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Home Disaster Preparedness

Beginning Preparedness is critical as we have come to depend on services daily. But what happens when those are disrupted? We have all watched as natural disasters across the nation and world have proved that point recently. Although Preparedness means different things on different levels, meaning locally, nationally and globally- the following are some steps that you can take to ensure that you are ready in the event of a natural disaster or terrorism situation taking the services we depend on away.

Make a list of the items that you have to have to live. Such as medications, non-perishable food, bottled water, knives, matches, personal hygiene products, eye glasses, contact lens solution. Also be prepared with communications, a cell phone with charged batteries is important for obvious reasons. If the phone lines are down, phone communication may be out as well therefore limiting your calls for help. Consider a HAM radio, CB, or walkie talkies with neighbors.

Cash on hand or tucked away in case is a good idea. If you have small children or pets, take into consideration things they need as well.

Make a first aid kit with large bandages/gauze and band-aids, Blankets, and anything else you can think of. Plan what to do in different scenarios such as power outages, mandatory evacuations or severe weather. Your list for each should be about the same however.

For example ñ Heat; If there is a power outage for days, how will you heat your home? Remember, even gas heaters run on electricity for the fan to operate. Maybe propane, kerosene or oil lamps/heaters are something practical. What about wood burning stoves or a fireplace. A gas fireplace can heat a small area; is there a way to block off areas of you home where the fireplace is located? Maybe have extra blankets and sleeping bags on hand and sleep in clothes. Dress in layers and stay close with family members to share body warmth.

Is a standby generator practical for you? If so, consult an electrician to be sure you purchase one large enough to run a heater and some of the appliances and maybe one or two lights in your home, it takes about 30-50 amps to run a furnace and a few other appliances. You should have it professionally installed. Plan on paying \$3,000 plus depending on the number of amperage you require.

What ever you choose to heat your home, be sure you have adequate ventilation to prevent death from carbon monoxide poisoning. Check with your hardware or heating professional to ensure that the product you are using is safe and will not start a fire. If there is a fire in your home- don't attempt to put it out, just get out and call 911 from a neighbor's house.

Be sure to get stuff together that may not seem essential but still necessary such as flash lights, personal ID, Wills, signal flares, etc. Perhaps going through each room will aid you in your listing.

For more ideas visit *Fema* the *Red Cross* or *Federal Homeland Security*.