

# LARIMER COUNTY **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE**



**LARIMER COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
**[WWW.LARIMER.ORG/EMERGENCY](http://WWW.LARIMER.ORG/EMERGENCY)**





# TO OUR COMMUNITY

A Letter from the County Commissioners

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# WE CAN BE A MORE PREPARED LARIMER COUNTY STARTING WITH YOU!


We know that many of us have experienced a great deal of hardship in recent years, particularly following the events of 2020 and 2021 when we suffered significant disasters impacting Colorado, including our county and beyond. Nevertheless, Larimer County is home to incredibly resilient community members, which has been demonstrated time and time again.

Larimer has been, and will continue to be, impacted by a wide range of hazards, both natural and human-related, that could result in various emergencies and disasters. The Larimer County Board of County Commissioners understands the challenge, and the responsibility, to be prepared for, respond to, and recover from these types of events. Being ready for disasters and ensuring the future of our resilience county-wide takes intentional partnership between the county and our community members. Key components of this partnership are ensuring our community is aware of the risks that exist in our local area and providing recommendations and resources on how to be better prepared. Development and release of this preparedness guide is one of the many ways in which Larimer County works with our community to be better prepared and more resilient to hazards we may face.

Disaster preparedness is a partnership, and we call upon our local community to share in this responsibility. Having a well-thought out personal and family preparedness plan is the first crucial step in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of yourself, your family, and furthermore, your community. We encourage you to utilize this guide as a tool in building awareness of the natural and human caused disasters that exist in Larimer County, and to use this as guidance for development of your own preparedness plan.

This preparedness guide has been updated with the current resources and lessons learned we have here locally. It has been developed by the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management in collaboration with the Larimer County Sheriff's Office as well as other critical local emergency management agencies and partners. It is our hope that this information will not only help minimize the fear and anxiety associated with disasters, but that it will inspire and empower you to feel more ready for the future. We hope the guide will enhance your ability to make the decisions that are best for you and your family before, during, and after a disaster.

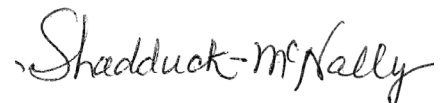
Larimer County is a special place, and we are fortunate you are part of the community in which we live, work, and play. **Thank you for taking action to make us more resilient.**



John Kefalas  
Commissioner, District 1



Kristin Stephens  
Commissioner, District 2



Jody Shadduck-McNally  
Commissioner, District 3



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# NOTE FROM THE SHERIFF & OEM



**Larimer County is a unique and amazing place to live, work and play.** The beauty and majesty of our mountains, rivers and plains is endless. However, the same features that make this such a great place to be also present potential dangers to those living and visiting our county. The events of 2012, 2013, and 2020 reminded us of the ever-present dangers from events like wildfires and floods. Despite these threats, the citizens of Larimer County have proven themselves amazingly resilient. This emergency preparedness guide has been developed as a tool to help residents to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that exist in our community.

**- Larimer County Sheriff Justin Smith**

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**When we are prepared, we become an asset to our neighbors.** It is always possible that you could be the first responder in any given situation, and by having the plans and tools needed to be ready at your disposal puts you ahead of the game to be able to better support those around you need.



Community preparedness is a team effort, and we are all in this together. We hope you utilize this resource as a guide to educate yourself and your family, make a plan that works best for you, and then share what you have learned with your neighbors. Community resilience starts with you, and together, we can ensure a strong Larimer County long into the future.

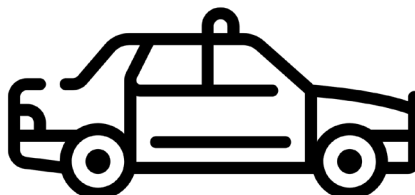
**- Larimer County Office of Emergency Management**



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A photograph of the interior of an ambulance, viewed from the side. The image is heavily overlaid with a teal color. Visible details include medical equipment, a patient gurney, and the interior structure of the vehicle. The text "BREAKING DOWN EMERGENCIES" is superimposed in large white letters across the center.

# BREAKING DOWN EMERGENCIES



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# EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

are complex! There are a lot of different entities that are involved in keeping our community safe. There is also a lot of work that is done before and after emergency situations to help our community prepare and recover from disaster!

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## Who is involved in an emergency?



### 1. Communications

**Centers** - are involved in such things as answering 911 calls, notifying appropriate response authorities of a situation, coordinating support, and issuing evacuations.

**2. Sheriff's Office** - are in charge of Law Enforcement for Larimer County. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office is the lead for evacuation operations, and serves as the Marshall for wildland fire in the county.

**3. Fire Protection** - In Larimer County, there are Fire Authorities, Fire Protection Districts, and Fire Departments. They respond to structure and wildland fires, and other emergency situations in our communities. They are responsible for emergencies in their jurisdictions and provide mutual aid to neighboring jurisdictions when needed.

**4. Emergency Medical Service** - are involved in the care and transport of patients needing medical care.

**5. Police Departments** - are in charge of law enforcement within municipal jurisdictions.

**6. Volunteers** - play a crucial role in emergencies. The volunteer fire fighters and EMTs are often the first to give aid at an incident. Search and rescue volunteers can spend days looking for someone. Dive and ice rescue volunteers pull people from dangerous water and ice. Other volunteers help with clean up from fires and floods.

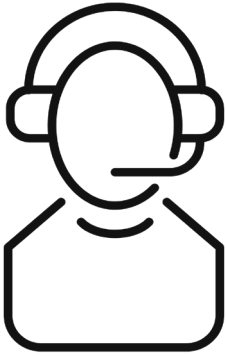
**7. Road & Bridge / Utilities** - Often these groups go overlooked, but they are important first responders! Road and Bridge personnel ensure that roads are plowed for emergency vehicles or help repair damaged roads after a flood. Additionally, Utilities personnel work hard during severe weather to make sure that power can get to our homes and buildings, which can prevent further emergencies!

**8. Office of Emergency Management** - OEM is involved in all phases of a disaster including preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery. OEM serves 3 key roles - assisting with public information, supporting responders in the field, and community support (such as activating overnight shelters with community partners).

**9. You!** You serve a key role in an emergency. Being prepared is the first step. Read on to learn more!

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# ALL ABOUT 911 & MEDICAL EMERGENCIES



## WHEN YOU DIAL 911

in Larimer County, your call, whether by landline or cell phone, will be received by any one of 5 communications centers. The Emergency Telecommunicators at these centers will help you by determining the nature of your emergency and what type of response will be needed based on your location and circumstances.

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## CALL BOXES

Callboxes can be found throughout Larimer County. They are often located in places where phone service is sparse. By picking up the receiver or pressing the call button on the callbox, citizens can reach an emergency communications center for emergency assistance.

## TEXT TO 911

All emergency communications centers in Larimer County are currently equipped to receive and handle Text-to-9-1-1 calls. Text-to-9-1-1 is very useful to those who are hard of hearing, deaf, or speech-impaired. Text-to-9-1-1 could also help in situations when a caller is facing a threatening situation and a voice call could increase the threat; the caller is injured and cannot speak; the caller is in a remote location and can only send out a text message; or other scenarios. Please remember that texting should only be used if you are unable to make a voice call to 9-1-1.

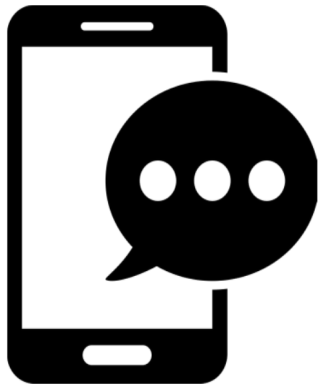
### 911 IS...

- The number to call to report a crime in progress
- The number to call if an emergency threatening life or property exists
- The number to call if you need medical help
- The number to call if you see an accident
- The number to call if you see smoke or flames

### 911 IS NOT...

- The number to call for phone numbers
- The number to call for animal problems
- The number to call for directions
- The number to call for road conditions
- The number to call for power outages





## EMERGENCY ALERTS:

Register for emergency alerts at [www.nocoalert.org](http://www.nocoalert.org)

Information about Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority & 911 in Larimer County: [www.leta911.org](http://www.leta911.org)

Please go online to register your cell or VOIP phone for emergency alerts and to learn more about the text to 911 feature.

# Call if you can, text if you must!

## MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In addition to sending emergency responders, the Emergency Telecommunicator may give you medical instructions or direct you in specific actions to assist you with your emergency until help arrives. Remember that when an ambulance arrives to assess the situation, it's free - but if you are transported, fees may be involved for you or your insurance company. A 9-1-1 call for assistance in areas far removed from a hospital may require an air ambulance to provide transportation to a medical facility as soon as possible. With medical emergencies, fires, law enforcement calls or whatever the situation, 9-1-1 Emergency.



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# PREPARING FOR DISRUPTIONS

Being prepared does not have to be overwhelming, nor does it have to be scary!

**We are going to let you in on a little secret (originally given to us by Aaron Titus, a member of our Local VOAD and author of the book, *How to Prepare for Everything*). The best way to prepare for disasters, is to not prepare for disasters at all!**

Think about it, the disaster itself is not what impacts us, but the disruptions the disaster causes. This could be things like displacement from your home, loss of power, or supply chain disruptions. So, if we plan for these disruptions, we can be better prepared in the event of a disaster to deal with them.

While this guide will have hazard-specific information, we encourage you to think through this disruption's lens. After all, it is easier to prepare a food supply, or think through what you might need for your pet if you have to be away from home for a while, versus simply "prepare for a flood." In conclusion, preparing this way helps you be better prepared for a multitude of possible situations!

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## A NOTE ON PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Every member of the community has personal responsibility for their own safety. This includes adequate planning and preparedness for the hazards and risks within each specific community. Larimer OEM is responsible for providing services and resources, as available, to all members of our community, but can only be successful with the help of every prepared individual. Self-reliance is a primary component in training and education programs in Larimer County to give community members the tools to help themselves and others in the event of a disaster. Community preparedness is a joint effort between emergency response agencies and community members.

**When you are prepared, you become an asset to your community and can better help support those in need!**



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# WANT TO SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS?

In Larimer County, there are a lot of opportunities to learn emergency preparedness skills for you and your family. A great way to build skillsets and also be able to contribute to your community during a time of need is to get involved with a volunteer organization. There is more information about this on pages 64 and 65.

See below for examples the different types of training that may be offered by Larimer County or community partners.

Want to learn more about training opportunities? Visit <https://www.larimer.gov/workshops-and-trainings-we-offer>

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HAM Radio  
& Emergency  
Communications



CPR & Stop  
the Bleed



Community Resilience  
& Neighborhood  
Support



Disaster  
Preparedness



Youth  
Preparedness



Disaster Financial  
Preparedness

# BE READY

Understanding Alerts, Warnings  
and Evacuations





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# EDUCATION & AWARENESS

are the two keys to protecting yourself and your family in an extreme weather event. There have been countless instances in the history of search and rescue in Larimer County where victims placed themselves in harm's way by refusing to pay attention to a weather forecast or their surroundings. Remember, 4-wheel drive vehicles are not indestructible and may offer a false sense of security. They can and do get stuck in snow and are easily swept away in floods as any other vehicle! Pay attention to weather advisories, watches, and warnings. Educate yourself on the differences between them, know the best way to respond, and share this knowledge with your family and friends. Practice situational awareness by learning to be aware of your surroundings and seek further information if you sense imminent danger. Keep tune to the latest hazardous weather information and weather forecasts, and always have an emergency plan set in place within your family.

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## EMERGENCY ALERTS

### NOCO ALERTS



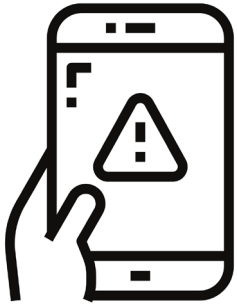
Emergency alerts are sent when there is an imminent threat to life in situations such as wildfires, floods, gas leaks, dangerous weather, or critical law enforcement activity. If you have a traditional landline phone, your landline will automatically receive emergency alerts. The emergency notification system also allows residents of Larimer County to sign up for FREE emergency alerts on their cell phone, work phone, VOIP phone, home phone, text message, and email.

**If you receive an emergency alert, please do not call 9-1-1 for clarification or to ask questions unless you have an actual emergency.** The NOCO Alert website is a dedicated place for all information about emergency alerts in Larimer County. Not only can residents sign up for alerts here, but they can also view a map of the alert area, see current and previous alerts sent, and discover non-emergency alert options for their community.

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## HOW EMERGENCY ALERTS WORK



The Emergency Alert System in Larimer County allows us to alert you if there is an emergency situation in your area creating an imminent threat to life. You opt-in to enter your contact information based on addresses you care about in Larimer County. The information you provide is protected and will not be used for any other purpose.

