

# Safety Sentinel

March 2017

## Fond du Lac County Safety Committee Mission Statement

*It is the Fond du Lac County Safety Committee's mission to provide safety awareness, education, and advocacy to all Fond du Lac County employees, while recognizing it is both the employer and employee's responsibility to maintain a safe work environment.*

### Area Homes Test High for Radon

With an average indoor radon level of 3.9 pCi/L (pico Curies per liter), many homes in Fond du Lac County hold an unhealthy amount of an odorless, invisible gas called radon. Radon is a naturally occurring, odorless, radioactive gas that causes lung cancer. Based on scientific studies, it is second only to smoking as a cause of lung cancer in the U.S. The EPA reports the average American home has a radon level of 1.3 pCi/L. It advises homeowners with a radon level of 4.0 or more to fix ("mitigate") their homes. There is no known level of safe radon. EPA does encourage owners to consider correcting to a level between 2 and 4 pCi/L.

Radon gas comes from the natural (radioactive) breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. The gas seeps into buildings, through cracks and openings, especially in basements and ground-level rooms, and cannot be detected by sight or smell. It is in the air we breathe and in homes, offices and schools. Once indoors, radon can concentrate, it gets trapped inside homes. Radon levels in homes tend to be higher during winter heating season putting residents at higher risk.

The only way to know the radon concentration of a home is to test it. According to Pat Klapperich, a long-time local realtor, "It has become commonplace in our industry to include a radon contingency with our residential offers." She says the majority of her company's offers include a contingency for professional radon detection. "If the property needs mitigation, the average cost ranges from \$750 to \$1100." When radon problems have

**Testing your home is the only way  
to know the radon level.**

been fixed, home sales have not been blocked or frustrated. The added protection is sometimes a good selling point.

[View the interactive map](#) of radon test results to see areas in Wisconsin where radon levels are the highest. "Radon finds its way into basement floor cracks, sump pits and such," Klapperich explains. The age of the house does not automatically determine safety, she emphasizes. "In an older home that is not as air-tight as newer ones, the level of radon gas is often lower. On the other hand, contractors are able to build new homes with radon-resistant features."

Fond du Lac County Health Dept., 160 S. Macy, offers an easy, do it yourself test kit for home owners. To find out more, call 929-3085 or go to: [Radon Information Center](#) or [Healthy Air, Healthy Us](#).

#### Short-Term Radon Test

**Cost:** \$10

**Time:** 48 hours

**Use:** First time testing, short time range, Desire to have quicker results

**Find it:** County Health Dept. at 160 S. Macy, FDL, and at municipal offices in: Brandon, North Fond du Lac, Ripon



#### Long-Term Radon Test

**Cost:** \$23

**Time:** 90 days – 1 year

**Use:** To measure radon exposure over a longer range of time

**Find it:** County Health Dept. at 160 S. Macy, FDL



## Diggers Hotline

Diggers Hotline is a free not-for-profit one-call locating service for identifying the location of buried utility facilities. It provides excavators and the general public with the ability to inform multiple owners of underground facilities of intended non-emergency excavation via a single telephone call.

An advance call to Diggers Hotline will allow the utilities time to locate and flag underground facilities. You are required by Wisconsin law to allow three working days before digging or excavating. This is mandatory as a safety precaution, as well as to avoid disruption of utility services and costly damage to facilities. In Wisconsin, call 811 or 1-800-242-8511. Diggers Hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



### Top Reasons to Contact Diggers Hotline:

1. **Safety** - Safety first we always say. Before digging, you should always know what's below for the safety of you, your family, neighbors and the general public. There are numerous factors that could cause buried utility lines to shift and come closer to the surface. So even if you think you know where lines are, one free call can help avoid a potentially dangerous situation.
2. **Money** - Identifying underground lines can save you big time in potential costs! If you accidentally damage an underground facility, as a homeowner you are responsible for the cost of any damage and replacement lines. So why risk it? Make the call!
3. **It's the law** - The headline says it all. Wisconsin State law requires all homeowners and/or contractors to contact Diggers Hotline before any digging that disrupts the ground's surface.
4. **It's completely free** - What's free anymore? When you find something free that can save you money and prevent potential injuries...why wouldn't you do it? Make the call and we'll handle having your lines marked free of charge.

Source: [www.diggershotline.com](http://www.diggershotline.com)

## Grill Safety Tips

Fire in the grill, under hot dogs and burgers, is a welcome sight at the family cookout. But fire anywhere else can make your summer kick-off barbecue memorable for all the wrong reasons.

### Safety tips

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.

### Charcoal grills

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

### Propane grills

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill.

Source: National Fire Protection Association  
[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

## Emergency Preparedness - Floods

Red Cross has a [step-by-step action plan](#) for protecting your family from the stress and health hazards that follow a flood, and protecting your home from further damage.

### Keep You and Your Family Safe Before, During and After a Flood

Floods are the most common natural disaster in the United States. Anywhere it rains, it can flood. Everyone is at risk. In fact, homeowners in high-risk flood areas have a 26% chance of experiencing a flood during the life of a 30-year mortgage.

Many circumstances can cause flooding:

- Seasonal events such as spring thaws or ice jams
- Hurricanes and tropical storms
- After a wildfire

### Before the Flood

*To prepare for a flood, you should ...*

- Build an [emergency kit](#).
- Make and practice a [family emergency plan](#). Plan and practice flood evacuation routes from home, work and school that are on higher ground.
- Get [flood insurance](#).
  - Flood damage is not typically covered by homeowners insurance.
  - It is a good idea to get flood insurance even if your home is in a low-risk area. The lower the risk, the lower the insurance premium.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.

