



# AVESTA

H O U S I N G

## RESIDENT SAFETY MANUAL

**Avesta Housing improves lives and strengthens communities  
by promoting and providing quality affordable homes for  
people in need.**



**RESIDENT SAFETY MANUAL**  
**Table of Contents**

<b><u>INTRODUCTION .....</u></b>	<b><u>1</u></b>
<b><u>EMERGENCIES.....</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>
<b><u>DISASTER PREPAREDNESS.....</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
<b><u>YOUR FAMILY DISASTER PLAN .....</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b><u>CREATE A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN .....</u></b>	<b><u>16</u></b>
<b><u>PETS AND DISASTERS: GET PREPARED.....</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>
<b><u>RENTERS INSURANCE .....</u></b>	<b><u>20</u></b>
<b><u>WINTER SAFETY .....</u></b>	<b><u>21</u></b>
<b><u>HYPOTHERMIA.....</u></b>	<b><u>22</u></b>
<b><u>SUMMER SAFETY .....</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>
<b><u>CREATING A FALL-PROOF HOME .....</u></b>	<b><u>24</u></b>
<b><u>FIRE PREVENTION/ SAFETY TIPS.....</u></b>	<b><u>26</u></b>
<b><u>FIRE PREVENTION/INVENTORY OF YOUR APARTMENT .....</u></b>	<b><u>29</u></b>
<b><u>APARTMENT SAFETY TIPS .....</u></b>	<b><u>31</u></b>
<b><u>FRAUD AND SCAMS .....</u></b>	<b><u>32</u></b>
<b><u>FILE OF LIFE.....</u></b>	<b><u>34</u></b>

## INTRODUCTION

This Safety Handbook is being provided as a service to you by Avesta Housing. It is meant as a general overview of several safety topics: some may affect you on a regular basis and others, hopefully, never will.

Please take the time to read this Handbook and review it on a regular basis. Some of the information comes directly from agencies that deal in safety issues, while others are compilations from professional sources including local fire departments.

Resident Service Coordinators will help organize many related programs at your property during the course of the year, and you are encouraged to participate and contribute.

In the meantime, we hope you will keep this Safety Manual close at hand and use it as a convenient reference. Your safety is important to us!!



Disclaimer

We will put this on tape if you have difficulty reading this print.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### **Emergency Pull Cords**

Emergency pull cords are located at some of our properties. At those properties, the cords are located in the bedrooms and bathrooms of each unit. In essence, these cords are provided for your use in case of an emergency. If pulled, a local alarm may sound, a light outside your apartment door may illuminate, and in some cases a signal is sent to a panel which may be monitored, and emergency services may be provided. If your system is not monitored, you cannot rely on an immediate response. And, if your system has only local alarms and lights, a response is conditional on your neighbors hearing or seeing your alarm.

Pulling this cord is not a substitute for dialing 9-1-1 in the case of any emergency. For all emergencies 9-1-1 should be dialed from your phone and the appropriate emergency services will be provided by those authorities.

Because your Development is for “Independent Living”, it is your responsibility to understand the system in place (where provided) and its limitations. We are not an emergency response team, and do not provide systems to substitute for traditional emergency reporting/responding.

Please contact your Property Manager for further detail.

## **Injury and Accident Reporting**

It is Avesta's commitment to provide your community with a decent, safe, and sanitary environment. We have systems in place that to the best of our ability prevents adverse issues and situations from occurring and addresses them as they arise. Unfortunately, we cannot plan for and/or prevent every possible issue and situation at your Development.

Because your Development is for "Independent Living", it is your responsibility to continuously assess unit, common area, property and community conditions and promptly report any deficiencies to your Property Manager, Resident Service Coordinator, and/or Maintenance Technician. These Avesta staff members will document identified deficiencies, resolve the issue(s), address the situation(s) and set a plan in place to prevent them from recurring. Similarly, if a resident, family member, guest and/or visitor incur an injury and/or accident, it is your responsibility to follow the appropriate emergency procedures for the given issue/situation and contact your Property Manager immediately to document, resolve, and address the issue/situation and set a plan to prevent it from recurring.

