



SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 8

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

To Protect, Serve, and Educate

Personal Preparedness

What is disaster preparedness? Why do we have to be prepared? These are all good questions. After reviewing this document, you will have answers to all of those questions and even a couple you haven't thought of yet.

This document is not intended to be the end all, go to document for us to use in disaster preparedness. It is intended to be a beginning to the planning process for you to use at home and at work. It is intended to encourage discussion and to be shared with your families.

So what is preparedness? The dictionary defines preparedness as *"the continuous process by which all individuals, groups, and communities manage hazards in an effort to avoid or ameliorate the impact of disasters resulting from the hazards."* On a simpler note you might think of it as being ready to deal with the issues facing your family after a significant event. Those events could include wildfires, a winter storm, or terrorism. They could also include something on a personal level such as a fire in your home or a death in your family. The likelihood that you and your family will recover from an emergency tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done today. Preparedness is not just about dealing with the emergency; it is walking around being and feeling safer.

Why do we have to be prepared? The bottom line is to ensure that we are able to survive on our own until the infrastructure that makes up our community is functioning again.

Where do we begin? First we need a plan. The plan should include what to do during an event and in the days following the event. A plan should consider some of the following:

Choose a location for your family to meet after an event happens and practice your plan.

You should consider who you want to know the status of you and your family. Choose a person outside the immediate area for family members to contact in

case you are separated. This person should live far enough away that they won't be affected by the same event.

Since we don't have the ability to schedule the timing of an event, you should be prepared for the event to happen when you are away from your home. Know how to contact your children's schools or daycare and how to pick them up after a disaster. Keep your child's emergency release card up to date. Include some training for the family on shutting off utilities.

Keep a small amount of cash with your kit. If the power is out, the ATM machines and credit card machines may not work. Keep some 10's and 20's as well as change, you might be able to use a pay phone or even the Laundromat. There may be some important paperwork that you will want to have with you.

Now that we have a plan starting to come together, we need to think about the basics for survival – food, water, shelter and any life sustaining items you require. Put together a kit that contains all of the items you identify for your family survival. We have a list of suggestions on Page 3.

Remember that after the event takes place, you and your family may experience some anxiety. There are some ways to cope with the stress on page 6.

Don't forget about the family pets, they are going to need you to plan for their basic needs as well – Page 7.

Consider building two kits, one for your home and one "Go Kit" to take if you need to evacuate the area.

To go out and purchase all of the items that you need for a preparedness kit would be expensive. By purchasing one gallon of water, a can of soup and some zip lock baggies this week you will spend about \$6 and have a nice start to your kit. The following week you can purchase another gallon of water, more soup and some garbage sacks, another \$6 and you are well on your way to putting together a great kit! Do you ever get presents from family that you don't use? Ask them to provide some of the items on your list for your kit. By doing this a little at a time you are able to spread out the cost and provide a good balance for the rotation of food and water.



Personal Preparedness Supplies

- *Food (Canned and nonperishable, write the date on them and rotate to keep fresh)
- **Water (recommended amount is 1 gallon per person per day)
- Cash including coins
- Pen and paper
- Duct tape
- Garbage bags (use to collect trash, contain water, weather protection, etc.)
- Zip lock baggies (use to keep papers dry, food storage, cooking, etc.)
- Flashlights with spare batteries
- Whistle
- First aid kit (include a first aid book)
- Radio (solar, wind up, battery)
- Light sticks
- Mylar blankets
- Photos
- Medication
- Sleeping bags
- Waterproof matches
- Candles
- Toiletries (shampoo, tooth paste, tooth brushes, etc.)
- Feminine and infant supplies
- Toilet paper
- Bleach (with an eye dropper for purifying water)
- Soap
- Gloves
- Tent
- Paper towels
- Plastic utensils
- Paper plates, cups
- Aluminum foil
- Tools
 - Axe
 - Crescent wrench
 - Screw drivers
 - Pliers
 - Hammer
 - Shovel
 - Broom
 - Garden hose
 - Coil of rope and twine
 - Plastic sheeting

