

Emergency Preparedness and Bioterrorism Report

ELKHORN LOGAN VALLEY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT-
GINA UHING, HEALTH DIRECTOR



DEPARTMENT

Introduction

Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department (ELVPHD) seeks to spread knowledge and resources in order to help the public be better prepared for emergency situations. It is important to assess the emergency preparedness of the general population as well as the preparedness of emergency responders in the area. Every person in our service area can take steps to prepare themselves for emergencies and disasters in order to minimize health risk or possibility of death.

Emergency Preparedness in the Home

Preparing for Emergencies

ELVPHD helps to prepare the public for emergencies by providing preparedness tips and trainings. We provide information on making family communications plans, building a basic or expanded emergency kit, and other considerations. Most information is received through FEMA.¹ A copy of an example of a preparedness information document can be found as Appendix 1. We suggest that families take time to plan before an event occurs so that all members will know how to communicate with each other during the event. This will help to ensure that families know that their members are safe, and to ultimately help them get back together if they become separated.

We also provide information on how to supply emergency kits. In addition to non-perishable food and water, we suggest cell phones and chargers, a first aid kit, a flashlight, emergency weather radio, etc. We often utilize FEMA's Emergency Supply List (see Appendix 2) to help direct our constituents in emergency preparing.²

Fire Safety

In the 2016 CHA survey for Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department, respondents were asked about their preparedness and prevention behaviors for emergencies around the home. About 54% of respondents stated that they have a working carbon monoxide detector in their home. The prevalence of smoke detectors in the home was much higher at 95.2%, and 63.7% of respondents have a fire extinguisher in their home.

Other fire safety-related questions related to heating or lighting behaviors. About half of respondents use a portable heater in the home, and of these about 83% use heaters that meet safety standards (those that shut off if tipped over, etc.). About 19% of those with fireplaces or wood burners do not have the chimney cleaned annually or are not in good repair. When asked about candle safety in the home, 97.6% of respondents either indicated that they did practice candle safety or that they did not burn candles in the home. About 1% did not practice safety, and about 1.5% did not know the safety precautions to take for burning candles.

Family Preparation and Certificates

According to the 2016 CHA survey, 64.6% of respondents stated that their family did have a plan on how to communicate and what actions to take during an emergency. This is improved since the 2013 Survey,

¹ <https://www.ready.gov/>

² List can also be found at http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1390846764394-dc08e309debe561d866b05ac84daf1ee/checklist_2014.pdf Accessed 6/28/16

see Table 1 for details. Out of these families, about 31% of 2016 respondents do not talk about this plan with everyone in the household at least yearly.

Table 1: Does your family have a plan on how to communicate and what actions to take during an emergency?

		Frequency	Percent	2016 Valid Percent	2013 Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	808	54.6%	64.6%	22.1%
	No	378	25.5%	30.2%	75.6%
	I don't know	65	4.4%	5.2%	2.3%
	Total	1251	84.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Missing	System	229	15.5%		
Total		1480	100.0%		

Only 36.7% of respondents stated that they have some kind of emergency preparedness kit at home.³ Nearly 61.3% of respondents do not have a system of managing medications in an emergency, 3.8% did not know if they had such a system to manage in an emergency.

About 60% of participants in the 2016 CHA survey reported that someone in their home had completed a CPR course in the past two years, while 47.8% indicated that a First Aid course had been completed by someone in the home in the same time frame. Tables 2 and 3 show that these have gone down among CHA respondents since the 2013 survey. This decrease may be due to changed demographics from 2013 to 2016, however there is still a strong enough decrease (greater than 10% in both cases) to make this an area of improvement.

Table 2: Has someone in your home completed a CPR course in the past two years?

		Frequency	Percent	2016 Valid Percent	2013 Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	772	52.2%	60.0%	71.1%
	No	502	33.9%	39.0%	26.6%
	I don't know	13	.9%	1.0%	2.3%
	Total	1287	87.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Missing	System	193	13.0%		
Total		1480	100.0%		

³ Emergency preparedness kit question listed examples of items to be included: “non-perishable foods, bottled water, flashlights, and batteries”

Table 3: Has someone in your home completed a First Aid course in the past two years?

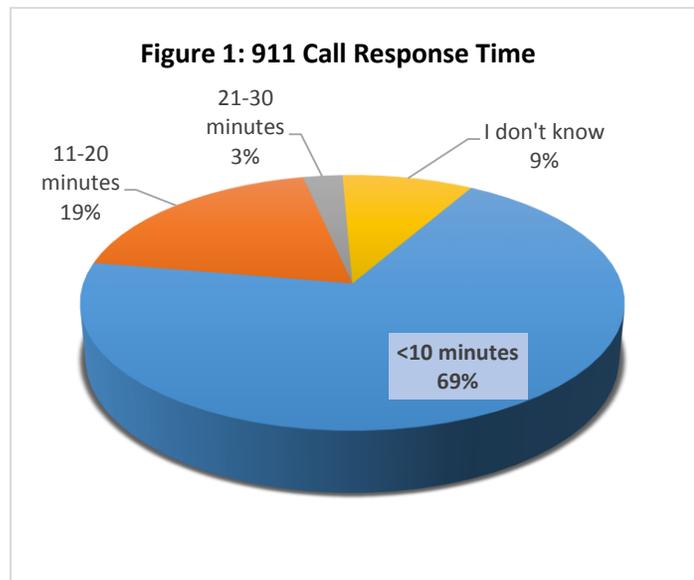
		Frequency	Percent	2016 Valid Percent	2013 Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	616	41.6%	47.8%	61.9%
	No	645	43.6%	50.1%	34.3%
	I don't know	27	1.8%	2.1%	3.8%
	Total	1288	87.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Missing	System	192	13.0%		
Total		1480	100.0%		

