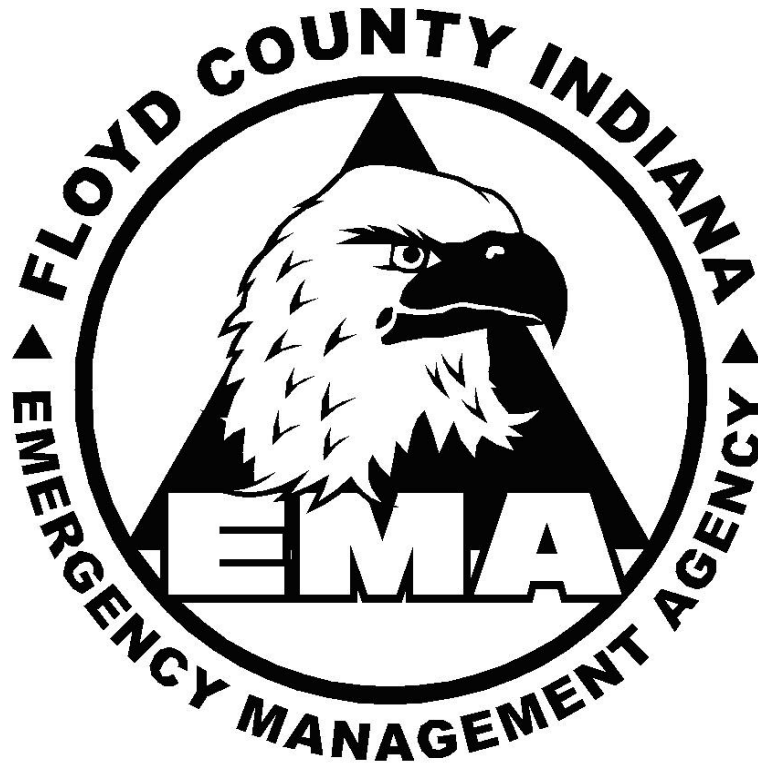


# FLOYD COUNTY



# EMERGENCY INFORMATION DISSEMINATION PLAN 2014

## **March 2014**

### **Executive Summary**

Emergencies and disasters are inevitable. Being prepared for these natural and man-made hazards can protect Floyd County's public safety professionals, general population and property. Floyd County Emergency Management is the County's designated homeland security and emergency management agency, and seeks, with other County/City agencies, and federal, state and local partners, to support preparedness, prevention, response and recovery from all hazards.

The ongoing threats to our homeland have advanced partnerships designed to collectively enhance crisis communication. The goal is consistent, clear, timely and coordinated messages to protect the public.

During an emergency or disaster, Floyd County EMA will likely be called upon to execute its Information and Dissemination plan, compile and disseminate information to the public through many possible channels and means, including the media, a Joint Information Center (a physical location where public information officers from different agencies come together to coordinate information), websites, emails, print materials and other methods.

***These actions will be closely coordinated with the Floyd County Commissioner's Office, the Mayor's Office in New Albany, and other local entities.***

The Floyd County Information Dissemination Plan has been designed to ensure that Floyd County is prepared to address the concerns of the general public, support inquiries from the media, and ensure accurate, timely and essential information is provided to those who need it.

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I. Introduction

A. Purpose

To ensure proactive and efficient dissemination of information to the media, general public, elected officials and internal audiences before, during and after a crisis. Goals include providing relevant, accurate, sensitive and timely information and minimizing risk to the public.

B. Scope

This plan is to be used during Floyd County's training exercises and actual emergency events of such a magnitude as to warrant response and the institution of the Information and Dissemination plan. The plan focuses on the public information function of Floyd County Emergency Management, partner local agencies, non-governmental organizations and other local entities. Communication vehicles will include media, Floyd County's website, email, phone contact (including one-on-one communication and incoming questions, personal contact with field staff and local partners, flyers, meetings, partners and stakeholders.

C. Background

Each year Floyd County has the potential to experience a number of hazards, including tornadoes/severe weather, flooding, chemical spills and radiological incidents.

Natural or man-made disasters require a system for communicating with the public during the event(s). Floyd County EMA is designated with a public information role in many response situations, so the agency has an important role in information and dissemination.

D. Applicability

During a crisis, EMA, the Commissioner's Office, the Mayors Office's, and other local partners will coordinate and deliver timely, accurate information to the public through all available channels. It is imperative that local officials be consistent in order to effectively and efficiently reach all target publics through all crises.

E. Authority

In order to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and Local authorities and policies, the following documents were used in the development of this Plan:

1. Federal
  - a. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended. 42 United States Code 5121, et seq.
  - b. Code of Federal Regulations. Title 44, Part 205 and 205.16.
  - c. Guidance on the National Incident Management System (December 2008)
  - d. Guidance on the National Preparedness Goal (September 2007)
  - e. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5
  - f. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8
  - g. National Response Framework, Public Affairs Support Index
2. State
  - a. Indiana Code 10-14-3, Emergency Management and Disaster Law
  - b. Executive Order 05-09, Clarifying the Duties and Responsibilities of Emergency Management
  - c. A Leaders Guide to Emergencies and Disasters, IDHS (November 2008)

F. Concept of Operations

1. General

The focus will be specific, event-related information. Where appropriate, positive information should be conveyed. Included should be guidance to the public about potential hazards, protective actions and appropriate response.

***The lead agency will be ultimately responsible for ensuring rapid preparation and dissemination of uniform messages, and coordinating information with appropriate agencies, partners, stakeholders and constituencies.***

The Joint Information System (JIS) will be used to provide a structure and process for developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages; recommending, compiling and executing public information plans and strategies.