Please contact your Property Manager for further detail.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The following pages are copies of two brochures provided by the American Red Cross and are important for you to review.

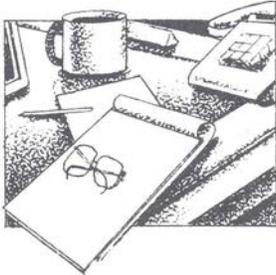
**Knowing what to do is your best protection.** Maine's disasters are usually weather-related...remember the ice storm!!!....but disasters can happen anytime and anywhere.



This information is excerpted from the American Red Cross Brochure:  
"Your Family Disaster Plan"

## YOUR FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

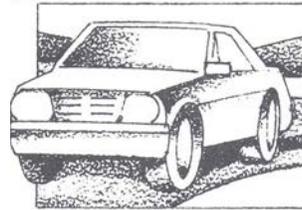
Where will your family be when disaster strikes? They could be anywhere –



at work



at school



or in the car

How will you find each other? Will you know if your children are safe?

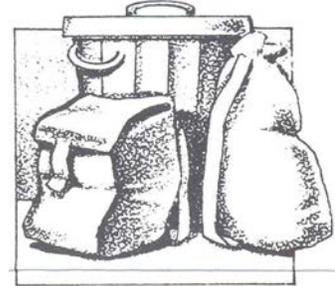
Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services—water, gas, electricity or telephones—were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

Families can, and do, cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Follow the steps listed to create your family's disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.



## EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or covered trash containers.



### Include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil.
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications.
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash or traveler's checks.
- Sanitation supplies
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- An extra pair of glasses.

Keep important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep a smaller kit in the trunk of your car.

## UTILITIES

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main and natural gas main. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves. Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. *If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.*

## 4 Steps to Safety

### 1. Find Out What Could Happen to You

Contact your local emergency management or civil defense office and American Red Cross chapter - be prepared to take notes:

- Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Ask about animal care after disaster. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters due to health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Next, find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare center and other places where your family spends time.

### 2. Create a Disaster Plan

Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet:
  1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
  2. Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

### 3. Complete This Checklist

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

### 4. Practice and Maintain Your Plan

- Quiz your kids every six months so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.

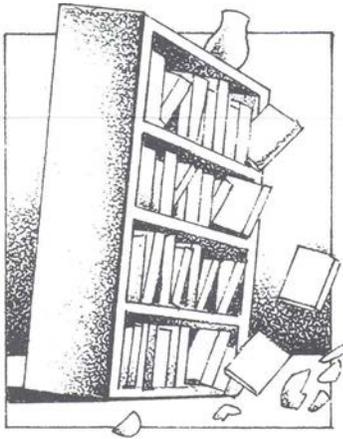
Year	Drill Date
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

## NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbors' special skills (e.g., medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

### HOME HAZARD HUNT



During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause a fire is a home hazard. For example, a hot water heater or a bookshelf can fall. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards. *Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire hazards.*

### EVACUATION

#### Evacuate immediately if told to do so:

- Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.
- Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities-don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.

#### If you're sure you have time:

- Shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving, if instructed to do so.
- Post a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Make arrangements for your pets.

## **IF DISASTER STRIKES**

### **If disaster strikes**

Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action.

### **Check for injuries**

Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.

### **Listen to your battery powered radio for news and instructions**

Evacuate, if advised to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

### **Check for damage in your home. . .**

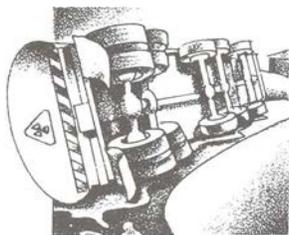
- Use flashlights - do not light matches or turn on electrical switches, if you suspect damage.
- Check for fires, fire hazards and other household hazards.
- Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately.