Emergency Preparedness at School/Work

Respondents were asked about whether their place of business or school had a written emergency action plan. In 2016, 72% of respondents stated that their work or school had a written emergency action plan. Of these, about 84% of respondents state that employees or students receive training at least yearly on this emergency action plan. About 8% of respondents did not know if such a plan existed for their work or school. About 7% of respondents stated that their work or school did not have an emergency action plan.

Emergency Response

In the 2016 CHA Access to Care report, emergency care structures and personnel were discussed. About seventeen (17) EMS services are based in the ELVPHD health district, with more that are outside of the health district but are still utilized when necessary.⁴ Only one of which is has non-volunteer EMS personnel. These services are spread evenly throughout the district and utilize both professional and volunteer units. All three hospitals in the service area have 24-hour emergency care availability.



About half (49.3%) of respondents stated that they or someone in their household used the emergency room, been admitted to, or used outpatient services at a hospital in the last 24 months. Only 8.5% of respondents had made a call to 911 for any reason in the last 24 months. For the most recent time dialing 911, 69.4% of respondents said that emergency personnel responded within 10 minutes. Further breakdown is shown in Figure 1.

Bioterrorism

ELVPHD also participates in Bioterrorism training and preparedness. These types of events include toxic and infectious agents. ELVPHD partners with local, state, and national agencies in order to be as

⁴ According to internal ELVPHD records

prepared as possible for such an event. ELVPHD and partners participate in trainings, drills, and full scale exercises each year in order to be as prepared as possible in an event that emergency response procedures are put in place.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon 2016 CHA data, one focus of the emergency preparations work done through ELVPHD will be to continue to support education on preparing emergency kits and emergency plans. Although 64.6% of families communicate about what to do in the event of an emergency, only 36.7% of individuals have prepared an emergency kit. Another area that could be improved upon are the rates of individuals that have been trained in CPR and First Aid. The decreased amount of the population that had non-expired training in CPR and First Aid warrants concern in a predominantly rural area where it would be beneficial for many more people to be prepared for such an emergency.

The 2016 CHA respondents seemed well prepared for fire emergencies with over 95% of homes practicing candle safety and over 95% with a working smoke detector. Helping to increase the amount of families with emergency communication plans and families with working fire extinguishers in the home will only help to protect and ensure the safety of area families.

References

FEMA. n.d. *Emergency Supply List*. Accessed 6 2016. http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1390846764394-dc08e309debe561d866b05ac84daf1ee/checklist_2014.pdf.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Emergency Preparedness Planning

1. **Make a Family Communications Plan.** The time to make a plan is in advance of an event. Take the time to discuss with all of your family members how you will communicate with each other and get back together in various situations.

Use the resources at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) to help you do this part. There is a webpage [here](#) that discusses this process. In addition, the website has printable plans like [this one](#) which can help you make this even easier!

2. **Build a Basic Emergency Kit.** When we think of emergency kits, we almost always remember to line up food and water. In addition to those, consider adding things such as cell phones and charging supplies, a first aid kit, a flashlight and an emergency weather radio.

For a full list of [emergency supplies](#), check out the lists that are available on [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

3. **Expand Your Basic Emergency Kit.** As you add supplies to your kit, consider adding [some additional items](#) to it. Included in this expanded kit are things like prescription medications and pet supplies.

4. **Pack at Least a Three-Day Supply of Food and Water.** Keep in mind dietary restrictions and avoid foods that will make you thirsty. When the seasons move into summer and the air temperature rises, more water may be necessary. In very hot temperatures, water needs can double.

Visit the sections at [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) on [food](#) and [water](#) for more guidelines.

5. **Have a Plan for Your Pets.** Consider packing additional supplies for your pet in your emergency kit. Things such as additional pet food will be necessary, should you need to relocate for a time. Keeping a secure pet carrier or leash on hand for your pet will be of benefit in case your pet panics so that he can't escape.

[Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) has excellent [pet and animal emergency planning](#) materials at their website.

Appendix 2



Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Ready

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.



Emergency
Supply List



FEMA

www.ready.gov

Appendix 2 Continued:



Recommended Items to Include In a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps

Through its *Ready Campaign*, the Federal Emergency Management Agency educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including natural disasters and terrorist attacks. *Ready* asks individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses.

All Americans should have some basic supplies on hand in order to survive for at least three days if an emergency occurs. Following is a listing of some basic items that every emergency supply kit should include. However, it is important that individuals review this list and consider where they live and the unique needs of their family in order to create an emergency supply kit that will meet these needs. Individuals should also consider having at least two emergency supply kits, one full kit at home and smaller portable kits in their workplace, vehicle or other places they spend time.



Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, DC 20472