

## **Evacuation**

**CIVIC Ready.** Be sure to stay safe and informed by receiving notifications and alerts from the Village of Chatham. Formerly eLerts, our new system allows you to better manage which alerts and notifications you receive. You can customize what notifications you receive through email, text, or phone call. We have a variety of groups you can join to get notifications about emergencies, advisories, and other events. You can get started at this link: <https://www.chathamil.gov/notifications-alerts>

**Plan to Evacuate** Many kinds of emergencies can cause you to have to evacuate. In some cases, you may have a day or two to prepare while other situations might call for an immediate evacuation. Planning is vital to making sure that you can evacuate quickly and safely no matter what the circumstances.

### **Before an Evacuation**

- Learn the types of disasters that are likely in your community and the local emergency, evacuation and shelter plans for each specific disaster. Chatham disaster threats include high wind events (including tornadoes); severe thunderstorms; and hazardous materials-related events. Other risks that may require an evacuation include long-term power outages, gas leaks, or potable water supply shortages.
- Plan how you will leave and where you will go if you are advised to evacuate.
- Check with local officials about what shelter spaces are available. Identify several places you could go in an emergency such as a friend's home in another town or a motel. Choose destinations in different directions so that you have options during an emergency. If needed, identify a place to stay that will accept pets. Most public shelters allow only service animals.
- Be familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area.
- Always follow the instructions of local officials and remember that your evacuation route may be on foot depending on the type of disaster.
- Come up with a family/household plan to stay in touch in case you become separated; have a meeting place and update it depending on the circumstance.
- Assemble supplies that are ready for evacuation. Prepare a "go-bag" you can carry when you evacuate on foot or public transportation and supplies for traveling longer distances if you have a car.
- If you have a car:
  - Keep a full tank of gas if an evacuation seems likely. Keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case of an unexpected need to evacuate. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.
  - Make sure you have a portable emergency kit in the car.
- If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if needed. Decide with family, friends or your local emergency management office to see what resources may be available.

### **During an Evacuation**

- Download the FEMA app for a list of open shelters during an active disaster in your local area.
- Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions.
- Take your emergency supply kit.
- Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.

- Take your pets with you but understand that only service animals may be allowed in public shelters. Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency now.
- If time allows:
  - Call or email the out-of-state contact in your family communications plan. Tell them where you're going.
  - Secure your home by closing and locking doors and windows.
  - Unplug electrical equipment such as radios, televisions and small appliances. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding. If there is damage to your home and you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving.
  - Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
  - Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides some protection such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and a hat.
  - Check with neighbors who may need a ride.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts, they may be blocked.
- Be alert for road hazards such as washed-out roads or bridges and downed power lines. Do not drive into flooded areas.

**After an Evacuation** If you evacuated for the storm, check with local officials both where you're staying and back home before you travel.

- If you are returning to disaster-affected areas, after significant events prepare for disruptions to daily activities and remember that returning home before storm debris is cleared is dangerous.
- Let friends and family know before you leave and when you arrive.
- Charge devices and consider getting back-up batteries in case power-outages continue.
- Fill up your gas tank and consider downloading a fuel app to check for outages along your route.
- Bring supplies such as water and non-perishable food for the car ride.
- Avoid downed power or utility lines, they may be live with deadly voltage. Stay away and report them immediately to your power or utility company.
- Only use generators outside and away from your home and NEVER run a generator inside a home or garage or connect it to your home's electrical system.

\* Learn more by visiting <https://www.ready.gov>