When we issue a notification about an imminent threat to life, you will receive a message on the voice or text communication methods that you have registered. If requested for the notification, you can confirm that you have received the message and you will not be contacted by any subsequent methods regarding that particular notification. If you do not confirm, the system will continue to attempt to reach you at all of the contact paths that you have registered.


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## REACHWELL RECEIVE ALERTS IN THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR CHOICE!

An additional alerting tool has been added to Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority's emergency alert system! Starting April 1, 2022, all emergency alerts in Larimer County will be delivered to the ReachWell app. Community members simply set their language preference in the app and ReachWell will deliver push notifications in the language selected. Choose from one of 103 different languages, including Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, and more! This app serves as an additional method to reach more people in Larimer County. We strongly encourage all community members to also register for an emergency alert profile at [www.nocoalert.org](http://www.nocoalert.org).


**Download the ReachWell app from the Apple App Store or Google Play today!**



Download the App

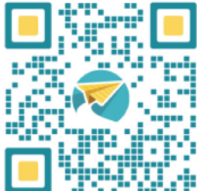

 **Get It**  
Download ReachWell app and "Allow" push notifications.

 **Set It**  
Set your language.

 **Add It**  
Search and add NOCO Alert.









[Emergency Alerts](#) [Public Events Calendar](#) [911 Education](#) [Community Resources](#)

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# WATCHES VS. WARNING - WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?



A **Weather Watch** is issued when the conditions are favorable for the development of severe weather over the next several hours. If there is a weather watch issued for your area, stay tuned to your local media for the latest weather information and closely monitor the situation. Review your emergency plan with your family and have your emergency kit close by. Be alert for changing weather conditions and possible warnings. Weather watches are large areas (typically 20,000 to 40,000 square miles) and are issued by county. If a weather watch is issued close to your location, but does not include your county, you should still remain alert to the situation as weather conditions can change suddenly.

**WITH A WEATHER WATCH, ALL THE INGREDIENTS  
ARE THERE FOR SEVERE WEATHER TO OCCUR**

A **Weather Warning** is issued when a dangerous weather event is imminent or currently in progress. A weather warning requires immediate action and may be life threatening. You and your family should take the appropriate actions necessary to seek shelter and safety. Weather warnings are usually issued as irregular shapes that may cover only part of the county. Warnings are also communicated in a variety of ways, and some may include local cities and landmarks. Therefore, know where you are relative to your home county, local cities, and notable landmarks, as well as neighboring counties to better understand the threats relative to you and your family.



**WITH A WEATHER WARNING, THE CUPCAKE HAS  
BEEN MADE AND IS HERE.**



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# ALL ABOUT EVACUATIONS

Larimer County is prone to hazards such as wildfires or flash flooding that may prompt the need for an evacuation from your place of residence. It is important to recognize that many of the hazards that pose a threat in Larimer County are fast acting and may occur with little time for warning.



Evacuations are issued through NoCo Alert (See Section Titled “Be Ready - Understanding Alerts and Warnings” on page 13). Below are the following types of evacuation orders that are issued. Please note that we will allow as much time as possible, however circumstances may be such that your first call will be to tell you to get out now.

Do not assume that you will get the evacuation orders issued chronologically.

**Please also note that if at any time you feel unsafe, you should evacuate. Do not wait on an evacuation order to be “sure” that you should vacate the area.**

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## LARIMER COUNTY EVACUATION ORDERS:



### **Voluntary Evacuation**

Please note that this is not a “pre-evacuation” order. **A Voluntary Evacuation Order is still an evacuation order**, and the purpose of this order is that if you are a community member who needs additional time to exit the area due to such things as needing to get large animals out of the area, you have health conditions that may be aggravated by the incident, or you are concerned for your safety, you should evacuate at this time.



### **Other considerations for a Voluntary Evacuation Order:**

- Gather essential items to add to an emergency Go-Kit, such as medication and items you may need if away for an extended period
- Create a plan for transporting animals out of the area if needed



### **Imminent Threat Evacuation**

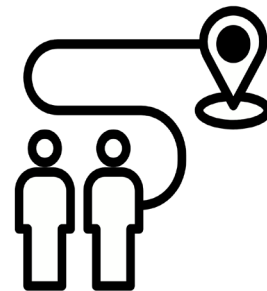
This evacuation level was added following the Cameron Peak Fire and the massive burn-scar it left as a result, leading to increased risk of dangerous flash flooding (see more about burn-scar flooding on page 34). If this alert is issued, this means you must leave now, and that there is no time to gather any personal belongings. At this time, you should seek higher grounds by any means necessary.

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## TIPS FOR EVACUEES

- **Plan Now.** The time to start thinking about your evacuation plans is not when you receive our emergency notification, but now – or immediately upon seeing or hearing about a threat within several miles of your location.
- **Gather Supplies.** Keep an Emergency Supply Kit (or “Go-Kit”) that includes:
  - Prescription medicine
  - Clothing, food, and water
  - Phone chargers
  - Cash
  - Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes
- **Evacuation Route.** Find the designated evacuation route for your area. If there is not one defined, make sure you take time to learn the routes out of your area. Plan at least 2 safe routes. Practice evacuating your home.
- **Have a Meeting Point.** There is a chance that you and the members of your household may be separated before or during an evacuation. Having a meeting spot that is known by everyone can help families get reconnected more quickly and alleviate putting first responders at risk searching a hazardous area for someone who is not there.
- **Get Organized.** Take time now, prior to an evacuation order being issued, to gather important documents. Make a written list of important phone numbers. Take a home inventory, either by video or photo records, of possessions and financial documents. Also locate your driver’s license, credit cards, cash, and checkbook.
- **Animals.** Make sure your supplies include what you might need for your pet, including food, medications, leash, kennel, and comfort items/toys. Gather small animals that you plan to take with you in one room. For larger animals, make plans to transport and board them.
- **Alert Friends and Family.** As soon as you are evacuated, call friends and family to let them know your situation and that you are okay.
- **Stay Informed.** Listen to the news for updates on the situation. Follow your local responding agencies on social media. Sign up for alerts at [www.nocoalert.org](http://www.nocoalert.org).





# NATURAL HAZARDS

Thunderstorms

Wildfire

Flash Floods

Winter Storms and Extreme Cold



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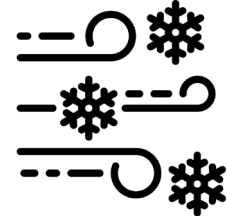
# LARIMER COUNTY PRIMARY NATURAL HAZARDS



FLASH FLOODING



WILDLAND (FOREST)  
FIRE



WINTER STORMS



LIGHTNING



HAILSTORMS

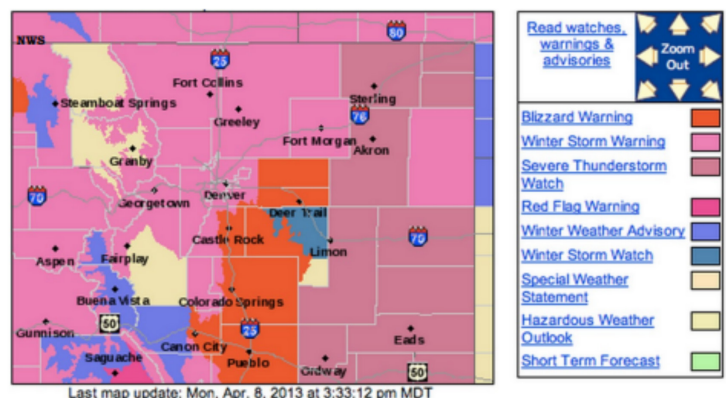


TORNADOES

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## WACKY COLORADO WEATHER

Remember that Colorado weather is dynamic. Weather conditions can change rapidly and the weather across the plains can be radically different from the high country. For example, take a look at the weather situation during the afternoon of April 8, 2013 (see right). The Front Range and mountainous areas were experiencing winter weather, while severe weather was expected out on the high plains and blizzard weather was affecting areas in between!



Graphic from NWS - Boulder

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# A THUNDERSTORM

is a local storm produced by a cumulonimbus cloud that is accompanied by lightning and thunder. An estimated 100,000 thunderstorms occur across the U.S. each year and are especially prevalent along the Front Range during the spring and summer. While many Colorado residents enjoy taking part in recreational outdoor activities during this time of year, it is important to keep in mind that it is also the peak season for thunderstorms. In Colorado, thunderstorms are most common during the afternoon and evening hours. Thunderstorms can pose a variety of hazards such as dangerous lightning, hail, and strong winds that may lead to property damage and loss of life. What ingredients are needed for thunderstorms to develop? What can we do to stay safe from their hazards? Read below and find out!

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## 3 INGREDIENTS TO MAKE THUNDERSTORMS

**1. Moisture** - Colorado has two major sources of moisture - the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico

**2. Instability** - The atmosphere is “unstable” when there is warm, moist air near the ground and cool, dry air higher up in the atmosphere. In this situation, if a “bubble” of warm, moist air near the ground is forced upward it will continue to rise so long as it is warmer than its surroundings. As the bubble rises, it cools, and the water vapor condenses to form water droplets - which we see as clouds!

**3. A Source of Lift** - To develop a thunderstorm, there needs to be something that pushes the air upwards. Some of the common lifting mechanisms in Colorado are cold or warm fronts, drylines, air rising up the mountains (upslope), the mountains heating up faster than the plains (differential heating), and strong winds that push the air upward as they rush away from thunderstorms (outflow boundaries).

### FUN FACTS:

➡ On average, July is when the most thunderstorm activity occurs across the eastern half of Colorado. The western slopes see most of their thunderstorm activity in August.

➡ Lightning heats the air to as hot as 54,000 °F! The heated air expands explosively and creates a shockwave, the thunder, which spreads out through the air in all directions.

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# THUNDERSTORM HAZARDS

## LIGHTNING



All thunderstorms produce lightning, which is the number one life threatening weather hazard in Colorado. In an average year, 3 people are killed by lightning and 13 are injured. Even those who are not killed by a lightning strike are often left to cope with permanent disabilities. Most people are struck by lightning while doing outdoor activities, such as working, hiking, or playing sports. Many people are unaware of how far lightning can strike from its parent thunderstorm. In fact, lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from a storm. Many deaths from lightning occur ahead of the storm because people wait until the last minute before taking cover.

It is not yet possible to forecast where and when lightning will strike. By learning about lightning and some basic safety rules, you can protect yourself from one of the most unpredictable forces of nature.

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## HOW IS LIGHTNING CREATED?

1. Inside a thunderstorm, it is very turbulent. Rising water droplets are constantly colliding with falling ice, building a separation of charge within the cloud (positive charge at the top, negative charge at the bottom). Meanwhile, a pool of positive charge gathers on the ground.
2. Have you ever heard of the saying “opposites attract”? The positive charges on the ground rise up through taller objects towards the negative charges at the bottom of the cloud, and vice-versa.
3. When the positive charges connect with the negative charges, we see the electrical transfer as lightning!





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## LIGHTNING SAFETY

- Keep an eye on the sky! Look for darkening clouds and/or flashes of lightning. Listen for the sound of thunder. It is a warning to anyone outside that they are within striking distance of the storm and need to get to a safe place quickly.
- If you see or hear a thunderstorm, postpone activities promptly and do not wait for rain to start to seek shelter. Many people take shelter from the rain, but most people struck by lightning are not in the rain!
- Seek shelter in a sturdy, enclosed building but not in a carport, open garage, covered patio, shed, or under a tree. Sturdy buildings are the safest place to be. Once inside, stay away from electrical appliances and plumbing fixtures.
- If no sturdy building is nearby, get inside a hard-topped, all-metal vehicle. Once in a vehicle, roll up the windows and avoid contact with any conducting paths leading to the outside of the vehicle (e.g., radio).
- If you are in the mountains and above tree line, you are the highest object around. Quickly get below tree line and get into a grove of small trees. Try not to be the second tallest object during a thunderstorm!
- If you are in an open area, crouch down and keep twice as far away from a tree as it is tall. Do not lie flat on the ground! When lightning strikes the surface, it induces currents in the ground that can be fatal up to 100 feet away. You have to minimize your height AND contact with the surface.
- If you are in water, get out! Water is a great conductor of electricity. Stay off the beach and out of small boats or canoes. If you are caught in a boat, crouch down in the center of the boat away from metal hardware.
- Avoid metal. Drop metal backpacks, stay away from clothes lines, fences, exposed sheds, and electrically conductive elevated objects. Do not hold on to metal items such as golf clubs, fishing rods, tennis rackets or tools.

