do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Make a Plan

THE GOAL: Understand what puts you at risk from disasters and take steps to lower your risk.

Disasters change things. When an emergency happens you may have to decide what to do very quickly, while you are worrying about what might happen. By planning ahead, it will be easier to make the right decisions when the worst happens.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Learn what disasters can happen in your area and decide what you will do in a disaster.

It is important to know what types of disasters can happen where you are. Is your home in a floodplain? Are you in an area that has earthquakes? When are tornadoes most likely to happen? Knowing what disasters could happen can help you know how to be prepared and what to do. Contact your local American Red Cross or emergency management office to learn more about the disasters in your area.

Meet with your family or household members. Discuss how to prepare and respond to emergencies that are most likely to happen where you live, learn, work, and play. Identify responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team. If a family member is in the military, plan how you would respond if they were deployed.

TALKING ABOUT DISASTERS

Talking about disasters can be scary, especially with children, or with someone who may have difficulty coping with daily life. Be open and positive. The unknown often causes more anxiety than knowing the facts. Listen to what the individual has to say, learn how they feel and what they may be afraid of. Older people and people with disabilities may worry that asking for help during a disaster will take away their independence. Talk about different options for assistance and make a plan with them.

❒ Take steps now to prevent damage to your home in a disaster.

Once you know what disasters could happen in your community, there are things you can do to lower your risk of injury or property damage. Here are some suggestions:

TORNADO

Add a tornado safe room to your home, or add extra protection to an existing room to keep your family safe in a tornado. Look for FEMA publication 320 for more information.

HURRICANE

Install hurricane shutters. Keep trees around your house trimmed to prevent damage from falling branches. Secure your soffits to make sure that they won't provide a way for wind and water to get into your home. Make sure entryway doors have three hinges and a deadbolt lock.

WILDFIRE

Use fire-resistant building materials like shingles and siding. Cut back branches and brush within 30 feet of your home. Keep firewood at least 30 feet away. Check into the National Fire Protection Association's Firewise program for more ideas.

FLOOD

Elevate your home above the base flood level or take steps to floodproof. Elevate your utilities above the base flood level. Make sure you have adequate flood venting. Use flood-resistant building materials when you build or remodel. Taking steps like these can lower your flood insurance rates.

EARTHQUAKE

Secure your furniture, appliances, and water heater to walls and floors. Install safety catches on cabinets and cupboard doors. Make sure your appliances are connected with flexible connections. Consider using a safety film on your windows or installing laminated glass to prevent injuries from broken glass.

For more information on any of these projects, or other things you can do to protect your home and family, contact your local sheriff's department or emergency management office.

❒ Plan what to do if you have to evacuate.

Choose two places for your family to meet. One should be right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire. The other should be outside of your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate.

Decide where you would go and what route you would take to get there. You may choose to go to a hotel, stay with friends or family in a safe location, or go to a shelter. Hold evacuation drills at home. Practice getting out of the house quickly, and drive your planned evacuation route. The more you practice, the more confident you will be if you really have to evacuate.

Plan ahead for your pets. Due to health concerns, pets are not allowed in Red Cross shelters. Keep a phone list of pet-friendly hotels and animal shelters that are along your evacuation route in case a designated pet shelter is not available. Contact your local humane society or animal shelter to ask if pet emergency shelters will be opened in a disaster.

Water

THE GOAL: Have enough water on-hand for your family to last 3 days (72 hours). This should be about 3 gallons per person.

Whether you live in the country or the city, your water supply relies on electricity to run the system. During a power outage you may find yourself without a way to get water. Your water supply can also become unsafe to drink. Both private wells and city water systems can be contaminated in a disaster.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Purchase and store a 72-hour supply of commercially bottled water (or more – up to two weeks).

A three-day supply for one person is 3 gallons of water (one gallon per person per day). Also include an extra one gallon for a medium size pet. That one gallon should last three days, but plan for more or less if your pet is very large or very small.

1 day, 1 person = 1 gallon (or 128 ounces) = 7-20 ounce bottles = 4 liters

3 days, 1 person = 3 gallons (or 384 ounces) = 21-20 ounce bottles = 12 liters

During an emergency, you should drink at least two quarts (one half gallon) of water a day. Drink 3-4 quarts a day if you are in a hot climate, pregnant, sick, or a child. Some of the water in your emergency water supply will be used for cooking or washing.

If you buy commercially bottled water, it should be replaced once a year. Store your water in a cool, dark place to keep it tasting fresher longer.

