

BE AWARE AND PREPARE



An Emergency and Terrorism Preparedness Guide for North Dakotans

September 2004

Preparing, Protecting North Dakota

Terrorism in North Dakota?

Many of us prefer not to think about bad things happening. And most of us don't believe we will ever be affected by a terrorist attack, not here in North Dakota. It's true, terrorism may be a remote possibility, but other emergencies do happen. With the Minot anhydrous ammonia spill in 2002, we saw that it doesn't take a terrorist act to cause a public health emergency. Every day, trucks and trains carry potentially hazardous material through our state. Our residents travel the world and could be faced with terrorist situations while in other states or countries. No matter where we live or travel, we should always be ready to expect the unexpected.

What is North Dakota doing about terrorism?

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has received federal funding to help the state prepare for terrorism events. We are using those funds to:

- ◆ Educate the public.
- ◆ Train health-care professionals.
- ◆ Expand the ability of local public health units to respond quickly to emergencies.
- ◆ Design and remodel our laboratory facilities, enhancing our ability to detect terrorism agents.
- ◆ Increase our communication abilities.
- ◆ Prepare to receive medicines and other medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile.
- ◆ Develop partnerships with hospitals and local public health units to implement an enhanced disease surveillance system that would rapidly identify unusual disease events that may occur.

The benefit to these terrorism preparations is that we are becoming better able to respond quickly and efficiently to any health-related event.

How can I "Be Aware and Prepare"?

The best way for you to be safe is to be as prepared as possible for **any** potential disaster. This booklet will help you learn about what kinds of terrorist threats are possible, prepare you to protect your home and family in case of an emergency, answer some basic terrorism questions and introduce you to other resources for learning about terrorism and general emergency preparations.

A Message From State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D.

Concern about the very real threat of terrorism is growing. Although there is not a high likelihood of a specific terrorist attack happening in North Dakota, as citizens, we should be aware and prepare for any natural disaster or public health emergency.

Being prepared includes physically preparing and educating yourself. Begin by reading this booklet. We've included

information about terrorism and emergency preparedness and what North Dakota is doing to prepare for these possible situations.

I encourage every North Dakotan to make a family emergency plan and prepare your own emergency supplies kit. See pages 4 and 5 of this booklet for some helpful checklists.

Businesses, schools and neighborhoods all should be prepared. Parents should find out what the emergency plans are at their children's schools. Employees should understand emergency response plans and discover the location of emergency kits in their workplaces. Neighbors should visit with each other and share their emergency plans.

As North Dakotans, we're no strangers to disasters and emergencies. We've often faced floods, blizzards, tornadoes and power outages. Being prepared for a terrorism emergency also will help prepare us for these more common "North Dakota" emergencies.



Terrorism Agents and Threats

Radiological, Chemical and Biological

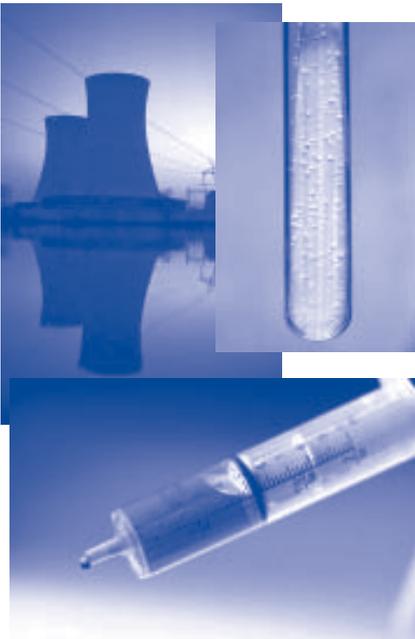
Radiological

A **radiological threat** could come in the form of a nuclear blast or a dirty bomb. A dirty bomb would involve the use of explosives to spread radioactive contamination over a targeted area. It is not a nuclear blast. The best way to protect yourself from a dirty bomb is to:

- ◆ Cover your nose and mouth, and leave the immediate area on foot.
- ◆ Go inside the nearest building.
- ◆ Remove your clothes as soon as possible, and seal them in a plastic bag.
- ◆ Take a shower or wash yourself as best you can.