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## SUPERCELL THUNDERSTORM

An organized thunderstorm with a rotating updraft (see right) is a supercell. Supercells often persist for several hours, making them some of the most dangerous types of storms because they often produce destructive tornadoes, large hail, strong winds, and flash flooding during their long lifecycles. (More about Tornadoes on page 19)



Chris Collura

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## HAIL & STRONG WINDS



Of the estimated 100,000 thunderstorms that occur each year in the U.S., about 10% are classified as severe. A thunderstorm is severe if it produces one or more of the following:

- Hail the size of a U.S. quarter or larger (1 inch in diameter)
- Winds of 58 mph or stronger
- A tornado

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## HOW DOES HAIL FORM?

1. Water droplets are carried up high in the atmosphere by the updraft of a thunderstorm.

2. In stronger updrafts, these water droplets may encounter temperatures that are well below the freezing level (the height where the temperature is 32 °F), causing the water droplets to freeze into ice.

3. These small hailstones grow as they collide with other water droplets that freeze onto its surface. As the hailstones grow larger, they start to fall out of the storm in the downdraft.

4. However, these hailstones can get caught back in the updraft, where they are carried back up into the atmosphere. This cycle can happen many times over. With each trip the hailstones travel through the freezing level, another layer of ice is added to the hailstone.

5. The hailstones continue to accumulate layers of ice until the updraft is no longer able to suspend them in air. At that point, the hailstones are heavy enough to fall out of the downdraft as large hailstones!

## DO YOU REMEMBER? JUNE 2014 FORT COLLINS HAILSTORM

On the night of June 24th, a severe thunderstorm developed near Red Feather Lakes and moved southeast over Fort Collins. A severe thunderstorm warning was issued for parts of southeastern Larimer County, as the strong storm brought ping pong sized hail (see right), gusty winds, and continuous cloud to ground lightning. Heavy rain also came with the storm, where as much as 2 inches fell within a 30-minute period over some areas.



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# TORNADOES



A tornado is a rapidly rotating column of air descending from the base of a severe thunderstorm and in contact with the ground. Tornadoes nearly always start as a funnel cloud, but the circulation must reach the ground to be classified as a tornado.

An average of about 60 tornadoes occur in Colorado each year, with a peak season typically between mid-May and mid-July. Most of these tornadoes develop east of the Continental Divide and are weak and short-lived. Although Larimer County does not often experience tornadoes, it is not unacquainted with such events either. On June 18th, 1987, a tornado touched down at Colorado State University's Mountain Campus. On the ground for about a mile, it uprooted nearly 1,500 trees and destroyed a ropes course. Most, but not all, tornadoes develop from supercell thunderstorms.

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## HOW DOES A TORNADO FORM?

Most tornadoes come from supercell thunderstorms because of their persistent rotating updraft. This rotation develops when the atmosphere has strong wind shear. Wind shear is simply a change in wind speed or direction with height. For example, say there are weak winds from the west near the ground (10 mph), and really strong winds from the west higher up in the atmosphere (50 mph). This type of wind shear will create a rotating, horizontal column of air. The updraft of a thunderstorm may lift this horizontally rotating column of air into the vertical which causes the entire storm to rotate. This storm-scale rotation is known as a "Mesocyclone."

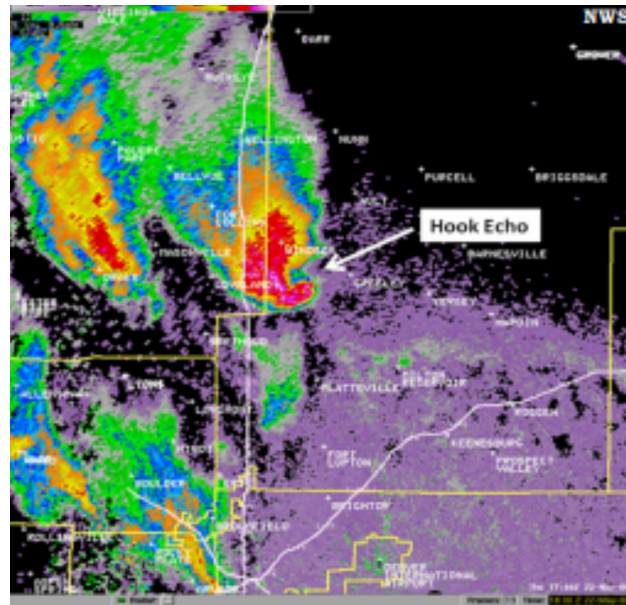
Trained weather spotters may observe this rotation as a corkscrew appearance to the storm's updraft with curved cloud bands. The circulation associated with a mesocyclone covers an area much larger than the tornado that may develop within it (that is, a mesocyclone is not a tornado, but may be a precursor to it). Often, a localized cloud lowering occurs beneath the mesocyclone called a "wall cloud". A funnel cloud may descend from the wall cloud and becomes a tornado when it makes contact with the ground.



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# EXPLORING NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE RADAR

National Weather Service forecasters use radar to monitor the type, movement, and intensity of precipitation, especially during times of severe weather. If the radar reflectivity pattern shows a “hook echo”, this is a good sign that a mesocyclone is present and favorable conditions exist for tornado development. For example, check out the radar image to the right of the supercell responsible for producing the Windsor, CO tornado in 2008.



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## ENHANCED FUJITA SCALE

Tornado strength is rated by the damage it causes. The Enhanced-Fujita scale is a set of wind estimates based on this damage and assigns a rating to the tornado that is surveyed.

<b>EF 0</b>	<b>65 – 85 MPH</b> Light Damage
<b>EF 1</b>	<b>86 – 110 MPH</b> Moderate Damage
<b>EF 2</b>	<b>110 – 135 MPH</b> Considerable Damage
<b>EF 3</b>	<b>136– 165 MPH</b> Severe Damage
<b>EF 4</b>	<b>166– 200 MPH</b> Devastating Damage
<b>EF 5</b>	<b>OVER 200 MPH</b> Incredible Damage

**Fun Fact: Many of the tornadoes that form along the Front Range come from non-supercell thunderstorms, often called “landspouts.”**

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## TORNADOES: MYTH VS FACT

**Myth:** All tornadoes are visible and look like a classic funnel.

**Fact:** Many tornadoes are obscured by heavy rain and hail (rain-wrapped) and may not be visible until they are already upon you! Also, the visible part of the funnel may not extend all the way to the ground, while the swirling winds do. Moreover, the violent winds of a tornado may extend well outside the visible funnel. Finally, some tornadoes are tall and skinny, while others are short and wide. Sometimes they are so large that they are mistaken for just really low clouds!

**Myth:** Bigger tornadoes are stronger and more destructive than smaller tornadoes.

**Fact:** The size and shape of a tornado does not say anything about its strength. There is no way to know how strong a tornado is just by looking at it.

**Myth:** During a tornado, you should open all the windows in your home to equalize the pressure.

**Fact:** Opening the windows of your home to decrease the air pressure does nothing to decrease the damage. Instead, it lets the wind in, making it easier to blow your house apart!

**Myth:** Tornadoes do not hit big cities.

**Fact:** Tornadoes have hit several large cities, such as Dallas, Oklahoma City, Miami, and Salt Lake City. An urban tornado will have a lot more debris than a rural one.

**Myth:** The southwest corner of the basement is the safest place to be in during a tornado.

**Fact:** The worst place to be is on the side from which the tornado is approaching, which is commonly the south or southwest side.

**Myth:** Tornadoes do not develop over mountains.

**Fact:** Tornadoes can and have occurred in the mountains. On July 7, 2004, a hiker observed and photographed a tornado at 12,000 feet in Sequoia National Park, California, making it the highest ever observed in the U.S. On July 28, 2014, a tornado touched down near 11,900 feet in Mt. Evans, Colorado, making it the 2nd highest elevation a tornado was observed!



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# TORNADO SAFETY

## General Safety Tips

- Seek shelter in a sturdy building with a basement or underground storm shelter. If these options are not available, move to a hallway or a small interior room on the lowest floor, such as a bathroom or closet and stay away from windows.
- Cover yourself! Wear a helmet to protect your head. Use blankets or get under a sturdy piece of furniture such as a workbench to protect yourself from flying debris (this is the greatest risk of injury from tornadoes!).

## If in a Mobile Home or RV

- If you live in a mobile home, have a plan of where to seek shelter in the event of severe weather.
- If severe weather is imminent, abandon your mobile home in advance of the storm and seek shelter in a nearby sturdy building or storm shelter. Mobile homes offer little protection from tornadoes!



## If Driving

- If you are in open country and see a tornado, drive away from the tornado and its path if time permits
- If the tornado is fast approaching and you don't have time to drive away, you have one of two options.
  - Safest option - Abandon your vehicle and seek shelter in the lowest level of a sturdy building
  - Abandon your vehicle and lie in a ditch or culvert away from your vehicle and protect your head. However, be aware that tornadic storms often produce heavy rainfall, which can flood ditches and culverts. Make sure you know what you are getting into and how easily you can get out of these locations if they flood.
- Do not take shelter under an overpass/bridge. By doing so, you are:
  - Blocking the roadway with your vehicle. This risks the tornado coming through and turning vehicles into debris fields, which will restrict emergency vehicles from being able to get through.
  - By climbing to higher ground underneath the overpass/bridge, you will place yourself at greater risk from the tornado and flying debris.



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## WINDSOR TORNADO: MAY 22, 2008

While strong tornadoes are not common in northern Colorado, they can happen. An example is the EF3 tornado that caused extensive damage to areas in and near Windsor, Colorado, on May 22, 2008. It is the costliest tornado to date in northern Colorado history, causing an estimated \$193.5 million in damage along a 39-mile track. There was one fatality, 78 injuries, and at least 850 damaged homes. There were several characteristics to this tornado event that made it unusual for the region, including the time of day when it formed, its intensity, its long track, and its direction of motion. The storm developed in the late morning, in contrast to the late afternoon when most tornadoes strike. It was also strong and long-lived, while most tornadoes this close to the Front Range are typically weak and short-lived. Although we often observe tornadoes to have an eastward motion to their track, this tornado moved very quickly toward the north northwest.



Photo courtesy of Weld County OEM

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# WILDFIRE

is one of Larimer County's greatest hazards. For most of our history, Larimer County's largest wildfires usually encompassed two to three thousand acres. However, in the year 2000, the situation changed with the Bobcat Fire at 10,665 acres. Then in 2002, the Big Elk Fire burned more than 4,000 and threatened the Town of Estes Park. In 2004, the Picnic Rock Fire burned nearly 9,000 acres. In 2012, Larimer County experienced its most destructive fire season on record with the Woodland Heights Wildfire burning down 22 houses and two outbuildings near Estes Park, and the High Park Wildfire, which burned 87,250 acres and destroyed more than 259 homes. The High Park Wildfire was the most destructive fire in Colorado history, in terms of the number of homes it burned, until it was surpassed by the Waldo Canyon Wildfire in El Paso County in that same year.

In 2020, Larimer County also experienced what would become the largest wildfire in Colorado State history, the Cameron Peak Wildfire. This fire ignited on August 13, 2020, and was not considered 100% contained until almost 4 months later on December 2, 2020, and was finally deemed controlled on January 12, 2021. This fire had a significant impact on our communities, prompting evacuations for almost all of the communities of western Larimer County, including Estes Park when a separate fire, the East Troublesome Fire, crossed into Larimer County from Grand County. In total, the Cameron Peak Wildfire burned 208,913 acres and destroyed 469 structures (224 of these being residential structures).

In the past few decades there has been a proliferation of homes in what is now called the Wildland/Urban Interface - cluster developments or individual homes located in the mountainous and forested areas of our county. When these developments and mountain homes are threatened, our firefighters must divert attention and resources to saving them and away from the effort to flank and stop the fire. In the pages following, we will look at emergency preparedness for fire with a discussion of this problem and what landowners in the areas potentially threatened by fire can do to make their homes safer.



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## WHERE TO GET INFORMATION



It is important during an incident to receive information from official sources. While tools like social media are great for accessing information quickly, it may not always be accurate. If the Larimer County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) has command of an active fire, the LCSO Public Information Office is the most accurate source of information. Most updates will be posted to Twitter as the information becomes available. LCSO also utilizes Facebook and Nextdoor to post less frequent, but more comprehensive reports about active fires. LCSO may also issue press releases in hopes the local media will share the information with their readers.