If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today and look for more tomorrow.

❒ Bottle a 72-hour supply of water at home.

If you get your water from a private well, disinfect your tap water before bottling. Place six drops of bleach for each gallon of water, shake well, then let sit for 30 minutes. If you get your water from a municipal water system, there is no need to disinfect tap water before bottling.

Replace your water supply every six months if you bottle your own water. Always sanitize bottles before refilling them. Store your water in a cool, dark place.

SANITIZE BOTTLES BEFORE FILLING:

1. Wash containers with dishwashing soap and rinse with water
2. Sanitize by washing a solution of 1 teaspoon of liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water on all interior surfaces of the container.
3. Let air dry for at least one minute

Use clear plastic bottles with tight sealing caps. Milk jugs don't make good water storage containers, they don't seal well, and water stored in them can sometimes develop a plastic taste. Only use bottles that originally had beverages in them (large plastic soft drink bottles work well). See the previous page to find out how much water you should have for your family in an emergency.

❒ Learn how to provide a safe supply of drinking water for your household in a disaster.

WATER HEATER—*DO NOT USE IF THE TANK OR FIXTURES HAVE BEEN SUBMERGED IN FLOODWATER!*

1. Turn off the gas or electricity to water heater (turn off electricity at the fuse or breaker box, turn off gas by locating the valve supplying the hot water heater and turning the valve handle so that it crosses—is not lined up with—the gas line).
2. Turn off the water intake valve (should be located near the water heater).
3. Open the drain at the bottom of the tank.
4. Turn on a hot water faucet (water will drain from the tank, not the faucet). Discard the first few gallons if they contain rust of sediment. Do not turn the gas or electricity back on until the tank is refilled.

PIPES

1. Turn off main water valve where the water comes into the house (usually near the water meter if you have city water).
2. Let air into the pipes by turning on the highest faucet in your house.
3. Get water from the lowest faucet in your house (never get water from faucets that have been submerged in floodwater).

ICE

If you have freezer space, consider freezing part of your water supply. This has the added advantage of keeping food in the freezer cold longer during a power outage.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Sheltering

THE GOAL: Know how to respond safely when instructions are given to evacuate or take shelter

In a disaster you may be asked to either evacuate or shelter-in-place. In the excitement of an emergency, it can be difficult to focus on what you are doing. Know what to do to keep your family safe. Practice your tornado and fire safety plans. If your family has practiced, they will be more comfortable doing it when the emergency actually happens.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Identify the best storm shelter in your home and practice getting to the shelter with your family.

Choosing the best place in your home or workplace to shelter from a tornado isn't always easy. Many newer buildings don't have a really good shelter area. Use these rules of thumb to find the best tornado shelter possible:

- Stay away from windows and skylights
- Shelter "down and in"—Put as many walls between yourself and the outside as you can (think of the ceiling as a wall)
- Avoid rooms with large ceiling expanses
- Find an area large enough for everyone to stay comfortably for at least 45 minutes

If you live in an area prone to hurricanes, be prepared to protect your family and your property. Cover windows with plywood or hurricane shutters when a hurricane warning is issued—don't use tape. If you are advised to evacuate, do so. Otherwise, stay inside and away from windows until the storm has completely passed.

❒ Learn how to safely shelter in place.

In an emergency like a chemical spill, you may be told to "shelter in place". This means to make the place where you are a safe place to stay until the danger has passed. Shelter in place orders are given when it would be dangerous for you to go outside.

Notification—Warning sirens may be used to warn people that it is not safe to be outside. Emergency responders may go door to door in the affected area. They may also use loudspeakers from police or fire vehicles to give instructions. Information will also be given over television and radio using the Emergency Alert System.

What to do in a hazardous materials incident—The first thing to do when a chemical spill or similar event occurs is to get information. Turn on the television or radio to find out if your area is affected and what steps to take. Never call 911 to get information about an emergency. Only call 911 if you are injured or need assistance.

If you are told to shelter in place you should close all doors and windows and shut off fans and air conditioners. Take your family to a room with as few doors and windows as possible. You may be told to put towels or tape around the cracks of the windows and doors. Follow emergency instructions carefully. Make sure you take a battery-powered radio with you so that you will know when the danger has passed. Power in your area may be shut off during the incident.

❒ Make a Go Bag for emergency sheltering.

