



POLK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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Media Release (4 pages) – For Immediate Release
August 31, 2010
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National Preparedness Month September 2010 - Get A Kit

September is National Preparedness Month and Polk County Emergency Management is supporting this campaign to increase awareness and assist you in becoming as prepared as possible if an event occurs. Today's topic is: *what you need to make a kit.*

You need to be able to take care of yourself after an emergency. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days. In addition, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or even a week or longer.

Your household emergency kit should include the necessary supplies to sustain you and your family in your home or other location **for at least 3 days**, maybe longer. Remember that it may take a significant amount of time for basic services (water, electricity, and telephones) to return to normal. Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own.

While there are many things that might make you comfortable, think first about fresh water, good food and clean air.

- Water: 1 gallon per person per day
- Food: Ready-to-eat, just-add-water, canned and dried foods that are easy to store and prepare
- Manual can opener
- First Aid kit
- Essential medications
- Flashlight (with extra batteries)
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Whistle
- Tools
- Portable Television or Radio (battery-operated or manual)
- Batteries

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- Cash in small denominations
- A copy of important documents & phone numbers
- Unscented liquid household bleach for water purification
- Personal hygiene items including toilet paper, feminine supplies, and soap
- Sturdy shoes
- Heavy gloves
- Warm clothes, a hat and rain gear
- A local map
- Prescription medicines
- Extra prescription eye glasses, hearing aid or other vital personal items
- Plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra keys to your house and vehicle
- Large plastic bags for waste and sanitation
- Special-need items for children and seniors or people with special needs
- Don't forget water and supplies for your pets

Many potential terrorist attacks could send tiny microscopic particles into the air. Many of these materials can only hurt you if they get into your body, so think about creating a barrier between yourself and any contamination. It's smart to have something for each member of the family that covers their mouths and noses like filter masks, which are readily available in hardware stores. These masks are rated based on how small a particle they filter.

If you don't have a mask, plan to use two or three layers of cotton t-shirt, handkerchief or towel. It is very important that the mask or other material fit your face snugly so that most of the air you breathe comes through the mask, not around it. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children.

Also include duct tape, and heavyweight garbage bags or plastic sheeting that can be used to seal windows and doors if you need to create a barrier between yourself and any potential contamination outside.

Consider putting together two kits. In one, put everything needed to stay where you are and make it on your own. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to get away.

If you need to leave from your home, it will be important that you are ready to go as quickly as possible. Some people find that having a "Go Bag" in an accessible place ensures that you and your family are prepared for whatever situation arises. Should you decide to prepare a "Go Bag", here are some things to consider.

Go Bag Guidelines

- Each member of your household should have his or her own Go Bag
- Go Bags should be easy to carry and sturdy
- Go Bags should be stored in an easily accessible location
- Ideally, you should keep a Go Bag at your home, in your car, and at work
- Go Bags should be prepared for any time of year
- Go Bags should be updated every six months

Go Bag Item List

- Bottled water
- Non-perishable food and a manual can opener
- Flashlight
- Battery-operated AM/FM Radio
- Extra batteries (check the necessary types)
- Pocketknife
- Whistle
- Prescription medication for a week, along with copies of your prescriptions
- Small first aid kit
- Extra house and car keys
- A blanket
- Raingear
- A hat
- Comfortable, sturdy shoes
- Warm clothes
- Extra pair of glasses and/or hearing aids
- Toilet paper
- Plastic garbage bags
- Soap
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Feminine hygiene products
- Sanitation and hygiene items (hand sanitizer, moist towelettes and toilet paper)
- A copy of your communications plan card
- A regional map
- Special needs items for members of your family, especially children, seniors, people with disabilities, and pets.
- Paper, pens, and tape – in case you need to leave a message somewhere
- Cash – preferably in small denominations
- Coins for pay phones
- Copies of important documents in a waterproof container (i.e. IDs, insurance information, proof of address, passports, etc.)
- A recent family photo for identification purposes - make sure everyone's face can be seen clearly

If you live in a cold climate, you must think about warmth. It is possible that you will not have heat during or after a disaster. Think about your clothing and bedding needs. Be sure to include one set of the following for each person:

- Jacket or coat
- Long pants and long sleeve shirt
- Sturdy shoes
- Hat, mittens and scarf
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket

Water

During an emergency, the water supply may be compromised or become contaminated. It's important to make sure you have enough water for everyone in your household to last at least 3 days.

Recommendations:

- Store 1 gallon of water per person per day in an easily-accessible, cool, dark place
- Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water
- If you live in a warm weather climate more water may be necessary
- Rotate your water supply every 6 months
- Water should be stored in tightly sealed plastic containers labeled with the date they will expire (6 months after storage)
- Keep a small bottle of unscented liquid bleach for purifying water

If you have concerns about the safety of your water supply, you can:

- Boil water for at least 5 minutes at a rapid boil and let it cool before using
- Add 8 drops of unscented liquid bleach per gallon of water and shake or stir. Let it stand for 30 minutes before using. Chlorine smell and taste is normal.

If you exhaust your water supply, you can use the water in your water heater by straining it through paper towels or clean cloth and treating it in one of the methods mentioned above.

For more information please visit the following websites:

<http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/emergencymanagement/>

<http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/EmergencyManagement/emergency-preparedness/>

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