### Official Social Media Handles:

Larimer County	Larimer OEM	Larimer Sheriff's Office (LCSO)
Facebook: @LarimerCounty	Facebook: @LarimerCountyOEM	Facebook: @LarimerSheriff
Twitter: @LarimerCounty	Twitter: @LarimerOEM	Twitter: @LarimerSheriff

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## WILDFIRE CONDITIONS & FIRE RESTRICTIONS

The Larimer County Sheriff's Office Emergency Services Unit and local fire departments/districts monitor potential wildfire conditions throughout the year. The Larimer County Board of County Commissioners will impose fire restrictions, when necessary, based on the recommendations of the Sheriff's Office and/or any fire chief or fire agency within Larimer County. If fire restrictions are in place, a notice will be posted on the Larimer County website at [www.larimer.gov](http://www.larimer.gov).

Regardless of current conditions, community members and visitors to Larimer County are encouraged to exercise caution with any potential source of ignition:

- Campfires - only build campfires when and where authorized, do not leave them unattended and put them out completely. Use ample water and stir until the coals are cool to the touch.
- Cigarette and cigar butts - dispose of lit smoking materials properly.
- Heat transfer from exhaust systems - do not park a vehicle in areas with tall grass that could catch fire.
- Grinding and welding - keep a shovel and fire extinguisher close and ready to use as these activities can start fires.
- Lawn mowers - metal blades striking rocks can create sparks and start fires.

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## FIREWORKS

Any fireworks that leave the ground or explode are illegal in Colorado. Legal fireworks include the following:

- fountains
- toy caps
- snake or glow worms
- ground spinners
- illuminating torches
- dipped sticks and sparklers
- toy propellants
- noise makers that crackle or whistle, but don't explode

Note: It is unlawful to furnish fireworks to anyone under 16 years of age.

Those under 16 are also prohibited by law from buying fireworks.

## IF YOU SEE SMOKE

Immediately call the LCSO non-emergency number **(970) 416-1985**.

Provide emergency dispatchers with the best location of the source of the smoke, where you are, the color of the smoke, and any characteristics of the smoke you can describe.



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## EVACUATION

In the event of an active wildfire, the Larimer County Sheriff's Office may issue evacuation notices for your safety. This is done via NOCO Alert. If you have a landline, you will receive emergency alerts on that phone. If you do not have a landline or wish to receive emergency alerts on your cell phone, visit [www.nocoalert.org](http://www.nocoalert.org) to register for free. For more information about evacuation notices in Larimer County, see page 16.

It is important to note that you do not have to wait to receive an evacuation order to evacuate. Remember that wildfires are dynamic, and can move really quickly. If you feel unsafe for any reason, leave the area immediately. Additionally remember that it can take time to evacuate children, pets, or livestock. If you are in this situation, it is highly recommended that you leave early, before a mandatory evacuation order is issued.





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## DEFENSIBLE SPACE

(Excerpts Courtesy of the Colorado State Forest Service) Two factors have emerged as the primary determinants of a home's ability to survive wildfire. These are the home's roofing material and the quality of the "defensible space" surrounding it.

### ZONE 1

is the area of maximum modification and treatment. It consists of an area of 5 feet around the structure in which all flammable vegetation is removed. These 15 feet are measured from the outside edge of the home's eaves and any attached structures, such as decks.

### ZONE 2

is an area of fuel reduction. It is a transitional area between Zones 1 and 3. The size of Zone 2 depends on the slope of the ground where the structure is built. Within this zone, the continuity and arrangement of vegetation should be modified. Remove stressed, diseased, dead, or dying trees and shrubs. Thin and prune the remaining larger trees and shrubs. Be sure to extend thinning along either side of your driveway all the way to your main access road. These actions help eliminate the continuous fuel surrounding a structure while enhancing safety and the aesthetics of the property.

### ZONE 3

is an area of 200 feet around the structure. It extends from the edge of your defensible space to your property boundaries.

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## ROOFING MATERIAL

Use fire-resistive materials (Class C or better rating), not wood, or shake shingles, to roof homes in or near forests and grasslands. When your roof needs significant repairs or replacement, do so with a fire-resistant roofing material. Larimer County currently requires new construction to have Class A roofs only. Check with the county building department for further details at [www.larimer.gov/building](http://www.larimer.gov/building). Defensible space is an area around a structure where fuels and vegetation are treated, cleared, or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire towards the structure. It also reduces the chance of a structure fire moving from the building to the surrounding forest. Defensible space provides room for firefighters to do their jobs. Your house is more likely to withstand a wildfire if grasses, brush, trees, and other common forest fuels are managed to reduce a fire's intensity. Creating an effective defensible space involves developing a series of management zones in which different treatment techniques are used. Develop defensible space around each building on your property.

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## DEFENSIBLE SPACE & FIREWISE ANNUAL CHECKLIST

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slash from the thinning is eliminated.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguishers are checked and in working condition.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roof and gutters are clear of debris.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Branches overhanging the roof and chimney are removed.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your escape routes, meeting points, and other details are known and understood by all family members.      | <input type="checkbox"/> There is an easily accessible tool storage area with rakes, hoes, axes, and shovels for use in case of fire.                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chimney screens are in place and in good condition.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Grass and weeds are mowed to a low height.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You have practiced family fire drills and your fire evacuation plan.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Road signs and your name and house number are posted and easily visible.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees and shrubs are properly thinned and pruned within the defensible space.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> The driveway is wide enough, and clearance of trees and branches is adequate for fire and emergency equipment.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An outdoor water supply is available, complete with hose and nozzle that can reach all parts of the house. | <input type="checkbox"/> Attic, roof, eaves, and foundation vents are screened and in good condition. Stilt foundations and decks are enclosed, screened, or walled up. |

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## WHAT IS PRESCRIBED BURNING?

Larimer County is a fire-dependent landscape. This means that fire is a central component of keeping this landscape thriving, beautiful and resilient. Years of limiting fires have decreased the important work that fire used to do in reducing and recycling the vegetation, both dead and alive, in our forests. This has left forests with too many trees competing for limited resources, creating overly dense and unhealthy forests that can fuel large, high-intensity wildfires like those experienced in 2020.

**Prescribed fire is an important forest restoration tool that leverages a natural process to help foster ecosystem health, decrease future fire risk, and prevent negative outcomes of fire.**

Prescribed fires are planned and implemented by well-trained fire managers with a strong understanding of fire and fire-adapted forests, utilizing on-the-ground experience and science. Prescribed fire is a way to use a natural process to ensure forest health and reduce high-severity wildfire hazards. **The choice is not between no fire and lots of fire, it is a choice between an unhealthy forest and a healthy one.** Prescribed fire is a chance to restore our forests, so they are more resilient to natural fire in the future.



You can be part of the solution! Take small actions to and around your home to decrease its exposure to wildfire, such as the tips around defensible space on page 28. You can also encourage your neighbors or homeowner associations to invest in similar activities.

**Find out more information regarding prescribed fire practices, forest and watershed health, opportunities to participate in workshops and tours and more at [www.nocofiredshed.org](http://www.nocofiredshed.org)**

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# 2020

## THE YEAR OF FIRES

Due to such factors as climate change, drought, pine-beetle infestations, and lack of fire on the landscape from fire suppression policy and resulting forest overgrowth, we continually see more intense fire conditions, with larger, more catastrophic wildfires occurring in the western U.S. each year. Prior to 2002, there was never a fire larger than 100,000 acres in Colorado. In the year 2020 alone, Colorado experienced three of its largest fires in history, all of which surpassed this number. These include the Cameron Peak Fire, the East Troublesome Fire in Grand and Larimer Counties, which burned 193,812 acres and resulted in the death of 2 people, and the Pine Gulch Fire in Mesa and Garfield counties which burned a total of 139,007 acres.

In addition to Colorado experiencing the three largest fires in its state history, 2020 was a challenging year with fire even here in Larimer County. At the same time of the Cameron Peak Fire, Larimer County was not only impacted by the global COVID-19 Pandemic, which caused challenges in sheltering and firefighting operations, but also experienced complex response challenges when multiple fires happened at the same time. There was the Lewstone Fire here in Larimer County that ignited close to Cameron Peak (though thankfully was extinguished in a few days), as well as large fires that threatened other parts of Larimer County such as the Mullen Fire in Wyoming to the North (which eventually reached over 176,876 acres) and the Calwood Fire in Boulder County to the South (which eventually reached about 10,113 acres), both of which influenced evacuations in Larimer County.



Photo Courtesy of Tracy Hines, Larimer County



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# FLASH FLOODS

are the number one cause of death of all thunderstorm hazards, and nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are vehicle related. Most flash floods are caused by slow-moving thunderstorms, a series of thunderstorms moving repeatedly over the same area, or heavy rainfall from tropical storm systems. There are some cases where flash floods also occur from dam failures, ice jams, or irrigation ditch breaches. Also, it takes much less rainfall to create flash flood conditions in the vicinity of an area burned by a forest fire.

Flash floods are dangerous, sudden rises in water levels along streams, rivers, and creeks above a predetermined flood level. Flash floods can also be rapid flows of high water moving into a normally dry area. Ongoing flooding can intensify to flash flooding in cases where intense rainfall leads to a rapid surge of rising flood waters. Depending on the intensity and duration of the rainfall, the landscape, and soil conditions, flash floods can develop within minutes or hours. They can also move with surprising speed, offering little or no warning of approach. Even without rivers going over their banks, heavy rain can trigger mud and rockslides. Some rain induced rockslides occur days after heavy rain has lubricated internal surfaces of rock formations. Such conditions create hazardous situations for driving in mountain canyons when rocks or debris are washed onto the road surface. These types of slides have closed both the Poudre and Big Thompson canyons for days at a time.

Many people underestimate the force and power of water. It takes 6 inches of fast-moving flood water to knock you off your feet. Flash floods can roll big boulders, tear out trees, destroy bridges and buildings, and even scour out new channels. Whether you are driving or walking, if you come to a flooded road, do not drive or walk through it!

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## FLASH FLOOD WATCH

**(6-24 hours in advance):** Life or property-threatening weather hazard possible. Conditions are favorable and floods are possible, but there is some uncertainty. Stay tuned for updates. If you are in/near the watch, you should review your emergency plan with your family and be prepared to take action if threatening weather approaches. Stay tuned to your local news or weather radio for current and expected weather conditions.

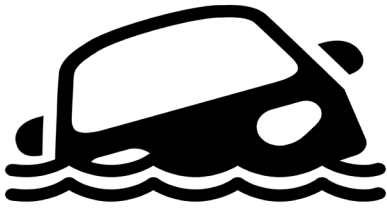
## FLASH FLOOD WARNING

**(5-60 minutes in advance):** Life or property-threatening hazard is occurring now or likely to occur in the near future. Move to higher ground or evacuate immediately.



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## BURN SCAR FLOODING



Following a catastrophic wildfire, as we saw in Larimer County with the Cameron Peak Fire and around the state of Colorado in 2020, the intense heat leaves behind conditions where vegetation is burned away completely, and soil is heavily charred. The soil develops an almost wax-like layer that repels water, and this condition can last for several years. As a result, when it rains, the water is no longer absorbed into the soil and instead behaves similarly to water running across a sidewalk. This potentially leads to flooding or mudflows, even when rain is light.

Flooding is a hazard that is already very likely in Larimer County, however, the burn scar from the Cameron Peak Wildfire is over 200,000 acres, which increases this likelihood of post-fire flooding occurring significantly in Larimer County. Additionally, areas that typically experience high waters, particularly in the spring run-off such as rivers, streams, or tributaries, and properties located below or downstream from the burn areas are at increased risk of flooding.

Larimer County OEM has compiled a comprehensive resource guide specifically for post-fire burn-scar related flooding. This can be accessed on our website at [www.larimer.gov/emergency](http://www.larimer.gov/emergency).

## JULY 20, 2021 | BLACK HOLLOW FLOOD

An example of burn-scar flooding is the Black Hollow Flood and Debris Flow that took place in the Poudre Canyon north of Fort Collins on July 20, 2021. Heavy rainfall resulted in a mudflow that sent a large amount of debris into the canyon, destroying at least five structures, damaging the roadway and taking the lives of 4 Larimer County community members.



Photo Courtesy of Larimer County OEM

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## EVACUATION

Like wildfires, flash flooding is a rapidly-onset hazard. This means it can happen quickly and with little time for warning. Therefore, it is important to understand evacuation orders. Because flash flood potential is heightened due to the Cameron Peak burn scar in Larimer County, a new evacuation order was issued in addition to Mandatory and Voluntary Evacuation orders. This new level is known as an **“Imminent Threat”** Evacuation order. If this order is issued, it means **LEAVE NOW** – there is no time to gather personal belongings, and you should reach higher ground by any means necessary.

