



**NATURAL
HAZARD
MITIGATION
PLAN
2021/2022**

RUTHERFORDTON, NC



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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Rutherfordton has compiled this booklet to help you prepare yourself, your family, your home, and your community for emergency situations. This guide contains information about how to contact government agencies for specific information before or after an emergency, how to compile an emergency kit for your household, and what to do during specific natural hazards. This booklet is not meant to be a comprehensive source and additional resources are provided in each section.

HISTORY

The Town of Rutherfordton and surrounding community has historically been affected by numerous natural disasters. Weather conditions ranging from droughts to flooding or thunderstorms to blizzards, brings with them a wide variety of threats to life and property, as well as economic and environmental risk factors. Each of these natural disasters provides a historical lesson in preparedness. On April 4, 1985, a small grass fire on the east side of Town progressed rapidly into a conflagration, the result of seven weeks with no rain, that when brought under control had destroyed one dozen buildings, ten vehicles, and burned fourteen acres of property causing more than one million dollars in damage (Lattimore, 2006). The historic “Blizzard of 1993” occurred in March causing major power outages and travel issues for approximately two weeks. These events offer great learning experiences to heighten our planning and preparedness levels, and as a result saves life and property.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Rutherfordton is located in the foothills of Western North Carolina, near 1,000 feet in elevation, with the center of town located atop a hill that serves as the central business district. Much of the Town's residential neighborhoods are located on hillsides in hardwood terrain.

Rutherfordton's location in the Isothermal Belt creates some unusual weather patterns that can differ greatly than areas just thirty miles away.

SIGN UP FOR EMERGENCY ALERTS



NIXLE EMERGENCY ALERTS



EVERBRIDGE EMERGENCY ALERTS

CONTACT INFORMATION

We are at the highest point we've been since 2002. Congratulations to everyone!

Town of Rutherfordton Public Works 828-287-5961
Town of Rutherfordton Police Department 828-287-5062
Town of Rutherfordton Fire & Rescue 828-287-7367
Town of Rutherfordton Town Hall 828-287-3520
Rutherford County Communications Center 828-286-2911 (Text 911)
Emergency Shelter Information 828-286-2911
Broad River Water Authority 828-286-0640
NC DOT-Road Conditions 511
North Carolina Forest Service 828-286-9201
Rutherford County Schools 828-288-2200
Duke Energy 800-Power-On
Rutherford Electric (REA) 828-245-1621
Dominion Gas 866-366-4357

RADIO STATIONS:

WCAB-AM 590 or 100.9 FM
WAGY-AM 1320 or 107.5 FM
WNCW-88.7 FM

NEWS STATIONS:

News 13-WLOS www.wlos.com
Fox Carolina News www.foxcarolina.com
News 7-WSPA www.wspa.com
News 4 - WYFF www.wyff4.com

**SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR
OTHER CONTACT
INFORMATION AND
ONLINE RESOURCES**



INSURANCE INFORMATION

Use this page as an inclusive & expansive overview of your insurance information and emergency contacts! Be sure to include policy numbers and contact information.



BUILD AN EMERGENCY SUPPLIES KIT

Keeping an emergency preparedness kit in your home can help your household be ready for a variety of emergencies. An emergency kit should provide supplies for your household for three days without power. The kit should be kept in a sturdy bag. Rethink your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

For more information on building an emergency kit go to: www.ready.gov/kit. Assemble your kit items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS:

- Water (one gallon 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
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

THUNDERSTORMS

When thunderstorms are expected, the Weather Service may issue watches and warnings. A THUNDERSTORM WATCH means conditions are favorable for thunderstorms. Watches are typically issued for large geographic areas and are in effect for several hours. A THUNDERSTORM WARNING means thunderstorms are imminent or occurring and action should be immediate.

BE PREPARED

DURING A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH:

- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio, local radio, or television stations for updated information
- Avoid lightning rods such as golf clubs, fishing poles, tractors, bicycles, etc.
- Be prepared to seek shelter if a severe thunderstorm is approaching. A sturdy building is the safest place to be!

DURING A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING

- Seek shelter right away
- Pay attention to alerts & warnings
- Unplug appliances
- Avoid taking a bath or shower, and running water for any other purpose

RISKS FOR THUNDERSTORMS

- Wind damage, downed trees & powerlines
- Flash flooding
- Tornadoes & powerful winds (over 50 mph)
- Damage from Hail



Scan these QR codes for the NOAA Radio and more safety tips



EXTREME COLD

Extreme cold weather is defined differently depending on geography and climate. In the Southern U.S. extreme near freezing temperatures are considered extreme cold. Many factors, including infrastructure and history, affect a region's ability to cope with winter weather. Winter storms and blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice, and high winds.

