

Public Health Preparedness Newsletter | Winter 2026



Department of
Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

In this newsletter you can expect:

Tips for building
an emergency kit.

Information on
utility assistance.

Mental health
resources.

Information on
how to stay safe
from respiratory
illnesses.

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 215-683-0806.

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.

Visit bit.ly/PHLEmergencyPlanning for a full list of what to include in your kit.

Use a Health Information Card to track medications, medical equipment, and important contacts. Print one at bit.ly/HealthInfoCard24 or order one through the mail at bit.ly/PHPGuidance.

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)

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 Care and Control Team.
267-385-3800 (available 24/7)

Find Free Food Near You

Visit phila.gov/food.

Search by address to find:

- Food for your household
- Older adult meal sites
- Student meal sites.
- No ID or proof of income is needed.



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 at 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 can help you stay safe in your home during extreme weather events or other emergencies.

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA)

PCA provides services to low-income seniors and caregivers, including information on resources to stay safe during cold weather.

215-765-9040 — bit.ly/pca-accessing-services.

Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF)

Offers information about income-based programs, stabilizing homes for families facing a housing crisis.

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

BenePhilly

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

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

Neighborhood Energy Centers

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

Contact **311** for assistance and resources to keep your home comfortable during the winter.

Fire and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Safety

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless gas that can make people very sick or even cause death, especially if it builds up indoors. To prevent CO poisoning:

- Install Smoke & CO Detectors.
- 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 **311**, or visit bit.ly/PHL311.
- Free CO Detectors: Call **311** 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.



Check the batteries in your smoke and CO detectors every six months!

Protect Your Health

Respiratory Viruses

Most people get a fever, chills, cough, runny nose, or headache if they get a respiratory virus, but some can get very sick or even die. Stay protected by getting vaccinated this season.

- The flu vaccine is updated yearly to protect against strains predicted to be the most common.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is updated to protect against current variants or types of the virus.
- 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.

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

Reach out 24/7 (interpretation available).

Mental Health Crisis Hotline

- 215-685-6440

Mental Health and Addiction Services

- Call or text 988

Free online screening and resources

- HealthyMindsPhilly.org



You are not alone.

ASKING FOR HELP IS OK.

Stay Connected

Visit our website.

 bit.ly/PDPHPPreparednessOutreach

- Request a resource table or training.
- Order free education materials in many languages.

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

 PublicHealthPreparedness@phila.gov

 Leave a message at 215-683-0806.

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

 bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse

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