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## FLASH FLOOD SAFETY

- Do not depend on official warnings reaching you before a problem arises. Keep alert to signs of heavy rain, both in your location and far upstream. Know where higher ground is and how to get there
- If you suspect that flooding is imminent, or if it is occurring, get to higher ground quickly. Get out of areas subject to flooding, such as low spots and canyons.
- Avoid flooded and rapid flow areas! Do not try to cross flowing streams.
- If your vehicle stalls, abandon your car and seek higher ground. Rapidly rising water may engulf your vehicle and sweep you/passengers downstream.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle near streams, especially during threatening weather conditions.
- Be very cautious at night during high water conditions. It is more difficult to recognize flood dangers and the darkness can disorient you from the safest route when trying to seek safety.



**Never drive through flooded roadways! It takes only 2 feet of running water to move a vehicle (even an SUV!). Even if you see parts of the road on the opposite side of a flooded area, you do not know the depth of the water or the condition of the road under the water.**

---

## RECREATING SAFELY

Larimer County is home to a lot of incredible outdoor recreation, especially along our beautiful river corridors. However, it is also important to do so safely, and be aware of flash flooding potential. To be flood-safe:

- Watch for flood precursors – cloud buildup, sounds of thunder in the distance, visible rain.
- Watch for sudden changes in water clarity in streams or rivers – rapid changes from clear to muddy means rain is heavy enough to cause run-off. Also watch for floating debris in the water.
- Watch for rapidly rising water levels or stronger currents – this means greater volume of water is heading your way.
- Listen for roaring water – this is especially possible to hear in a canyon as water approaches

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## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CAUGHT IN A FLASH FLOOD

Sometimes even heeding warnings and watching for signs isn't enough. If you unexpectedly find yourself caught in a flash flood, you need to act as quickly as possible.

Start by getting as high up as possible, even if it means leaving your gear behind. Remember that water levels can rise several feet in a matter of minutes. Never step in the water, no matter how shallow it looks. Water as shallow as just 6-inches can knock you off of your feet. Once you reach higher ground, stay there until the water recedes.

## FRONT RANGE FLOOD – SEPTEMBER 2013

**During mid-September 2013, portions of northern Colorado experienced one of the most extreme rainfall events in its history that led to destructive flooding and loss of life. The combination of a slow-moving weather system with a stalled cold front, deep moisture from the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, upslope flow along the Front Range, and already saturated soils resulted in several episodes of torrential rain and flash flooding across the area. The total rainfall amounts ranged from 4 inches to over 15 inches. Boulder was one of the hardest hit spots along the Front Range, with a storm total of 17.15 inches! There were a total of 8 fatalities associated with this widespread flood event.**



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## 1976 BIG THOMPSON FLOOD



**Photo Courtesy of Fort Collins Museum  
of Discovery Archive  
Photo #H12840**

The Big Thompson Canyon was also impacted by the 2013 Larimer County Floods, once again experiencing damages to homes, bridges, and roadways.

4 Decades ago, Larimer County experienced one of the deadliest flash floods in Colorado's history. The flood, which occurred as a result of 12 inches of rainfall in just a matter of a few hours, sent a wall of water and debris through the Big Thompson Canyon on July 31, 1976. This tragic event took the lives of 144 people (including the lives of 2 police officers who were helping residents evacuate), and caused over \$35 million in damages to homes, vehicles, roads, and other infrastructure.



**Photo Courtesy of Fort Collins Museum  
of Discovery Archive  
Photo #H7564u**

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# WINTER STORMS

are most commonly accompanied by snow, and across Larimer County, snow is most common between November and April, but we have seen snow fall as early as September and as late as June. Typically, March and April are Colorado's snowiest months. The Colorado winter snow is an important resource to many businesses within the state, including agriculture and tourism, as well as for filling up our reservoirs. The snowpack that builds from each winter's snow is a major source of freshwater for Front Range communities. However, winter storms can bring us heavy snow, freezing rain or sleet, ice, bitterly cold temperatures and wind, low visibilities, and slick roads. These weather conditions lead to dangerous travel situations, avalanches, and low wind chill temperatures. If you must travel, stay informed about the current weather, road conditions, and latest weather forecasts before departing.

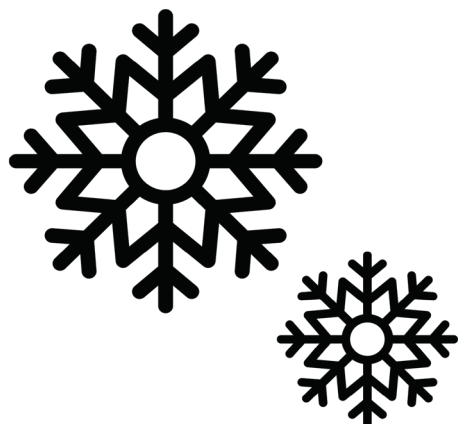
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**Stay indoors during winter storms and extreme cold. If you must go outside, avoid overexertion as cold weather puts an extra strain on the heart. Pushing yourself to shovel snow or push your car may increase your risk of heart attack or stroke.**

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## WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY

A combination of winter weather is expected (snow, freezing rain, sleet, etc.) that presents a hazard, but does not meet warning criteria.



## WINTER STORM WATCH

There is a potential for heavy snow or significant ice accumulations.

**If you are in/near the warning you should:** review your emergency plan with your family and be prepared to take action if threatening weather approaches. Stay tuned to your local news or weather radio for current and expected weather conditions.

## WINTER STORM WARNING

a winter storm is producing or is forecasting to produce heavy snow and/or significant accumulations.

**If you are in/near the warning, you should:** remain indoors if possible and continue to monitor the weather conditions.



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# WINTER STORMS & EXTREME COLD

Prior to the winter season, it is important to ensure that you and your vehicle are in good condition and is properly serviced. Additionally, it is important to ensure your vehicle is equipped with the following:



- A full tank of gas
- Good snow tires and chains
- Tool kit and tow rope
- Sand or cat litter for traction
- Shovel
- Windshield scraper and brush
- Jumper cables and flares
- First aid kit
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Blankets and/or sleeping bags
- Extra clothing
- Candles
- Water-proof matches
- High calorie packaged food
- Empty can to melt snow for drinking
- NOAA weather radio

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## INDOOR WINTER SAFETY

Winter weather can keep you indoors, and lead to power outages because of heavy snow and ice bringing down power lines. Having an emergency preparedness kit at home in the case of a winter storm will be handy, especially if the power goes out in your home.

- If your furnace does not work, only use alternative heat sources such as kerosene heaters, large camp stoves, or camp grills with proper ventilation. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a deadly killer.
- Dress in layers of warm, lightweight clothing.
- If you have elderly neighbors or know people with disabilities that may be at risk, check on them regularly.
- Close off any unoccupied rooms and stuff towels under the doors to prevent drafts into the room.

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## **LARIMER COUNTY SNOWSTORM**

### **MARCH 17-20, 2003**

On March 17, 2003, a slow-moving weather system from the Pacific Ocean moved into the Four Corners region of the U.S. Associated with this storm system were strong winds from the east that resulted in strong upslope flow across the Front Range. Also, there was a plume of moist air coming into Colorado from the Gulf of Mexico. A slow-moving system, moisture, and upslope are the ingredients needed to produce a major snowstorm in Colorado. From this particular snowstorm, about 3 feet of heavy, wet snow fell in Denver, and up to 7 feet of snow fell across the foothills. The winter snowstorm caused an estimated \$93 million in property damage alone, making it the costliest snowstorm in Colorado history. Across Larimer County, nearly 30 inches of heavy snow fell over a three-day period. This damaged many homes and businesses, and closed CSU and other local area schools for days.

### **OUTDOOR WINTER SAFETY**

- If you get stranded with your vehicle during a winter storm, stay in your vehicle. Run the motor for 10 minutes every hour to keep warm, but keep the windows open a little to prevent the buildup of carbon dioxide. Be sure the tailpipe is clear of snow while the engine is on.
- To stay hydrated, melt the snow if you can before drinking it to avoid lowering your body temperature.
- Keep the car visible to rescuers by tying brightly colored cloths to the side view mirrors/door handles/antennas.
- Turn on the interior light at night when the engine is on.
- Be sure to exercise from time to time by vigorously moving your arms, legs, fingers, and toes to keep your blood circulating and increase body warmth.
- If you are caught outside in a winter storm, the first thing to do is to find shelter and try to stay dry. If you have to build a simple wind break, do so quickly.
- Cover all exposed parts of your body, especially your head. A lot of heat can escape from an uncovered head!
- Build a fire to attract attention and to provide heat. Place rocks around the rim to absorb and reflect heat.
- If you are traveling alone, make sure you tell someone of your travel route and stick to it.
- Have a fully charged cell phone (with a charger or extra batteries) ready to go. Travel by daylight, use major highways, and keep your radio turned on for the latest weather and travel reports. If you are driving at night, be aware that roads may be covered in a thin layer of ice called black ice. Black ice can cause you to rapidly lose control of your vehicle and is most common during the nighttime. Please drive with caution and reduce your speed.



A stylized, dark green flame graphic is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the main title. The flame has several pointed, upward-curving shapes, suggesting fire. The background of the entire page is a dark green color with a subtle, diagonal, textured pattern.

# HUMAN-RELATED HAZARDS

Home Fires

Criminal Activity and Terrorism

HAZMAT

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# LARIMER COUNTY PRIMARY HUMAN-CAUSED HAZARDS

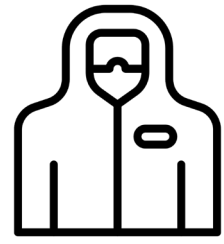
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HOUSE FIRE



CRIMINAL ACTIVITY &  
TERRORISM



HAZMAT

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## NOT ALL HAZARDS ARE NATURAL

Some of the hazards we face are a result of human activity. Much like natural hazards, we don't always have a lot of control over when these things happen, nor are they necessarily predictable, but we can take steps to help lessen the impact of these types of situations. For example, we can build better awareness on how to avoid a fire starting in our kitchen, or we can take action to help detour criminals from targeting you or your home.

On the following pages is information and tips on how to be better prepared for and to navigate disasters that are caused by human activity including such things as home fires, criminal activity and terrorism, and hazardous materials incidents.



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# HOME FIRE

## WHEN A FIRE OCCURS

- Never open doors which are hot to the touch. Feel the knob and the top of the door. If hot, use a secondary escape route.
- Do not waste time trying to save property! It is not worth your life. Leave immediately and call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's house.
- Always use the stairs - never the elevators unless directed by the fire department.
- If you encounter smoke, try another escape route.
- If you must escape through smoke, crawl low on your hands and knees keeping your head no more than two feet above the floor where the air is cleanest. Try to keep your mouth covered. Smoke contains toxic gases which can disorient and overcome you very rapidly.
- As with home fires, never re-enter a burning building.
- Take the safest pre-planned escape route.
- Once out, stay out! Never enter a burning building. It just might be the last thing you ever do.

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## SOME FACTS ABOUT HOME FIRES



- Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Unattended cooking was by far the leading contributing factor in these fires.
- Heating equipment fires are the second leading cause of home fires and accounted for 18% of all reported home fires in 2009. Failure to clean heating equipment, principally creosote from solid fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys, was the leading contributing factor of these fires.
- Smoking-material fires are the number one cause of fatal home fires. The majority of fatal home fires take place at night when people are sleeping. Nearly one-half of fatalities related to smoking-material fires are age 65 or older.

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## HOME SAFETY TIPS

- Have an escape plan and practice it. Sit down with your family and talk about what you should do in case of a fire. Make sure you have a set meeting place outside the home.
- Know two ways out. Discuss and diagram two ways out from every room, especially the bedrooms.
- Place your smoke detectors smartly. Have a working smoke detector outside each bedroom. If you can afford more, place them in your bedrooms as well.
- Check your wiring. Have a professional electrician check your house for faulty wiring, especially if you own an older home.
- Check your dryer hose. Lint can cause a fire. Clean the hose and dryer at least annually, especially behind the dryer.
- Watch out for portable heaters. Keep blankets, clothing, curtains, and anything that could get hot and catch fire away from heaters.

**Make sure that responding emergency vehicles can easily identify your address from the road, day or night.**

## FIRE SAFETY AT YOUR WORKPLACE

- Read your building's evacuation plan. If there isn't one, ask why not.
- Count the doors or desks between your work area and the nearest exits. You may need to navigate with little or no light.
- Know at least two ways out of your work area and participate in regular fire drills. Know where the fire alarms and extinguishers are located and make sure you and your coworkers know how to use them.
- Never ignore a fire alarm. Fire can move so rapidly that every moment may count toward saving your life.
- Have an assigned outside meeting place where employees can meet and be accounted for.
- If you have a physical disability, make sure your employer includes your special needs in office evacuation plans.