STAY SAFE IN THE COLD

5 TIPS

Extreme cold can be particularly hazardous for infants and the elderly since their core body temperature can drop rapidly. Taking extra precautions with these loved ones is very important.



WEAR CLOTHING IN LAYERS

Remember to remove some outer layers once indoors, as sweating can cause you to get cold later on.



EAT HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS MEALS

A healthy diet will ensure your body has the fuel it needs to stay warm.



LIMIT YOUR TIME OUTDOORS

If your skin becomes numb, pale, or hard to the touch, seek warm shelter.



MOVE AROUND, BUT DON'T GET FATIGUED

Walk around if you can, and keep your hands inside gloves/mittens.



CARRY A CELLPHONE FOR EMERGENCIES

Don't forget to charge it!

EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat is defined as a long period (two to three days) of high heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees. Humidity increases the feeling of heat (measured by the heat index). Extreme Heat or heat waves occur when the temperature reaches extremely high levels or when the combination of heat and humidity causes the air to become oppressive.

BEAT THE HEAT

WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?

Children & Elderly



Outside Workers



People with Disabilities



LOCATIONS WITH HIGHER RISK:

Houses with little or no AC



Cars



Construction worksites



HOW TO AVOID THE HEAT



Stay hydrated with water, avoid sugary beverages



Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose fitting clothes



And remember to just stay cool in an air conditioned area!



FLOODING

Flooding is defined by the rising and overflowing of water onto normally dry land. As defined by FEMA, a flood is a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of two or more acres of normally dry land area or of two or more properties Flooding can occur from heavy rainfall, hurricanes, or tropical storms.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

GENERAL TIPS

- Flooding can occur from heavy rainfall, hurricanes, or tropical storms
- Evacuate if told to do so
- Listen for emergency information & alerts
- Only use generators outdoors & away from windows
- Turn around, do not drown! Do not drive around barricades
- Heed Flood Warning Signs posted in flood prone areas

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



ReadyNC: Flood



Flood Risk Information System

DROUGHTS

A drought is a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water. Droughts can last for months or even years. An increase of wildfires is one risk associated with droughts.



- During a drought, always observe state and local restrictions on water use
- If restricted, do not water your lawn, wash your car, or use water for other non-essential tasks, to help ensure that there is enough water for essential uses.

WILDFIRES

Wildfires often begin without being seen. These fires are usually triggered by lightning or accidents. They spread quickly, igniting brush, trees and homes. Lower your risk by getting ready now before wildfire strikes. Meet with your family to decide what to do and where to go if wildfires threaten your area. Follow the steps listed below to protect your family, home and property.



- Use fire-resistant materials to build, renovate, or make repairs
- Keep yards and roofs clear of leaves, pine needles, and debris that could help a wildfire spread to your home
- Trim back shrubs or tree branches that come within five feet of the house

TORNADOS

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that extend from a thunderstorm to the ground. They can happen anytime, anywhere, and bring intense winds of more than 200 mph.

IF YOU ARE UNDER A TORNADO WARNING, FIND SHELTER RIGHT AWAY.



FIND A STURDY BUILDING

If you can safely get to a sturdy building, do so immediately.



FIND A BASEMENT OR CELLAR

Find a safe room, basement, or storm cellar. No basement? Find a small interior room on the lowest level.



AVOID AN OVERPASS OR BRIDGE

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



AVOID WINDOWS, ETC.

Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.



PROTECT YOURSELF

Watch for flying debris that can cause injury or death, and use your arms to protect your head & neck.

DURING A TORNADO

- Immediately go to a safe location
- Take additional cover by shielding your head & neck with your arms, and putting materials like furniture & blankets around you
- Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions
- Do not try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle
- If you are in a car or outdoors & cannot get to a building, cover your head & neck with your arms, and cover your body with a coat or blanket if possible.

EARTHQUAKES

Earthquakes are a sudden and violent shaking of the ground as a result in movements within the earth's crust or volcanic action. Earthquakes strike suddenly, without warning, and they can occur at anytime of the year and anywhere in the world.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE



EVACUATION PLAN

Be aware of evacuation plans for all the buildings you regularly occupy.



DECORATE SMART

Hang heavy items like mirrors, pictures, etc. away from beds or couches.