### **Remember to. . .**

- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact - do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

## Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit

Disasters happen anytime and anywhere. And when disaster strikes, you may not have much time to respond.

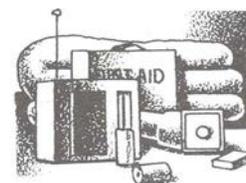


A highway spill of hazardous material could mean instant evacuation.



A winter storm could confine your family at home. An earthquake, flood, tornado or any other disaster could cut off basic services - gas, water, electricity and telephones - for days.

After a disaster, local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it may take days. Would your family be prepared to cope with the emergency until help arrives?



Your family will cope best by preparing for disaster *before* it strikes. One way to prepare is by assembling a Disaster Supplies Kit. Once disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. But if you've gathered supplies in advance, your family can endure an evacuation or home confinement.



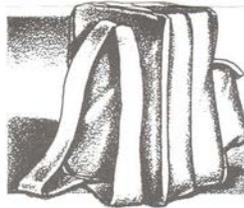
### To prepare your kit

- Review the checklist in this brochure.
- Gather the supplies that are listed. You may need them if your family is confined at home.
- Place the supplies you'd most likely need for an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. These supplies are listed with an asterisk (\*).

## SUPPLIES

There are six basics you should stock in your home: *water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies* and *special items*. Keep the items that you most likely need-during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container - suggested items are marked with an asterisk (\*).

Possible containers include



a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack, or a duffle bag.

### Water

Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more.

- Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation)\*
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household.

### Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

\* Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water)
- Staples - sugar, salt, pepper
- High energy foods - peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods - cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

## First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. A first aid kit\* should include:

Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes	Assorted sizes of safety pins
2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)	Cleansing agent/soap
4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)	Latex gloves (2 pair)
Hypoallergenic adhesive tape	Sunscreen
Triangular bandages (3)	
2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)	<b>Non-prescription drugs</b>
3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)	Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
Scissors	Anti-diarrhea medication
Tweezers	Antacid (for stomach upset)
Needle	Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
Moistened towelettes	Laxative
Antiseptic	Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)
Thermometer	
Tongue blades (2)	
Tube of petroleum jelly	

**Contact your local American Red Cross chapter to obtain a basic first aid manual.**

### **Tools and Supplies**

Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils\*  
Emergency preparedness manual\*  
Battery operated radio and extra batteries\*  
Flashlight and extra batteries\*  
Cash or traveler's checks, change\*  
Non-electric can opener, utility knife\*  
Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type  
Tube tent  
Pliers  
Tape  
Compass  
Matches in a waterproof container  
Aluminum foil  
Plastic storage containers  
Signal flare  
Paper, pencil

Needles, thread  
Medicine dropper  
Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water  
Whistle  
Plastic sheeting  
Map of the area (for locating shelters)

### **Sanitation**

Toilet paper, towelettes\*  
Soap, liquid detergent\*  
Feminine supplies\*  
Personal hygiene items\*  
Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)  
Plastic bucket with tight lid  
Disinfectant  
Household chlorine bleach

### **Clothing and Bedding**

\*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

Sturdy shoes or work boots*	Hat and gloves
Rain gear	Thermal underwear
Blankets or sleeping bags*	Sunglasses

## Special Items

Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

### For Baby\*

Formula  
Diapers  
Bottles  
Powdered milk  
Medications

### For Adults\*

Heart and high blood pressure  
Medication  
Insulin  
Prescription drugs  
Denture needs  
Contact lenses and supplies  
Extra eye glasses

**Entertainment** – games and books

### Important Family Documents

(Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container)  
Will, insurance policies, contracts,  
Deeds, stocks and bonds  
Passports, social security cards,  
immunization records  
Bank account numbers  
Credit card account numbers and  
companies  
Inventory of valuable household  
goods, important telephone numbers  
Family records (birth, marriage, death  
certificates)

## SUGGESTIONS AND REMINDERS

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the Disaster Supplies Kit in the trunk of your car.
- Keep items in air tight plastic bags.
- Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh.
- Rotate your stored food every six months.
- Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.



