THE HIGHLANDS EMERGENCY READINESS GUIDE

A Supplemental First-Aid & Routing Reference for Haliburton County Cottage Estates

LEGAL & MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

The Highlands Emergency Readiness Guide is provided by Kacaba Cottage Care for informational, educational, and resource-planning purposes only. Kacaba Cottage Care is a property maintenance and management company, not a licensed healthcare provider, medical facility, or emergency response authority. The first-aid references contained within this document are compiled from published public health and wilderness medical standards (including Health Canada, the Canadian Red Cross, and the Wilderness Medical Society) and are intended as supplemental reference material for remote settings where definitive care is delayed. This document is an added tool for safety and does not constitute formal medical advice, clinical triage, or a definitive stand-alone substitute for certified First Aid/CPR training or professional veterinary care. Utilizing these references is done at the user's sole risk and discretion. In any life-threatening emergency, severe trauma, or instance of diagnostic uncertainty, always dial 911 and seek immediate evaluation at a certified medical or veterinary facility. Kacaba Cottage Care assumes no liability for injury, loss, or adverse medical outcomes resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained herein.



Property Identification (For 911 Dispatch)

When calling 911 in a rural or lakeside zone, the emergency dispatcher may require this information to send help.

◌ **Civic Address (911 Number & Road Name):**

_____

◌ **Lake Name & Specific Bay / Shoreline:**

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◌ **Township / Municipality:**

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◌ **GPS Coordinates (Latitude / Longitude):**

_____

◌ **Gate / Driveway Access Code (If applicable):**

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Medical Facility Routing & Warnings

Do NOT assume the Minden Hospital is an open, 24/7 Emergency Room. It is currently designated as an Urgent Care facility, is often staffed primarily by nursing personnel, and is subject to temporary closures based on regional staffing levels.

- ◌ **Primary 24/7 Emergency Room:**

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- ◌ **Major Trauma Center**

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- ◌ **Nearest Urgent Care**

_____

- ◌ **Ontario Poison Control Centre: 1-800-268-9017**

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- ◌ **Primary Local Veterinary Clinic & Phone:**

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- ◌ **24/7 Emergency Veterinary Hospital & Phone:**

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THE HIGHLANDS READINESS CHECKLIST

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OWNERS: Audit your estate readiness this weekend. A standard city first aid kit and a single trained individual are inadequate for remote, lakeside emergencies. Complete Priority #1 (Training) first, then use this sheet to upgrade your physical supplies to the "Highlands Standard."

◌ PRIORITY #1: The Human Element (Critical Training)

THE GOLDEN RULE OF RURAL FIRST AID: Advanced medical gear is completely useless without the calm, clinical knowledge required to deploy it under pressure. Do not buy gear until your household training is secure.

- Verify Certified Personnel on Site (Minimum 2 at all times)
  - The Single-Point-of-Failure Risk: If only one person in the family knows first aid, what happens when they suffer a chainsaw laceration, a boat propeller injury, or a fall from a ladder?
  - The Cottage Standard: Make it a mandatory estate rule that at least two adults (or older teenagers) present at the cottage hold a current Standard First Aid & CPR-C certification.
  - Local Recommendation: Keep your training local! We highly recommend checking out Engage First Aid (facebook.com/EngageFirstAid)—an exceptional Haliburton County provider offering practical, WSIB-approved certifications right here in our community.
  - The Backcountry Level-Up: For boat-access properties or remote backcountry enthusiasts, consider enrolling in a Wilderness First Aid course from Swift (swiftresponse.ca) to learn advanced delayed-care techniques, improvised splinting, and remote field triage.
  - The Investment: A weekend certification course is a lifelong investment in practical knowledge that can mean the difference between life and death during the critical "golden hour." Refresh certifications every three years.

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◌ Category 1: The 5 Mandatory Cottage Upgrades

1. The Tick Tackle (Dedicated Tick Key or Fine-Tipped Medical Tweezers)

- Why: Ticks are a reality in Haliburton. Discard matches, petroleum jelly, and chemical remedies; agitating a tick causes it to regurgitate Lyme bacteria directly into the bloodstream.

2. The Fisherman’s Friend (Heavy-Duty Lineman Pliers or Small Bolt Cutters)

- Why: Standard needle-nose pliers cannot cut thick hook wire. Your cutters must be made of hardened steel capable of snapping a barbed fishing hook in half.

3. The Deck Doctor (Sterile, Disposable Lancets or "Splinter Out" Probes)

- Why: Old pressure-treated docks create deep splinters that blunt tweezers cannot reach. Lancets surgically part the skin without crushing decaying, chemically treated wood.

4. The Burn Unit (Medical-Grade Hydrogel Burn Dressings)

- Why: Essential for woodstove, campfire, and barbecue burns. Hydrogel seals out air, provides continuous cooling relief, and keeps open blisters sterile during hospital transport.

5. The Reactor (Fast-Acting Liquid Antihistamine)

- Why: Liquid absorbs significantly faster during severe deer fly or wasp reactions to control localized swelling and itching.

