

Public Health Preparedness Newsletter | Winter 2025



Department of
Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

In this newsletter you can expect:

Tips for building
an emergency kit.

Information on
how to stay safe
from respiratory
illnesses.

Mental health
resources.

Information on
utility assistance.

About This Newsletter

This newsletter was created by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Preparedness Program to better prepare residents for public health emergencies, such as severe storms, infectious diseases, and more.

This newsletter is available in Amharic, Arabic, Dari, French, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Swahili, Vietnamese, and English at bit.ly/CRPNnewsletter.

Request free printed copies.



bit.ly/PHPMaterials



Leave a message at 215-429-3016.

Don't Forget to Sign Up for ReadyPhiladelphia!

The Office of Emergency Management shares information about severe weather through free email and text alerts using the City's mass notification system, ReadyPhiladelphia.

Alerts are now available in **eleven languages**: English, French, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Swahili, and American Sign Language.

For free text alerts, please text **READYPHILA** to **888-777** or sign up at bit.ly/ReadyPhila.



Prepare Yourself and Your Loved Ones

Emergency Supply Kit

Severe storms, power outages or other emergencies could occur this season. Gather enough supplies to last you and the people you live with for at least **three** days.

Stock your kit with these items

- Medications
- Food and water
- Supplies for babies and children
- Pet supplies
- Cell phone and charger
- Flashlight and whistle
- Cash
- First-aid kit
- Copies of important documents
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries

Look Out for Others

The Office of Homeless Services will send a homeless outreach team to any person on the street who needs transportation to a local shelter or other homeless services.

215-232-1984 (available 24/7, 365 days)

Keep Pets and Service Animals Safe

It is not safe to leave pets alone for a long time. If you need to leave your home in an emergency, find a safe place to take them.

See animals left outside in severe weather? Call the Animal Control and Care Team.

267-385-3800 (available 24/7)

Do You Take Medication?

Always have at least a one-week supply of medications on hand. Get prescriptions renewed before they run out, so you are prepared for emergencies.

Filling out a Health Information Card is a great way to keep track of your medications, dosages, and doctors' contacts. Print one here bit.ly/HealthInfoCard24 or ask us to mail some at bit.ly/PHPGuidance.



Budget Friendly Preparedness

- **Start small.** Add one or two items, like canned food or batteries each time you shop. It adds up without breaking the bank!
- **Use what you have.** Check around your home for supplies you already own, like flashlights and blankets. Repurposing everyday items can save you money.
- **Shop smart.** Look for sales, discounts, and dollar stores for emergency essentials. You can find basics like first-aid items and non-perishable foods at affordable prices.

Prepare Your Home

Utility Assistance

Utility assistance and other programs help you manage bills, afford necessities, and lower the chance of health and safety challenges during extreme weather events.

Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging (PCA)

Provides assistance to low-income seniors and caregivers.

215-765-9040 — pcacares.org/contact-us/

Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF)

Provides income-based programs, stabilizing homes for families facing a housing crisis.

215-814-6845 — BAC@uesfacts.org — uesfacts.org

BenePhilly

Provides non income-based, one-on-one support to help apply for public benefits.

1-844-848-4376 — phila.gov/programs/benephilly/

PECO's Universal Service Programs

Learn about all of PECO's assistance programs.

1-800-774-7040 — bit.ly/PECOPrograms

Neighborhood Energy Centers

Learn about conserving energy and apply for bill payment assistance. Find an energy center at bit.ly/NeighborhoodEnergyCenters.

Fire and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Safety

- **Install Smoke & CO Detectors.** Ensure batteries work.
- **Do not use gas ovens** to heat your home.
- **Never block CO detectors or smoke alarms** and do not disable them.

Signs of CO poisoning can include headache, dizziness, chest pain, nausea, or vomiting.

- If you suspect CO poisoning, get outside immediately and call 911 or the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

Where to get detectors?

- **Free Smoke Detectors:** Visit bit.ly/RedCrossSmokeAlarm, call 3-1-1, or visit bit.ly/PHL311.
- **Free CO Detectors:** Call 3-1-1 to check for availability.



Landlords are required to provide and maintain smoke alarms and must provide or fix CO detectors for new tenants.

For more information, visit bit.ly/COPHL or bit.ly/PHLFire.



Very cold weather or severe storms can affect your health, especially if you do not have proper heating or if you lose power at home.

Protect Your Health

Respiratory Viruses

Some illnesses can cause fever, chills, cough, runny nose, or headache. Stay protected by getting vaccinated.

- The flu vaccine is updated yearly to protect against strains predicted to be the most common.
- The COVID-19 vaccine was updated to protect against current variants this winter.
- RSV immunization helps prevent severe respiratory virus in infants and adults 60 years and older.

It is safe to get all three vaccines at the same time.

Help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

- If you have symptoms, test for COVID-19 and the flu, if possible.
- Wear a mask in crowded public spaces.
- Stay home if you feel sick.

Find free or low-cost medical care, even if you do not have insurance.

- phila.gov/primary-care

Find more information on respiratory viruses.

- bit.ly/Covid19_test
- bit.ly/FluPHL
- bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL
- bit.ly/RSV_PHL

Questions? Call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at **215-685-5488**. Press **2** for Spanish; press **3** for interpretation in your language. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

Mental Health Resources

- You are not alone.
- Reach out 24/7 (interpretation available).

Mental Health Crisis Hotline

- 215-685-6440

Mental Health and Addiction Services

- 888-545-2600

Free online screening and resources


- HealthyMindsPhilly.org

More than 1 in 6 adults in Philadelphia has a diagnosed mental health condition.



Stay Connected


Visit our website.


 bit.ly/PDPHPreparednessOutreach

Request a resource table or training.




Contact us for copies of this newsletter, questions, or problems with the translation.

 PublicHealthPreparedness@phila.gov

 Leave a message at 215-429-3016.

Sign up for the Community Response Partner Network (CRPN).

 bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse

Get essential public health information to share with family, friends, and neighbors.