## **CREATE A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN**

**To get started...Contact your local emergency management or civil defense office and your local American Red Cross chapter.**

- Find out which disasters are most likely to happen in your community.
- Ask how you would be warned.
- Find out how to prepare for each.

**Meet with your family.**

- Discuss the types of disasters that could occur.
- Explain how to prepare and respond
- Discuss what to do if advised to evacuate.
- Practice what you have discussed.

**Plan how your family will stay in contact if separated by disaster.**

- Pick two meeting places:
  - 1) a location a safe distance from your home in case of fire.
  - 2) a place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- Choose an out-of-state friend as a "check-in contact" for everyone to call.

**Complete these steps.**

- Post emergency telephone numbers by every phone.
- Show responsible family members how and when to shut off water, gas and electricity at main switches.
- Install a smoke detector on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms; test monthly and change the batteries two times each year.
- Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire hazards.
- Learn first aid and CPR. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for information and training.

**Meet with your neighbors.**

Plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster. Know your neighbors' skills (medical, technical). Consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as elderly or disabled persons. Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

**Remember to practice and maintain your plan.**

## **PETS AND DISASTERS: GET PREPARED**

### **Be Prepared with a Disaster Plan**

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan must include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives.

Different disasters require different responses. But whether the disaster is a hurricane or a hazardous spill, you may have to evacuate your home.

*In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them, too.* Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost, or worse. So prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home.

### **1. HAVE A SAFE PLACE TO TAKE YOUR PETS**

Red Cross disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals who assist people with disabilities are the *only* animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size, and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places; including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.

## **2. ASSEMBLE A PORTABLE PET DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT**

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (duffle bags, covered trash containers, etc.). Your pet disaster supplies kit should include:

- Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan and can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

## **3. KNOW WHAT TO DO AS A DISASTER APPROACHES**

Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.

- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet disaster supplies kit is kept, and have a key to your home. If you use a pet sitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape, or even bite or scratch. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines. Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

## **CARING FOR BIRDS IN AN EMERGENCY**

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the cage during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo for identification and leg bands. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

## **POCKET PETS**

Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Take bedding materials, food bowls, and water bottles.

## **A FINAL WORD**

If you must evacuate do not leave your animals behind. Evacuate them to a prearranged safe location if they cannot stay with you during the evacuation period. (Remember, pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters.) If there is a possibility that disaster may strike while you are out of the house, there are precautions you can take to increase your pets' chances of survival, but they are not a substitute for evacuating with your pets.

For more information, contact The Humane Society of the United States  
Disaster Services, 21001 Street N.W., Washington, DC 20037

This information is excerpted from the American Red Cross Brochure:  
“Can You Afford to Lose Everything You Own?”



## RENTERS INSURANCE

What would it cost to replace everything in your apartment if there was a fire or other disaster, and where would you stay?

- Avesta Housing’s insurance does NOT protect your personal property: it only protects the building
- In order to protect yourself and your personal property, Avesta Housing recommends that you purchase Renters Insurance. Renters Insurance is there to assist you if your personal property is damaged or stolen.
  - Renters Insurance coverage generally includes:
    - Contents coverage (replacement cost option)
    - Liability and theft
    - Living expense coverage
  - It is available at a low cost
- Shop around for the policy that best fits your needs at the best price. Local insurance companies generally have Renters Insurance policies available and may give you a discount if you have other insurances, such as automobile insurance, with them.