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◌ Category 2: Rugged Trauma & Wound Care

- Heavy-Duty Fabric Bandages: Assorted sizes of flexible fabric strips (Plastic bandages fall off immediately in lake water or sweat).
- Sterile Gauze & Tape: 4x4 and 2x2 sterile gauze pads, plus waterproof medical tape.
- Tensor / Cohesive Bandages: 3-inch and 4-inch elastic wraps for dock slips, ankle sprains, and securing dressings.
- Irrigation & Antiseptics: Povidone-iodine prep pads, rubbing alcohol, triple antibiotic ointment (Polysporin), and sterile saline eye wash pods.
- Personal Protection: 3 pairs of large nitrile gloves and 1 CPR breathing barrier face shield.
- Trauma Shears: Heavy-duty paramedic shears capable of cutting through thick denim, canvas, or leather work gloves.

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◌ Category 3: K-9 & Pet Tactical Add-ons

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- Irrigation & Antiseptics: Povidone-iodine prep pads, rubbing alcohol, triple antibiotic ointment (Polysporin), and sterile saline eye wash pods.
- Personal Protection: 3 pairs of large nitrile gloves and 1 CPR breathing barrier face shield.
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EMERGENCY RED FLAGS: WHAT NOT TO DO

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OWNERS: In a lakeside emergency, preventing further harm is your most important job while waiting for or traveling to professional medical care. When an accident happens, avoid (dangerous) cottage myths.

◌ Embedded Fishing Hooks

- DO NOT Pull Backward: Never pull a barbed hook backward out of thick tissue. The barb acts like a jagged anchor and will severely tear the surrounding muscle, nerves, and skin.

- DO NOT Attempt Face/Joint Removal: If the hook is embedded anywhere near an eye, the face, a joint capsule, or a major blood vessel, do not touch it.

- The Safe Action: Whenever possible, leave the hook exactly where it is. Secure it with bulky gauze and medical tape so it cannot bounce or shift, and seek professional medical care at Haliburton Hospital (HHHS) for a sterile, anesthetized removal and a Tetanus booster.

◌ Embedded Ticks

- DO NOT Use Matches or Chemicals: Never apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline), rubbing alcohol, essential oils, or a hot match to an embedded tick.

- The Safe Action: These irritants suffocate or traumatize the tick, inducing it to regurgitate its stomach contents—which significantly increases the transmission rate of Lyme disease into the bloodstream. Use a Tick Key or pointed tweezers to pull straight upward with unyielding pressure. Save the tick in a sealed bag for potential testing.

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◌ Thermal Burns (Woodstoves, Campfires, Grills)

- DO NOT Use Lake Water: Never use untreated open water (lakes, rivers, ponds) to cool blistered or broken skin. Summer lake water harbours high concentrations of Pseudomonas and cyanobacteria. Introducing these to open burns creates an extreme risk of severe, rapid-onset infection.

- DO NOT Use Ice, Butter, or Grease: These can cause cellular damage or trap extreme heat inside the tissue.

- The Safe Action: Submerge the area in clean, cool (not cold) running tap water, or apply compresses soaked in potable drinking water for a full 10 to 15 minutes. Cover with a sterile hydrogel pad (Second Skin).

◌ Severe Allergic Reactions (Anaphylaxis)

- DO NOT Rely on Benadryl for Systemic Reactions: Antihistamines DO NOT treat or arrest systemic anaphylaxis. They cannot reverse airway constriction or blood pressure drops.

- The Safe Action: Liquid antihistamines are for localized skin swelling only (like a puffy deer fly bite). If a patient exhibits systemic red flags—such as lip/throat swelling, wheezing, hives across the body, or dizziness—immediately ask if they carry an Epinephrine Auto-Injector (EpiPen), assist them in using it, and call 911 immediately.

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◌ Porcupine Quill Encounters (K-9 First Aid)

- DO NOT Cut the Quills: The shaft of a porcupine quill is hollow. Cutting it destroys the internal air pressure, causing the shaft to collapse and splinter. This makes veterinary surgical grasping nearly impossible.

- DO NOT Pull Them Yourself: Quills feature microscopic backward-facing barbs that flare outward when warmed by body fluids. Pulling them without anesthesia causes excruciating pain, tissue shredding, and broken tips that migrate deeper into muscles, joints, and organs, causing severe abscesses.

- The Safe Action: Immediately wrap the dog securely in a heavy towel or blanket to prevent them from pawing at their face (which drives quills deeper into the eyes or roof of the mouth). Leash them, call your emergency vet to state you are en route, and drive safely to the clinic.

SAFETY IS OUR STANDARD

At Kacaba Cottage Care, we operate in the Highlands environment every single day.

Every member of our operational team holds current First Aid certification, and our fleet carries the gear to keep them safe—giving our routine property care clients total peace of mind whenever we are on site.

Empower Your Family & Community

True rural readiness starts with preparation. We encourage every cottage family in the Highlands to invest in certified First Aid training and properly equip your property.

Taking these steps ensures you have the tools and confidence to protect your family, your guests, and your lake community if an emergency strikes.

For our routine property maintenance clientele, our Concierge Team can also help to source and stage the items listed for an upgraded First Aid Kit and more as part of your seasonal care package.

Contact us at 705-809-0898 to learn more.

www.kacabacottagecare.com