The JIS provides the mechanism to organize, integrate, and coordinate information to ensure timely, accurate, accessible, and consistent messaging across multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines, including the private sector and NGOs. It includes the plans, protocols, procedures, and structures used to provide information to:

- \* general public;
- \* disaster victims;
- \* affected jurisdictions;
- \* elected officials;
- \* community leaders;
- \* private sector;
- \* media;
- \* NGOs (e.g., American Red Cross);
- \* response and recovery organizations (e.g., urban search and rescue, utilities);
- \* volunteer groups (e.g., CERT, VOAD);
- \* international interests (e.g., international media and donations); and other impacted groups.

Federal, State, tribal, local, and voluntary agencies, private sector PIOs, and established JICs are critical supporting elements of the JIS. Key elements include the following:

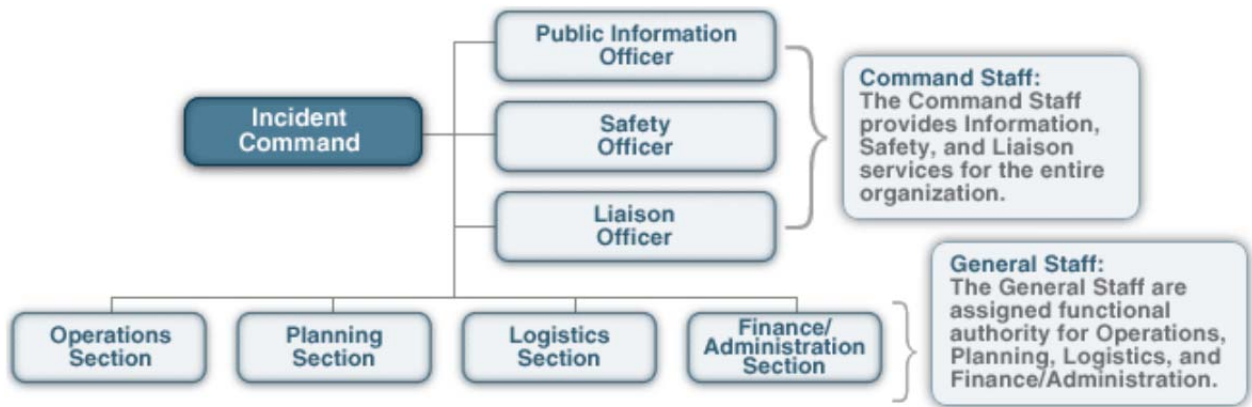
- \* gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating consistent messages;
- \* interagency coordination and integration;
- \* support for decision-makers; and
- \* flexibility, modularity, and adaptability.

Agencies issue their own releases related to their policies, procedures, programs, and capabilities; however, messages need to be coordinated utilizing the JIS to ensure message consistency.

2. Joint Information Center (JIC)

In the early stages of response to an incident, the PIO shall consult with the Incident Command/Unified Command (IC/UC) regarding the opening of a JIC. The IC/UC shall retain authority to order the opening of a JIC, although the lead PIO may recommend when it is appropriate.

When activated, the JIC will be the central point of contact for all news media. The JIC will work within the Incident Command System (ICS) and will communicate to the public through the media, monitor the public perception and media reports, and advise leadership (IC/UC, Commissioners, Mayors, and others) on activities and actions.



a. JICs are established at:

- The direction of the IC/UC at various levels of government;
- Pre-determined or incident-specific sites; and
- Components of Federal, State, tribal, or local Multiagency Coordination Systems (MACS).

b. JICs may be staffed:

By representatives from all agencies and jurisdictions involved in the response and recovery operation; and through intrastate and interstate mutual aid agreements.

Local and State/Federal partners are encouraged to collocate or coordinate information with members of the JIC.

A single JIC location is preferable, but the system is flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate virtual or multiple JIC locations, as required.

G. Key Public Information Tasks

The lead PIO will:

1. Direct work related to the release of information to the media, public and partners.
2. Coordinate with horizontal communication partners to ensure that messages are consistent and within the scope of our responsibility.
4. Provide updates to the Commissioners, Mayors, and EOC command.
5. Advise Executive level government officials and the chain of command on information to be released.
6. Ensure that risk communication principles are employed in all contact with the media, public and partner information release efforts.
7. Review and approve materials for release to media, public and partners.
8. Obtain required clearance of materials for release to media on all information not previously cleared.
9. If established, determine the JIC hours of operation, reassessing throughout the emergency response for appropriateness.
10. Partner with local agencies, mutual aid agencies, State agencies, and Federal agencies to manage the crisis most effectively;
11. Ensure that sufficient resources are available to effectively manage the crisis (people, equipment and supplies).

H. Situation and Assumptions

Large emergencies or disasters may attract regional and national media representatives. These outside media representatives will have little or no knowledge of local media working relationships. As such, a clearly identified JIS and JIC are necessary.

1. During emergency situations, the general public and media will demand information about the emergency situation and instruction on proper self protection actions.



2. The local media, particularly television and radio, will perform an essential role in providing emergency instructions and the most current information to the public.
3. Depending on the severity of the emergency (or the media's perception of the severity of the emergency) regional and national media may also cover the story and demand information and comment from local officials.
4. Depending on the severity of the incident, telephone communication may be sporadic, interrupted or impossible.
5. Local and regional radio and television stations without emergency power may also be off the air.
6. Plans must be flexible enough to continue providing effective information during these situations.

## II. Plan Components

### A. Public Education and Outreach

#### 1. Overview

Risk communication strategies are a necessary component of preparedness. To be effective, these strategies should be fact-based, and are critical before, during, and after a crisis. Effective communication guides the public, the news media, and other groups in responding appropriately to emergency situations and assists public safety professionals in the effective execution of their jobs.

