

It's The Time to Be Prepared

September is National Preparedness Month. It's a great time to plan for an emergency or disaster. It is a myth that "nothing ever happens in Tucson!"

We are fortunate to live where few natural disasters occur. Earthquakes are very rare, hurricanes don't come our way and a tsunami just won't happen here. But it's foolish to assume that Southern Arizona is immune to disasters. No place is.

We live in an area where floods are a major cause of accidental death. There have been a recent rash of railroad accidents and a main line runs right through Tucson. Monsoons contribute major disruptions. Wildfires are common. And an industrial accident or even a terrorist event is always possible. Any one of a dozen local events could directly affect you. You absolutely need to make preparations now.

Consider how an emergency might affect your individual needs. You may need to live on your own without services or utilities for three or more days. No electricity; no telephone; no water; no access to medical facilities. How would you live without your daily resources?

Make a Plan: Think through the details of your everyday life and plan an alternative procedure. How you will contact people who assist you? What if the phones, cell phones or your Internet connection won't work? Identify people who can help you in an emergency. Is there a neighbor who can help? If you needed to evacuate, what transportation could you use? What's the back-up plan? And most important, write your plan down. Start with a checklist of items you need to take in an evacuation. Share it with your family, friends, care providers and others in your personal support network.

Basic Supplies: Think about the basics – food, water, clean air and life sustaining items. Make an emergency supply kit consisting of a gallon of water per person for three days, non-perishable food (don't forget a manual can opener), a dust mask to help filter contaminated air, and a battery-powered radio and extra batteries. Keep a flashlight with extra batteries handy. Don't wait until your car's gas gauge is sitting near empty. It's best to fill it up whenever it gets below the half way mark. Because if an evacuation is necessary there will be long lines at the filling station... if they have power to pump gas.

Medications and Medical Supplies: Keep a week's worth of medications on hand. You should also keep a copy of your prescriptions. If you undergo routine treatments or receive regular home health care services, treatment or transportation, talk to your provider about their emergency plans. Identify back-up services.

Keep Emergency Documents: Keep copies of important documents such as prescriptions, family records, legal documents, car, home and medical insurance, etc. Paper copies are good, but scanning documents onto a USB flash drive is perfect.

For lots more excellent ideas, go to any of these sites: www.readytucson.org, www.ready.gov or <http://arizonafirst.org>. For your family and yourself... do it today!