

Emergency Preparedness Toolkit

for Individuals

Planning for Non-Emergency Situations

Presented by
**PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

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Be Prepared

The Philadelphia Fire Department Emergency Medical Services division deploys 50 ambulances to cover the emergency medical needs of Philadelphia's residents and visitors. In 2015 these ambulances went on 270,000 EMS 9-1-1 responses, making this one of the busiest EMS systems in the country. Demand for the PFD's medical services increases every year. A significant number of EMS responses are for non-emergency or chronic medical issues.

We encourage the public to be educated and plan for non-emergency and non-life threatening situations that may require professional medical care outside of the home. This will ensure that the PFD's ambulances are available to respond promptly when truly needed.

Here are a few tips to get your plan started.

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Planning for Non-Emergency Situations

- ✓ Pregnancy/labor & delivery transportation
- ✓ Chronic care management
- ✓ Limited access to transportation
- ✓ The emergency is not life threatening

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Pregnancy

Planning Tips

When it gets close to the baby's delivery date, it will be time to plan for your transportation needs for non-emergency labor and delivery.

- ✓ Pack your bag for the hospital and don't forget to prepare a list of important phone numbers.
- ✓ Let your family and friends know your due date and to be ready to take you to your delivery facility when it's time.
- ✓ If you have no access to a vehicle, make a list of phone numbers for taxi or private car services.
- ✓ When you call for transportation, have your facility location in mind and ask for estimated travel time.
- ✓ If there is a medical emergency with the pregnancy, call emergency ambulance services immediately.

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Chronic Care Management

Chronic care management can be stressful to seniors and people with chronic medical conditions or pain. Planning for non-emergency care outside of the home can help eliminate some of the stress.

- ✓ Follow prescribed guidelines for your health condition
- ✓ Work with your doctor to monitor your condition
- ✓ Let friends and family know how to support non-emergency and emergency health situations
- ✓ Plan transportation for regularly scheduled doctor and care outside of the home
- ✓ Develop a list of transportation resources

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Transportation Management

If your situation is not life threatening, there are alternatives to visiting a hospital emergency room. Transportation alternatives to EMS 9-1-1 ambulances should also be considered such as: public transportation, taxi cabs, personal and private vehicles.

A ride in an ambulance does not guarantee you will receive care faster or be taken to the facility of your choice.

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Planning Tips

- ✓ Keep doctor and health care providers numbers in your phone and available to friends and family.
- ✓ Consult with family and friends about transportation needs for regular visits, non-emergency services and emergency care.
- ✓ Care for yourself in the manner prescribe by your doctor or health care professional.

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When To Call 911

Use an ambulance when:

- ✓ The condition appears to be life threatening
 - ◆ Are there indications the person could die without getting to the hospital right away?

- ✓ The condition could worsen and become life-threatening on the way to the hospital
 - ◆ Are there indications the person may deteriorate quickly?

- ✓ Could moving the person cause additional injury?

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Acute Emergencies

Symptoms that require ambulance service

- ✓ Severe difficulty breathing, especially that does not improve with rest.
- ✓ Chest pain
- ✓ A fast heartbeat (more than 120-150) at rest especially if associated with shortness of breath or feeling faint
- ✓ You witness someone faint/pass out or someone is unresponsive (comatose)
- ✓ Difficulty speaking, numbness, or weakness of any part of the body
- ✓ Sudden dizziness, weakness or mental changes (confusion, very odd behavior, difficulty walking)
- ✓ Sudden dizziness, weakness or mental changes (confusion, very odd behavior, difficulty walking)
- ✓ Sudden blindness or vision changes
- ✓ Heavy bleeding from your mouth, nose, vagina or bottom
- ✓ Bleeding from any wound that won't stop with direct pressure
- ✓ Broken bones visible through an open wound, or a broken leg
- ✓ Drowning
- ✓ Choking
- ✓ Severe burns
- ✓ Allergic reaction, especially if there is any difficulty breathing
- ✓ Extremely hot or cold
- ✓ Poisoning or drug overdose
- ✓ New severe headache
- ✓ Sudden intense severe pain
- ✓ Someone is threatening to hurt or kill themselves or someone else

Source: American College of Emergency Physicians

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At the scene of an emergency

Action Steps

- ✓ Evaluate the scene
- ✓ Assess safety
- ✓ Prioritize care
- ✓ Check for medical alert tags
- ✓ Do a head-to-toe check
- ✓ Move only if necessary

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Thank You

To request a community education workshop
contact us at 215-686-5993.

For more information visit our website at
www.Phila.gov/Fire

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