The main objective of education and outreach is to prepare the Floyd County public by developing messages and materials to share with other local, and private sector partners. In advance of a crisis, a system can be developed to alert the public and disseminate prepared messages and materials.

A critical component of preparedness for any hazard is informing the public about potential threats and providing a solid foundation of information upon which future actions can be based. Once a natural or man-made disaster occurs, our ability to communicate effectively will help manage the public implications.

#### 2. Primary Concepts, Goals & Objectives

a. Communication preparedness follows key risk communication concepts:

The public will need information about what is known and unknown, as well as interim guidance to formulate decisions for protection.

Coordination of message development and release among federal, state and local partners is critical to help avoid confusion that can undermine public trust, raise fear and anxiety, and impede response measures.

Information provided to the public should be technically correct and brief without seeming patronizing.

Information presented should minimize speculation and avoid over-interpretation of data, overly confident assessments of investigations and control measures.

A disaster or emergency will generate immediate, intense, and sustained demand for information from the public and other key audiences. Timely and transparent dissemination of accurate, fact-based information about the progress of the response can build public trust and confidence.

b. Primary Goals:

Prepare the public and communities for natural and man-made hazards.

Develop messages and materials that can be shared broadly.

Coordinate information across state and local jurisdictions.

c. Primary Objectives

Pre-disaster periods should be used to focus on preparedness planning and on building flexible, sustainable communication networks. Key activities should include the following:

Provide materials - brochures, fact sheets, presentations, giveaways, to the public and local public safety agencies.

Present information to local groups: citizens, schools, and other public safety groups.

Coordinate efforts with the appropriate agencies to identify needs, then compile and disseminate education materials and messages.

Coordinate emergency translations.

Guide the web team to organize and post all materials.

Identify gaps in education messages and implement responsive measures.

Attend briefings; provide team-specific updates for inclusion in the Incident Action Plan and other reports.

3. Target Audiences
  - a. Floyd County could be directly affected or is expected to be affected in the immediate future by a whole host of emergency or crisis situations. This would include residents, businesses, non profits and government entities in areas susceptible to floods, tornadoes and other severe weather, earthquakes, or chemical spills to name a few.
  - b. Public directly experiencing the disaster
  - c. Public immediately outside the disaster area
  - d. Public safety professionals directly involved in response
  - e. Family members of victims and response workers
  - f. Elected officials and community leaders: local and state
  - g. Media
  - h. Other members of the public in Floyd County and beyond, including those who are concerned and may want to provide assistance.
4. Key Tasks/Responsible Entities
  - a. Compile and present public and media messages:
    1. Emergency Supply Kit
    2. Keep preparations simple
    3. Include the kids
    4. Review instructions regularly
    5. Understand what to do for different disasters
    6. Know your home (how to turn off water, electric, etc...
    7. Have a fire extinguisher
    8. Review your homeowner's insurance policy
    9. Keep neighbors in mind

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## Floyd County Emergency Information Dissemination Plan

10. Remember pets and other animals
  - b. Determine and implement methods of dissemination
    1. Meetings
    2. Press Releases
    3. Flyers, brochures, other publications
    4. Email
    5. Telephone (individual and conference calls)
    6. Give-a-ways
    7. Websites, including Facebook etc...
  - c. Identify audiences
    1. Media
    2. General Public
    3. Public safety professionals
    4. Schools
    5. Professional and not for profit groups
    6. Large employers
    7. Businesses, non profits and governments
  - d. Monitor and analyze messages by viewing, listening to and reading TV, radio, print and web news reports.
  - e. As necessary, correct misinformation by contacting the media source directly, and finding out the origin of the information. If possible, follow up with the source of the information and educate the distributor.
  - f. Responsible Entities
- Floyd County EMA

All other appropriate County/City agencies (See Floyd County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan)

# MESSAGE PREPARATION

## (TEMPLATE) MESSAGE PREPARATION

1. **Prepare a statement of commitment, empathy or concern** to use as an introduction.

Put yourself into the shoes of your audience and address what they are most concerned about.  
*Example: "Before I give you an update of the incident, I'd like to say our number one concern is the safety of the community." or "The most important objective in our operation is ensuring a resolution to this situation as soon as possible."*

NOTE: From this point on, sentences should be short - seven to 12 words in length.

2. **Prepare one to three key messages** you want to address and incorporate them into a bridge between the sentence above and the body of your statement.

*Example: "Precautionary vaccination is the best course of events and we're starting clinics later today."*

3. **Clarify facts and give a call for action.**

Who \_\_\_\_\_

What \_\_\_\_\_

Where \_\_\_\_\_

When \_\_\_\_\_

Why \_\_\_\_\_

How \_\_\_\_\_

4. **What we don't know** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Explain process to get answers:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Repeat statement of commitment:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. Give referrals: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information \_\_\_\_\_

Next scheduled update \_\_\_\_\_

8. Finally, check your message for the following:

Positive action steps  
Honest/open tone  
Applied risk communication principles  
Clarity  
Simple words, short sentences

And

No jargon  
No judgmental phrases  
No humor  
No extreme speculation

## NEWS BRIEFING CHECKLIST

1. Select the appropriate time for the news briefing.

**NOTE: If possible, should be no fewer than two hours before the majority of news deadlines or as soon as possible after a major development;**

2. Select and schedule an appropriate location and set up space (audiovisual, chairs, public address system, name plates for participants, etc.).

