

NATURAL DISASTERS/SEVERE WEATHER

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

We are all confronted with natural disasters/severe weather from time to time. The purpose of this document is to give our Public Housing Residents pertinent information as to what protective measures they can take when facing a potentially threatening situation.

To Prepare for a Thunderstorm you should:

- *Go indoors, if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.
- *Postpone outdoor activities.
- *Get inside your home, building, or hard top automobile (not a convertible). Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.
- *Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- *Secure outside doors. Close window blinds, shades, or curtains.
- *Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- *Use a corded telephone only for emergencies. Cordless and cellular telephones are safer.
- *Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- *If you have a battery-operated radio or battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio, tune in for updates from local officials.
- *Avoid the following: Natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated trees in an open area; Hilltops, open fields, the beach, or a boat on the water; Isolated shed or other small structures in open areas; Anything metal – tractors, lawn equipment, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs, and bicycles.
- *During a Thunderstorm: If you are in a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. If you are in an open area, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods. If you are on open water, get to land and find shelter immediately. If you are anywhere and you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates that lightning is about to strike), squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND.

To Prepare for a Tornado you should:

- *Avoid the wind and debris. Go to the safest place available in your home. The middle of a building is usually safer than near exterior walls, especially those without windows. Hallways

can provide more protection than rooms with windows or exterior walls, but under certain circumstances, wind flow in hallways that have exterior doors at each end can be enhanced by wind tunnel effect. Closing interior doors can help impede wind flow through a structure in some cases. Additional protection in buildings can be provided perhaps in a bathtub, and by covering oneself with blankets, mattresses, or coats, and even wearing head protection such as bicycle helmets.

*Mobile homes should be evacuated for more sturdy shelter if a tornado is imminent and time permits. The decision about where to go should be based on how much time there is to act and what type of shelters are available. The traditional advice given to those outdoors or in mobile homes and vehicles is to lie in a ditch or culvert. This should be considered as a last resort and used only when a tornado cannot be avoided and when quick access to a sturdy building or shelter is impossible.

*The City has a warning system whereby a siren is sounded if a tornado has been sighted in area. Always, keep ears open and be alert. Also, if possible, check for weather warnings on your TV and radio.

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

To Prepare for Extreme Heat you should:

*Recognize symptoms of a Heat Stroke: Extremely high body temperature; Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating); Rapid, strong pulse; Throbbing headache; Dizziness; Nausea; Confusion; Unconsciousness. If you see any of these signs, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you do the following: get the victim to a shaded area; Cool the victim rapidly using whatever methods you can, such as a tub of cool water, a cool shower, cool water from a garden hose, sponge with cool water, fanning. Monitor body temperature (if possible) and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101-102 degrees. If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions. Get medical assistance as soon as possible. Do not give the victim fluids to drink.

*Recognize symptoms of Heat Exhaustion: Heavy sweating; Paleness; Muscle cramps; Tiredness; Weakness; Dizziness; Headache; Nausea or vomiting; Fainting. The skin may be cool and moist. The victim's pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms are severe or the victim has heart problems or high blood pressure. Otherwise, help the victim to cool off and seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour. Cooling measures that may be effective include the following: Cool, nonalcoholic beverages, as directed by a physician; Rest; Cool shower, bath, or sponge bath; An air-conditioned environment; Lightweight clothing.

*Recognize symptoms of Heat Cramps: Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms – usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs – that may occur in association with strenuous activity. If you have heart problems or are on a low-sodium diet, get medical attention for heat cramps. If medical attention is not necessary, take these steps: Stop all activity and sit quietly in a cool place; Drink clear juice or a sports beverage; Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or

- heat stroke; See medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in one hour.
- *Recognize symptoms of Sunburn: Skin becomes red, painful, and abnormally warm after sun exposure. Consult a doctor if the sunburn affects an infant younger than one year of age or if these symptoms are present: Fever; Fluid-filled blisters; Severe pain. Also, remember these tips when treating sunburn: Avoid repeated sun exposure; Apply cold compresses or immerse the sunburned area in cool water; Apply moisturizing lotion to affected areas. Do not use salve, butter, or ointment. Do not break blisters.
 - *Recognizing Heat Rash: Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather. It can occur at any age, but is most common in young children. Heat rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. It is more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases. The best treatment for heat rash is keep the affected area dry. Dusting powder may be used to increase comfort, but avoid using ointments or creams—they keep the skin warm and moist and may make the condition worse. Treating heat rash is simple and usually does not require medical assistance. Other heat-related problems can be much more severe.
 - *To prepare for extreme heat, you should: Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun; Stay out of sunshine; Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.; Drink plenty of water. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease, or are on fluid-restricted diets or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake. Limit intake of alcoholic beverages; Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible; Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat; Check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning and who spend much of their time alone; Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles; Avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat and take frequent breaks.

To Prepare for a Flood, you should:

- *Listen to the radio or television for information.
- *Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- *Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain.
- *If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following:
 - Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Put low lying essential items on top of tables or counters, etc.
- *Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- *The following are guidelines for the period following a flood:
 - Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink. Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines. Also, water may contain snakes.

Avoid moving water.

Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.

Stay away from downed power lines and report them to the power company.

Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.

Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.

Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.

Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.

To Prepare for a Hurricane, you should:

*Listen to the radio or TV for information.

*Secure your home—secure outdoor objects/furniture or bring them indoors.

*Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.

*Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

*In case of power outage, if time permits, stock up on food items that don't have to be cooked.

*You should evacuate under the following conditions:

If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions.

If you feel you are in danger.

*If you are unable to evacuate follow these guidelines:

Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.

Close all interior doors – secure and brace external doors.

Keep curtains, shades and/or blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm – winds will pick up again.

Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway.

Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

To Prepare for Winter Storms and Extreme Cold, you should:

*Listen to your radio, television, or NOAA Weather Radio, if you have one, for weather reports and emergency information.

*Drive only if it is absolutely necessary.

PLEASE REMEMBER: IF YOU ARE HAVING A PROBLEM DUE TO A NATURAL DISASTER/SEVERE WEATHER, CALL THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS: 7:00 A.M. – 5:30 P.M., MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY. SHOULD YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY AND HOUSING AUTHORITY STAFF ARE NOT ON DUTY, YOU SHOULD CALL 911.

Home & Cell Phone Numbers for PHA Staff:

Pam Bedsole – 897-3570 or 313-5610

Gary Lambert- 897-⁵⁵⁹⁷~~597~~ or 313-0077

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