For more information about radiation emergencies, visit:

- ◆ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – www.bt.cdc.gov/radiation/index.asp
- ◆ U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – www.ready.gov/radiation.html



Chemical

A **chemical attack** is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid to poison people and the environment. Nerve agents such as sarin and tabin are high on the list of suspected chemical threats. Signs of a chemical attack would include many people suffering from watery eyes, choking and having trouble breathing and many sick or dead birds, fish or small animals. If you suspect a chemical attack has occurred:

- ◆ Avoid the contaminated area. Either get away from the area or shelter in place, using the option that minimizes your exposure to the chemical.
- ◆ Wash with soap and water immediately if you were exposed to a chemical.
- ◆ Seek medical attention.
- ◆ Notify local law enforcement or health authorities.

For more information about chemical attacks, visit:

- ◆ North Dakota Health Alert Network – www.ndhan.gov
- ◆ CDC – www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/agentlistchem-category.asp
- ◆ American Academy of Pediatrics – www.aap.org/terrorism/index.html

Biological

A **biological attack** is the deliberate release of biological substances that can make you sick. Some agents, like anthrax, are not contagious while others, like smallpox, can be transmitted to other people. A biological attack may not be immediately obvious. Patterns of unusual illnesses or a surge of sick people seeking medical treatment may be the first sign of an attack. If you believe there has been a suspicious release of biological substances:

- ◆ Quickly get away from the area.
- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose with layers of fabric, such as a t-shirt or towel.
- ◆ Wash with soap and water.
- ◆ Contact local law enforcement or health authorities.

The CDC has listed the following agents as Category A agents, meaning they pose the greatest potential public health threat: anthrax, botulism, plague, smallpox, tularemia and viral hemorrhagic fevers. For more information about these biological agents and others, visit:

- ◆ North Dakota Health Alert Network – www.ndhan.gov
- ◆ CDC – www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/agentlist-category.asp
- ◆ DHS – www.ready.gov/biological.html

Frequently Asked Questions About Terrorism

In an emergency, should I shelter in place or evacuate?

Depending on the type of emergency, you may be instructed by authorities to either shelter in place or evacuate. Authorities base their decisions on what would cause the least harm to individuals. Even though leaving your home may seem like the best thing to do, there are times when staying inside and sealing doors and windows may provide you with the most protection. Listen to your TV or radio for instructions from local authorities or public health officials.

Could my water supply be a bioterrorism target?

Most bioterrorism experts agree that municipal water systems are an unlikely target for bioterrorists.

Methods already in place to filter and clean the drinking water supply are considered effective against most biological agents. Chlorine, for example, protects drinking water from water-borne bacteria and would neutralize most biological agents.



Should I buy a gas mask to protect myself against bioterrorism?

A gas mask would only be helpful if it was specially fitted and you were wearing it at the exact moment that a bioterrorist attack occurred. A biological agent would likely be released without anyone's knowledge.

Will sealing windows with plastic sheeting and duct tape protect me during a biological or chemical emergency?

There have been varying opinions publicized about the use of duct tape and plastic sheeting. While sealing your home will probably not be effective against a biological agent, sealing your windows and doors after a chemical release may provide temporary protection from exposure to the chemical.

Should I store my own supply of antibiotics for use after a bioterrorist attack?

A bioterrorist might use several different germs. Although many antibiotics are effective for a variety of diseases, no single antibiotic is effective against all diseases. In addition, no antibiotics are effective against viruses. Antibiotics should be taken only with medical guidance. **How will I know that a terrorism event or emergency has occurred?**

In the event of an emergency, local, state and federal agencies will quickly respond and inform the public about what to do and where to go. You generally will hear of an emergency through your local radio, television and newspaper media. State health officials will coordinate with law enforcement, fire departments, hospitals, emergency management, local public health units and other local, state and federal agencies, developing plans to minimize the risk

to the public and to treat those who may become ill.

