

EVACUATIONS

Natural disasters and dangerous storms are still quite rare in northwestern Alberta. The most common threats come from spring flooding and from wildfires. In order to assist our priests in responding appropriately to calls for evacuation because of a wildfire or flooding, the Archdiocese has prepared these checklists. Priests are expected to follow all government instructions in emergency situations and are asked to ensure the safekeeping of themselves and the property of the Archdiocese.

- **What to know**

Please review this information twice a year with your PFC or PPC. The checklists and instructions are generic. You should make any changes that you and your consultants believe will improve your response to emergency situations.

Your first source of information in cases of wildfires, dangerous storms and other natural disasters is the government, municipal and provincial. It is essential that you stay in contact, through the local radio station and the alert system on your cellphone. Therefore:

- Be sure you have a battery-powered radio and sufficient batteries in your rectory
- If you have an Android or Apple phone, install the Alberta Emergency Alert app available for free at the Google Play Store and the App Store.

- **What to take**

Your principal concern in emergency situations must be your safety and welfare. Your second concern is the Blessed Sacrament and parish sacramental registers.

- **What to protect**

If you have sufficient time in the circumstances of a wildfire or other similar emergency, you should take steps to protect the church and rectory property, as described in the checklist. It is very helpful that, as soon as possible after arriving at a parish assignment, you take the time to learn:

- Where to turn off the water to the church and rectory buildings
- How to drain the hot water tank
- How to turn off and re-light the pilot on the hot water tank, furnace and/or boiler

- **When to leave**

Until there is an official evacuation order, it is your decision whether you remain in the rectory. If you do leave, you must inform the chancery office and your PPC and PFC chairpersons (or other parishioner, if neither chairperson is in the community), by phone or in person, of your departure and your destination. You must also inform the same people of your arrival at your destination and update any contact details.

When there is an official evacuation order, you **must** leave. You **must** follow all instructions from authorized officials. When you depart following an evacuation order, you **must** contact the chancery immediately or as soon as possible after you leave, with the information about the evacuation and your destination. You **must** also contact the chancery when you arrive at your destination.

Evacuation Instructions

In the event of an evacuation alert:

- **Plan to be away for at least three (3) days and prepare the items on the checklist**
- **Listen to a local radio station to stay updated on the situation (use a battery-powered radio)**
- **Download the Alberta Emergency Alert app (available at Google Play Store and Apple App Store) to your cellphone and computer; keep your cellphone to hand (and charged)**
- **Be sure you know where to shut off water and electricity to the church and rectory.**

In the event of an evacuation order:

- **Follow all instructions and vacate your residence as ordered.**
- **As much as possible, go with your parishioners to the same evacuation destination.**
- **Double check that all items on the checklist are in your vehicle.**
- **Follow the route(s) specified by officials. Do NOT use any other route.**
- **Drive carefully, with headlights on. Make way for pedestrians and emergency vehicles.**
- **Stop when instructed to stop. Stop at checkpoints and report to authorities as instructed. Inform officials when you leave the checkpoint.**
- **Do NOT return to your residence until officials permit you to do so.**
- **When safe to do so, inform the Chancery office that you have left your residence and where you plan to stay.**

Protect the church and rectory:

- **Move flammables, such as propane tanks and barbecues, gasoline cans and lawn mowers, away from the building.**
- **Unplug all appliances.**
- **Shut off water and electricity if officials ask you to do so.**
- **If the evacuation is in winter, be sure to drain all water from pipes by turning off main valve and then opening all faucets/taps and flushing toilets until empty. Turn off the pilot light on the hot water tank and drain it. Protect the valve, inlet pipe, and meter or pump by wrapping them with blankets.**
- **Do NOT turn off natural gas unless officials order you to do so.**
- **Lock the doors and windows when you leave.**

If a registry or evacuation centre for evacuees is set up, register with them. This will ensure that you receive all necessary information and services during the period of evacuation.

<http://www.aema.alberta.ca/documents/aema-ppp-evacuation.pdf>

Evacuation Checklist

- **Prepare before departure**

Emergency supply kit: 3-day supply of non-perishable food, 3 gallons of water per person; change of clothes (including underwear and socks)
Keep evacuation vehicle gas tank full
Map marked with two evacuation routes
Mass kit (hosts, wine, receptacles, missalette, breviary)
Prescription or special medications (two-week supply, at least)
First aid kit
Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
Credit cards and cash (at least \$100)
Driver's license, passport, Visitor Record, birth certificate
Copies of driver's license, passport, Visitor Record, birth certificate
Copy parish computer files to hard drive, disks, USB sticks
Secure historical parish registers
Battery-powered radio and extra batteries

- **Bring with you**

Current sacramental registers
Blessed sacrament
Mass kit
Emergency supply kit
Prescription or special medications (two-week supply, at least)
First aid kit
Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
Credit cards and cash (at least \$100)
Driver's license, passport, Visitor Record, birth certificate
Copies of driver's license, passport, Visitor Record, birth certificate
Copy of parish computer files (hard drive, disks, USB sticks)
Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
Personal computer
Chargers for cell phone, laptop, tablet, etc.

- **Additional items if you have space and time**

An extra set of car keys
Personal valuables
Photographs and other irreplaceable items
Sanitation supplies: toilet paper, towel, soap, hand sanitizer
Extra clothing
Bedding and pillows

- **After departure**

Advise Chancery office of your departure
Register with the evacuation center as directed by your municipal government