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# CRIMINAL ACTIVITY



The Larimer County Sheriff's Office has resources and information to aid in crime prevention through the Crime Prevention Unit. This includes presentations and educational materials to help protect yourself, family, and belongings from becoming a crime statistic in the following areas:

- Neighborhood Watch
- Current SCAMS & how to identify, report, and prevent becoming a victim of a scam
- ID theft
- Personal safety, home safety, realtor safety, senior safety, and child safety

Visit [www.larimer.gov/sheriff](http://www.larimer.gov/sheriff) for more information & resources

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## PROTECTION AGAINST CRIMINAL ACTIVITY: IN THE CAR

- Always lock the car doors after entering or leaving your vehicle.
- Check the inside of your car for would-be attackers before getting behind the wheel.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Have your car keys in hand, ready to open and enter the car.
- If you think you are being followed, drive to a well-lit public place.
- If your car breaks down, open the hood, and attach a white cloth to the car antenna. If someone stops to help, stay in your locked car, and ask him/her to call the local law enforcement agency or garage.
- Don't stop to aid broken down motorists. Phone in a request for help.
- When being driven home, ask the driver to wait until you are inside.

**If you have doubts about the legitimacy of a traffic stop by an unmarked law enforcement vehicle, drive slowly, with emergency flashers on, to a well-lit, public place. If you have a cell phone, call 9-1-1, tell the dispatcher your location and ask him/her to find out if it is a legitimate stop. If not, help will be on the way.**

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## PROTECTION AGAINST CRIMINAL ACTIVITY: IN THE HOME

You cannot make a residence absolutely burglar-proof, but you can make entry extremely difficult. Here are some tips:

- Lock your doors during the day, even if you are home or only leave for a few minutes.
  - Never open the door automatically after a knock. Use a peephole or ask for identification.
  - If a stranger asks to use the phone, do not permit entry. Offer to call for emergency assistance.
  - If a window or door has been forced or broken while you were gone, **DO NOT ENTER** or call out! Use a neighbor's phone to immediately call 9-1-1 and wait until help arrives.
  - Always close and lock garage doors before you drive away.
  - When you return home, do not leave your house key in your door, even for a minute, after you open it.
  - Never put your keys and purse down just inside the open door, while carrying packages inside.
  - Make sure every external door has a sturdy, well installed deadbolt lock with a minimum of a 1 1/2-inch bolt.
  - Doors should be of good quality with the exterior doors being made of metal or solid 1 3/4-inch hardwood.
  - Make sure windows are of good quality and have strong locks. Don't forget about basement windows.
  - Keys shouldn't be hidden in mailboxes, planters or under doormats. Give an extra key to a neighbor you trust.
  - When moving to a new house or apartment, have the locks changed. Install a peephole. Door chains are NOT security devices. Chains won't keep an intruder out.
  - Trim shrubbery that hides doors or windows. Cut tree limbs that could help an intruder climb into windows.
  - Never leave ladders or other tools outside.
  - Ensure all outside lights are on after dark, including in the front and back. Timers that turn on lights automatically is ideal.
  - Clearly display your house number so police and emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.
  - If you hear a noise that sounds like someone breaking in or moving around, quietly call 9- 1-1 and wait until they arrive. If you and your family can leave safely, do so. Otherwise, lock everyone in a room. Don't be a hero.
  - Don't leave a "We're not at home" message on your answering machine or let newspapers accumulate on your driveway or porch.
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## PROTECTION AGAINST CRIMINAL ACTIVITY: IN THE OFFICE

- If you are on the elevator with a stranger, stand near the control panel. If attacked, press the alarm and as many of the control buttons as possible.
- Be alert to pickpockets on crowded elevators.
- If you work along or outside of normal business hours, keep the office door locked.
- Be aware of escape routes for emergencies and post emergency numbers near telephones.
- Never leave your purse or billfold in plain view or in the pockets of a jacket by the door.
- Mark personal property with identification.
- Don't leave cash or other valuables at the office.



### RUN

Evacuate the area. Leave your belongings behind. Help others if possible. Call 911 when you are safe.



### HIDE

Find a secure, safe space, be quiet, silence your phone, turn off the lights and lock/blockade the door. Stay calm.



### FIGHT

This is a last resort. Attempt to incapacitate the attacker. Act with aggression, improvise weapons. Commit to your actions

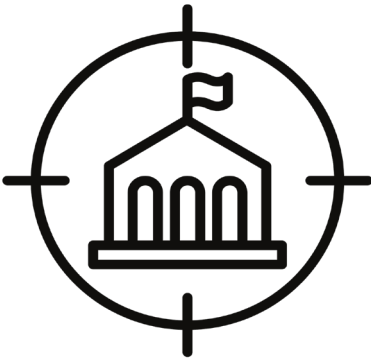
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## PROTECTION AGAINST CRIMINAL ACTIVITY: ON THE STREET

- Always be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- Make eye contact with people when walking.
- Whenever possible, travel with a friend.
- Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible.
- Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys where someone might be hiding.
- If you carry a purse, your personal safety might depend on NOT clinging to it.
- Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street - continue walking.

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# TERRORISM



**International Terrorism:** Violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored).

**Domestic Terrorism:** Violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.

**If you see something, say something. Many times, a person's family or friends may be the first to notice a concerning change in behavior that may indicate a person is mobilizing to incite violence.**

## PROTECT YOURSELF BOTH ONLINE & IN-PERSON

- Stay aware of your surroundings – terrorism often happens with little or no warning.
- Refrain from oversharing personal information and take precautions while traveling.
- Do not accept packages from strangers, and do not leave luggage unattended.
- Know where emergency exits are located.

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## TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- **Call 911** in an immediate, life-threatening situation.
- **The National SAR Initiative (NSI):** The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative is a joint collaborative effort by the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and law enforcement partners.
- Use the “**Contact Us**” Section of the FBI to find detailed contact information for the FBI's local and international office, and to submit a tip online: [www.fbi.gov/contact-us](http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us).



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# HAZARDOUS MATERIAL & EMERGENCIES

Materials that are considered hazardous include:

- Explosives
- Flammable and Combustible
- Poisons
- Radioactive Materials

An emergency incident as a result of hazardous materials, often referred to as a “HAZMAT” incident, can happen when chemicals are used unsafely or released in harmful amounts during production, storage, transportation, use or disposal. Larimer OEM facilitates the Larimer Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), which is responsible for collecting information about hazardous materials in our community as well as emergency planning.

Visit [www.larimer.gov/emergency/prepare/lepc](http://www.larimer.gov/emergency/prepare/lepc) for more information about the Larimer LEPC

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## TIPS FOR A HAZMAT SITUATION

- Build an emergency supply kit with the addition of plastic sheeting and duct tape.
  - Know how to operate your home’s ventilation system.
  - Identify an above-ground shelter room with as few openings as possible in the event you are directed to shelter in place.
  - If asked to evacuate, do so immediately – if you have time, minimize contamination in the house by closing all windows, shutting all vents, and turning off attic fans.
  - If asked to stay indoors, make sure pets are inside, turn off ventilation systems and air conditioners and remain in pre-selected room. Seal gaps under and around doorways, windows, air conditioning units, exhaust fans, and stove and dryer units.
  - If you are caught outside, stay uphill and upwind, and in general try to go at least a half a mile from the danger area.
  - Do not walk into or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists, or condensed solid chemical deposits. If possible, cover mouth with cloth or mask to avoid inhaling gases, fumes, and smoke.
  - If in a vehicle, stop and seek shelter in a permanent building. If you must remain in your car, keep windows and vents closed and shut off air conditioner and heater.
  - Stay aware of information and follow directions from local emergency authorities.
-

# LARIMER EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is a federally mandated entity composed of state and local officials, business representatives and members of the public.



The Larimer County LEPC works with the community to identify industrial hazardous materials and keep the community informed of the potential risk.

All companies that have certain types and quantities of hazardous chemicals must report annually to the LEPC.

If the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

requires your company to keep a Safety Data Sheet (SDS, formerly Material Safety Data Sheet, or MSDS) on file for any chemicals stored or used in the workplace, and the chemical(s) is stored in quantities equal to or greater than the Threshold Planning Quantity (TPQ) for that chemical, then you must report it.

**The public is encouraged to participate in the process and get involved with the Larimer LEPC. For questions and more information, please visit**

**[www.larimer.gov/emergency/prepare/lepc](http://www.larimer.gov/emergency/prepare/lepc)**







# PREPARE

Tips and Tricks for you and your family  
Pets and Livestock  
Community Resilience  
Disaster Supply Kit

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# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

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Natural and human-caused emergencies, such as floods and acts of terrorism, can present a real challenge to individuals and families. These challenges can be even more overwhelming for the elderly, people with disabilities, and other populations that may have access and/or functional needs. Preparing an emergency plan in advance can help protect yourself and your family when disaster strikes. Creating a personal support network and completing a personal assessment are the first steps in your preparedness planning. You will also need to get informed of the services in your community and make a plan that considers your needs. It is important to discuss these items with your family, friends, and personal care attendants.

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## STEPS TOWARD PREPAREDNESS



### **STEP ONE: CREATE A PERSONAL SUPPORT NETWORK**

**These members can help you identify and get the resources you need to cope with disasters effectively:**

- Organize a network that includes your home, school, work, and other places that you spend much time in.
- The members of your network are not limited to family. They can be friends, neighbors, coworkers, or other individuals that you trust and who know your capabilities and needs.
- Have at least 3 people in your network for each place you spend much of your time in.



### **STEP TWO: COMPLETE A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT**

**What will you be able to do for yourself? What help may you need before, during, and after a disaster? These are the questions you need to answer in your personal assessment:**

- Make a list of your personal needs and the resources to meet those needs in a disaster environment. Think about these items, your capabilities, and the assistance you will need:
  - Calling for help
  - Transportation
  - Running errands
  - Service animals and pets
  - Adaptive feeding utensils
  - Personal care and equipment
  - Building evacuations and exits
  - Mobility aids & ramp access
  - Equipment that depends on electricity



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# STEPS TOWARD PREPAREDNESS (CONT'D)



## **STEP THREE: GET INFORMED**

**Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross to get the information you will need to create a plan. Be sure to consider the following questions:**

- What hazards threaten your community, and what are your risks from those hazards?
- What response plans, evacuation plans, and emergency shelters exist in your community?
- How will local authorities provide you information before, during, and after a disaster?
- Are there special assistance programs available in the event of an emergency in your community?



## **STEP FOUR: MAKE A PLAN**

**It is important for you to create a back-up because a disaster can disrupt your primary emergency plan.**

- Share the information you gathered about community hazards and emergency plans with your family, personal care attendants, and building manager.
- Ask an out-of-town friend or relative to be your contact, and make sure your family knows their contact information. After a disaster, have your family members call this person and tell them where they are. It is easier to make a long-distance call than a local call from a disaster area where phone lines are busy.
- Designate a location outside your home where all family members/personal care attendants can meet in case of an emergency. Choose a location outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home.
- Complete a communication plan and share it with your family members. Check out [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) for handy forms to use. Make sure everyone in the family knows the best escape routes out of your home and where the safe places are in your home for each type of disaster.
- If you or someone in your home uses a wheelchair, determine what the alternative shelters will be and how you will get there. For evacuations, make sure escape routes are wheelchair accessible.
- Practice your emergency drills and be sure to include all family and personal care attendants in the drill.
- Prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians, and pet-friendly hotels that could shelter your pets in an emergency.

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# **PETS & LIVESTOCK**

## **PLAN FOR YOUR FURRY FAMILY MEMBERS**



If you own pets, service animals or livestock, it is very important to include them in your emergency preparedness. Our pets and animals are members of the family, and they depend on us for their safety and wellbeing. If an emergency were to happen, it is important for you and your family, including your pets and animals, to be prepared. There are many things to consider before, during, and after an emergency to keep your animals safe.

**Most American Red Cross shelters cannot accept pets during an evacuation because of health & safety concerns – though they try their best to co-locate human & animal shelters. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are allowed in shelters.**

## **DISASTER ANIMAL SUPPORT CONTACTS**

### **LARIMER HUMANE SOCIETY**

Small, Domestic Animals + Poultry & Goats

[www.larimerhumane.org](http://www.larimerhumane.org)

(970) 226.3647

### **LARIMER SHERIFF'S POSSE**

Large Animals and/or Livestock (i.e., horses & cows)

[www.larimercountysheriffsposse.org](http://www.larimercountysheriffsposse.org)

(970) 498.5100

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## **PET-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you find that you are having trouble finding “pet-friendly” accommodations, check out the following websites to assist you with your search!