**NOTE: The location should be easily accessible, with plenty of parking, power, phones and phone lines, minimal background noise and a good visual back drop if possible;**

3. Notify media of place and time for the news briefing;

4. Produce briefing packets for distribution to the media;

5. Identify spokespeople, schedule and conduct speaker preparation for as much time as possible before the news briefing starts;

6. Appoint a news briefing moderator who will:

- Set the agenda - discuss format;
- Greet the assembly;
- Explain the purpose of the news briefing;
- Introduce the speakers;
- Provide sources for additional information;
- Control the amount of time spent on any given subject;
- End the conference on time.

7. Assist reporters with any additional needs immediately following the news briefing;

8. Videotape news briefings.



**MEDIA ADVISORY ON UPCOMING NEWS BRIEFING**

**NEWS MEDIA ADVISORY**

**MEDIA ADVISORY: NOT FOR  
PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST**

**CONTACT: (name of contact)**                      **PHONE: (number of contact)**

**Date:**                      **AREA OFFICIALS TO HOLD NEWS BRIEFING ON  
(EVENT)**

**WHAT:**                      Officials from the (your department) and (other agencies and partners) will hold a news briefing to discuss the local response to the (event) and answer questions about the recovery effort.

**WHEN:**                      (Time), (Day and date)

**WHERE:**                      The (county/name) joint information center (JIC)  
(Building name)  
(Room number, floor, exact location)  
(Street address)  
(City, state)  
(JIC media phone number)

**PARTICIPANTS:**                      List All

**BACKGROUND:**                      Provide one or two sentences explaining the situation.

Media representatives should enter the **(describe)** entrance of the building to sign-in. A JIC representative will be present to meet with media representatives. All news briefings will be held in the media briefing room.

The following telephone number is ***FOR MEDIA USE ONLY: to be determined*** .

***Please do not release this number to the public. This is for media use only. The public will be given a different number for information.***

***(Provide directions or a map to JIC).***

**NEWS BRIEFING INTRODUCTION CHECKLIST**

(For lead agency PIO or designee)

**General Guidelines:**

1. As the moderator it is your responsibility to set the tone for the news briefing.
2. Have a predetermined message for each news briefing. *If you do not have a message, you do not need a news briefing.*
3. Provide correct spellings for all names. Ensure you state the person's position in the JIC/unified command.
4. Set a time limit with your speakers prior to starting the news briefing. Stick to that time. Do not let any one person dominate the time during the news briefing. Take charge and use time as your authority.
5. Make yourself available at the end of the news briefing. This will build relationships and your trust and credibility with the members of the media attending your news briefing.

**Checklist**

- Introduce yourself;
- Explain the format of the news briefing;
- Provide the time frame (usually 30 to 45 minutes);
- Read the incident statement;
- Introduce the speakers;
- Moderate the question and answer period;
- End the news briefing and announce the time for the next news briefing.

## NEWS BRIEFING INTRODUCTION CHECKLIST

### **Moderator Script:**

*Welcome, ladies and gentlemen to today's (**this morning's, tonight's**) news briefing.*

*We will be presenting information on \_\_\_\_\_ today.*

*With us today is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*We will begin today with some brief statements from the representatives of the JIC/unified command.*

*Then we will open the floor to your questions. Because of the ongoing operations we will be available for \_\_ minutes today.*

*Please allow time for everyone here to ask questions.*

*Following the news briefing, the joint information center staff and I will be available to help you with any further needs*

**Media Advisory: Not for Publication**

**DATE:**

**Emergency Operations Center Staffing Increased**

The Floyd County Emergency Management's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is increasing staffing to (NAME LEVEL) to monitor the NAME THE DISASTER OR SITUATION.

The EOC is staffed to a Level ?? , with the LIST positions being staffed 24 hours.

At full staff, the EOC has 26 positions including communications, Floyd County 911, public works, hazardous materials, transportation, resource support, fire, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indiana State Police, Floyd County Emergency Management, mass care (American Red Cross), Health Department, various operations support (finance, logistics, planning, resources), executive level government representatives, and hospital representatives.

If you have additional email addresses you would like to have included for press release distribution, please email them to [ema@floydcounty.in.gov](mailto:ema@floydcounty.in.gov)

**Contact:**

Name and contact information.

INITIAL MEDIA ADVISORY ON EMERGENCY  
*(To be issued while JIC is being activated)*

**Media Advisory: Not for Publication**  
**DATE**

(Your contact information)

NEWS MEDIA

ADVISORY

At about (time) today, the (your agency) received reports of (nature of the incident).

We have a (system, plan, procedure, operation) in place for just such an (emergency, event) and we are being assisted by (other public safety officials) as part of that plan.

The situation is (under) (not yet under) control and we are working with (local, state, federal) authorities to (contain this situation, determine how this happened, determine what actions may be needed by individuals and the community to prevent this from happening again). Additional information will be provided as soon as possible.

**Contact:**

Name and contact information.



# Public Education and Outreach Information and Sample Messages

## I. Public Education and Outreach

Public Education and Outreach is provided to the public on individual and business preparedness/safety measures for disasters and emergencies. This is accomplished through various publications, flyers, brochures and websites. The information is disseminated through displays at the Floyd County Fair, county safety days, trade shows, conference/conventions and speaking engagements, such as home school programs, Kiwanis, Elks, etc.

During events the public is educated on which disasters are prone to certain areas and how to prepare before, during and after an emergency. Public information messages also explain why it is important to have an emergency preparedness kit, have adequate insurance coverage and the importance of getting involved in communities to help with such disasters. A few of the topics are earthquakes, extreme heat, flooding, thunderstorm, tornado, and winter weather preparedness.

- A. Sample materials - brochures, guides and information:
- B. Presentations - Pre and Post Disaster:

## **THUNDERSTORMS**

Thunderstorms can bring heavy rains, strong winds, hail, lightning and tornadoes. It is possible for a thunderstorm to affect one location in the course of a few hours, which can cause flash flooding, downed trees, downed power lines, power outages and debris on roads.