Emergency shelters will be opened when people are displaced from their homes. In most areas emergency shelters are operated by the American Red Cross. At the Red Cross Shelter:

RED CROSS WILL PROVIDE

- A cot to sleep on
- Meals and bottled water
- A nurse for basic medical care
- Information about the disaster from public officials

YOU MAY NEED TO BRING

- Pillow and blanket
- Identification
- Change of clothes
- Cards or magazines
- Comfort items
- Your medication and medical supplies (or a list of what you are taking, dosage, and Dr's names)

NOT ALLOWED AT THE SHELTER

- Weapons or alcohol
- Pets (except for service animals)

The Red Cross will never provide information about you to anyone without your permission. There is never any charge for emergency sheltering.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Food

THE GOAL: Have an emergency food supply that will meet the needs of your household for three days without outside help.

An emergency food supply doesn't have to sit on a shelf, ready for disaster to strike (although it can). It can be part of the food you use every day. The key to a good food storage plan is to buy ahead of time. Replace items before they run out. Buy items when they are on sale. A large duffle bag or plastic tub with a lid makes a great storage place for an emergency food supply. Make sure your family, including pets, will have what they need when disaster strikes.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Buy a three-day emergency food supply for your household.

Put aside a three-day supply of food for disasters. You probably have a better idea than anyone else how much food you and your family members would need for three days. Follow the BUS rule to help you. BUS stands for balance, usability, and shelf-life.

1. BALANCE

You may already buy food that provides a balanced diet for your family. A balanced diet includes a variety of foods from each of the basic food groups. This is especially important for people with certain health conditions. Also include high energy foods (such as nuts and protein bars) and comfort foods (such as graham crackers or chocolate).

2. USABILITY

Choose items that don't need to be cooled, heated, or need a lot of water. Examples include canned or dried meat, dry cereal, and canned vegetables. Make sure you have a manual can opener if you plan to use canned goods.

3. SHELF LIFE

Look at the expiration date listed on the food item. Use and replace foods before the expiration date.

❒ Take steps to make sure food in your refrigerator and freezer will stay safe.

During an extended power outage, temperatures in your fridge and freezer will begin to rise, even if the doors stay closed. As the temperature rises, harmful bacteria may begin to grow on your food.

If the temperature in your fridge stays above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for more than four hours, perishable food items (milk, lunch meat, mayonnaise based salads, poultry items, leftovers, etc.) may be unsafe to eat.

If the temperature in your freezer stays above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for more than one to two days, food may be unsafe to eat. Food that still contains ice crystals should be safe. Always check the color and odor of food, particularly meat when it is thawed. If it is questionable throw it out (make sure it is discarded where animals can't get to it).

TAKE STEPS NOW TO MAKE SURE YOUR PERISHABLE FOOD REMAINS AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE:

- Install a thermometer in your fridge and freezer.
- If you anticipate a power outage, such as a winter storm, reduce the temperature of your fridge and freezer. The colder your food is the more time it takes to thaw.
- Keep containers of ice in your freezer to keep the temperature down.

WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT:

- Cover the fridge or freezer in newspapers and blankets. Keep vents clear in case the freezer starts operating again.
- Avoid opening the door to the fridge or freezer.
- Use dry ice, if available. Identify a source for dry ice in advance and remember that if the power outage is widespread, there may be a lot of competition for this resource.

If you don't know the temperature of your fridge or if the fridge was off for more than four hours, the food should be discarded. Eating perishable food that has not been kept cold can cause food poisoning, even if it is refrozen or cooked. When in doubt, throw it out!

❒ Make sure you can meet any special dietary needs in your household.

Some people are on special diets for health reasons. There can be serious effects if the right food is not available during a disaster. If you use special equipment, like a blender, food scale, or feeding tubes, make sure you take those with you. Think about keeping extra equipment at a friend or relative's home in case you have to evacuate.

Talk to your healthcare provider or a nutritionist about nonperishable menu options that can be used if you can't get to a grocery store, or that can be prepared at an emergency shelter. Keep a description of your medical condition and the diet in your emergency kit.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Work, School, & Community

THE GOAL: Make sure everyone in your household can receive, understand, and act on information received in an emergency.

Disasters can happen at any time. If you are away from home do you know where to find safe shelter locations? Do you know what the emergency procedures are for your child's school or for your workplace? Will people who count on you know what to do if you can't reach them? Know how to make sure you and your loved ones are safe in a disaster, no matter where you are.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Make sure emergency procedures are in place for your workplace or school.