What is North Dakota doing to prepare for a possible smallpox attack?

Although the probability of an intentional release of smallpox is low, the consequences are so great that we must be prepared. North Dakota is not often thought of as a target for the release of smallpox, but it's possible that our residents could be exposed to a release of smallpox elsewhere or could be exposed to someone who is infected and develop symptoms upon returning home.

The North Dakota Department of Health has worked closely with local public health units, hospitals, the medical community and federal emergency response partners to implement the state's voluntary smallpox vaccination program as part of a national bioterrorism preparedness initiative. The benefit of this voluntary program is a prepared professional work force across the state that will be able to respond in case of a smallpox emergency. North Dakota has pre-event and post-event smallpox response plans in place.

National researchers continue working to develop a safer and more effective smallpox vaccine.

For more information about smallpox, visit the North Dakota Health Alert Network at www.ndhan.gov.

If I see suspicious activity, whom should I call?

In an emergency, call 9-1-1. If you notice someone or something suspicious, contact your local law enforcement agency.

Sources: North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota Division of Emergency Management and The Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies

Make a Plan and Build a Kit

In an emergency or natural disaster, you are the real “first responder.” You will be the first one there for your family and your neighbors. Emergency personnel will be able to help but may not initially be able to reach you. Therefore, you must be prepared.

Give your family the gift of security

You fix the leaky roof, rotate the tires on the car and change the batteries in your smoke detectors, all to protect your family and your home. Why not make this weekend’s home improvement project a “life improvement” project? Prepare your family emergency plan and emergency supplies kit today. Here are some checklists to get you started.

Family Emergency Plan

- Hold a family meeting about emergencies and decide what to do in case of fire, severe weather, a hazardous chemical spill or a terrorist event.
- Determine escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Learn the emergency plans at schools and workplaces.
- Help your children and elderly relatives or neighbors identify your community’s warning system siren and tell them what to do if they hear it.
- Teach children how and when to dial 9-1-1.
- Teach children how to call long distance and how to use a cell phone.
- Post emergency numbers near your telephones.
- Identify a relative or friend whom all family members can call if they are not together during an emergency. Make sure this person lives far enough away not to be affected by the same emergency, preferably outside of the state.
- Establish a meeting place away from your home where you can go if the area in which you live has been evacuated.
- Make sure the adults in your family know how to turn off water, gas and electricity at main switches. (Remember to turn off gas only if instructed to do so. You must have a professional turn your gas back on.)
- Put family records in a safe deposit box or fireproof, waterproof safe.
- Have a plan for your pets during an emergency.
- Take a basic first aid and CPR class.
- Teach responsible family members how to use your fire extinguisher.
- Practice fire drills and emergency evacuations.



For more information about emergency preparedness, call one of these North Dakota Red Cross Quadrant chapters:

- ◆ Burleigh-Morton Chapter (Bismarck) – 701.223.6700
- ◆ Mid-Dakota Chapter (Minot) – 701.852.2828
- ◆ Minn-Kota Chapter (Fargo) – 701.364.1800
- ◆ Red River Valley Chapter (East Grand Forks, Minn.) – 218.773.9565

Or visit the following websites to view more extensive emergency checklists:

- ◆ www.redcross.org
- ◆ www.ready.gov
- ◆ www.fema.gov/areyouready

Emergency Supplies Kit

Listed below are recommended items for your emergency supplies kit. Store these items in a plastic storage container or backpack, something you could easily grab and take with if you have to evacuate.

- Battery-operated portable radio and flashlight
- First aid kit
- An extra set of car and house keys
- Pocket knife, tape, plastic bags with ties, scissors, whistle
- Candles and waterproof matches
- List of important phone numbers
- Plastic tableware and a non-electric can opener
- Entertainment (i.e., toys, playing cards, games, books)



Store the following occasionally used items near your emergency supplies kit so you know where they are.

