

What to do after an emergency

Overview

The lingering effects of unexpected emergencies and disasters are different for everyone. Knowing what to do after an emergency can help reduce stress and aid in a quicker recovery.

Recovery is a process

The recovery process includes the actions you take to repair and restore your life after an emergency or disaster. The process is not easy and takes time, flexibility, and patience. Examples of recovery can include:

- Removing waste and debris
- Contacting your insurance company
- Replacing lost or destroyed documentation
- Finding a new home
- Getting mental health support

Find out where your community will post information after an emergency. Information such as support and recovery services that may be available to you could be posted there.

Community

Having a sense of community and people you can lean on is an important part of recovery. Research shows that communities with strong relationships recover faster.

Reach out to your neighbours and friends to find out how you can support each other.

Re-entry

If you had to evacuate, you can't return home until authorities have told you it safe to do so.

In some cases, re-entry can involve a brief return home to inspect damages. If you have returned to inspect damages, please keep in mind the following:

Do not enter to your home or property if:

- an expert has not deemed it safe to do so
- any part of the structure has collapsed
- the structure is off its foundation
- the main power switch was not turned off prior to flooding

Use extreme caution at all times. This is especially true if there are holes in the floor, broken glass and dangerous debris.

Your mental health

Disasters can affect people in many ways. Sometimes we have emotional responses right away and sometimes they show up days, weeks, months or even years after. Feelings of stress are normal, but some people can experience more severe distress and may require help.

Monitor yourself and your loved ones for signs of distress, which could include:

- difficulty sleeping
- emotional outbursts
- anxiety
- depression or unexplained physical issues

If any of these signs appear, make sure to talk about them and seek advice from a professional.

Financial preparedness

- Speak to an insurance agent about your specific needs.
- Prepare a [detailed list](#) of all your belongings.
- Know the [7 steps](#) for making a home insurance claim.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada is ready to answer your questions. Connect with them by email at askibcwest@ibc.ca or by telephone [1-844-227-5422](tel:1-844-227-5422). For more information on insurance preparedness visit ibc.ca.

Helpful resources

- [Alberta Works and Alberta Supports Contact Centre](#)
- [Responding to a Disaster or Emergency](#)
- [Recovery After a Disaster or Emergency](#)
- [Taking Care of Ourselves, Our Families and Our Communities](#)
- [Helping Children Cope](#)
- [Helping Teens Cope](#)

The role of your local government

After a disaster, your local government will focus on activities that support community building, such as:

- conducting damage and loss assessments
- restoring public services
- providing emotional support service

Your local government also leads the development of recovery plans and initiatives, with support from the provincial and federal governments.

The role of the provincial government

The Government of Alberta has a responsibility to help recovery from a disaster or major emergency. Some examples of how the province provides support are:

- Programs, grants, and tax incentives that support reconstruction
- Financial assistance through programs such as the Disaster Recovery Program
- Arranges for insurance representation to be available to Albertans
- Work with the local community to provide advice and the coordination of provincial support

For more information on disaster recovery, visit [Alberta.ca](https://alberta.ca). Please note, provincial programs are never guaranteed and are not a supplement for private insurance.

We are all in this together

There are a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) committed to assisting those affected by a disaster or emergency. Examples include:

- Community clean up
- Psychological counseling

- Assistance with replacing lost items
- Paperwork, or other tasks as needed.

As of 2019, the partners of the NGO Council of Alberta are:

- [Canadian Red Cross](#)
- [St. John Ambulance](#)
- [The Salvation Army](#)
- [Adventist Disaster Relief Agency](#)
- [Billy Graham Rapid Response Team Chaplaincy](#)
- [Canadian Global Response](#)
- [Mennonite Disaster Service](#)
- [Samaritan's Purse Canada](#)
- [Team Rubicon Canada](#)
- [World Renew](#)
- [Alberta SPCA](#)

For more information

Read our other fact sheets on:

- Disaster Recovery Program information for Homeowners and residential tenants, Not-for-profit and cooperatives, and Agriculture and farming operations
- Before an emergency
- During an emergency

You can find more information about preparedness through [Alberta.ca](https://alberta.ca), or by contacting your community's Director of Emergency Management.