Talk to your employer about emergency plans for the building where you work. Think about other places that you and family members regularly spend time, like your child's school. Talk to administrators at those places about their emergency plans as well.

WAYS TO BE SAFE AT WORK AND SCHOOL:

- Make sure evacuation routes and tornado shelter locations are marked on a map and posted in the building.
- Hold emergency training and drills.
- Help create an emergency kit for the facility.
- Know where fire extinguishers and Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) are located.

❒ Give emergency kits to people who count on you (college students, elderly parents, etc.).

Put together basic emergency kits for people who may not be able to do so for themselves or for those who may not think of doing it for themselves. Show them what is in the kit and talk to them about disasters.

Make sure the kit meets their specific needs. For instance, if someone takes prescription medicine, include a list of medications and dosages. For a college student, make sure the kit is small enough to store in the space they have available.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Talk to your college student about how you will stay in touch if a disaster occurs. Make sure they understand that cell phones may not work during a disaster. Choose an emergency contact who does not live near you or the college. Arrange with your student to call that person if they can't reach you during a disaster.

Visit the website for your student's college to find out about the school's disaster plans and procedures. Some colleges will provide a phone number that you can call in an emergency. If you don't find the number on the website, call the admissions office and ask. Add the number to your emergency contact list. Make sure your student knows to call you if there is an emergency on campus. Also, ensure your student is registered for any emergency notification system on their campus.

INSURANCE

Talk to your insurance agent to find out if your policy covers your student's belongings while they are away at school. You may need to buy an additional renter's policy. Also check with your health insurance carrier to find out where your student can find covered healthcare at school.

The "Emergency Supplies" fact sheet has more information about making emergency kits for work and school.

❒ Know how others in your community will respond in a disaster.

Talk to other people when you are developing an emergency plan for a school, workplace or organization. Get input from people who work there and other people who use the building. It is especially important to include people with disabilities. Think about asking your local police and fire departments to review the plan. Make sure that what you are planning won't interfere with emergency response.

Find out if your community has designated evacuation routes for floods, hurricanes, or other disasters. Include that information in your plans. Make sure that the plans you develop will work for everyone.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Unique Family Needs

THE GOAL: Be aware of and prepare for your family's unique needs.

Every household is different. Is there an infant or young child in your home? Does someone in your family have a medical condition that requires medication? Do you have a pet? Before disaster strikes, talk to your family about your household's unique needs. Make a list of special items you may need in a disaster.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Talk with family members to identify your household's unique needs.

What kinds of things can members of your household not be without for 72 hours? Here are some examples of things that can create unique needs for your family:

- Infants and young children
- Prescription medication (keep a three day supply with you)
- Health-related supplies (For example, diabetics need insulin syringes, alcohol wipes, and glucometer supplies)
- Assistive devices (glasses, canes, etc.)
- Pets

When you are in a hurry, it is easy to overlook small and important items. Common items like diapers and pet food might not be easy to find right after a disaster. Trying new brands of food or formula, or not having a comfort item, can make disasters more stressful for both children and pets.

Talk to your kids about what to do in a fire, a medical emergency, or a disaster. Make sure they know where emergency supplies are kept, how (and when) to call 911, and who to call if they can't reach you in an emergency.

❒ Make a plan to make sure pets are taken care of in a disaster.

A disaster may happen while you are away from home. Your neighborhood may be evacuated, or you could be trapped somewhere else and unable to get home. Consider asking a trusted neighbor to check on your pets if you can't get home because of a disaster or emergency. You may also ask them to take your pets with them if an evacuation is ordered while you are not home. Make sure they are comfortable with your pet, and that they know where to find leashes and other supplies.

Remember, pets are not allowed in most emergency shelters. Talk to your local animal control agency or humane society about options for sheltering your pet in a disaster.

❒ If you or someone in your household has a disability, create an evacuation plan that works for them.

