

November 2005 is . . .

Personal Emergency Planning Month

Disasters can strike at anytime and without warning. Make a plan and prepare your family. The more you have planned ahead during an emergency, the calmer and more assured you and your family will be. This is especially important for those of you - emergency responders, government employees, law-enforcement personnel and managers alike - that have a job to do during emergencies and disasters. It is important to have that peace of mind, knowing when you report to duty and respond to disasters that your family and loved ones (including your pets) are safe and that they are well prepared.

Steps Which Will Help You Prepare

- Talk with your family about disasters that can happen where you live.
- Discuss the potential dangers, and plan to share responsibilities and work as a team. Make sure every family member knows his or her duties.
- Designate an alternate in case a person is not there at the time of disaster.
- Plan where to meet after an emergency or disaster. Choose two places: One outside your home, in case of a sudden emergency such as a fire. Another outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate your neighborhood.



- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room. Also, decide the best two escape routes out of your neighborhood or community.
- Ask an out-of-town friend to be your family contact. After a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this contact and tell them where they are.
- Make copies of the emergency contact information for each family member to carry with them, and be sure to include the out-of-town contact.
- Train each family member how and when to turn off utilities such as electricity, water and gas.
- Ask someone from the fire department to show you how to use the fire extinguisher at your home.



- Learn where the safe spots are in your home for each type of disaster.
- Review your disaster supplies and replace water and food every six months.
- Check the batteries in smoke alarms every year and make sure at least one is installed on each level of your home.
- Review your insurance for each type of disaster to ensure you have adequate coverage.
- Practice fire drills and evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on a map in case the main roads are impassible or blocked.
- Make sure your family members know how to "shelter-in-place" if they are advised by officials. Visit www.redcross.org for more information.
- Learn how to care for your pets during disasters. Many shelters do not allow them because of health regulations. For more information on how to care for your pets, visit the Animal Safety section on American Red Cross at www.redcross.org.

