



Ten Frequently Asked Questions about Evacuations & Emergency Sheltering



Anchorage Office of Emergency Management

Main: (907) 343-1400

Emergency Conditions Line: (907) 343-4701

www.muni.org/oem

1. What are the major hazards in the Anchorage area that may require evacuation or emergency sheltering?

• **Severe Earthquake:** Earthquakes are the most severe and persistent threat to Anchorage. Although South Central Alaska regularly experiences minor earthquakes, there is little to no damage. However, a severe earthquake similar to the one felt in 1964 would cause major infrastructure and building damage that may affect a significant portion of the local population.

<https://www.ready.gov/earthquakes>



• **Wildfire:** Anchorage is declared a community-at-risk for wildfire by the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Factors contributing to the risk include mixed hardwood and conifer forests that burn readily in high fire danger conditions. Likewise, residential and rural neighborhoods exist throughout forested areas susceptible to seasonal wildfires.

<https://www.ready.gov/wildfires>

• **Severe Weather:** Severe weather in South Central Alaska can produce hazardous conditions that include thunderstorms, high or hurricane force winds, large hail, and flooding or flash flooding. Additionally, severe winter weather can have associated with it heavy snow, freezing rain or sleet, and extreme low temperatures.



• **Energy Utility Disruptions:** Temporary natural gas disruptions and power outages may also create conditions where Emergency Shelters need to be established for displaced residents. These types of conditions are usually limited in nature but may be widespread.

Chugach Electric	907-762-7888	http://www.chugachelectric.com/
ML&P - Municipal Power and Light	907-279-7671	https://www.mlandp.com/
MEA - Matanuska Electric Assn.	907-696-7697	http://www.mea.coop/
ENSTAR	907-334-7788	https://www.enstarnaturalgas.com/

2. How do I stay informed about hazardous conditions in my area?

• Follow local broadcast media for information on possible threats that may affect the area in which you live.

• Register for the free service NIXLE to get advisories and alerts from Public Safety Agencies by email, texts messages, and other social media. You can easily register for NIXLE by texting your Anchorage Zip Code to 888-777. You can also log on to NIXLE.com to register for email and text messages.



• Continue monitoring local broadcast media and NIXLE for current information on conditions and for any special instructions during an emergency or as threatening conditions emerge.

• You can also dial 2-1-1, where Call Monitors will have information regarding conditions, evacuation instructions, and information about emergency shelter locations.

• The Anchorage Emergency Conditions Line at 907-343-4701 provides a pre-recorded message of update information and instructions for residents in the affected area.

- The Office of Emergency Management webpage at www.muni.org/oem is also a good resource for current information and instructions as well.



3. How will I know if I should evacuate?

- Public Safety officials will try to provide as much advance notice as possible before an evacuation is absolutely required. Whenever there is an imminent threat (wildfire or other hazard) Police Officers and other Public Safety Officials will directly notify residence in the affected area. They may do this by going door-to-door, through public address hailing systems, or a combination of both.
- Monitor local broadcast news media and NIXLE – they will also provide evacuation

alerts and warnings.

4. How will I know what the evacuation route is?

- Evacuation routes are determined by Public Safety Officials based on current and anticipated conditions as well as the nature of the threat or hazard. Every effort will be made to provide residents the expected evacuation routing as soon as possible prior to an evacuation being ordered.
- Keep in mind that changing conditions may require changes to evacuation routing to ensure your safety. Traffic Control points will be established by Anchorage Police Officers to ensure residents can remain on the designated routes. Please follow the directions of Public Safety Officials to ensure your safety.



5. What if I don't have transportation or need assistance evacuating?

- Municipal owned and operated transportation resources can be used to support transportation requirements for ordered evacuations if necessary.
- It is important for residents to let public safety officials know when you are initially contacted if you do not have personal transportation to evacuate.
- Para-transit services will also be made available for individuals with functional access needs requiring this type of service.



6. What about my pets?

- Along with family members, residents should have a plan for evacuating their household pets or service animal. Household pets are considered small animals such as dogs, cats, or similar animals commonly found among residential pet owners.