People with disabilities are more affected by disaster than others in the community. Accessible services might not be available. Hazards like wildfire, floods, and hurricanes can lead to evacuations. If you have a disability and you live in an area where these things can happen, make sure you have an evacuation plan:

- Make sure you are signed up for any emergency notification systems your community offers. Some notification systems will only call landline phones. If you use a cell phone, you may have to sign up separately.
- Paratransit services may not be available once a disaster happens. Talk to your paratransit provider now to find out what services they can provide when evacuation is ordered.
- If paratransit services aren't available, arrange for someone else to pick you up if an evacuation is ordered. Make sure they will come for you UNLESS you tell them not to. That way there won't be any confusion when the time comes. If you can't evacuate, call 911 to let them know your location.
- Talk to your local Red Cross chapter or other organizations who provide emergency sheltering in your community. Make sure that your needs can be met in an emergency shelter. Think about accessible entrances and bathrooms. What methods of communicating with shelter staff, medical services or assistive devices will you need? If you have a service animal, talk to them about what they can provide for the animal. Find out what you need to bring with you. Make sure you have batteries or a charger for any assistive devices in your emergency kit.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Family Communication Plan

THE GOAL: *Have the ability to communicate with family members during a disaster.*

Today we have more ways to speak with one another than ever before. We are used to staying in touch with cell phones, internet, and email, but disasters can change things. These devices may not be available. Cell phone towers quickly become overloaded with people trying to reach friends and family. If the power is out at your home, cordless phones, internet, and email will not work either.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Have a phone with a cord and a car charger for your cell phone standing by in case of a power failure.

Phones with cordless handsets won't work in a disaster because they need more electricity than they can get from the phone jack. Old fashioned phones with a cord connecting the handset to the base will work even in a power outage. Make sure you have at least one phone with a cord in your home in case of a power outage.

Keep a car charger for your cell phone in your vehicle. If the power is out in your home, you can still charge your cell phone in your car.

If you don't have a landline and you use a cell phone as your home phone, remember that cell phone towers may be tied up with calls in an emergency. However, a text message from your cell phone may get through when a phone call doesn't. Make sure everyone in your family knows how to send and receive text messages.

Remember, never call 911 to get information about what is going on in an emergency. Only call 911 if you are injured or need help.

❒ Develop a plan for how your family will stay in touch during a disaster.

Develop a plan so you can stay in touch with your family in a disaster. Include phone numbers for all family members and those who can give you extra help, such as caregivers. Also include all work, school, and daycare phone numbers, if applicable. A wallet-size form you can use to write down this information can be found at www.ready.gov. Be sure each family member has a copy of your communication plan. Post the communication plan by a phone in your home, and include it in your go bag as well.

OUTSIDE THE AREA CONTACT

Local phone calls and long distance calls work on different circuits. When local circuits are overloaded, you may still be able to make long distance calls. Choose someone outside of the local calling area to be your "outside the area" contact. Make sure all family members carry this phone number with them. If something happens when your family is not together and you are not able to reach each other, each family member can call the "outside the area" contact and leave a message for the others.

Safe and Well

The Red Cross Safe and Well program is a way for families to keep in touch when they are separated in a disaster. Visit the website at www.safeandwell.org now and show family members how it works.

Make the website address part of the emergency information every family member carries. If you are separated from each other in a disaster, make sure everyone knows to go to the website to enter information about themselves, and how to find information on others.

❒ Program In Case of Emergency numbers into all family cell phones.

If you are hurt and can't talk, first responders and hospital staff may not know how to contact your family right away. If you have a cell phone, you can provide the phone numbers for your emergency contacts to first responders and hospital staff.

1. Create a new contact in your cell phone's phone book.
2. Name the contact **In Case of Emergency**
3. Enter all phone numbers for the person you would like to have notified in a medical emergency.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Get Involved

THE GOAL: Make your community stronger by getting trained and getting involved.

It takes more than police, fire and EMS to respond to a disaster. It takes people who are committed to neighborhood, churches, schools and volunteer organizations. When people are willing to work together for the good of others, communities are stronger.

People who are involved are the key to a disaster resilient community. They are willing and able to look out for themselves and others. A resilient community is one that can withstand a disaster and get back to normal quickly (even if normal isn't the same as it was before).

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Connect with an isolated individual in your neighborhood or start a neighborhood organization.

Isolated individuals are more vulnerable during and after a disaster. They are less likely to ask for help or follow emergency instructions. The elderly or those with disabilities may have trouble getting out of the house, and may not have much contact with the outside world. Someone who doesn't speak English well may have trouble understanding emergency instructions. People may also be isolated just because they are new to the area, or because their work hours keep them from meeting their neighbors.

Who are the isolated individuals in your neighborhood? Take time to meet them. Help them make a plan for emergencies, and include checking on them in your plan.

Neighborhood watches and other groups can be a great way for you to become better connected to your neighbors. If your neighborhood doesn't have a group, consider starting one. There are resources available online at www.usaonwatch.org or by calling your local police or sheriff's department.

❒ Promote emergency preparedness in your community.

