

# 3 Disaster preparedness



“Disaster preparedness” means to prepare for damages caused by disasters. Japan experiences many earthquakes. From July to October, Japan is hit by typhoons that carry strong winds and heavy rains. In the event of heavy rain, a Flood Alert may be issued and rivers will overflow.

## 3.1 Preparations against disaster-inflicted damages

Community Safety Section

029-273-0111 (ext.) 3211、3218

### (1) Actions to take before a disaster happens

- ① Note the locations of evacuation sites close to your home before a disaster happens.  
For more information, refer to the [city's website \(List of designated evacuation sites for disasters\)](#).
- ② Note the level of danger around where you live before a disaster happens.  
For more information, refer to the [city's website \(Non-Japanese / Disaster preparedness\)](#).
  - ・ Flooding hazard map (Japanese)
  - ・ Landslide hazard map (Japanese)
  - ・ Tsunami hazard map, tsunami flood forecast map, tsunami evacuation map (Japanese)
  - ・ Liquefaction hazard map (Japanese)
- ③ Prepare emergency supplies that can be brought out immediately for use. (E.g. flashlight, mobile charger, radio, lighter, rain gear, work gloves, masks, whistle, towels, a change of clothes, plastic bags, medicine, antiseptic solution, thermometer.)
- ④ Prepare emergency supplies to be stored at your home. (E.g. seven days' worth of water and food, portable gas stove, wet wipes, change of clothes, towels, candles, lighter, flashlight, lantern, radio, batteries, medicine, masks, antiseptic solution, thermometer.)
- ⑤ Ensure that furniture is fixed in place to prevent it from falling over.
- ⑥ Decide on how family members will remain in contact with each other, select a gathering place, and take other such precautions.
- ⑦ Participate in disaster drills conducted in the community and pick-up drills conducted at your children's schools. Pick-up drills are to ensure that guardians can smoothly pick up their children in a disaster situation.

## (2) How to collect information in a disaster situation

### ① Radio disaster warning system

In Hitachinaka City, there is a radio broadcast tower set up outdoors for the disaster warning system. This system broadcasts disaster-related emergency information in Japanese. The City also loans out free receivers to individual households to tune into radio disaster warning system broadcasts. For more information, refer to the [city's website](#) (“[The City loans out free receivers to individual households to tune into radio disaster warning system broadcasts](#)”).

### ② Hitachinaka Safety and Security Email

You can receive emails that contain the contents of radio disaster warning system broadcasts.

For more information, refer to the [city's website \(Hitachinaka Safety and Security Email\)](#).

### ③ Twitter

The City tweets out the contents of radio disaster warning system broadcasts on Twitter. Twitter account (@hitachinakacity)

※However, be wary of outdated or mistaken information when using social media.

### ④ City of Hitachinaka website

In the event of a major disaster, you can get disaster-related information on the city's website.

## (3) Ensure that you can use the Disaster Emergency Message Service

The Disaster Emergency Message Service can only be used during earthquakes, typhoons, and heavy rains. In major disasters, phone calls may have trouble connecting. The Disaster Emergency Message Service is used instead. You can use the service to post text and record voice messages.

### Post text

#### ① Disaster Emergency Message Board (Web171)

- Use your computer or mobile phone to post phone numbers or messages in text form.
- You can view messages posted for specific phone numbers.

NTT East <https://www.ntt-east.co.jp/saigai/web171/>

NTT West <https://www.ntt-west.co.jp/dengon/web171/>

#### ② Disaster Emergency Message Board

- Use your mobile phone to post messages in text form.
- You can view messages posted for specific mobile phone numbers.

### Record a voice message

#### ③ Disaster Emergency Message Hotline (#171)

- You can record a voice message via landline phone or public payphone.
- You can listen to messages left for specific phone numbers.

NTT East <https://www.ntt-east.co.jp/saigai/voicel71/>

NTT West <https://www.ntt-west.co.jp/dengon/>

④ Disaster Emergency Voice Message Delivery Service

- You can leave a voice message from a smartphone on which you have installed the dedicated app. Voice messages can be sent even between different telephone companies.

**(4) Build relationships with neighbors for disaster preparedness**

Make an effort in your daily life to become acquaintances with your neighbors. If you have any questions or concerns, talk to your neighbors. Participate in local festivals, disaster drills, and other events in your community.

**(5) Get insured**

If you own a house or vehicle, it is recommended that you get non-life insurance that covers repair costs for damages suffered from earthquakes, flooding, fires, or other disasters.

## 3.2 Types of evacuation information

Alert level	Evacuation information provided	Explanation
Level 3	Evacuation Advisory for the elderly, children, handicapped, etc.	The elderly, children, and others who will require more time to evacuate should immediately proceed to evacuation sites (※1). Others should prepare to evacuate.
Level 4	Evacuation Advisory	Everyone must evacuate from dangerous places.
Level 5	Disaster Occurrence Alert	Take whatever immediate action is best to ensure your safety.

Take as few items with you as possible when evacuating. Help children, the elderly, the sick, and the injured evacuate.

(※1) Evacuation sites are places to go when it is dangerous to stay in your house due to a disaster. Anyone can use these sites. You can also receive the bare minimum in terms of food and water, as well as find helpful information and other resources.