## **WINTER SAFETY**

### **Snow Storm:**

- Be alert to weather warnings
- Use caution when going out. Don't put yourself at risk unnecessarily
- Always be alert for ice and black ice
- Wait until the snow contractors come to do their work.
- Use the sand provided in a bucket at your door as necessary.
- Once walkways have been cleared and sanded, residents (and their visitors) must move their cars for plowing of parking areas.
- Call your Property Manager or the Portland office to report a dangerous situation. The number is: (207) 553-7777 or 1-800-339-6516

### **Some Common Sense Tips:**

- Stay home if there is a snow storm unless it is absolutely necessary to go out.
- If you must go out, wait until walks have been shoveled/plowed and sanded.
- Wear shoes or boots with textured soles.
- Consider buying cleats to put over shoes for ice.
- Use a cane and walker carefully-get special tips for winter use.
- Dress to stay warm/avoid Hypothermia



## **HYPOTHERMIA**

**Definition:** Hypothermia is the loss of body heat due to prolonged exposure to the cold. It can be life threatening.

### **To avoid this condition:**

- **Wear proper clothing**
  - Dress in layers. Wear a thin layer next to your body as a way of keeping heat close to your body.
  - Wear a hat that covers your ears, a scarf to protect the skin on your face and neck, dry gloves and dry shoes or boots.
  - Make sure clothing is dry.
- **Drink plenty of water to keep from getting dehydrated.**
- **Keep active.**

### **Seek immediate help if you:**

- **Can't stop shivering.**
- **Begin stumbling.**
- **Become confused or severely fatigued.**



## SUMMER SAFETY

Everyone needs to be very careful in the heat. **Elderly individuals and persons with chronic illnesses such as asthma are especially at risk.** But everyone needs to be careful!! The major risk is dehydration, which can be a very serious illness.

### **Tips for Hot Weather:**

- Stay inside if possible and do errands early in the morning or in the early evening when it is cooler.
- Avoid exertion.
- Avoid cooking and hot foods.
- Wear loose, light-weight, and light colored clothing.
- Wear sunscreen and a hat to help stay cool and avoid sunburn.
- Drink plenty of fluids:
  - Water is best (try to drink one glass of water every hour.)
  - Juices are ok to drink.
  - Coffee, alcohol, tea and soda should be avoided.
- Use fans to stay cool and circulate the air in your apartment.
- Take a cool (not cold) bath or shower to cool off.
- Watch for signs of getting over-heated: fatigue, headache, nausea, and seek medical attention.

## CREATING A FALL-PROOF HOME

### BATHROOM

- Install grab bars in the shower or tub and beside the toilet
- Use a nonskid mat in tub or shower in contrasting color
- Use a shower seat and a hand-held shower head to sit while showering
- Place colored tape on edge of tub to judge the lip
- Remove loose mats and replace with nonskid mat
- Drain water out of tub before getting out
- Consider a raised toilet seat
- Make sure toilet paper is within easy reach

### LIVING ROOM

- Keep electric cords, telephone cords, newspapers, magazines and clutter away from walking areas
- Avoid putting small area rugs on top of carpeting to reduce danger of slipping
- The furniture you sit in should fit you and allow you to easily sit down and get up
- Remove unsteady furniture
- Stabilize or remove rockers and swivel chairs.

### STAIRS

- Install handrails preferably on both sides, projecting beyond top and bottom step and always use them when walking on stairs
- Place a strip of bright tape on the top and bottom step of each staircase or mark edge of stair with a contrast color (i.e. tape)
- Make sure lighting is good
- Consider re-organizing on one level



# CREATING A FALL-PROOF HOME *(continued)*

## KITCHEN

- Store commonly used items (pots, dishes, food) within easy reach to avoid bending over or climbing
- Use a long-handled reacher to reach light objects that are on the floor or on high shelves
- Store heavy items on lower shelves for easier access

## BEDROOM

- Use a night light in the hallway between the bedroom and bathroom
- Consider using a bedside commode during the night
- When getting out of bed, sit for a minute at the side of the bed before standing to prevent dizziness or loss of balance
- Sit on a chair, rather than stand, when putting on socks, shoes, or slacks
- Keep a phone by the bed

