

Prepare in a Year – January 2010

This is the first of a series of short action articles that will enable you, over the next 12 months, to better take care of your family, friends, neighbors, and yourself in times of disaster. The consequences of disasters are largely preventable. Discuss disasters that are most likely in your area; what would you do? Where would you go? Some potential disasters could be long term power outages, extreme cold / heat, chemical release, local flooding, house fire, and earthquake. Some of these would require evacuation. Locally, pick a spot – at end of the driveway, at the mailbox across the street, etc. You want to establish a household meeting place to preclude anyone re-entering a burning structure in an unnecessary rescue attempt. What if you couldn't return to your neighborhood? Where would your family meet? (24 hours per day?) A relative's, a friend's, or our church? Decide now and start your plan.

Prepare in a Year – February 2010

This is the second of a series of short action articles that will enable you, over the next 12 months, to better take care of your family, friends, neighbors, and yourself in times of disaster. The consequences of disasters are largely preventable. Probably your foremost concern in a disaster is the status of your family members. In past disasters, cells and other local phones are regularly overwhelmed or out of service with long distance lines being far more survivable. To benefit from this reality, select an out-of area contact that is located in Eastern Washington or in another state. Have all household members memorize this phone number and write it down for their wallets and backpacks. Note: memorize the number as "speed dial" doesn't work if you're not at home or your cell phone is inoperative. After a disaster, after assuring your immediate safety; call your out-of area contact and report your location and intentions. As others check in, they report and receive status updates. Another call may be needed, but soon everyone receives the reassurance of knowing their family members are fine; and, without primary worries, they are able to more effectively assist others.

Prepare in a Year – March 2010

This is the third of a series of short action articles that will enable you, over the next 12 months, to better take care of your family, friends, neighbors, and yourself in times of disaster. After a disaster, water may be your most urgent need. You need to store at least three gallons of water per person (one gallon per day) to cover the first 72 hours. This quantity of water is used for drinking, cooking, and very basic personal hygiene. Plastic containers with a screw-cap lid, such as two-liter soda pop bottles or food-grade plastic jugs, work great. If you use two-liter soda pop bottles, plan to store at least six (6) of these for each person in your household. Do not use glass bottles or old bleach bottles (or any container that has held a toxic substance). Glass breaks too easily. The plastic of old bleach bottles contains substances that, over time, get into the water and make it unfit for drinking. Avoid the use of plastic milk jugs. They are difficult to seal tightly, and their plastic becomes very fragile and brittle over time. Stored water should be replaced with fresh after about six months, at a minimum at one year. If you have been acting upon these preparation articles; you are well on your way to mitigating the consequences of disasters that will affect your family.

E-mails: _____