BOLT & BRACE

Bolt & brace water heaters, gas appliances, bookcases, & other tall furniture to wall studs.



ORGANIZE

In cabinets and cupboards, place heavy items close to the floor.

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE



DROP, COVER & HOLD ON

Sit on the floor next to an interior wall and cover your head & neck with you arms.



STAY IN PLACE

Stay in place until the shaking stops. If you must leave the building, use stairs, not elevators.



FIND CLEAR GROUND

If you're outside, find a clear spot away from trees, buildings, powerlines, & streetlights, and drop to the ground.



PULL OVER

If you are in a vehicle, pull over to a clear location & stop. Avoid bridges, over passes, & powerlines.

HOME FIRES

Home fires move quickly through a building and can consume a residence within minutes. These fires produce large amounts of smoke & heat, and can be deadly. Common causes of home fires are unattended cooking, smoking, and heating appliances. Some risks from home fires include smoke inhalation, burns, property damage/loss, & death.

LEARN ABOUT FIRES

FIRE IS FAST



In less than 30 seconds, a small flame can turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house or for a house to be engulfed in flames

FIRE IS HOT



Heat is more threatening than flames. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 at floor level to 600 at eye level.

FIRE IS DARK



Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness.

FIRE IS DEADLY



Smoke & toxic gases kill more people than flames do, these gases make you disoriented & drowsy. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by 3:1.

FIRE PREVENTION TIPS



HOME FIRES

Home fires are preventable. The following are simple steps that each of us can take to prevent a tragedy.

GENERAL FIRE SAFETY TIPS



CREATE AN ESCAPE PLAN

Every second counts!
Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly.



FIREPROOF SAFE

Keep important documents and items in a fireproof safe.



BE PREPARED.

Practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.



FIREFIGHTERS ARE THERE TO HELP

Teach kids to not hide from firefighters. With all their protective gear on, they may look scary, but they're there to help!



SMOKE ALARMS

Replace smoke alarm batteries at least once a year & test them once a month. A working smoke alarm significantly increases your chances of surviving a deadly home fire.

FOR MORE TIPS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE: RUTHERFORDTON.NET



CREATING A HOME ESCAPE PLAN

In the event of a fire, remember that every second counts, so you and your family must always be prepared. Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly. Twice each year, practice your home fire escape plan. Some tips to consider when preparing this plan include:

