officials, not the Red Cross, issue evacuation orders when disaster threatens. Listen to local radio and television reports. If local officials ask you to leave, do so immediately!

If you have only moments before leaving, grab these things and go!

- Medical supplies: prescription medications and dentures
- Disaster supplies: flashlight, batteries, radio, first-aid kit, bottled water
- Clothing and bedding: a change of clothes and a sleeping bag or bedroll and pillow for each household member
- Car keys and the keys to your home and any keys to where you may be evacuating to (i.e., friend’s or relative’s home)

If local officials haven’t advised an immediate evacuation:

Or, if there is a chance the weather may get worse or flooding may occur, take steps now to protect your home and belongings. Do this only if local officials have not asked you to leave.

REMEMBER, DO NOT PANIC!

PROTECT YOUR HOME

Bring things indoors. Lawn furniture, trash cans, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines, hanging plants and any other objects that may fly around and damage property should be brought indoors.

Leave trees and shrubs alone. If you did not cut away dead or diseased branches or limbs from trees and shrubs, leave them alone. Local rubbish collection services will not have time before the storm to pick anything up.

Turn off electricity and water. Turn off electric at the main fuse or breaker, and turn off water at the main valve if it is safe to do so.

Leave natural gas on. Unless local officials advise otherwise, leave natural gas on because you will need it for heating and cooking when you return home. If you turn gas off, a licensed professional is required to turn it back on and it may take weeks for a professional to respond.

Turn of propane gas service. Propane tanks often become dislodged in disasters.

If high winds are expected, cover the outside of all windows of your home. Use shutters that are rated to provide significant protection against windblown debris, or fit plywood coverings over all windows. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking. All tape does is prevent windows from shattering. Using tape on windows is not recommended.

If flooding is expected, consider using sand bags to keep water away from your home. It takes two people about one hour to fill and place 100 sandbags, giving you a wall one foot high and 20 feet long. Make sure you have enough sand, burlap or plastic bags, shovels, strong helpers, and time to place them properly.

REMEMBER: Houses do not explode due to air pressure differences. Damage happens when wind gets inside a home through a broken window, door, or damaged roof.

PROTECT YOUR VALUABLES

Move objects that may get damaged by wind or water to safer areas of your

home. Move television sets, computers, stereo and electronic equipment, and easily moveable appliances like a microwave oven to higher levels of your home and away from windows. Wrap them in sheets, blankets, or burlap.

Make a visual or written record of all your household possessions. Record model and serial numbers. This list could help you prove the value of what you owned if those possessions are damaged or destroyed, and can assist you to claim deductions on taxes.

Do this for all items in your home, including expensive items such as sofas, chairs, tables, beds, chests, wall units, and any other furniture too heavy to move. Store a copy of the record somewhere away from home such as in a safe deposit box.

If it is possible that your home may be significantly damaged by impending disaster, consider temporarily storing your household furnishings elsewhere.

GATHER ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES AND PAPERS

You will need the following supplies when you leave your home; put them all together in a duffle bag or other large container in advance:

- Flashlight(s) with plenty of extra batteries
- Battery-operated radio with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Prescription medications in their original bottles, plus copies of the prescriptions
- Eyeglasses (w/ copies of the prescriptions)
- Water (at least one gallon per person per day is recommended)
- Foods that do not require refrigeration or cooking
- Items that infants and elderly household members may require
- Medical equipment and devices such as dentures, crutches, prostheses, etc.
- Change of clothes for each household member
- Sleeping bag or bedroll for each household member
- Checkbook, cash, and credit cards
- Map of the area (available at Greene County Courthouse Suite 107 free of charge)

Important papers to take with you:

- Driver's license or personal identification
- Social Security card
- Proof of residence (deed or lease)
- Insurance policies
- Birth or marriage certificates
- Stocks, bonds, and other negotiable certificates
- Wills, deeds, and copies of recent tax returns

CARING FOR ANIMALS

Animals also are affected by disasters and the Greene County OEM is acutely aware of the importance our family pets play in our lives. Use the guidelines below to prepare a plan for caring for pets and large animals.

Guidelines for Pets

Plan for disaster needs for pets by:

- Identifying shelter
- Gathering pet supplies
- Ensuring your pet has proper identification and up-to-date veterinarian records
- Providing a pet carrier and leash

Take the following steps in preparation to shelter your pet:

- Call your local animal shelter, veterinarian, or animal control office to get advice or information
- Keep veterinary records to prove vaccinations are current
- Find out which local hotels and motels allow pets and where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to research some outside of your local area in case local facilities close.

- Know that, with the exception of service animals, pets are not typically permitted in emergency shelters as they may affect the health and safety of other occupants.

Guidelines for Large Animals

If you have large animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats, or pigs on your property, be sure to prepare before a disaster. Use the following guidelines:

- Ensure all animals have some form of identification
- Evacuate animals whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance
- Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers. (Note: It is best to allow animals a chance to become accustomed to vehicular travel so they are less frightened and easier to move.)
- Ensure pets and animals have food, water, veterinary care, and handling equipment when they reach their destination.
- If evacuation is not possible, animal owners must decide whether to move large animals, shelter, or turn them loose.

Source: <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/emergencyplanning.html>

ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS OF OTHER IMPORTANT LOCAL AGENCIES

American Red Cross – Northeast Arkansas Chapter

2416 South Madison Street
Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401
(870) 932-3212

Greene County Sheriff's Office

1809 North Rockingchair Road
Paragould, Arkansas 72450
(870) 236-7612

Paragould Police Department

101 North 3 ½ Street
Paragould, Arkansas 72450
(870) 236-7621

Greene County Health Department

801 Goldsmith Road
Paragould, Arkansas 72450
(870) 236-7782

Greene County OEM/Courthouse

320 West Court Street
Paragould, Arkansas 72450
(870) 239-6300

GREENE COUNTY OEM PARTNER WEBLINKS

- Greene County Government - www.greenecounty.arkansas.gov
- Paragould Police Department - www.paragouldpolice.org
- City of Paragould - www.cityofparagould.com
- City of Marmaduke - www.marmadukear.com
- Arkansas State Police - www.asp.arkansas.gov
- Union Pacific Railroad - www.up.com
- Arkansas Dept. of Emergency Management - www.adem.arkansas.gov
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad - www.bnsf.com
- Federal Bureau of Investigation - www.fbi.gov
- Arkansas Department of Health - www.healthy.arkansas.gov
- Arkansas Geological Survey - www.geology.arkansas.gov
- Craighead Electric Cooperative - www.craigheadelectric.coop
- Paragould Light, Water, and Cable - www.paragould.com
- Entergy - www.entergy.com
- Paragould School District - www.paragould.k12.ar.us
- Greene County Tech. School District - www.gctsd.k12.ar.us
- Marmaduke School District - www.mhs.nesc.k12.ar.us
- Crowley's Ridge Academy - www.crafalcons.org

- St. Mary's Catholic School - www.stmarysparagould.org
- Arkansas State University - www.astate.edu
- Arkansas Methodist Medical Center - www.ammc.org
- Paragould Doctors Clinic - www.paragoulddoctorsclinic.com
- 1st Choice Healthcare Northeast Arkansas - www.1stchoice-ar.org
- Main Street Paragould - www.downtownparagould.com
- FEMA – www.fema.gov
- Ready (Prepare, Plan, Stay Informed) – www.ready.gov

This booklet is provided to the public by the Greene County Office of Emergency Management in Paragould, Arkansas.

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