

Preparing for Extreme Weather
and Climate Change Impacts

Hurricanes and Tropical Storms

From June through November each year, Halifax is on the path of hurricanes traveling up the East Coast of North America. These storms can be powerful and destructive, with high winds, heavy rainfall, flooding and coastal storm surge. People can be at risk during these weather events.



Do:



Secure or remove all loose items from your yard, balcony or around your home (such as barbecues, furniture, toys, tools).



Listen to local news and weather reports for updates.



If you live near the coast or in a low-lying area, make plans to move inland or to higher ground.



Stock up on water, ready-to-eat food (that doesn't need to be cooked), flashlights and batteries.



Cut down and remove any dead trees or fallen branches near your home.



Create an emergency kit and make an emergency plan before the storm.



Be prepared to evacuate quickly if necessary.



Risks

- **High winds** can cause falling trees and branches and flying objects that can cause harm.
- Collapsing **structures**.
- **Flood risk**.
- **Power outages** that can last for hours or even days.
- Flooding.
- Along the coast, **high winds and waves** can be hazardous.

Avoid

- going outdoors during the storm.
- the coastline during storms. Waves and high winds can make the shoreline very dangerous.

Learn More

For municipal emergency alerts and notifications, register for:
halifax.ca/hfxalert

Follow storm warnings and weather alerts at Environment Canada:
https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/ns-19_metric_e.html

More information to help you prepare:

halifax.ca/emergency-preparedness



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Flooding

Floods are the most common natural hazard in Canada. They can occur at any time of year and can happen almost anywhere. Floods are caused when melting snow or heavy rainfall delivers more water than the ground and stormwater system can absorb. Water pooling on the surface can spill into buildings, and block or damage roads.



Do:



Find out what kinds of flood damage your home insurance or tenant's insurance covers. In many Canadian insurance plans, flood protection is optional for an additional cost. If you rent, your landlord's insurance covers only their building, not your possessions.



Store valuables and important documents in waterproof and fireproof containers, and move them upstairs or to high shelves if possible.



Ensure any storm drains in your home are not covered by rugs or other furniture.



If you live in a house, clean out any debris blocking the gutters as well as your nearest on-street storm drain, ditch or culvert.



If you own your home, install a backwater valve and a sump pump with a battery backup, and check them twice a year.



Create an emergency plan and an emergency kit with supplies for three days.



Listen to local weather alerts and be prepared to evacuate to higher ground.



Risks

- Flooding is hard to recognize at night in the dark. Take extra caution and use a flashlight.
- Flood water can be contaminated, so minimize contact and wear protective clothing like rubber boots and gloves when cleaning up.
- Well water can become contaminated after a flood. If you have well water, avoid drinking any until you get it tested. Resources for testing well water can be found at novascotia.ca/well-water-testing.
- Never use appliances, heating or cooling systems that you think may have been flooded. Wait until an electrician has inspected them to be sure they are safe and dry.

Floods are extremely dangerous. Avoid walking or driving through floodwater, even if it looks safe.

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Winter Storms

Winter storms usually occur between December and March. Winter storms include snow, freezing rain, high winds and cold temperatures. The snow, ice and cold can be challenging, especially if you aren't used to it and these conditions can put people at risk of injury or harm.



Do:



Have road salt or sand available to melt ice and reduce slipperiness on doorsteps and driveways. If you live in an area with well water, only use sand.



Have shovels and scrapers and use them carefully.



Have warm clothes, including coat, hat, scarf and mittens or gloves.



Plan to stay indoors during extreme cold.



If the power goes out, use battery powered flashlights, lanterns and radios.



Have food, batteries, cash, medications and an emergency kit available so you have what you need to wait out the storm.



Risks

- Exposure to the cold can be harmful and even result in death. **Frostbite** is when body tissues freeze and are damaged. Toes, fingers, noses and ears are most often affected by frostbite. **Hypothermia** can be life threatening and occurs when a person is in cold temperatures for too long.
- **Ice** can make surfaces very slippery. People can fall and vehicles can lose control on ice.
- People have difficulty getting around due to cold temperatures, slippery surfaces, reduced visibility, transit delays, and the **danger** of driving in a storm.
- Storm cleanup such as **shovelling** up can be hard on muscles, cause injury and create the risk of heart attack.
- Hazards during **power outages** can include exposure to the cold and risks when using dangerous ways to light our home or cook food. Make sure all appliances are turned off or unplugged during power outages.

Do Not

- use candles in a power outage (they can be a fire hazard).
- use outdoor cooking units inside (such as charcoal or gas. barbeques or camp stoves).
- bring generators indoors.

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Extreme Heat

Extreme heat events occur during the summertime (usually between July and September), when temperatures are high during the day and night for several days. People are at risk of overheating during an extreme heat event. Temperatures can be hotter in tall structures (like apartment and office towers) and in direct sunlight.



Do:



Hydrate - have lots of cool drinks and hydrating foods available. Caffeine and alcohol are not good drink choices as they can dehydrate you.



Keep cool – stay indoors and avoid physical exertion in extreme heat.



Dress appropriately to keep cool – with a hat, sunscreen, loose layers of light coloured clothing.



Use a fan or air conditioner at home or go to an air-conditioned place to cool down, like a mall, library or community centre.



It helps you to cool down if you spritz yourself with water, take a cold shower, and put ice in front of a fan that is blowing on you.



Draw curtains during peak sunlight to avoid passive heating in your home.



Risks

- Dehydration.
- **Sunburn** and/or **heat rash** (red bumps on the skin).
- **Overheating** which can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Symptoms include headache, muscle cramps, dizziness, confusion, fainting. **Heat stroke** requires **emergency** medical attention and can cause death.
- People who are **most at risk** are seniors, infants and people with health conditions.

Watch for symptoms of heat illness

- including: fainting, nausea, dizziness, rapid breathing, extreme thirst.

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EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Organization	Phone Number	Description
911 Emergency Services	911	Police, Fire, Ambulance
Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team	902-429-8167	Emergency mental health services
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868	Professional Counselling available 24/7
Transition House Association of NS	1-855-225-0220	Services to women and children who are experiencing violence and abuse.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Non-emergency Halifax Regional Police Dispatch	902-490-5020 or 902-490-7252 (TTY)	Non-urgent police assistance
Nova Scotia Power	nspower.ca/outages	Shows where the power is out and allows you to report if your power goes out.
511 Road Conditions	511	Information for road conditions, accidents or construction
411 Directory Assistance	411	To search for a phone number
311 Halifax Municipal Services and Information	311	Information on city services available in over 150 languages. Check halifax.ca/311 for updates including shelter and comfort centre locations in emergencies.
211 Nova Scotia	211	Connections to community services such as food banks and other supports
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)	902-423-3607	Services & Community Connections for Newcomers to Canada
YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs	902-457-9622	Services & Community Connections for Newcomers to Canada

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

811 Health Information	811	Health information and advice from nurses
Community Health Team	902-460-4560	Free non-urgent health related resources and programs in your community and online.

WEATHER

https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/ns-19_metric_e.html (Halifax)