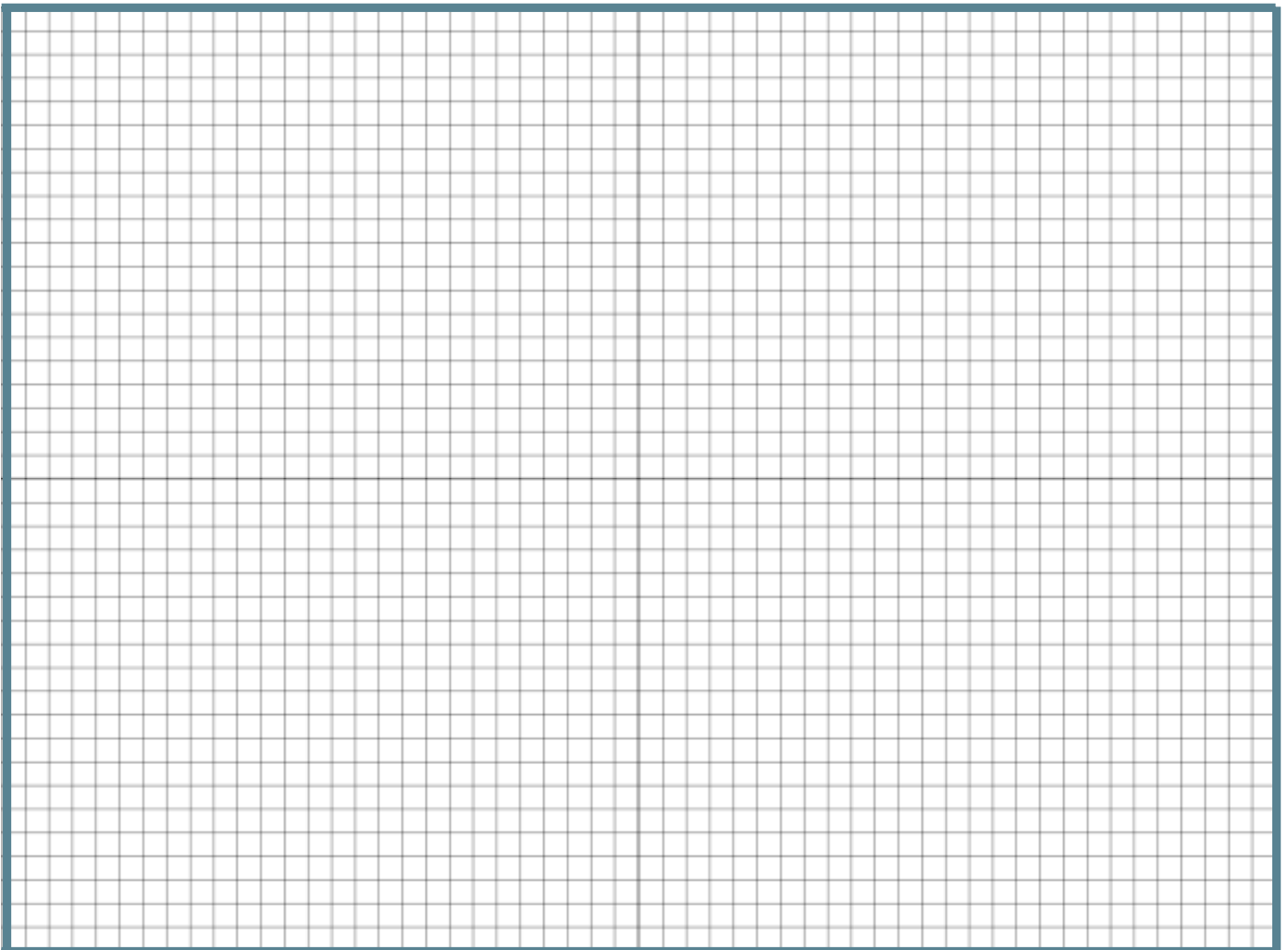
- Find two ways to get out of each room in the event the primary way is blocked by fire or smoke.
- A secondary route might be a window onto a neighboring roof or a collapsible ladder for escape from upper story windows.
- Keep important documents in a fireproof safe place.
- Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly and that security bars can be properly opened.
- If you use a walker or a wheelchair, check all exits to be sure you get through the doorways.
- Make any necessary accommodations, such as providing exit ramps and widening doorways, to facilitate an emergency escape.
- Speak to your family members, building manager or neighbors about your fire safety plan and practice it with them.
- Contact your local fire department's non-emergency line and explain your special needs. Ask emergency providers to keep your special needs information on file.
- Keep a phone near your bed and be ready to call 911 or your local emergency number if a fire occurs.

**MORE INFORMATION & TIPS
ABOUT HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLANS**



CUSTOM HOME ESCAPE PLAN

Use the grid below to create a home escape plan. Remember to include all windows & doors and establish a meeting place!



AFTER THE DISASTER

POWER LOSS



If you lose power during a storm event, notify your power company as soon as possible so they can begin the process of restoring your power.



If the meter box outside your home is damaged, call a professional electrician to make repairs before power can be restored.



Use flashlights instead of candles to reduce the risk of fire.

USING A GENERATOR



Do not use a generator indoors! That includes in the garage, carport, basement, crawlspace, & other partially enclosed area, even with ventiation.



Opening doors & windows, or using fans, will not prevent a buildup of carbon monoxide in the home, which cannot be seen or smelled & can be deadly.

ASSESSING PROPERTY DAMAGE



Use extreme caution when assessing damage to your home & property. It may be hard to see downed power lines or sharp objects like glass or nails.



There may be dangerous structural, electrical, or gas-leak hazard. To prevent injuries, turn the power off at the breaker box & contact the gas company to turn gas off to the building.

IF THERE IS PROPERTY DAMAGE:

RENTERS



Notify your landlords or property manager



Put requests for repairs in writing



Take photos & document the damage



Notify your rental insurance company of any personal property loss

OWNERS



Contact your insurance company.

Your agent may send an adjuster to the property to survey the damage before debris removal begins & plans for repair are made.



If you don't have homeowner's insurance or don't want to file a claim, you may act as your own contractor or call a contractor to assess the damage.

BEFORE SELECTING A CONTRACTOR

SCAM

Be cautious! Unfortunately, it isn't uncommon for scammers to prey on storm victims. Check references & the Better Business Bureau to ensure you're hiring a reputable contractor.



Carefully read contracts & determine who will be responsible for obtaining the required permits & requesting inspections from the Town, and ask for a copy of the permits for your files.



Shop around & get multiple estimates for the work and construction costs.

NOTES



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