## 3.3 After an earthquake

In Japan, the strength of earthquake tremors is expressed numerically, and this number is called the “seismic intensity” (shindo). There are ten levels of seismic intensity, with larger numbers indicating stronger tremors. From smallest to largest, the seismic intensities are “0”, “1”, “2”, “3”, “4”, “5 Lower”, “5 Upper”, “6 Lower”, “6 Upper”, and “7”.

For more information, refer to the [Japan Meteorological Agency website \(Tables explaining the JMA Seismic Intensity Scale\)](#) (external link).

### (1) When inside a building

- Hide under a sturdy table and protect your head.
- Open doors to make sure you can still escape.
- Broken glass may fall from windows, so do not rush outside immediately.
- Turn off gas appliances, heaters, and other heat sources. If you are unable to turn off such equipment, call 119.



### (2) When outside

- Objects may fall from above. Protect your head.
- Do not enter narrow roads.
- Do not go near walls or cliffs.
- Evacuate to a park, school playground, or other wide-open area.
- If you are driving a car, pull over and stop the car on the left shoulder in a safe way. If you need to leave your car on the road to evacuate, leave your key inside the car.
- If you are on an elevator, get off the elevator immediately.

### (3) When near the ocean or rivers

- Areas near the ocean or rivers are at risk of being hit by a tsunami. Everyone must immediately evacuate to a higher elevation.
- If you cannot evacuate by car because the roads are blocked or congested, leave your vehicle behind and evacuate on foot.
- Tsunamis come in several waves. Confirm tsunami information on the radio or another device.



## 3.4 When a typhoon, heavy rain, or tornado occurs

Japan's typhoon season runs from July to October. Tornadoes tend to occur in September. When you are near a tornado, the wind will be strong and the sky dark, with thunderstorms and large hailstones.

### (1) When a typhoon or heavy rain occurs

- Houses may collapse due to strong winds. Inspect your house and add structural reinforcements. Potted plants and other objects that are outside should be moved inside the house.
- Close storm shutters and stay inside the house.
- If your house is flooded, move furniture, electrical appliances, vehicles, bicycles, and other such objects to a higher elevation.
- There may be power or water outages. Prepare flashlights and a radio, and fill the bathtub with water.
- Do not go near the ocean, river, canals, or anywhere that is likely to experience a landslide.
- If an evacuation order is issued over TV or radio, evacuate immediately.



### (2) When a tornado occurs

- If outside, immediately get inside a nearby sturdy building.
- If there are no sturdy buildings nearby, lie face-down in a canal or depression and protect your head and neck with both arms.
- If you are inside a building, close storm shutters, windows, and curtains, and stay away from rooms' walls and windows.
- Do not go under bridges or overpasses.

## 3.5 If a nuclear power disaster occurs

There are nuclear power facilities located in Ibaraki Prefecture. If a nuclear power disaster occurs, get accurate information from sources such as TV, the radio, or the radio disaster warning system. However, be wary of outdated or mistaken information when using social media. You should also try to avoid contacting disaster response-related organizations or city offices because you may interfere with disaster response activities.

### (1) What is a nuclear power disaster?

Unlike wind or water disasters, earthquakes, or fires, a nuclear power disaster cannot be felt with the five senses.

In a nuclear power disaster, it is difficult to judge for yourself what effect the disaster is having on your body and what actions you should take.

In order to correctly respond to a nuclear power disaster, you need to act in accordance with instructions given by the national, prefectural, and municipal governments based on the status of nuclear power facilities and measurements of environmental radiation.

### (2) External radiation exposure and internal radiation exposure

“Exposure” refers to the exposure of the body to radiation. “External exposure” refers to exposure to radiation emitted by radioactive material outside of the body. “Internal exposure” refers to exposure to radiation emitted by radioactive material inside the body from food or breathing.

### (3) Acquiring accurate information

In the event that a disaster strikes a nuclear power facility, you need to properly assess the situation and calmly take action based on the information received. If you do not understand Japanese, check with a nearby Japanese person or use the machine translation feature to translate disaster-related information posted on the city’s website.

#### [ Information sent out when a disaster occurs ]

- What happened? When? Where? Did it occur at a specific facility and building?
- Status of the incident and estimates/forecasts moving forward
- What actions residents should take

### (4) When a shelter-in-place order is issued

When a shelter-in-place order is issued, immediately enter a building and close all doors and windows to lower radiation exposure. In general, air ventilation should also be turned off. Once inside, wash your face and hands, rinse your mouth and gargle, and change your clothes.

#### [ How to avoid internal exposure ]

- Wear a mask
- Moisten a towel or handkerchief with water, wring tightly, and then lay it over your nose and mouth.

### **(5) If you are instructed to take stable iodine**

In Hitachinaka City, stable iodine is distributed to all residents to prevent or lessen internal exposure caused by a nuclear power disaster. The stable iodine is to be taken after a nuclear power disaster occurs. If a nuclear power disaster occurs and there is a need for people to take stable iodine, you will be notified of this via the radio disaster warning system. Bring the check sheet that was mailed to your home to a dispensing pharmacy in order to receive your stable iodine. If you lost your check sheet, come to the Health Care Center.