

**FOCA Fall Seminar 2018 - Member Discussion Session at Tables:
Emergency Preparedness & Tips for Resilient Waterfront Communities**
Summary of notes submitted by table attendees

How many of you have experienced, first-hand, an emergency or a water/wind/power/extreme weather event at your cottage or your permanent waterfront home?

90% of recorded respondents had experienced such emergencies first-hand!

- events experienced included: fires, power outages, flooding, wind events including tornado warnings, heavy snow, hail, medical emergencies, freeze/thaw events, blue green algae in the water, road washouts, microbursts and extended fire bans due to extremely dry conditions.
- one reported having been caught in their car in a snowstorm for two days!

The **longest power outage experienced** was
3 weeks

although several reported having had **4 days** without power (and one had **one full week** at an island cottage)

When asked, “**Prior to this/these events, what would you say was your own personal level of readiness for extreme situations?**”

and “**What steps have you already taken to be prepared?**” -

- some reported having a generator (or said “a neighbour does”), a chainsaw, propane back-up (at least for BBQ cooking); most, however, reported that they were not well prepared yet
- full-time waterfront residents were the most likely to have already taken steps to prepare for extended periods without power, or for extreme weather situations
- many respondents do have an emergency kit at the cottage, and some have one in the car, too (certainly the person who was stuck in the snowstorm now does)
- a number reported they have kept, or re-instated, a land-line phone that still works during electrical outages.

Insider tip:
leave a nickel
on top of an ice cube
in the cottage freezer

*(If it's submerged in the ice upon return, you've likely had an extended power outage at some point, and it might **not be safe** to eat the food left in the fridge!)*

Gaps or needs identified in personal preparedness included:

- Has your family discussed a fire exit plan from each room of the cottage?
- Has your family picked an emergency meeting location, just outside the cottage? Further away? Who could you all call at a distance, to be a “point-of-contact”?
- Would guests know how to direct EMS to find your property? Post an Emergency Locator Sheet in a prominent place! (Copy [FOCA's template](#).)
- Do you know where to go in your municipality to get drinking water, in an emergency?
- Do you keep cash on hand, for times when debit/credit cannot be used?
- Have you checked your generator to ensure it still works and/or has gas? When did you last change the oil, if needed?

Insider tip: if power is out but you still have a working smartphone/internet connection, visit the **Hydro One “Storm Centre” outage map** for updates on scheduled and emergency power outages in many (but not all) parts of cottage country:

<https://www.hydroone.com/StormCenter3/>

What can/should LAKE ASSOCIATIONS do to plan ahead?

- keep an updated contact list of neighbours, and note any folks with mobility issues or other potential special needs in an emergency situation
- publish an article in the Association newsletter or online, about emergency preparedness at the cottage, including a checklist for contents of a 72-hour emergency kit
- ask your municipality about their emergency plan and communications plan (how they will disseminate urgent information?), and can you download an APP or subscribe to electronic updates, even when you are not at the cottage?
- provide opportunities for group first aid/safety training in the community
- invite a councillor/local fire chief to speak at your AGM about emergency preparedness and remote EMS access (e.g., water access property issues)
- a handful of Associations reported they already have an AED (or several) at the lake, available for shared use – see: [Action First Aid's FOCA offer](#), or “check out <https://mikeynetwork.com/mikey-defibrillators/apply-for-a-mikey/>”
- some Associations have Facebook pages or groups which act as a community hub in case of emergencies, lost-and-found, etc.

Article tip: borrow FOCA resources!

new FOCA Fact Sheet:
[Emergency Tips & Checklist](#)
(PDF, 2 pages)

or [email the Office](#) for a text version for your Newsletter.

Find more links, downloads, and resources here:

<https://foca.on.ca/weather-extremes-and-emergency-preparedness/>