

# Safety Sentinel



## 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.

April 2019

## April is National Safe Digging Month

April is National Safe Digging Month, which reminds Wisconsin residents to contact Diggers Hotline before any digging project to have underground utility lines marked.

Diggers Hotline is a free service that helps protect Wisconsin residents from injury and repair costs that may occur when striking a buried utility line.

Anyone in Wisconsin digging with a shovel, posthole digger or anything else that disturbs the soil is required to contact Diggers Hotline, either by phone by dialing 811 or at [www.DiggersHotline.com](http://www.DiggersHotline.com) three working days before the project begins. Diggers Hotline then notifies the appropriate utility companies, which send out professional locators to mark the locations of underground lines with flags or paint at the dig site.

Installing a mailbox, building a deck, planting a tree and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects that need Diggers Hotline before starting.

It doesn't matter how deep the digging project will go. The depth of utility lines can vary for a number of reasons, such as erosion, previous digging projects and uneven surfaces. Utility lines need to be marked because even when digging only a few inches, the risk of striking an underground utility line still exists.



Every nine minutes an underground utility line is damaged in the United States because someone decided to dig without contacting 811.

Diggers Hotline can be reached via phone by dialing 811, or at [www.DiggersHotline.com](http://www.DiggersHotline.com)

Source: <https://www.diggershotline.com/news/april-is-national-safe-digging-month>

## Tornado Safety

**To stay safe during a tornado, prepare a plan and an emergency kit, stay aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms, know the best places to shelter both indoors and outdoors, and always protect your head.**

Tornadoes continue to impact locations across the country every year, bringing massive winds and destruction in their paths.

The 2016 tornado season claimed the lives of 18 individuals and injured another 325. Seventy-eight percent of those victims were in a mobile home or trailer park at the time of the tornado. These storms caused an estimated \$183 million in property damage.

According to the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency \(NOAA\) External](http://www.noaa.gov) there is no guaranteed safety during a tornado. Even the possibility of a tornado must be taken seriously. Although the most violent tornadoes can level and blow away almost any house and those within it, extremely violent EF5



tornadoes are very rare. Most tornadoes are much weaker. You can survive a tornado if you follow safety precautions. Here are three important tips to help keep you safe.

Make sure you and your loved ones know what constitutes a “[safe shelter](#).” (See our [infographicCdc-pdf](#) for a quick summary of tips).

### **TIP 1: Be prepared.**

The best way to stay safe during a tornado is to be prepared with:

- fresh batteries and a battery-operated TV, radio, or internet-enabled device to listen to the latest emergency weather information;
- a tornado emergency plan including access to a “safe shelter” for yourself and for people with special needs;
- an emergency kit (including water, non-perishable food, and medication); and
- a list of important information, including telephone numbers.

Make sure your children know what a tornado is, what tornado watches and warnings are, what county or parish they live in (warnings are issued by county or parish), and what constitutes a location as a “safe shelter,” whether at home or at school.

### **TIP 2: Stay aware of weather conditions.**

To protect yourself and your family from harm during a tornado, pay close attention to changing weather conditions in your area. If you know thunderstorms are expected, stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or an NOAA weather radio for further weather information. Some tornadoes strike rapidly without time for a tornado warning. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:

- a dark or green-colored sky;
- a large, dark, low-lying cloud;
- large hail; or
- a loud roar that sounds like a freight train.

If you notice any of these conditions, take cover immediately, and keep tuned to local radio and TV

stations or to a NOAA weather radio or check the internet.

### **TIP 3: Know where to shelter.**

Falling and flying debris cause most deaths and injuries during a tornado. Although there is no completely safe place during a tornado, some locations are much safer than others.

- Go to the basement or an inside room without windows on the lowest floor (bathroom, closet, center hallway).
- Avoid windows.
- For added protection get under something sturdy (a heavy table or workbench). Cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag or mattress. Protect your head with anything available.
- **Do not stay in a mobile home.**



If you are outside or in a mobile home, find a nearby building preferably with a basement. If you are in a car, do not try to outrun a tornado but instead find the nearest sturdy building. NOTE: You may need to change your plans and change locations when the tornado watch is issued.

No one can know a tornado’s strength before it touches down, so keep up with local weather information, especially when thunderstorms are forecast. Prepare your home and family for the possibility of a tornado. Moving to shelter quickly is easier when everyone knows where to go, whether in your home or outdoors. Following these tips will give you the best chance for staying safe in a tornado.

Learn more about [how to stay safe during a tornado](#).

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/tornadosafety/index.html>



## Code Red Emergency Notifications

Fond du Lac County uses CodeRED to send EMERGENCY notifications by phone, email, text and social media to keep citizens informed of emergencies such as an evacuation notice, chemical spill, gas leak, or other emergency situations. Messages are delivered to a targeted area or if needed, the entire community. The emergency messages will provide specific information and clear instructions, if needed.

Fond du Lac County may, in the future, also activate CodeRED to send GENERAL notifications to registered subscribers to communicate non-life safety matters such as planned road closures, water main repairs, etc. By selecting the box for GENERAL alerts, you will also receive these types of notifications.