- Household pets do not include exotic or dangerous animals such as snakes, monkeys, livestock or farm animals, and domesticated wild animals.
- For residents who do not have their own transportation for an ordered evacuation, household pets may accompany their owner on transportation provided by the Municipality. Pets must remain under positive control of the owner at all times during the evacuation while riding Municipal transportation.
- Additional information is available from the Anchorage Office of Emergency Management regarding what pet supplies owners should bring with them for an evacuation

7. What about my horses and other livestock?

- Municipality does not have the resources or capability to evacuate and care for livestock or farm animals during an emergency. It is the responsibility of the animal owners to ensure the safety and well-being of their animals during an emergency.
- Local livestock owners are encouraged to join or form mutual support networks to help each other during emergencies and disasters.
- Livestock owners are encouraged to consider evacuating their animals early as threatening conditions approach.





8. Where are the Emergency Shelters located?

- Public Safety Officials will advise residents with as much advance notice as possible the location of emergency shelters. Emergency shelter facilities may be a school, a Municipal facility, or a privately owned or leased facility.
- Similar to evacuation routes, emergency shelters are selected based on the conditions and proximity to the affected area. The number of people being displaced is also a consideration for the location and types of facilities to be used for Emergency Sheltering.
- Evacuating residents may be directed to a Temporary Reception Center first while an emergency shelter is being established.
- Generally speaking, emergency shelters established by the Municipality are managed by the Red Cross. Meal services for displaced residents at an emergency shelter will be coordinated by the shelter management staff.
- Additional information regarding what to bring to a shelter is available from the Red Cross or Office of Emergency Management

9. Can my pets stay with me at the Emergency Shelter?

- Pets are not authorized at emergency shelters. Owners should make arrangements to either board their pets or have a friend take care of them while they reside at the shelter.
- The only animals permitted in emergency shelters are service dogs and service miniature horses as restricted and defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
- For large evacuations where a significant number of people and pets have been displaced, the Municipality will establish an emergency pet shelter.
- The emergency pet shelter is not the same as pet boarding service; pet owners can be expected to help care for their pets at emergency pet shelter locations.
- Additional information on what is expected of pet owners is available from the Municipal Animal Care and Control Center.

10. How will I know when it's safe to return to my home?

- Public safety officials will advise residents when it is safe to return home primarily through broadcast media, NIXLE, and social media sites.
- Emergency shelter sites will also display information to help residents understand when they can expect it will be safe to return home.
- Department websites such as police, fire and Office of Emergency Management will also keep citizens updated on when it is safe to return home.

Anchorage Police Department

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/APDInfo>
Twitter <https://twitter.com/APDInfo>
Municipality Website <http://www.muni.org/departments/police/pages/default.aspx>

Anchorage Fire Department

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Anchorage-Fire-Department>
Twitter <https://twitter.com/afinfo>
Municipality Website <http://www.muni.org/departments/fire/pages/default.aspx>

Office of Emergency Management

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AnchorageOEM>
Twitter https://twitter.com/Anchorage_OEM
Municipality Website <http://www.muni.org/departments/oem/pages/default.aspx>

Residents should prepare for all emergencies or disasters by:

□ **Making a kit!**

- Make a shelter-in-place kit with 7 or more days' supplies AND make a smaller go-kit to grab if you have to leave your house in a hurry!
- Include water, food, medicine, clothing, cash, toiletries, sanitary items, pet care items, and unique needs (assistive devices, special foods, etc.).

□ **Having a plan!**

- How are you going to communicate? What actions are you going to take?

□ **Staying informed!**

- Sign up for Nixle to receive alerts and advisories by text, email, Facebook, or Twitter from Anchorage public safety. Text your MOA zip code to 888777 or sign up online at Nixle.com
- Listen to, read, watch, and follow local news media.

Additional information regarding developing a plan, making a go-kit, and being informed is available from the Office of Emergency Management.

Wildfire Preparedness...

Ready, Set, Go!

□ **Ready! Be fire-adapted and ready!**

Take personal responsibility and prepare long before the threat of a wildland fire so your home is ready in case of a fire. Create defensible space by clearing brush away from your home. Use fire-resistant landscaping and harden your home with fire-safe construction measures. Assemble emergency supplies and belongings in a safe place. Plan escape routes and make sure all those residing within the home know the plan of action.



□ **Set! Develop and maintain situational awareness!**

Pack your emergency items. Stay aware of the latest news and information on the fire from local media, your local fire department and public safety.

□ **Go! Act early!**

Follow your personal wildland fire action plan. Doing so will not only support your safety, but will allow firefighters to best maneuver resources to combat the fire.

<http://www.wildlandfirersg.org/Resident>