## GENERAL RULES

- Don't rush when doing a task
- Wear supportive shoes with low heels and rubber soles
- Never use a chair as a step stool
- If you feel unsteady at all, don't be embarrassed to use a cane or walker
- Dresses and nightgowns should be short enough to avoid tripping over them
- Have a portable phone near you, or have a phone in as many rooms as possible
- Have your vision checked regularly
- Take your medication as prescribed by your doctor. Notify him/her of any medication problems
- Remove scatter rugs
- Secure all rugs with double-sided tape or rubber backing
- Repair all flooring in poor condition
- Keep walker or cane in good repair, replace rubber tips when needed
- Camouflage windows with decorations and coverings if reflections are a problem
- Leave some lights on at night
- Consider additional lighting
- Consider higher wattage bulbs (within specifications indicated on socket)





## **FIRE PREVENTION/ SAFETY TIPS**

- **RESPOND WHEN YOUR OR ANOTHER TENANT’S SMOKE ALARM SOUNDS.** Do not assume that it is just the toast burning or kettle steaming. Check it out. (Good Neighbor action: If your toast burns and sets off the alarm, let your neighbors know so they don’t worry needlessly.)

**IF THE BUILDING’S FIRE ALARM SOUNDS – YOU NEED TO LEAVE THE BUILDING. KNOW YOUR NEAREST EXIT – AS WELL AS AN ALTERNATE ROUTE, IF NECESSARY.**

## **IN CASE OF FIRE**

- Keep glasses, a telephone, and walking aids by your bed.
- Have an escape plan.
- Don’t open a door that’s hot to the touch.
- If you are in a building with more than one floor, use the stairs (NOT the elevator) to exit
- If you must escape through smoke, crawl low where it’s easier to breathe.
- **If your clothing catches fire, STOP, DROP, AND ROLL. If you cannot, use a small rug, etc. to help smother flames. DON’T RUN! (Running will increase the flames.) Protect your face.**



## IN THE KITCHEN

### **A leading cause of fire in apartments is unattended cooking!! (Especially with oils)**

- Use the fan over your stove when you cook to prevent smoke and steam from activating smoke detector.
- Turn pot handles in – don't leave them sticking out to bump into.
- Beware of distractions when you are cooking – such as the telephone ringing or someone coming to the door. If you must leave the room, turn off the burner or take something with you as a reminder – such as a POTHOLDER OR UTENSIL.
- Keep your stove clean – don't let grease build up. Be sure nothing is stored in the oven before turning it on.
  - Don't reach across hot burners wearing loose sleeves – You don't have to touch the burner for some fabrics to catch fire!
  - Don't pile papers or plastic items on or close to the stove.

### **Microwave Ovens:**

- Remember to check dishes, cups, and cooking containers for metal – such as gold paint, which can cause sparks.
- DON'T OVERHEAT LIQUIDS - for example if you boil water in a cup or bowl and then stir it immediately when you remove it – the liquid may “explode” and could cause burns. Use a potholder when removing items from the microwave to avoid burns.
- If a fire should start in your microwave, UNPLUG IT -don't open the door. The fire will go out when the oxygen is used up.

## **GENERAL**

- Don't store mops, brooms or anything combustible near a hot water heater or furnace.
- Keep trash in containers with close fitting lids. Don't accumulate rubbish, such as old paper, broken furniture, old clothes, paint cans.
- Unplug heating pads, electric blankets, irons, toasters, electric frying pans, toaster ovens, etc. when not in use.
- Practice safety with electricity. Unplug an appliance if it gives off smoke or a burning odor. Replace all frayed or broken cords. Use only U.L approved power strips if you require an extension cord.
- Remove lint regularly from laundry room dryers.
- Check your apartment before leaving – be sure all appliances are off.