In general, you should know the difference between a **watch** and a **warning**. A severe thunderstorm **WATCH** means that a severe thunderstorm (damaging winds of 58 miles per hour or more, or hail three-fourths of an inch in diameter or greater) is likely to develop. A severe thunderstorm **WARNING** means that a severe thunderstorm has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.

### **In the event of a Watch or Warning you should:**

Go to a safe place, turn on a battery-operated radio or television and wait for the "all clear" by the authorities.

Secure outdoor objects, such as lawn furniture, that could blow away or cause damage or injury and take light objects inside (if weather permits).

Shutter windows securely and brace outside doors.

Turn off and unplug all electrical equipment, including telephones and televisions.

Avoid bathtubs, water faucets and sinks because metal pipes can transmit electricity.

### **If outdoors:**

Go inside a building or car.

If no structure is available, find an open space and squat low to the ground.

Avoid tall structures such as towers, tall trees, fences, telephone lines or power lines.

Stay away from bodies of water and flood-prone areas.

DO NOT attempt to move downed power lines, trees or other fallen objects.

### **If in a car:**

Pull safely onto the shoulder of the road away from any trees that could fall on the vehicle.

Stay in the car and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rains subside.

Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road-you could be trapped or stranded. The depth of the water is not always obvious, or the road could be washed away. If you can't see it, you can't be sure it's there.

For power outages and downed wires, call your local utility company.



## WINTER STORMS

Winter storms can include high winds, freezing rain, sleet, heavy snowfall and extreme cold.

Severe winter storms can cause blocked roads, downed power lines, power outages and transportation accidents.

**In general, you should know the following terms:**

**Winter Storm Watch** means a winter storm is possible.

**Winter Storm Warning** means a winter storm is occurring or will soon occur.

**Blizzard Warning:** Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter of a mile) are expected for a period of three hours or longer.

**Frost/Freeze Warning:** Below freezing temperatures are expected.

**Freezing Rain:** Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines.

**Sleet:** Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground, causing moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.

**In the event of a winter storm, you should:**

Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack -a major cause of death during the winter.

Listen to your radio, television or NOAA Weather Radio for weather reports and emergency information.

Have an emergency kit in your home and car.

Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive, consider the following:

- \* Travel during the day and keep others informed of your schedule. \* Stay on main roads; avoid back roads and alleys.

Keep your gas tank as full as possible during cold weather.

Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep them at least three feet from flammable objects.

Dress for the weather. Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens, a hat and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

Watch for signs of frostbite - skin appears white and waxy, numbness or no feeling in that area and/or possible blisters.

Watch for signs of hypothermia - shivering and numbness, confusion or dizziness, stumbling and weakness, slow or slurred speech and shock.

Go to a medical facility immediately if you or someone you know is experiencing signs of hypothermia.

If you see homeless people stranded in the cold, call your local authorities so they can find a shelter for them.

## **TRAVEL ADVISORIES**

Floyd County Officials may issue travel advisories as a way of alerting the public to basic road and traveling conditions that may be encountered within Floyd County. The travel advisory system used by Floyd County is set by Indiana Law Code IC 10-14-3-29.5, and states as follows:

If officials feel a local travel advisory is warranted, the travel advisory shall fall under one of the 3 categories. These categories are similar to what the National Weather Service uses for severe weather.

**ADVISORY** - The lowest level of a local travel advisory, means that routine travel or activities may be restricted in areas because of a hazardous situation, and individuals should use caution or avoid those areas.

May be enacted by Emergency Management Department or Principal Executive Officer of a political subdivision.

**WATCH** - Means that conditions are threatening to the safety of the public. During a “watch” local travel advisory only essential travel, such as to and from work or in emergency situations is recommended and emergency action plans should be implemented by businesses, schools, governments agencies, and other organizations.

May be enacted by Emergency Management Department or Principal Executive Officer of a political subdivision.

**WARNING** - The highest level of a local travel advisory, means that travel is restricted to emergency workers only. Individuals should refrain from all travel unless extreme emergency, comply with necessary emergency measures, cooperate with public officials and disaster services forces in executing emergency plans, and obey and comply with the lawful directions of properly identified officers. Further restrictions may be included.

May only be enacted by the Principal Executive Officer of a political subdivision and only after a local disaster emergency is declared under section 29 of the above mentioned IC code. This includes having a signed disaster declaration on file with the State.

Information on local travel advisories may be found at [www.in.gov/dhs](http://www.in.gov/dhs) and then by clicking on “*County Travel Advisory Map*”

## **SNOW**

Indiana usually experiences at least some accumulation of snow during the winter months. Small amounts of snow can create slippery conditions on the roads and heavy amounts of snow can create dangerous driving conditions, blocked roads and power outages throughout the city. Snow in conjunction with gusty winds can significantly reduce visibility, therefore, motorists are urged to use extreme caution when these conditions are present.

In general, you should know the difference between an **advisory and a warning**. A snow **ADVISORY** means that snow is expected to occur and may accumulate. A snow **WARNING** means that snowfall is imminent or occurring.

### **In the event of a snow advisory or warning, you should:**

Listen to your radio, television or NOAA Weather Radio for weather reports and emergency information.

Have an emergency kit in your home and car.

Drive only if it is absolutely necessary. If you must drive, consider the following:

Travel during the day and keep others informed of your schedule.

Stay on main roads; avoid back roads and alleys.

**DO NOT** Park your car on the side of the road, roadways should be kept clear for snow plows and other emergency crews.

Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack -a major cause of death during the winter.