### During the Flood

*If a flood is likely in your area, 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.

*If you must prepare to evacuate, you should ...*

- Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

*If you have to leave your home, you should ...*

- Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, turn around and go another way. Six

inches of moving water can sweep you off your feet. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving.

- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. Most vehicles can be swept away by less than two feet of moving water.



### After the Flood

*Returning to your home*

- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Emergency workers will be assisting people in flooded areas. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash floods can occur. Listen for local warnings and information. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.
- 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.
- Keep children and pets away from hazardous sites and floodwater.

*Cleaning up and repairing your home*

- Before entering your home, look outside for loose power lines, damaged gas lines, foundation cracks or other damage.
- Parts of your home may be collapsed or damaged. Approach entrances carefully. See if porch roofs and overhangs have all their supports.
- If you smell natural or propane gas or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and call the fire department.
- Turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box, even if the power is off in your community. That way, you can decide when your home is dry enough to turn it back on.
- During cleanup, wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots. Dry or discard wet items within 24-28 hours to [avoid mold](#).
- If using portable generators or power washers, follow precautions to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

- If you hire cleanup or repair contractors, check references and be sure they are qualified to do the job. Be wary of people who drive through neighborhoods offering help in cleaning up or repairing your home.

Make sure your food and water are [safe](#). Listen for news reports to learn whether the community’s water supply is safe to drink and discard items that have come in contact with floodwater.

**Know the Difference**

**Flood Watch:** Flooding is possible in your area.

**Flood Warning:** Flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

**Flash Flood Watch:** Flash flooding is possible in your area. Be prepared to move to higher ground.

**Flash Flood Warning:** Flash flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area. Seek higher ground on foot immediately.

**Driving in a Flood**

**Six inches of water** will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.

**One foot of water** will float many vehicles.

**Two feet of rushing water** can carry away most vehicles including SUVs and pick-up trucks.

**Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road.** The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water and you could be stranded or trapped.

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/Flood-Preparedness.aspx>

**March 12 – Daylight Savings Time Starts**

When local standard time is about to reach Sunday, March 12, **2:00 am** clocks are turned **forward** 1 hour to **3:00 am** local daylight time instead.

Sunrise and sunset will be about 1 hour later on March 12 than the day before. There will be [more light in the evening](#).



**Fond du Lac County Safety Committee**

- Stacie Basler, Dept. of Social Services
- David Brandenburg, Golf Course
- Linda Chandler, Purchasing/Risk Mgmt.
- Ken Fischer, Land & Water Conservation
- Richard Gedemer, Dept. of Social Svcs.
- Heather Heus, Harbor Haven
- Bobbi Hicken, Emergency Mgmt.
- Diane Immel, Clerk of Courts
- Tom Janke, Highway
- Ann Kaiser, UW-Extension
- Rick Kiefer, Central Maintenance
- Cindy Kiser, Harbor Haven
- Michael Marx, Human Resources
- Kim Mueller, Public Health
- Mark Radmer, Health Care Center
- Ray Sharp, Health Care Center
- Sam Tobias, Planning/Parks
- Ryan Waldschmidt, Sheriff’s Dept.
- Karen Warren, Wellness

Return via inter-office mail marked “Safety Suggestion Box,” give to a Safety Committee member, or put in Safety Suggestion Box at the City/County Govt. Center, 4<sup>th</sup> floor lobby.

**Safety Suggestion**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please share any safety concern or suggestion:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

## Tornadoes

### Know the Terms

#### **Tornado Watch**

Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, commercial radio, or local television for information.

#### **Tornado Warning**

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

### Tornado Facts

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. Its whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Every state is at some risk from this hazard.

Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible.

Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

- Wisconsin averages 21 tornadoes a year.
- The peak tornado season in Wisconsin is April to August, but tornadoes can occur any time of year.
- Tornadoes can occur any time during the day or night, but are most frequent between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- About 80% of tornadoes that hit Wisconsin are relatively weak, with winds under 100 mph. Only 1% are violent with winds over 200 mph.



- They may strike quickly, with little or no warning.
- They may appear nearly transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms in the funnel.
- The average tornado moves southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction.

The average forward speed of a tornado is 30 MPH, but may vary from stationary to 70 MPH.

### What to do Before a Tornado

- Be alert to changing weather conditions.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards or to commercial radio or local television newscasts for the latest information.
- Look for approaching storms
- Look for the following danger signs:
  - ◊ Dark, often greenish sky
  - ◊ Large hail
  - ◊ A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
  - ◊ Loud roar, similar to a freight train.



# Are You **READY WISCONSIN?**

✓ Get a Kit

✓ Make a Plan

✓ Be Informed

## Tornadoes

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

If you are:	Then:
Inside a building without a basement	Move to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor and get under a sturdy table. Put as many walls as possible between you and the storm. Stay away from windows.
Inside a mobile home or trailer	Leave and go to the designated storm shelter or the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building.
In a forest	Seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees.
In an open area	Go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.
On open water	Get to land and find shelter immediately.
Anywhere 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. <b>DO NOT</b> lie flat on the ground.

For more information on emergency preparedness, please visit our website at <http://ready.wi.gov>.

You'll find guidance on:

- Getting a Kit — of emergency supplies for your home, car and workplace.
- Making a Plan — to communicate with and locate your loved ones during an emergency.
- Being Informed — about the types of emergencies that occur and the safety measures you should take.

You can also get additional information from your county emergency management director.