## **FAMILIES NOTE:**

- Buy flame retardant clothing for children.
- Teach children not to play with matches/fire.
- Be sure your children know what to do in case of a fire. Hold practice drills in your home.
- Keep matches & lighters out of the reach of children.
- Be sure the baby-sitter knows what to do in case of a fire:
  - Take children outside
  - Call Fire Department



## **FIRE PREVENTION/INVENTORY OF YOUR APARTMENT**

### **Kitchen area**

- Are loose papers, flammable hangings, paper towels, napkins, potholders, etc. away from your stove, so they will not fall or blow onto a burner?
- Are your stove surface and the oven and broiler unit free of grease which could ignite?
- Is there adequate space around each appliance to prevent overheating?
- Do you have a container of baking soda and/or a large lid near, but not adjacent to, the stove to use to smother flames?
- Do you have a fire extinguisher near your exits? ...know how to operate it? Check directions for maintenance

### **Bedroom Area**

- Are electric blankets and heating pads turned off when not in use?

## Other Areas

- Are radiators free of paper bags, boxes, clothing, drapes and other items that could heat up for spontaneous combustion? Wires that touch them could melt and short circuit.
- Is furniture far enough from heating units to allow for adequate circulation and to prevent over-heating?
- Are cords to lamps and appliances free of fraying and overloading?
- Do you have easily accessible flashlights for power failures?
- Are matches, etc. kept safely away from visiting children?
- Have you safely disposed of any flammable rags?
- Are the emergency pull cords long enough to reach from the floor in the event of a fall?



## Miscellaneous

- Do you have a list of emergency phone numbers posted at each phone?
- Are outlets limited to two plugged in cords and are extension cords (power strips) in good shape?



## APARTMENT SAFETY TIPS

- Never leave your apartment door unlocked, even while taking out the trash!!
- Make an effort to meet your neighbors....know who “belongs”.
- Do not let anyone into the building you do not know, either by “buzzing” someone in or as you leave the building.
- Never open your door to a stranger. Utility workers, etc. should have IDs they can slip under your door to verify who they are.
- Do not prop open any outside doors. If you find one propped open, close and secure it.
- Do not leave your first floor windows open and unlocked when you are out of your apartment.
- Use only your first initial and last name on your doorbell and mailbox.
- When you will be away for an extended period of time, cancel mail delivery and notify your Property Manager at Avesta Housing.



## **FRAUD AND SCAMS**

**Don't fall for a telephone line—consumers lose \$40 billion each year to criminal telemarketers!!**

### **Common Scams: Learn the Signs**

Phone calls from people who solicit charity donations, offer fantastic prizes, and no risk investments, all with a fee that needs to be paid immediately.

- The caller wants your social security number or credit card number in order to receive prize.
- The caller seems to know a lot about you and want to help you win the big prize.
- Mail solicitations promising big prizes, wonderful vacations, and no risk investments ..all you pay is.....

## **Tips to Combat the Criminal Caller:**

- Never give your social security or credit card information over the phone
- Beware of anyone who asks you to send money or buy anything sight unseen.
- Don't pay anything for a free prize. Free is free!!!!
- Do not pay in advance. Pay for services only when they have been delivered.
- Refuse to be rushed into making a decision or be intimidated by frequent calls.

If you think you are receiving calls for fraudulent telemarketing or mailings call: Attorney General-Consumer Protection Division at (207) 626-8849



This information is excerpted from the AARP Brochure:  
"Telemarketing Fraud"



## **FILE OF LIFE**

It is suggested that residents prepare a File of Life that will be provided at the time of move-in.

- The file of Life is a small, magnetic, red plastic file that can be affixed to the refrigerator.
  
- Residents complete a form containing
  - Medications
  - Allergies
  - Major illnesses
  - Emergency contacts
  
- If placed on the refrigerator, information is readily available for emergency personnel.