- Knife
- Nails, screws, fasteners
- Toys, games, books
- Phone list
- Can opener
- Large plastic trash can (use to store kit materials and then use to collect trash if needed.)
- BBQ or camp stove
- Fuel for BBQ or camp stove
- Hand sanitizer (saves on water use)
- Dust mask respirators
- Pet needs (food, water, medication, leash, crate, toys, litter)
- Tissues
- Generator (fuel & oil)
- Eyeglasses, contact lense solutions
- Clothes and shoes
- Important papers

*Food: Try to keep a minimum of one week's worth of food per person. Choose food that doesn't need cooking. Energy bars; dried fruit; jerky; peanut butter; crackers are good examples. Some canned food can be eaten cold. Smaller portions are easier to share and don't make leftovers that need storing. Be sure to rotate food while it is still good, so choose food you'd be willing to eat.

**Water: The recommended amount of water to store is one gallon of water per person per day. Look for other sources of water that you may already have, your water heater, ice in your freezer, pools, toilet tank etcetera. Water can be made safer with specialty filters, plain bleach (8 drops per gallon if the water is clear) 2% iodine solution (12 drops per gallon) or boiling (at least 1 minute of full boil). These are not guaranteed to 100% sterilize the water, but they help.



Personal Preparedness Documents

Having key documents available in an emergency will help you access your resources, contact you loved ones and otherwise handle the situation with greater confidence, speed and ease. Make two copies of any paperwork that you believe that you should have. Keep one copy in your Preparedness Kit. Keep another copy off the premises in a safe deposit box or a relative or friends house outside the area. You can also scan the documents and put them on a disk or flash drive. Be sure to update the information as necessary. Here are some of the important documents and data that you can duplicate and protect:

- Birth Certificates
- Marriage Certificates
- Divorce papers
- Social Security cards
- Passports
- Naturalization documents
- Will
- Power of Attorney
- Mortgage or real estate deeds of trust
- Vehicle registrations
- Previous years tax return
- Property tax statement
- Bank statements
- Credit card statements
- Retirement accounts
- Investment accounts
- Recent pay stubs
- Government benefits (social security, Veterans, etc.)
- Alimony income
- Child support income
- Copies of loans and statements due
- Insurance policies
- Health / Dental insurance cards
- Record of immunizations
- List of necessary medications
- Military Discharge DD 214
- Any other document that you may want copies of.



Taking Care of Your Mental Health

It's natural to be upset when you think your health or the health of your family is threatened. Pay attention to your own feelings and take care of your emotional needs, then you can better help friends and family members handle their concerns.

Anxiety can be related to fear of the unknown. It is normal to feel anxious and worried during an emergency. Everyone reacts differently to an emergency. People often experience changes in their physical, emotional or mental state during and after emergencies. For example, they may have trouble sleeping, experience anger or depression, or have problems at work or school. These are among the many normal reactions to an emergency situation. There are things you can do to cope with these problems. However, if these reactions seem extreme or last for a long time, the person suffering the condition should seek help.

Some ways you can cope with stress and anxiety:

- Have a plan for you and your family incase an emergency happens to you
- Limit your exposure to graphic news stories
- Get accurate, timely information from reliable sources
- Maintain your normal routine, if possible
- Avoid drugs and excessive drinking
- Exercise, eat well and get enough sleep
- Stay active physically and mentally
- Stay in touch with friends and family
- Help others
- Keep a sense of humor
- Share your concerns with others



Pet Preparedness

Pets are family to a lot of people, and taking care of their needs is important. Many of the standard supplies in your kit and actions you take are critical for pets as well. Here are some additional steps you can take to keep them safer:

Supplies for Pets:

- Food and water
- Medications
- Medical records, including shots
- License or other legal paperwork
- Photo of your pet, with you in the picture
- Restraint items (leash, harness, muzzle – these may be needed in stressful situations)
- Portable carriers
- Kitty litter or cage liners
- Toys
- Brushes, combs

Actions for Pet Owners

- Put your pet's name and phone number on their collar
- Get your pet microchipped
- Put their license and rabies tag on their collar
- Have a friend who can access your home in emergencies, and can be a temporary caretaker.
- Arrange a safe haven for your pet. It may not be possible to co-locate pet shelters near human shelters.
- Pre-print LOST fliers with a photo of your pet
- Learn about the pet shelter plans for your area
- Practice getting your pet in their carrier quickly