- [www.gopetfriendly.com](http://www.gopetfriendly.com)
- [www.pettravelcenter.com](http://www.pettravelcenter.com)



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## **KNOW A SAFE PLACE TO TAKE YOUR PETS IN AN EMERGENCY**

- Find out what places in your area can take care of your pets if you were to be evacuated.
- Contact your local animal shelter, humane society, veterinarian, or emergency management office to get information on caring for pets during an emergency.
- Contact hotels/motels outside of your area to check their policies on accepting pets and their restrictions on the number, size, and species. If they have a “no pet” policy, ask if it can be waived in an emergency situation.
- If you and your pets plan to use a hotel as your evacuation location during an emergency, make sure you call ahead for reservations as soon as you know that you may need to evacuate.
- Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the emergency area if they would be willing to watch your pets if you were to have to evacuate your home.
- After you have contacted hotels, motels, shelters, your veterinarian, and the other suggested places, make a list of all the “pet friendly” facilities, including their 24-hour phone numbers.
- After an emergency, some people may not be able to return to their homes right away. Being out of your home for an extended period of time may mean that you need to board your pet. You should find out where the boarding facilities are in your area and be sure to research some outside your local area as well in case the local facilities are closed due to the emergency or other reasons.
- When animals become lost during a disaster, they often end up at a local shelter. Keep handy the locations and phone numbers of the shelters in your area.

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## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PRECAUTIONS FOR PETS/LIVESTOCK**

- Emergencies can happen with very little warning, which is why it is important that you and your pets and livestock are prepared in case of an emergency.
- Include your pets in your family evacuation drills in the hopes that it will help them become comfortable with entering and traveling in their carriers calmly
- You can train your pet to become comfortable with their carrier by placing their favorite toy or blanket inside the carrier. Make sure that you have a pet carrier that allows your pet to stand up and turn around inside.
- Make sure that your pets are wearing collars that have securely fastened and up-to-date identification tags on them. Other forms of identification to consider using are a dog license or a microchip.
- Your livestock should also have a few different forms of identification. Consider having your livestock microchipped or freeze-marked now.

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## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PRECAUTIONS FOR PETS/LIVESTOCK (CONT'D)

→ If an emergency happens and you feel your animals do not have proper forms of identification, try writing your name and phone number on their hooves. Use a livestock crayon to write your name, phone number and address on them. Braiding into the horse's mane an ID tag with your name, address, and phone number written on it is one more method. Talk to your veterinarian about other ways to have your animals marked for identification purposes.

→ Have an evacuation plan for your animals, which should include a list of resources such as trucks, trailers, pasture and/or feed. The plan should also list a person or persons (along with their phone numbers) who will be able to unlock gates and doors and make it easy for emergency workers to reach your animals.

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### ASSEMBLE A PET EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

Keep your pet's essential supplies in sturdy containers that can be easily accessed and carried (e.g., a duffle bag). You should give this kit to whoever you are leaving your pets with during the evacuation. Your pet emergency preparedness kit should include:

- Pet first aid kit
- Pet carriers
- Food, water, and treats for at least three days
- Dishes, bowls, a spoon
- Large capacity self-feeder and water dispenser
- Cat litter, pan, poop scooper
- Paper towels, plastic trash bags and bottle of spray disinfectant
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- List of animal emergency contacts (animal control, animal shelter, veterinarians)
- Manual can opener
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems
- Pet bed & favorite toys
- Photos of you with your pet (in case your pet gets lost)
- Current sticker on a house window with pet list for fire/ emergency/ rescue personnel
- Leashes or harnesses, and a collar with tags and/or microchip information
- Grooming supplies
- Cloth or thermal blanket
- Registration and/or adoption papers, and veterinary records (including a note that allows rescuers to give your pet medical treatment if needed)
- Medications and medical records with copies of up-to-date vaccination records



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## ASSEMBLE A LIVESTOCK EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

Here is a list of things you should have available for your livestock and/or have in their emergency kits:



- Halters and lead straps/ropes
- Medical records and a list of necessary medicines
- At least three days of hay and/or other feed, water
- Livestock first aid kit
- Hoof care and grooming tools
- Medications
- Water and feed buckets
- Registration papers and brand inspection cards
- Horse blanket
- Tack (in order to exercise your horse)
- Fly spray
- List of animal emergency contacts (animal control, animal shelter, veterinarians)
- Muck bucket, rake, and shovel

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## PROTECT YOUR PET DURING AN EMERGENCY

You should **NEVER** leave your pets behind if you evacuate, but if you have absolutely no alternative but to leave your pets at home during an evacuation, there are some things you should know in order to prepare them and keep them safe. Remember, leaving your pet at home can place your animal in great danger!

- Animals have instincts about severe weather changes and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. During these changes, to prevent your pets from running away you should bring them inside immediately.
- Leave a two- or three-day supply of dry food in a sturdy container that the pet cannot overturn. Water should also be left in a sturdy, no spill container.
- If possible, open a faucet slightly and let water drip into a big container. Large dogs may be able to obtain water from a partially filled bathtub.
- If your dog wears a chain link collar, have a leather or nylon collar available for when you must leave your dog alone for several days. Chain link collars can get caught on items around the house which can be dangerous and even deadly for your dog.



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## THE “BUDDY PLAN”

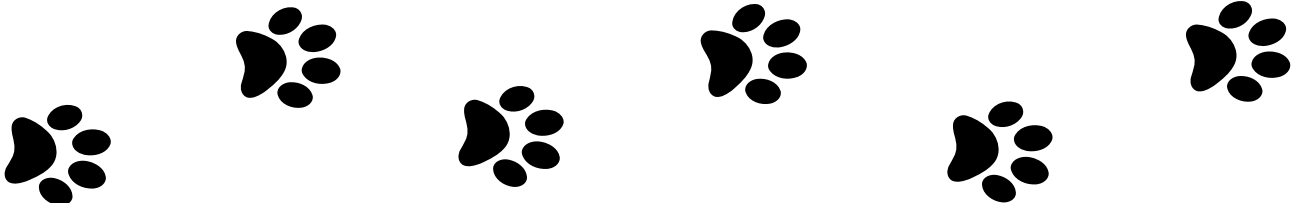
- Create a “buddy plan” with nearby relatives, friends, or neighbors to help you with evacuating your animals if you are not home when the evacuation order is given.
- Include written permission for transport and care of your animals, and access to animal ID information and your animal emergency kit.
- If animals are stranded at your home during an emergency, contact local emergency management, law enforcement, or a community animal agency to arrange for evacuation assistance at your house.
- You should post somewhere in your barn area the number and types of animals you own, the location of your emergency kit, and your emergency contact information. This is important to do so that if someone has to evacuate your livestock, they will know how to help your animals and how to contact you.

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## HELP EMERGENCY WORKERS HELP YOUR PETS

If you have no alternative but to leave your pets at your home during an emergency evacuation, there are several things you should do to help emergency workers, rescuers, and your pets:

- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) recommends that if you have to evacuate without taking your pets with you, leave a sign or rescue sticker high up on either a window or a glass door, somewhere that rescuers can easily see it.
- On this sign you should have written the number and type of pets that are inside your home.
- If your pets are located in one specific area of the house, you should have that location written on the sign as well.
- Remember to leave plenty of food and water with feeding instructions for the rescue workers.
- Leave the rescuers a note with a phone number where you can be reached, and the name and phone number of your veterinarian.
- If you evacuate with your pets, it is still a good idea to make a sign or write on the rescue sticker that everyone is out of the house including pets. By doing this rescue workers won't waste time looking for anyone in your house.



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## HELPING PETS RECOVER AFTER AN EMERGENCY

Going through an emergency can be a very traumatic event for pets. Their behavior may change drastically after an emergency. Even normally quiet and friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. You can help keep your pets safe after an emergency and return them to a life of normalcy.

- In the first few weeks after an emergency, leash your pets when they go outside and always maintain close contact with them.
  - It is important to watch your animals closely and keep them under your direct control because fences and gates may have been damaged or destroyed.
  - Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered, and your pet may become confused and lost. Pets may become disoriented, particularly if an emergency has affected scent markers that normally allow them to find their home.
  - It may be a while before your pets are okay with being separated from you or being left home alone so take your pets with you when you can.
  - When you let your pet go or play outside, be aware of other hazards such as downed power lines. Be aware of hazards at nose, paw, or hoof level, particularly debris, spilled chemicals, and fertilizers and other substances that might not seem to be dangerous to humans.
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# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

## COMMUNITY HUBS



In today's world, despite things like social media and technology, we tend to be rather isolated from one another. However, research has shown that communities that are well-connected are those that tend to recover from adversity much more quickly.

Emergency planning does not have to stop with you and your household! We encourage you to consider creative ways to get to know your neighbors, and to invite them into emergency planning. Here are some ideas to get started!

- Identify a neighbor that has something in common with you. Do you both have pets? Perhaps you can work together on a plan to take care of one another's animals if the other one is unable to make it home during an evacuation or other relevant situation.
- Organize a community block party for a fun way to get to know your neighbors. Perhaps partner with a disaster volunteer organization like the American Red Cross to conduct an emergency training opportunity during the party to learn life-safety skills!
- Organize an evacuation drill scavenger hunt! This is a fun way to learn evacuation routes but make it a fun challenge along the way!

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## CREATING A COMMUNITY HUB

Another consideration for a way to engage neighbors around emergency planning and connection is to designate a neighborhood or community hub. This involves identifying a location where community members are able to gather, share ideas, receive training, and access information or resources before, during, and after disaster.

Creating a community hub also opens up opportunities such as the ability to partner with local organizations on community-led initiatives.

Community hubs can be tailored to your individual community or neighborhood needs. They can even be as complex as having a local volunteer team that helps organize it or to coordinate activities for neighbors during times of adversity.

The Larimer Connects Program helps support development of community hubs, among many other neighborhood connection-building initiatives. To find out more information, visit [www.larimer.gov/larimer-connects](http://www.larimer.gov/larimer-connects).



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# VOAD & COMMUNITY RESPONSE

## GET INVOLVED: VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER



**Larimer County**  
Voluntary Organizations  
Active in Disaster

COOPERATION | COMMUNICATION | COORDINATION | COLLABORATION

During times of disaster, some of the most important people that help in the response are volunteers. These can be members of the community that has been impacted, or people who show up to help from all over the world. That is the beautiful thing about human nature – that when bad things happen, we all stand up to help!

However, “spontaneous volunteers” or volunteers who show up that are not connected to an organization can make response and recovery complicated. People who are well-intentioned may end up unknowingly placing themselves in harm’s way, may cause duplication of efforts, or other types of disruptions. The best way you can help as a disaster volunteer is to become affiliated with a VOAD organization. VOAD stands for Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

VOAD organizations help coordinate disaster volunteers to ensure success. This can include important trainings, helping assign tasks or activities that best meet your skill set or interests, and ensure your safety. VOAD organizations exist in many different capacities, including such areas as animal support, disabilities support, cultural support, veterans support, medical support, and more! We are fortunate to have a well-established and connected VOAD chapter here in Larimer County. For more information, please **visit: [www.larimervoad.org](http://www.larimervoad.org)**



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## GET INVOLVED: VOLUNTEER RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONS

Another way to get involved in disaster, is to participate in the emergency response itself. A unit of the Sheriff's Office, Emergency Services is responsible for the management of wildland fire, search and rescue, water rescue, and hazardous materials incidents in Larimer County. Emergency Services coordinates with many organizations that are largely made up of volunteers and are looking for folks willing to join the teams!

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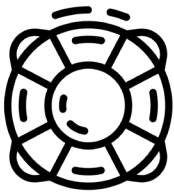
### LARIMER COUNTY SEARCH & RESCUE



An independent, non-profit corporation, LCSAR's mission is to find the lost, rescue the stranded and injured, recover the deceased, and educate the public on wilderness and mountain safety.

**For more information:** [www.larimercountysar.org](http://www.larimercountysar.org)

### LARIMER COUNTY DIVE RESCUE TEAM



This team's primary mission is the rescue and/or recovery of people and property involved in water-related incidents. The Dive Rescue Team trains year-round using classrooms, pool sessions, open water dive, and swift water exercises.

**For more information:** [www.lcdrt.org](http://www.lcdrt.org)

### LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S POSSE



The Sheriff's Posse Reserve Program is a volunteer unit of the Operation Services Division of the LCSO. It is dedicated to protecting lives and property of our community by providing professional law enforcement services in support of the LCSO, rooted in the culture and traditions of the western lifestyle.

**For more information:** [www.larimercountysheriffsposse.org](http://www.larimercountysheriffsposse.org)

### VOLUNTEER FIRE PROTECTION



In many rural parts of Larimer County, fire protection services are comprised largely of volunteers! This is an excellent way to not only learn incredible skills but provides an opportunity to help your neighbors when they need you most!