Scout troops, service clubs, residential associations, communities of faith—almost any organization you belong to can become a partner in emergency preparedness. Organizations that promote emergency preparedness make their community more able to withstand and recover from disaster. Here are some suggestions for involving your organization:

- Include a Do 1 Thing preparedness topic in newsletters or on bulletin boards each month.
- Talk to your scout troop leader about how Do 1 Thing activities can be used toward a preparedness badge.
- Get a group together to make emergency kits for seniors or kids who stay home alone.
- Visit the www.do1thing.com website to see how other organizations are promoting preparedness in their communities.

The Red Cross, Ready.gov, and many other organizations also promote preparedness. Find the materials that will work best for your organization and become a partner in preparing your community!

❒ Become a volunteer in your community (CERT, Red Cross, Neighborhood Watch, etc.).

There are many places to volunteer in your community. Many police and fire departments use volunteers to help with special projects, events, or program. The American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other organizations train volunteers to work in disasters.

If you are interested in helping in your community or other communities during a disaster, become a volunteer for your local Red Cross or Salvation Army chapter. But don't wait for disaster to strike—volunteer now. These organizations won't send untrained volunteers into disaster areas.

Many communities also have a volunteer center or a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). These programs can find ways for you to help in your community that will fit your schedule and abilities.

If you are already a member of a volunteer organization, consider getting your volunteer group involved in VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). VOAD is a national program that helps volunteer groups work in their community during a disaster.

Community preparedness starts at home. If you know that your family is prepared at home, you will be better able to help others in your community.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Be Informed

THE GOAL: Make sure everyone in your household can receive, understand, and act on information received in an emergency.

Getting correct information during an emergency is the key to taking safe action. Someone in your household may not be able to receive, understand, or act on emergency information. Think about what special needs your household may have. Take action now to make sure everyone in your family will be safe in an emergency.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Make sure everyone in your family knows what to do when they hear emergency warnings.

Your community may have outdoor warning sirens (also called tornado sirens) to warn you in an emergency. These sirens are meant to let people who are outside know they should go indoors. When you hear the outdoor warning sirens sound in your area it is not safe for you to be outdoors. You should take cover inside a sturdy building and get more information from television, radio, internet, or by contacting a friend or family member.

Call your local fire department to find out if your area is covered by warning sirens, when they are tested, and when they would be activated. Make sure other members of your household know what to do when outdoor warning sirens sound.

Some communities have other ways of warning residents. They may call by phone, or send text messages or emails with emergency information. Check with your local emergency management or sheriff's office to find out what other warning systems are used in your area. Talk to family members about what to do when emergency information is given.

❒ Get a NOAA Emergency Alert Radio.

Weather can change very quickly. Severe weather may strike when people are sleeping or unaware of the forecast. This can be deadly if people do not seek a safe shelter. A NOAA emergency alert radio (sometimes called a weather radio) can turn itself on when an emergency alert is issued and warn you at any time - day or night.

Emergency alert radios can also be used to warn about other emergencies, such as a chemical spill. With the Emergency Alert Radio, you will be warned about dangerous situations in time to take shelter or other safe action.

Every home should have an emergency alert radio, just the way all homes should have a smoke detector. They can be purchased at stores that sell electronics. Prices start at about $20.00. Most run on batteries or have battery back-up.

❒ Make sure everyone in your household can communicate in a disaster.

The way emergency information is sent out in your community may not work for everyone. If you don't speak English well, or if you use an assistive device to speak or hear, make a plan now. Make sure you can get and give information in a disaster.

Communities may give information by television or radio, by automated phone call, text messages, email, or by sounding outdoor warning sirens. Police or fire may use loudspeakers to give information as they drive through the streets. Responders or volunteers may go door-to-door to talk to people directly.

If you think you may not be able to understand emergency information, identify someone (or more than one person) that you can contact for help in an emergency. Have more than one way to get in touch with them. Keep their contact information with you.

Emergency Information: Things to consider...

- Emergency news or weather broadcasts may not be close captioned.
- Information that is shown on screen may not be spoken aloud.
- Automated voices and voices over loud speakers may be hard to understand.
- Information comes quickly and the stress of a disaster may make it hard to understand or remember instructions.
- Words moving across the bottom of a television screen may move very quickly.
- The screen color or color of the text might make some information on television hard to read.