- Sleeping bags and blankets
- Rain gear
- Tarp and plastic sheeting

Keep the following items in or near your pantry and replenish them as they are used. Make it a habit to check dates on food, water and batteries whenever you change batteries in your smoke detectors.

- Water – three gallons per person (enough for three days)
- A three- to five-day supply of non-perishable food (i.e., canned foods and juices, granola bars, dried meats)
- Extra batteries for your portable radio and flashlight

Keep a list of the following regularly used items taped to the inside of your pantry or broom closet. Be prepared to gather these items quickly in case you have to evacuate.

- Special items for infants and elderly or disabled family members (i.e., diapers, formula, baby food, insulin)
- Special items for pets (i.e., food, pet carrier, cat litter, leash)
- Sturdy shoes or boots and gloves
- A change of clothing for each family member
- Medications and important medical information
- Toilet paper and personal toiletries
- Extra eye glasses or contact lenses and solution



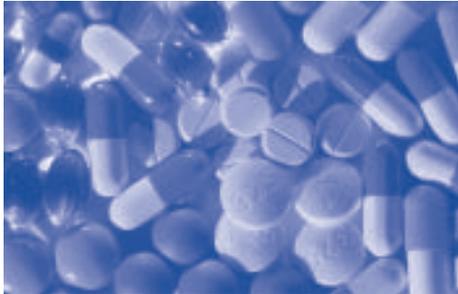
What to do in case of an emergency or a biological or chemical attack

- Remain calm and be patient.
- Listen to the radio or television news for instructions.
- If your family is separated, make one phone call – to your family contact.
- Follow the advice of local emergency officials about whether to shelter in place or evacuate.
- If you evacuate:
 - Take identification, credit cards, cash and important documents, including home insurance information.
 - Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
 - Take your emergency supplies kit, cell phone and other items you may need.
 - Take your pets.
 - Lock your home.
 - Use travel routes designated by authorities.
 - Shut off water and electricity if instructed to do so before leaving.

Strategic National Stockpile Ready

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in consultation with other partners in bioterrorism preparedness, has developed a Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program to respond to biological or chemical terrorism emergencies. The stockpile is made up of life-saving antibiotics, chemical antidotes and other medical supplies and equipment that are meant to be available when medical supplies at the local level are exhausted. Stockpiles are stored in strategic locations to ensure

rapid delivery (two to 12 hours) anywhere in the country. In addition to the medical supplies already set



aside, the federal government has an agreement with drug manufacturers to make large amounts of additional emergency medicine available.

The North Dakota Department of Health currently is working in conjunction with the Division of Emergency Management and other city, county and state agencies to develop a plan to receive and distribute items from the national stockpile. North Dakota has adopted an “all hazards preparation” approach to emergency planning, meaning we will be prepared to use stockpile items in the case of any disaster or public health emergency.

The planning process involves recruiting and training a group of qualified personnel (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc.) who would receive and distribute any needed antibiotics or other medical supplies. A computer database also is being developed that will track and inventory all received and distributed stockpile items.

The Department of Health, along with other health-care institutions and government agencies, will work to protect the health of North Dakota’s citizens. If a terrorist event or other emergency occurred, the public would be informed through the news media about what to do to protect themselves and their families. If antibiotics or vaccines were recommended, instructions would be provided locally about who should receive them and where the distribution sites would be located.

North Dakota Health Alert Network www.ndhan.gov

The North Dakota Health Alert Network (NDHAN) website is your source for current information about health emergencies. Developed in cooperation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the NDHAN is part of the North Dakota Department of Health’s Emergency Preparedness and Response program.

Visit the website for:

- ◆ Health alerts.
- ◆ Preparation and safety guidelines.
- ◆ Emerging health issues.
- ◆ Terrorism agents and threats.
- ◆ Whom to contact in an emergency.
- ◆ Other resources of information about health-related issues.
- ◆ County-specific health information.
- ◆ Schedules of Department of Health webcasts and training.
- ◆ News releases from the Department of Health.

Volunteers Needed To Help During an Emergency

Every emergency response is a coordinated effort. Officials and volunteers must work together to save lives and protect property. Emergency officials all agree volunteers are absolutely necessary in the event of an emergency.