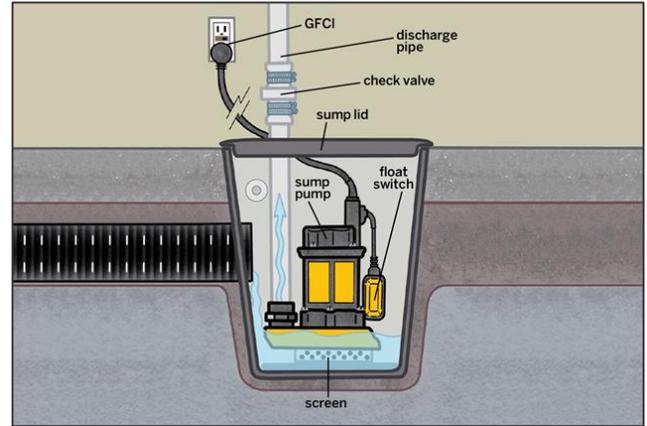
There is no charge to register for or use CodeRED and your personal information will be kept confidential.

**Registering for CodeRED is quick and easy. Just click [here](#).**

Source: <http://www.fdlco.wi.gov/departments/departments-a-e/emergency-management/code-red-information>

## Is Your Sump Pump Ready for Spring?

April showers bring May flowers—and up the risk of basement flooding. Follow these steps to ensure your pump is primed to keep your lowest level high and dry:



**1. Clean the screen.** Unplug the pump, disconnect it from the discharge pipe, and pull the pump out of the sump. Hose away any debris on the screen at the pump's base and rinse off its housing. Lubricate the pump bearings, if required. (Consult the owner's manual if you're unsure.)

**2. Inspect the check valve.** If its internal flap doesn't swing freely, flush it out, and if you see mineral deposits, soak it in vinegar. Make sure its arrow points up when reconnecting it to the discharge pipe.

**3. Test the float switch.** Pour a few gallons of water into the sump. If it comes on and sucks out the water, the switch (and pump) are good to go. If not, repair or replace the switch.

**4. Exercise the outlet.** Per code, a sump pump has to be plugged in to a GFCI receptacle. For your safety, press its test and reset buttons.

**5. Got a backup battery?** Top up its cells with distilled water, as needed.

Video: [How to Install a Sump Pump](#)

Source: <https://www.thisoldhouse.com/ideas/your-sump-pump-ready-spring> - By Thomas Baker of This Old House magazine

A screenshot of the CodeRED enrollment website for Fond du Lac County, WI. The page has a blue header with the CodeRED logo and the text "Keeping citizens informed." Below the header, there is a section titled "COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION ENROLLMENT" with a sub-header "Fond du Lac County, WI". The main content area asks "Would you like to create a managed account?" and provides instructions on how to create one. There are three login options: "Login with Google", "Login with Facebook", and "Login with Twitter". Below these are fields for "Username", "Password", and "Confirm password". At the bottom, there is a "Continue" button and a footer with the "ONSOLVE" logo.

## Spring: A Great Time to Review Your Safety Checklist

With spring comes a feeling of renewal. Many people begin cleaning out their basements and garages. Windows are opened, flowers bloom and the days grow longer.

When you set your clocks forward, the National Safety Council reminds you also to review a safety checklist for your home.

**Smoke Alarms** save lives – if they are powered by a fresh battery. You should test them every month to make sure they work and [replace the battery at least once a year](#), according to the National Fire Protection Association. If the alarm makes a "chirping" sound, replace it immediately.

Smoke alarms should be located in every bedroom and in the common areas on each floor of a home. Mount them at least 10 feet from the stove to reduce false alarms, less than 12 inches from the ceiling and away from windows, doors and ducts.

Did you know smoke alarms can be interconnected wirelessly? That means, when one sounds, they all sound. A Consumer Product Safety Commission survey found this is the best way to notify everyone in a home if there is a fire. Be sure to purchase smoke alarms with the label of a reputable testing agency, like [Underwriters Laboratories \(UL\)](#).

Three out of every five home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms, according to NFPA.

**Carbon Monoxide Detectors (CO)** is an invisible, odorless gas, and it can kill you. Anything in the home that burns fuel can potentially become a source of carbon monoxide. CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each bedroom and on every level of the home. The safety tips for CO detectors mirror those of smoke alarms: change the batteries, test them and interconnect them, if possible.

Also, make sure vents for your gas appliances (fireplace, dryer, stove and furnace) are free and clear of snow or debris.

**Family Emergency Plan** - The National Safety Council recommends every family have an emergency plan in place in the event of a natural disaster or other catastrophic event. Spring is a great time to review that plan with family members to make sure they know what to do.

Have a home and car emergency kit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency says an emergency kit should include one gallon per day of water for each person, at least a three-day supply of food, flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, filter mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape, and medicines. Visit the [FEMA website](#) for a complete list.

The emergency plan also should include:

- A communications plan to outline how your family members will contact one another if they are not in the same place and where you should meet if it's safe to go outside
- A shelter-in-place plan if outside air is contaminated; FEMA recommends sealing windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting
- A getaway plan including various routes and destinations in different directions

### What Else Should You Do This Spring?

NSC recommends you take unwanted or expired medicines to a prescription drop box or take-back event near you, update your first-aid kit and, most of all, get outside and have fun!

Source: <http://www.nsc.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>

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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:

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Name (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

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