Power

THE GOAL: *Be able to safely meet your basic needs during an electrical outage.*

We count on electricity for heat, food, and medical needs. Many gas appliances even need electricity to run. A power outage is an emergency that often follows another emergency—like a hurricane, tornado, or winter storm. That makes it even more important to be prepared in advance.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Acquire and learn how to safely use a portable generator.

Using a properly connected generator of adequate size during a power outage will reduce or almost eliminate the impact a power outage has on your life. Before you buy a generator, talk to an electrician about the size and type you need. Think about what you want your generator to run. Generators can be used to keep food cool, provide lights and electricity for phones and television, power furnace blowers and pumps.

Always run generators outside. Never use a generator inside a house, in a basement, or garage. Never use a cord from a generator to backfeed a circuit in your house.

The best way to use a portable generator is to connect it to your home using a transfer switch installed by a licensed electrician. This will keep the power from overloading the wiring in your home. It will also keep the power from your generator from traveling back into the power lines, which can injure or kill people working on power lines, or can unexpectedly re-energize downed power lines near your home. You may also connect equipment directly to the outlets on the generator, but be sure that any extension cords are of the proper length and gauge to handle the power requirements.

❒ Have flashlights ready in an easily accessible place and check batteries in flashlights and radios.

When the lights go out, the safest way to provide emergency lighting is with flashlights or battery-powered lanterns. Keep flashlights with fresh batteries in several places throughout your home and check them for proper operation regularly. Always keep a supply of extra batteries. Think about buying a rechargeable flashlight. Batteries might be hard to find in a disaster.

Power Outage Safety

- Discard food if the temperature in your refrigerator exceeds 40 degrees for more than 2 hours.
- Stay away from downed power lines and anything they are in contact with such as fences or buildings.
- Never drive over downed power lines; they may be energized.
- Never use charcoal or gas grills inside a structure. You may be overcome by carbon monoxide.
- If you must use candles, be sure to use them safely. Never leave candles burning unattended.

❒ Create a power outage plan – decide what you can do before, during and after a power outage to minimize the effect on your household.

BEFORE THE POWER GOES OUT:

- Fill empty space in freezer with containers of water. Frozen water will displace air and keep food cold longer. Remember to leave space in containers for ice to expand.
- Have at least one phone with a handset cord in your home. Many cordless phones will not work in a power outage.
- If you have an automatic garage door opener, learn how to use the manual release and open your garage door manually.
- Try to keep your car's gas tank at least half full. Many gas stations will not be in operation during a power outage. Fill up your tank if a major storm is predicted.
- Make sure you have a car or lighter plug cord for your cell phone.
- If you use special healthcare equipment like oxygen generators or dialysis equipment, notify your power company.

AFTER THE POWER GOES OUT:

- Unplug major appliances and electronics. When the power comes back on, there may be power spikes that can damage large appliances or delicate electronics.
- Do not open refrigerators or freezers any more than necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for approximately 4 hours, an unopened freezer will keep food frozen for approximately 24 hours.
- Use a battery-powered radio to stay informed.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Emergency Supplies

THE GOAL: Remember important items that may be overlooked when leaving your home in a disaster.

Any emergency is easier to handle when you have prepared ahead of time. Put together an emergency kit with important items to keep at home, and a go bag with items you will need to take with you if you evacuate. Think about what you and your family would need in a disaster. You can make kits for your home, car or workplace. Emergencies can happen anywhere.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Gather your emergency supplies in an accessible place.

Have a go bag ready if you have to shelter in place or evacuate your home. Your go bag can be part of your emergency kit, just make sure it is in a bag or easy to carry container and that it is easy to get to.

THINK ABOUT THESE ITEMS FOR YOUR GO BAG:

- Battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Lightweight blankets
- Emergency information, including insurance policies
- A list of medications and correct dosage, and doctor's names
- Personal items such as toothbrushes, soap, extra glasses, etc.
- First aid kit
- Whistle
- Change of clothing
- Nonperishable snacks
- Books, cards or magazines to pass the time

Along with the basics on the previous page, think about these items for your go bag:

FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN:

- Baby formula and food
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Blanket or toy

FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS:

- Empty pill bottle(s) or a list of current medications *(Make sure you update your go bag when your medications change)*
- Your doctor's phone number

FOR PETS:

- Pet food & water
- Collar with ID tags
- Pet medication(s)
- Pet carriers and leashes
- Medical records from vet
- Photos of your pet
- Microchip information

❒ Create an emergency supply kit for your pet, your car, and your workplace or school.