See page 76 for more information on your local fire protection agency.

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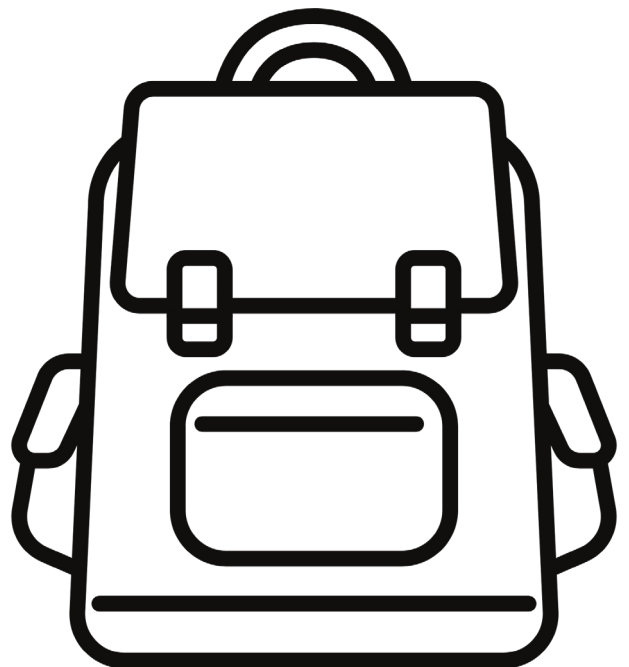
# PREPARING A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT

What is a 3-day (72 hour) Disaster Supply Kit? A 3-day disaster supply kit should contain items to provide for the basic needs of each member of the family in the event of an emergency. Having a disaster supply kit ready to take with you at a moment's notice ensures that you will have necessary supplies no matter how fast you may need to evacuate. Pack supplies in duffel bags or backpacks and keep them in a designated place. Your kit will also come in handy if you must take shelter in your home. The lists on the following pages will help ensure that your disaster supply kit includes all the essentials.

Each individual should customize the kit to meet his or her personal needs, but keep in mind that this reserve should be an all-hazards kit. You must ask yourself, "What are the potential hazards in my community?"

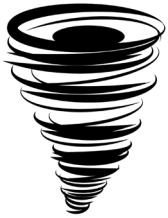
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**In rural areas of Larimer County, a 72- hour kit may not be sufficient to meet the needs of the disaster. Consider the needs for the area you live in and design a kit that meets those specific needs. This could include a shelter-in-place kit that can sustain the family for several weeks, or a go kit that will sustain the family for a short term until permanent arrangements can be made.**



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## 72 HOUR DISASTER SUPPLY KIT CHECKLIST



### EMERGENCY NEEDS

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADDRESS<br>& PHONE<br>NUMBERS  | <input type="checkbox"/> FLASHLIGHTS                           | <input type="checkbox"/> UTILITY KNIFE                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BASIC TOOLS                    | <input type="checkbox"/> FIRST AID KIT                         | <input type="checkbox"/> WATERPROOF<br>MATCHES                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BATTERY-<br>POWERED<br>RADIO   | <input type="checkbox"/> INSURANCE<br>COMPANY<br>INFORMATION   | <input type="checkbox"/> WATER<br>PURIFICATION<br>TABLETS              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY<br>CANDLES           | <input type="checkbox"/> MANUAL CAN<br>OPENERS                 | <input type="checkbox"/> WATER<br>STORAGE<br>(1 GAL/PER<br>PERSON/DAY) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL<br>MEDICATIONS       | <input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAL<br>INSURANCE &<br>INFORMATION | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK GLOVES                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXTRA<br>BATTERIES             | <input type="checkbox"/> NON-PERISHABLE<br>FOODS               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXTRA<br>CLOTHING/<br>RAINGEAR | <input type="checkbox"/> PERSONAL I.D.                         |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> SLEEPING BAGS<br>& BLANKETS           |  |

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Remember to think about any special items for infants, aging family members, or family members with disabilities.

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### OTHER EMERGENCY NEEDS

- ☐ MONEY (CASH)
- ☐ PEN & PAPER

#### **Suggested Non-perishable food items:**

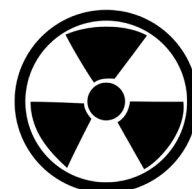
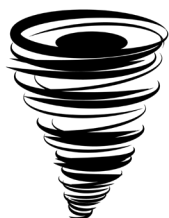
Ready to eat goods in unbreakable containers, canned meats, canned fruits and vegetables, canned juice, powdered milk, infant care foods, crackers, peanut butter, freeze-dried and dehydrated goods.

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## 72 HOUR DISASTER SUPPLY KIT CHECKLIST



### CAR SURVIVAL KIT

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BAG OF SAND,<br>A SHOVEL &<br>TOOLS | <input type="checkbox"/> MAINTAIN 1/2<br>TANK OF GAS    | <input type="checkbox"/> SUNDRY KIT,<br>PAPER &<br>PENCIL, MAP, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BLANKETS/<br>SLEEPING BAGS          | <input type="checkbox"/> NON-PERISHABLE<br>FOODS        | <input type="checkbox"/> TISSUES, MOIST<br>TOWELETES,           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CLASS ABC FIRE<br>EXTINGUISHER      | <input type="checkbox"/> RADIO &<br>BATTERIES           | <input type="checkbox"/> PLASTIC BAGS,<br>ESSENTIAL             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FIRST AID KIT                       | <input type="checkbox"/> REFLECTORS &<br>FLARES         | <input type="checkbox"/> MEDICATIONS                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FLASHLIGHT &<br>BATTERIES           | <input type="checkbox"/> SHORT RUBBER<br>HOSE TO SIPHON | <input type="checkbox"/> WATERPROOF<br>CANDLES &<br>MATCHES     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> JUMPER CABLES                       |   |   |

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### PLAN FOR YOUR PET

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CAT LITTER &<br>PAN                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> DESIGNATE<br>SOMEONE TO<br>CARE FOR PETS | <input type="checkbox"/> NAME &<br>NUMBER OF<br>VETERINARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CAN OPENER  | <input type="checkbox"/> IN CASE OF<br>EMERGENCY                  | <input type="checkbox"/> STURDY<br>LEASHES,                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CURRENT<br>PHOTO OF PET<br>IN CASE THEY<br>GET LOST | <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> HARNESSES &<br>CARRIER              |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> MEDICATIONS/<br>MEDICAL<br>RECORDS       | <input type="checkbox"/> PET BED & TOYS                      |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> WATER                               |

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## IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY DIAL 9-1-1

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# **CONTACTS**

## **IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY DIAL 9-1-1**

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCIES**

**LARIMER COUNTY  
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
4872 Endeavor Drive, Johnstown, CO 80534  
(970) 498.7120  
[www.larimer.gov/emergency](http://www.larimer.gov/emergency)

**CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS & SECURITY**  
(970) 416.2955  
300 Laporte Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80521  
[www.fcgov.com/eps](http://www.fcgov.com/eps)

**CITY OF LOVELAND  
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
(970) 962.2534  
4872 Endeavor Drive, Johnstown, CO 80534  
[www.lovgov.org/services/public-information/emergency-preparedness](http://www.lovgov.org/services/public-information/emergency-preparedness)

**TOWN OF ESTES PARK  
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
(970) 586.4000  
170 MacGregor Avenue, Estes Park, CO 80517  
<https://estespark.colorado.gov/emergency>

### **Emergency Medical Services**

**ESTES PARK HEALTH EMS**  
555 Prospect Avenue, Estes Park, CO 80517  
(970) 586.2317  
<https://eph.org>

**THOMPSON VALLEY EMS**  
(970) 663.6025  
4480 Clydesdale Parkway, Loveland, CO 80538  
<https://tvems.com>

**UCHEALTH EMS**  
(970) 495.7000  
[www.uchealth.org](http://www.uchealth.org)

### **FIRE DEPARTMENTS & DISTRICTS**

**ALLENSPARK FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(303) 747.2586  
[www.allensparkfire.com](http://www.allensparkfire.com)

**BERTHOUD FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(970) 532.2265  
[www.berthoudfire.org](http://www.berthoudfire.org)

**BIG ELK MEADOWS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT**  
(303) 823.5717  
[www.vfdofbigelk.org](http://www.vfdofbigelk.org)

**BIG THOMPSON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT**  
(970) 962.2534  
[www.lfra.org](http://www.lfra.org)

**CRYSTAL LAKES FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(970) 881.3521  
[www.clvfd.org](http://www.clvfd.org)

**GLACIER VIEW FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(970) 493.3353  
[www.glacierviewfire.gov](http://www.glacierviewfire.gov)

**GLEN HAVEN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT**  
(970) 586.5406  
[www.ghavfd.org](http://www.ghavfd.org)

**LIVERMORE FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(970) 472.5592  
[www.livermorefire.org](http://www.livermorefire.org)

**LOVELAND FIRE RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
(970) 962.2497  
[www.lfra.org](http://www.lfra.org)

**LYONS FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(303) 823.6611  
[www.lyonsfire.org](http://www.lyonsfire.org)

**PINEWOOD SPRINGS FIRE PROTECTION  
DIST**  
(303) 823.5086  
[www.pinewoodspringsfire.org](http://www.pinewoodspringsfire.org)

# CONTACTS (CONT'D)

## FIRE DEPARTMENTS & DISTRICTS

**POUDRE CANYON FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(970) 881.2472  
<https://poudrecanionfpd.colorado.gov>

**POUDRE FIRE AUTHORITY**  
(970) 416.2891  
[www.poudre-fire.org](http://www.poudre-fire.org)

**RED FEATHER LAKES VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT**  
(970) 881.2565  
[www.rflvfd.org](http://www.rflvfd.org)

**RIST CANYON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT**  
(970) 493.1501  
[www.rcvfd.org](http://www.rcvfd.org)

**WELLINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(970) 568.3232  
[www.wfpd.org](http://www.wfpd.org)

**WINDSOR FIRE PROTECTION DIST**  
(970) 686.2626  
[www.wsfr.us](http://www.wsfr.us)

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

**LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
2501 Midpoint Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525  
(970) 498.5100  
[www.larimer.gov/sheriff](http://www.larimer.gov/sheriff)

**CITY OF FORT COLLINS POLICE**  
2221 S. Timberline Road, Fort Collins, CO 80522  
(970) 419.3273  
[www.fcgov.com/police](http://www.fcgov.com/police)

**CITY OF LOVELAND POLICE**  
810 E. 10th Street, Loveland, CO 80537  
(970) 962.2212  
[www.lovegov.org/services/police](http://www.lovegov.org/services/police)

**TOWN OF ESTES PARK POLICE DEPT**  
170 MacGregor Avenue, Estes Park, CO 80517  
(970) 586.4000  
<https://estespark.colorado.gov/pd>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

**TOWN OF JOHNSTOWN POLICE DEPT**  
430 S. Parish Avenue, Johnstown, CO 80534  
(970) 356.1212 x4  
<https://johnstown.colorado.gov/police>

**TOWN OF TIMNATH POLICE DEPT**  
4800 Goodman Road, Timnath, CO 80547  
(970) 224.3211  
<https://timnath.org/government/departments/police-department>

**TOWN OF WINDSOR POLICE DEPT**  
200 11th Street, Windsor, CO 80550  
(970) 674.6400  
[www.windsorpd.com](http://www.windsorpd.com)

## WEATHER INFORMATION

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE BOULDER**  
Facebook: @NWSBoulder  
Twitter: @NWSBoulder  
(303) 494.3210  
[www.weather.gov/bou](http://www.weather.gov/bou)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**NOCO ALERT**  
(970) 962.2173  
Facebook: @LETA911  
Twitter: @LETA\_911  
[www.nocoalert.org](http://www.nocoalert.org)

**LARIMER COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
200 W. Oak Street  
(970) 498.7000  
[www.larimer.gov](http://www.larimer.gov)

**LARIMER COUNTY DEPT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT**  
(970) 498.6700 (Fort Collins)  
(970) 619.4580 (Loveland)  
(970) 577.2050 (Estes Park)  
[www.larimer.org/health](http://www.larimer.org/health)

# EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

**IF IT'S AN IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY, CALL 9-1-1**

EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSON(S): \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE & ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

MEETING PLACE #1 (NEAR HOME): MEETING PLACE #2 (AWAY FROM HOME):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY CELL/HOME PHONE & ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CLOSEST HOSPITAL (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

VETERINARIAN CONTACT:

EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR PETS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# LARIMER COUNTY

Office of Emergency Management

4872 Endeavor Drive,  
Johnstown, CO 80534

[www.larimer.gov/emergency](http://www.larimer.gov/emergency)

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