Watch for signs of frostbite - skin appears white and waxy, numbness or no feeling in that area and/or possible blisters.

Watch for signs of hypothermia - shivering and numbness, confusion or dizziness, stumbling and weakness, slow or slurred speech and shock.

Go to a medical facility immediately if you or someone you know is experiencing signs of hypothermia or frostbite.

If you see homeless people stranded in the cold, call your local authorities so they can find a shelter for them.

For power outages and downed wires, call your local utility company.

## **FLOOD**

A flood can develop slowly, over a period of several days, or it can develop within minutes, which is the case with Flash Floods.

In general, you should know the difference between a **watch** and a **warning**. A flash flood **WATCH** means that current or developing conditions are favorable for flash flooding in and close to the watch area, but the occurrence is neither certain nor imminent. A flash flood **WARNING** means that flash flooding is in progress, imminent or highly likely.

### **In the event of a flash flood watch or warning, you should:**

Keep your automobile gas tank filled; if electric power is cut off, gas stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.

Have an emergency kit with enough water and non-perishable food for 3 days.

Keep a portable radio, flashlight, extra batteries, manual can-opener and other essential supplies on hand.

Know your elevation above flood level.

Store drinking water in various containers and clean bathtubs. Water service may be interrupted.

Move to a safe area before access is cut off by floodwater.

DO NOT attempt to drive over a flooded road - you could be trapped or stranded. The depth of the water is not always obvious, or the road could be washed away. If you can't see it, you can't be sure it's there.

Be prepared to evacuate if necessary.

Check evacuation routes from your home and your workplace.

Be aware of creeks and other low-lying areas that are prone to sudden flooding.

For power outages or downed wires, call your utility company.

## **UTILITY OUTAGE**

A utility outage is a situation where commodities such as electricity, water or gas service are interrupted.

### **In general, you should take the following protective actions:**

Keep a battery-powered radio and flashlight; have an extra supply of fresh batteries.

Store essential supplies, such as, flashlights, batteries, a portable radio, water, non- perishable foods, blankets and a manual can-opener.

**DO NOT** use charcoal indoors! Without proper ventilation, fumes from burnt charcoal can cause a deadly situation.

If the air conditioner is not functioning, (during summer months) stay cool by keeping out of direct sunlight and moving to the lowest floor of the building.

Use food supplies wisely. Use refrigerated foods first, frozen foods second and non- perishable foods last.

Remember that perishable items from the refrigerator can be kept cool for about 4 hours if the refrigerator is left closed.

Learn how to safely and properly switch on/off gas valves, water lines, circuit breakers, once utilities have been restored.

For power outages or downed wires, call your utility company.

## **FIRES**

Fires are a common tragedy in residences. Such events can produce severe injuries, cause deaths and inflict serious financial loss.

### **In general, you should take the following precautions:**

DO NOT leave lit candles unattended.

Monitor the stove when cooking.

Keep matches and lighters away from children.

Install a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each level of your home.

Check the smoke alarm once a month.

Replace all smoke alarm batteries at least once a year.

Replace your smoke alarms every ten years.

Have a fire extinguisher in your home and know where the extinguisher is located at in your workplace. Make sure the fire extinguisher is up-to-date and make sure you know how to properly operate the extinguisher.

Have several escape routes planned from your home and your workplace.

If you see smoke or fire in your first escape route, use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit.

If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a bright-colored cloth at the window. If there is a telephone in the room, call the fire department and tell them where you are.

If your clothes catch fire, STOP DROP and ROLL.

If the door is cool leave quickly, close door behind you and crawl to an exit.

Once you are out, stay out.

DO NOT enter a fire-damaged building until authorities say it's okay.

Check for signs of smoke or heat in case the fire isn't totally out.

Have an electrician check your household wiring before you turn the power back on and DO NOT try to reconnect any utilities yourself.

For power outages or downed wires, call your utility company.

## **EXTREME TEMPERATURES**

You must be cautious when the heat index (an accurate measure of how hot it really feels when the effects of humidity are added to the high temperatures) reaches 95 degrees.

### **In the event of extreme heat, you should take the following precautions:**

Stay indoors as much as possible.

Turn on the air-conditioner or fan.

DO NOT leave children or pets in vehicles.

Drink plenty of water.

Wear light-colored, lightweight and loose-fitting clothes.

Apply sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outside (SPF 15-30 is best).

Limit exposure to the sun (the sun is most powerful between 10 am and 3 pm).

Watch for heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

If you see homeless people who need help, call your local authorities so they can find a shelter for them.

## **Cold**

Extreme cold consists of temperatures significantly colder than normal. Extremely cold conditions can cause a number of health and safety concerns, including frostbite, hypothermia, carbon monoxide poisoning and fires (from alternative heating sources).

### **In general, if you are experiencing extremely cold conditions you should:**

Be aware of the fire danger from space heaters and candles; keep such devices away from all flammable materials.

Install recommended smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (at least one of each per floor in your home).

Stay indoors and use safe heating sources.

Do not use charcoal or other fuel-burning devices, such as grills, that produce carbon monoxide indoors.

Stay dry and in wind protected areas outdoors.

Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. Wear mittens, a hat and cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and eat high-caloric foods.

Watch for signs of frostbite—skin appears white and waxy, numbness or no feeling in that area and/or possible blisters.



## **EARTHQUAKES**

**In general, if you feel an earthquake you should:** Take cover under a desk, table, bed or doorframe, stay clear of windows and other glass

Stay put until the shaking stops.

Find an open area clear of buildings and power lines if you are outdoors.

Stop your vehicle (preferably in an open area).

Listen to the radio and follow instructions.

DO NOT enter damaged structures.

Check all gas lines.