Disasters can strike when you are away from home. If your office or school does not have an emergency kit, offer to help make one. The kit should include:

- First aid supplies
- Flashlights or light sticks
- Building emergency procedures
- Building maps showing evacuation and shelter areas
- Pens or pencils
- Signs with the words "Need Help" and "All Clear"
- Clipboard with class/staff names

Make or buy an emergency kit for your car. If you travel with your pet regularly, make sure that you have an emergency kit for them as well. Some items to think about for your car kit are: a small first aid kit, flashlight or light sticks, flares or reflective cones, a blanket, cell phone charger, jumper cables, bottled water, nonperishable snacks, and a "help" flag or brightly colored cloth that can be tied to the antenna.

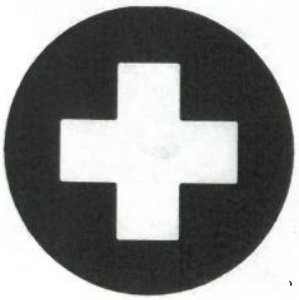
❒ Stash some cash in case ATMs and credit card machines are not usable in a disaster.

Many things that we take for granted are not available when there is no power. ATM machines may not work. Grocery stores and other businesses may not be able to accept your credit or debit card. Cash could be the only acceptable means to make a purchase. Some experts say you should have at minimum $150.00 in cash stashed away. Realizing this may not be possible for everyone, any amount is good to start with. Take $1.00 dollar a week and place it in an envelope in your emergency kit. In just a little time, you will have some cash stashed away for use in emergencies.

do 1 thing

SMALL STEPS TOWARD BEING PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

First Aid



THE GOAL: Be prepared to give first aid while waiting for an ambulance.

An emergency can happen at any time and any place. Many public places have a first aid kit, oxygen, or an AED (automated external defibrillator) to treat people. These items can only save lives if someone knows how to use them. Actions you take in the first few minutes after an injury or other medical incident may save someone's life.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

❒ Know what to do while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

Call 911 instead of trying to take an injured or ill person to the hospital yourself. It seems like waiting for an ambulance will make it take longer to get help, but ambulance crews can start providing care as soon as they arrive. They can get the patient to hospital quickly, legally, and more safely.

1. Stay on the line with 911 and follow emergency instructions.
2. Stay calm and try to keep the patient calm.
3. Don't move a patient who was injured in an automobile accident or fall, or who was found unconscious.
4. If the patient is cold, cover them with a blanket.
5. Don't give an injured person anything to eat or drink (unless instructed by the 911 dispatcher).
6. Have someone watch for the ambulance and show the crew how to get to the patient. (This is especially important in an apartment or office building, or if your address is hard to see from the street).

❒ Make or buy first aid kits for your home and car.

Ready-made first aid kits are available at most department stores or your local American Red Cross chapter. These kits come in a variety of sizes and prices. You can also make your own kit from supplies you probably already have around the house.

Some items that should be included in a basic first aid kit are:

- Adhesive Tape
- Antiseptic Ointment
- Band-Aids (assorted sizes)
- Blanket
- Cold Pack
- Disposable Gloves
- Gauze Pads & Roller Gauze (assorted sizes)
- Hand Sanitizer (liquid or wipes)
- Plastic Bags
- Scissors and Tweezers
- Small Flashlight and Extra Batteries
- Triangular Bandage

❒ Take training in first aid, CPR, AED, or pet first aid.

Helping others in a medical emergency isn't as hard to learn as you might think. Knowing how to apply a bandage, identify the signs and symptoms of shock, perform CPR or use an automatic external defibrillator (AED) can save a life.

First responders may not be on the scene for five minutes or more. It is up to individuals like you to be ready to help someone who is injured. The person whose life you save may be someone that you love.

Many American Red Cross chapters now offer training in pet first aid. Training may also be available through your local humane society, kennel club, or pet store. Check with your veterinarian to see what special items you may need to include in a first aid kit for your pets. If you travel with your pet, or if they are service or hunting animals, you may want to make a travel-sized pet first aid kit as well.

Contact your local fire department or American Red Cross chapter to learn what first aid classes are available in your area. Ask your employer if they will sponsor a class for your workplace, or take a class with your family or on your own. Many classes are offered free of charge. Courses may also be offered at your place of worship, school, or community organization. Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training also includes first aid training.

Being prepared doesn't have to be hard or expensive. By doing one thing a month, you can make sure that you and the people who depend on you will be better prepared for whatever happens.