During a public health emergency – such as a terrorist event – help might be needed at central locations. At these clinics, we may need people to:

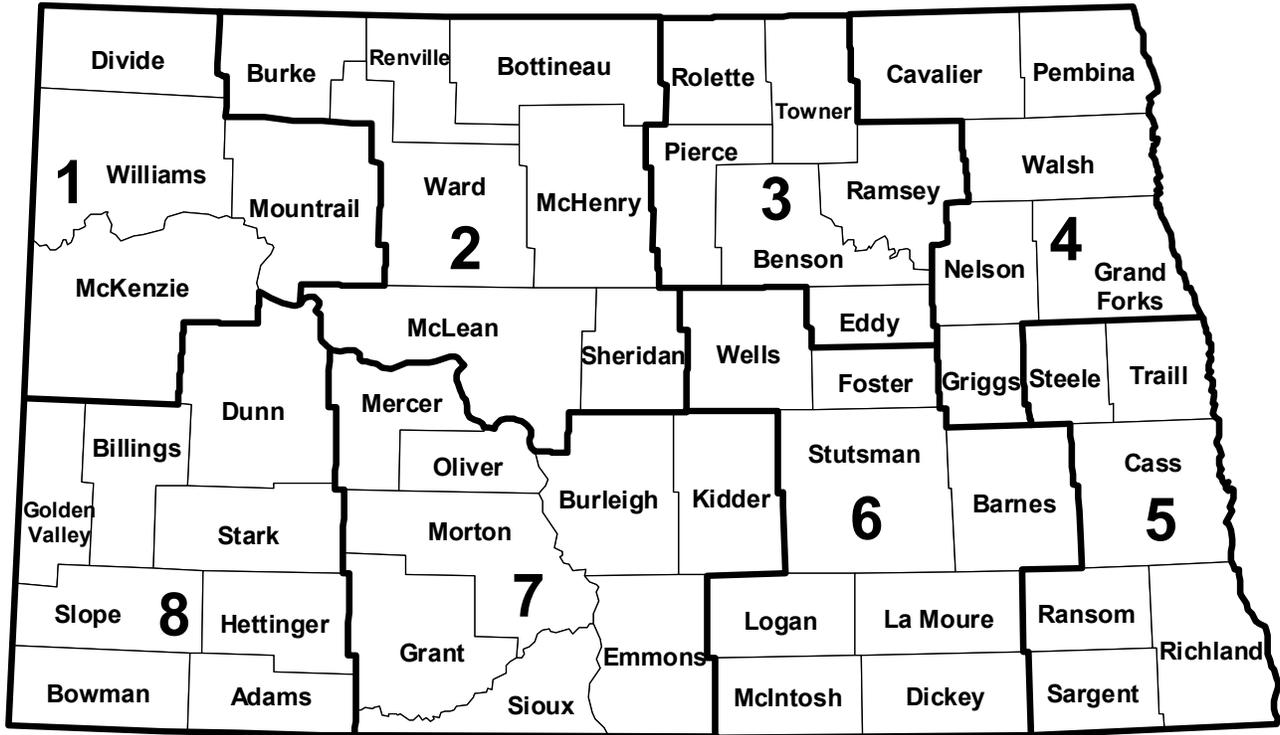
- ◆ Distribute information.
- ◆ Help patients complete paperwork.
- ◆ Direct traffic.
- ◆ Staff an informational hotline.
- ◆ Load and unload supplies.
- ◆ Provide child care.
- ◆ Prepare meals.
- ◆ Provide security.
- ◆ Distribute medications.
- ◆ Give vaccinations.

If you would like to be an asset to your neighborhood or community in an emergency, consider joining the **Public Health Emergency Volunteer Reserve**. You do not need to be a health-care professional to join. See page 7 of this booklet for a phone number in your region to call.

North Dakota's Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Regions

North Dakota has been divided into eight public health emergency preparedness and response regions. Each region is working on plans for dealing with terrorism events or other emergencies.