Inspect chimney or have chimney inspected before using the fireplace.

Expect to feel aftershocks, which are usually smaller in size, and take the aforementioned precautions.

For power outages, damaged gas lines or downed wires, call your utility company.

## **TORNADOES**

Tornadoes are violent storms that can strike anywhere, at any time and with little warning. Stay alert to these danger signs:

Severe thunderstorms with strong, gusty winds

A dark, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from the sky to the ground

A roaring sound

Know the difference between a **watch** and a **warning**. A tornado **WATCH** means conditions are favorable for a tornado. A tornado **WARNING** means a tornado has been sighted or detected by weather radar: **Take shelter immediately!**

**In the event of a Tornado Warning, protect yourself and your family:**

If you are at home, go to your basement or a central room on the lower level. Stay away from windows.

If you are in a public building, go to the designated shelter area or a central room on the lower level. Stay away from windows.

If you are driving, stop your vehicle, get out and go to a storm shelter or lowest level in a nearby building.

If you are in a trailer or mobile home get out and go to a storm shelter or lowest level in a nearby building. Mobile homes even if tied down offer little protection from tornadoes.

If you are outside lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding.

Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.

Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.

Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

For power outages or downed wires, call your utility company.

## **TERRORIST ATTACKS**

**In general, you should also take the following precautionary measures:**

Be alert and aware of your surroundings.

Report conspicuous behavior.

Take precautions when traveling.

Do not accept packages from strangers.

Do not leave luggage unattended.

Promptly report unusual behavior, suspicious or unattended packages and strange devices to the police or security personnel.

Learn where emergency exits are located in buildings you frequent.

Plan evacuation routes in case of an emergency.

Be prepared to do without services you normally depend on - electricity, telephone, natural gas, gasoline pumps, cash registers, ATMs and Internet transactions.

Create an emergency kit for your workplace (in case you need to evacuate from work).

Work with building owners to ensure the following items are located on each floor of the building:

- \* Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- \* Several flashlights and extra batteries
- \* First aid kit and manual
- \* Hard hats and dust masks
- \* Fire extinguisher
- \* Fluorescent tape to rope off dangerous areas

Report suspicious behavior by calling your local police or sheriff's department.

## **RADIOLOGICAL/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

The release of radiological and/or hazardous materials, whether intentionally or an accident, can pose a risk to health and safety. The release can also cause a mass evacuation in and around the area where the release occurred, or residents may be told to "shelter in place".

### **In the event of the release of radiological and/or hazardous materials, you should:**

Report the incident to authorities immediately.

Stay away from the area where the spill occurred.

Cover mouth and nose with a cloth or a surgical face mask.

Bring pets inside.

Evacuate if told to do so, and take pets with you.

Follow the evacuation routes provided by the authorities (short-cuts can potentially place you in more danger).

Have an emergency kit on hand.

Seal house so contaminants cannot enter (if told to shelter-in-place).

Close all windows and doors.

Turn off ventilation systems (cut-off exposure to outside air).

Stay tuned to the radio or television for updates and instructions.

## **SHELTER IN PLACE**

It is more dangerous to be outside in some types of emergencies. In these emergencies, the best, safest response is to "shelter in place." This means staying inside a safe building - your house, workplace, school, or other building - or entering a nearby building and seeking cover.

### **If you are asked to shelter in place:**

Shelter in a room with the fewest doors and/or windows possible. Ideally choose a room that has just one door and at least 10 square feet per person.

Seal doors, windows and fireplaces.

If the emergency is airborne (such as a disease, chemical release, or radiation) turn off ventilation and hot air heating systems (radiator heat may remain on).

Keep at least one phone line open for emergency calls.

Stay tuned to your radio or television, or scan official websites for information and updates.

Use your emergency kit.

## **EMERGENCY KIT**

### **Make a Kit**

Preparing an emergency kit in advance can save precious time if you must evacuate or seek shelter. Put the following items in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or suitcase with wheels. Keep your kit in an easily accessible place.

Add the following to your kit:

At least a three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Store in sealed, unbreakable containers.

A three-to five-day supply of non-perishable canned food, and a non-electric can opener

Battery operated or hand crank flashlight

Battery-powered or hand crank radio

Extra batteries

Wrench and/or pliers to turn off utilities

Whistle to signal for help

First aid kit

Prescription medications for at least one week

List of family physicians, important medical information, and the style and serial number of medical devices, such as pacemakers

Cell phone charger

Extra set of eyeglasses, or contact lenses and solution

Rain gear, sturdy shoes, and a change of clothing

Blankets, bedding, and/or sleeping bags

Identification, credit cards, cash

Photocopies of important family documents including bank and home insurance information

Extra set of car and house keys

Local maps

N95 dust masks to help filter contaminated air

Plastic sheeting, duct tape, and scissors to shelter in place

Tools: screwdrivers, waterproof matches, a fire extinguisher, flares, plastic storage containers, needle and thread, pen and paper, a compass, garbage bags, moist towelettes, and regular household bleach.

Special items for seniors, family members with disabilities, infants and young children.

Change batteries in all your equipment at least once a year. An easy way to remember is to do it when you turn your clocks back in the fall.

**Special Items for Infants**

Formula, bottled water, bottles, nipples

Jars of baby food and baby spoons

Diapers and diaper rash ointment

Medications

Moist towelettes and hand sanitizer

Blankets, pacifiers, and layers of clothing

Sunhat in warm months, warm hat in cool months

Several small, lightweight toys

### **FIRST AID KIT**

In any emergency you or a family member may be cut, burned, or suffer other injuries. Basic supplies will make you better prepared to help you or your loved ones with injuries.

Things you should have:

Two pairs of Latex, or other sterile gloves (if you are allergic to Latex).