In the event of a terrorism emergency or natural disaster, spokespersons from these regions, your local public health unit or the state health department will work with the media to distribute information to the public. *If you suspect a terrorist attack, contact your local law enforcement or public health authorities.*



Region 1 (Northwest)

Upper Missouri District Health Unit, Williston
Phone: 701.774.6400

Region 2 (Northwest Central)

First District Health Unit, Minot
Phone: 701.852.1376

Region 3 (Northeast Central)

Lake Region District Health Unit, Devils Lake
Phone: 701.662.7035

Region 4 (Northeast)

Grand Forks Public Health, Grand Forks
Phone: 701.787.8100

Region 5 (Southeast)

Fargo Cass Public Health, Fargo
Phone: 701.241.1360

Region 6 (Southeast Central)

Central Valley Health Unit, Jamestown
Phone: 701.252.8130

Region 7 (Southwest Central)

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, Bismarck
Phone: 701.222.6525

Bismarck Fire and Inspections, Bismarck
Phone: 701.250.7671

Region 8 (Southwest)

Southwestern District Health Unit, Dickinson
Phone: 701.483.0171



Each county and tribal government in North Dakota has an emergency management program that works closely with local emergency response and volunteer assistance organizations. For a listing of all county and tribal emergency managers, and for other emergency and disaster information, visit the Division of Emergency Management website at www.state.nd.us/dem.

Homeland Security Advisory System*	
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower levels. • Listen to radio/TV for current information and instructions. • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities immediately. • Adhere to any announced travel restrictions. • Be prepared to shelter in place or evacuate and assist elderly or special-needs neighbors to do the same. • Provide volunteer services only as requested.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower levels. • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities. • Exercise caution when traveling. • Check on elderly or special-needs neighbors and review emergency plans with them. • If a need is announced, donate blood at a designated blood collection center.
Elevated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower levels. • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities. • Ensure your emergency supplies kit is stocked and ready. • Have a neighborhood meeting in order to identify neighbors who are elderly or have special needs. Assist them in preparing an emergency plan and emergency supplies kit, if requested.
Guarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recommended actions at lower level. • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities. • Review stored emergency supplies and replace items that are outdated. • Develop an emergency communication plan with family/neighbors/friends.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a family emergency plan and prepare an emergency supplies kit. • Promote or arrange for people in your neighborhood to take CPR and first aid courses. • Learn about volunteer opportunities in your community; choose an agency to volunteer with and receive initial training. • Start a Neighborhood Watch program. For more information, visit www.usaonwatch.org.

*These recommendations for individuals and families, courtesy of the American Red Cross, pertain to threat conditions of the National Homeland Security Advisory System. For more Red Cross information, visit www.redcross.org.

A Message from North Dakota's Homeland Security Coordinator Doug Friez

Much of the fear caused by the threat of terrorism is based on the uncertainty of when it will occur; whether we, and our family or friends, will be injured; or whether the business where we work will be targeted. Some feel we have no control over our fate; however, individuals can take control by doing the same things we do to prepare for floods, tornadoes and severe winter storms – make a family emergency plan and prepare an emergency supplies kit. We can also:



- ◆ Watch the neighborhood. Our best defense begins in our homes and on our streets. Local communities and neighborhoods should start awareness programs to build public, private and individual partnerships.
 - ◆ Become more aware of our surroundings. Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement and support local, state and national homeland security programs.
 - ◆ Have an attitude change. Our lives have changed since Sept. 11, 2001, and we need to find that balance between appropriate protections and living the freedoms this nation is about.
 - ◆ Implement protective measures. Businesses should set up security measures and continue to evaluate and change them as necessary.
 - ◆ Receive training from your local emergency management and other community groups.
- Taking these steps and others may not enable us to prevent an attack by terrorists, but we can take away some of their ammunition.

This booklet was developed by the North Dakota Department of Health and funded by a bioterrorism grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

State Health Officer – Terry Dwelle, M.D., M.P.H.T.M.



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