Sterile dressings to stop bleeding.

Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect.

Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection.

Burn ointment to prevent infection.

Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes.

Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant.

Thermometer

Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates.

Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies.

### **Things it may be good to have:**

Scissors

Tweezers

Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever

Anti-diarrhea medication

Antacid (for upset stomach)

Laxative

Be sure to have an emergency contact list accessible in an event of a disaster.

### **Take the following steps to create an emergency contact list:**

Pick an out-of-state friend or relative that all family members will call if you become separated from each other. (If local phone circuits are busy during an emergency, it may be easier to call out-of-state.)

Give the name, phone number, and email address to each member of your family.



Store the list in a plastic zip-lock bag (to avoid water damage).

## **EVACUATION**

In some emergencies, you may be told to evacuate your home or neighborhood. Officials will tell you when to evacuate and what routes are open. If you are being told to evacuate, look for information about available shelters through your local emergency management agency.

If you have time, close windows, lock doors, and unplug appliances. Authorities will tell you if you need to turn off your utilities (water, gas, electricity). It is important to have a plan for your pet in the case of an evacuation.

During an emergency, stay tuned to your local radio station or listen to emergency personnel for instructions about which route to follow. Take your emergency kit with you.

### **Evacuation by Walking**

In many circumstances, walking is an effective means of evacuating a neighborhood. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing, and don't forget to take your emergency kit with you.

### **Evacuation by Car or Other Vehicle**

Be calm and orderly. Obey all speed limits, signs, signals and other laws.

### **On the Bus or Train**

If there is an emergency while you are on the public transportation, wait for the bus or train to stop. Wait for instructions.

Do not exit until told to do so.

The safest place is usually inside the bus or train.

Use the box with the emergency door release handle located to the left of the center doors of the car. Pull the handle down, slide the left-center door to the left, and exit the train.

On the bus, windows and ceiling hatches serve as emergency exits. Use the red levers on either side of a window to release it.

## **PET PLAN**

The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire or flood, tornado or terrorist attack depends largely on emergency planning done today. Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets.

Create an emergency kit for your pet, including:

- ID collar and rabies tag
- Current photo (in case they get lost)
- Carrier and leash
- Medications
- Newspapers and plastic trash bags
- Veterinary records
- At least a three-day supply of food and water

Even if you can't bring your pet with you, make your pet as comfortable and safe as possible, then evacuate. If your pet could pose a hazard to others, keep it confined.

## **SENIORS AND DISABLED PLAN**

Each person's needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all hazards and put plans in place. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation.

### **Below are steps you can take to prepare for an emergency:**

- Create a personal support network of family and friends who can help you in an emergency.
- Make sure that someone in your network has a key to your home and knows where you keep emergency supplies.
- Keep at least a week's worth of medications on hand.
- Keep a copy of all prescriptions as well as dosage or treatment information.
- If you undergo any regular medical treatments, or if you require home health care services, talk to your service provider about its emergency plans.
- Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you need to prepare.
- If you are dependent on electricity for a wheelchair or any life-sustaining device, consult your power provider.
- Make copies of important documents, including your health insurance and Medicare and Medicaid cards.
- Keep this list in your emergency kit, along with the names and phone numbers of the people in your support network.
- Keep emergency cash or travelers checks on hand.
- For your emergency kit, consider items such as eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries, oxygen, dentures, and emergency foods that meet any special dietary needs.

## **UTILITIES**

During an emergency, it may become necessary to turn off the utilities at your home or business.

### **Before an emergency:**

Locate the electric, gas and water shut-off valves.

Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.

Teach family members how to turn off utilities.

**Note:** If you turn the gas off, a professional must turn it back on. Do not attempt to do this yourself.

## **CHILDREN**

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan how you will contact one another and what you will do in different situations.

### **What Your Children Need to Know:**

How to dial 911 for emergency assistance.

Your name, phone number and address.

How to reach your parents and other family members.

Contact information for the family's out-of-state contact.

How to make long-distance telephone calls.

## **FAMILY PLAN**

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance.

### **Below are simple steps to take to ensure you and your family is prepared:**

- Teach your children how to make long-distance telephone calls and how to dial 911 for emergency assistance.
- Program emergency numbers into all phones.
- Pick two places where your family will reunite after an emergency: A place near your home and a place away from your home in case you cannot return home after an emergency.
- Make sure everyone knows the addresses and phone numbers of both meeting places.
- Know and practice all possible exit routes from your neighborhood.
- Put important family records (birth certificates, healthcare records, passports) in a safe place, such as a fireproof and waterproof safe or a bank safety deposit box.
- Practice your plan with all household members.
- Include your children in your planning, practice your plans with them, and quiz them to make sure they understand what to do. Always stress that this is a "just in case" plan.
- Get a copy of your child's school or daycare emergency plans.
- Make plans for where you can meet your child after an evacuation.
- Make sure that the school has up-to-date contact information for you and other family members.
- Authorize a friend or family member to pick up your child in an emergency if you are unable to do so.
- Identify an easily accessible location in your home to store your emergency kit and make sure everyone in the home is aware of the location. If you have young children, make sure your emergency kit includes toys, books, and other personal items for your child.

## **HOME PLAN**

During a disaster, everyday objects in your home can cause injury or damage.

### **Take the following simple steps to make your home safer:**

Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and change batteries every year.

Install carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas.

Move beds away from windows.

Clear hallways and exits for easy evacuation.

Keep a fire extinguisher on each level and know how and when to use them.

Store flammable or highly reactive chemicals (such as bleach, ammonia, paint thinner) securely and separate from each other.

Know how and when to switch off your utilities.

Ensure that all window safety bars have emergency releases.