



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS

(Adapted from news release 1/13/09 from Maine Emergency Management Agency, Lynette Miller)



Winter.

You may wish it were over, but we know that there is still plenty of unpredictable winter weather, and possible spring flooding, ahead. This is a great time to get started with an emergency plan.

For your family or your business, making an emergency plan starts with simple steps. And the best part in these tough times: planning is free!

If you get stuck, help is always available from your County Emergency Management Agency and on the web at <http://www.maineprepares.com>

Here are some simple steps to get you started with your plan.



Talk about what might happen.

Some emergencies could happen to anyone, like a building fire. Severe winter and summer storms happen every year. Depending on where you live, floods, hurricanes or chemical accidents could be an issue. Talk to your local or county emergency management director about what could happen at your home or business. Also find out how you would be warned of a danger in your community.

Make sure you can communicate.

A communications plan for your family can be as simple as just making sure that everyone has all of each other's phone numbers, e-mail addresses and text messaging addresses.

For business owners, think about how you could get in touch with your staff after hours, and how they can reach you.

Think about what you would need for three days with no power.

The basics are non-perishable food, food, water, medicines, sanitary supplies, flashlights, a battery- or crank-powered radio and batteries. If someone in your home has a special medical or life need, other critical supplies or equipment may be needed.

Identify the most important things to take with you if you have to leave.

Whether you go to a friend or relative's house, or a shelter, a "Go" kit (what you'd need if you had to go) can include medications, a change of clothes, pillows, blankets, snacks, toys and diapers and books for little ones. Also, think about a way to bring important papers (such as insurance policies, wills, birth certificates, etc.) with you, or store a copy of them at your workplace, or with a friend or relative.

Plan for your pets if you have to leave our home.

Pets are not usually allowed in public shelters, but some communities have planned special "pet shelters" in case of a major disaster; Develop a "Go" kit for your pets, as well. Include food and water, medications, vaccination records and special toys. Having the proper collar, tags, leashes and carriers will make it much easier to transport pets.

Improve the safety of your home or business.

Map two escape routes from every room of your home or business, and practice them. Make sure all emergency exits are clear of clutter. Make sure you have enough insurance coverage. Remember that homeowners' or business insurance does not cover flood damage; special flood insurance is needed.

Do a "hazard hunt" for items that can move, fall, break or cause a fire. If you have a generator or an alternate source of heat, make sure it is installed correctly, and that all adult or teen family members, or appropriate employees, know how to use it. Make sure all smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers or sprinkler systems are installed and working properly.

Lastly, consider taking a first aid and CPR class yourself, or arrange for several employees to get this training. .

For business owners: Think outside and inside the community

How would emergencies in other places interrupt your supply chain or your sales? Can you identify alternate suppliers or different ways of getting your products to your customers?

Encourage your employees to have family emergency plans. If their families are safe, they'll be much more likely to be able to report for work.

If your community suffers a disaster, your business might be able to help with recovery, perhaps in ways you haven't thought of. The faster all families and businesses can get back on their feet, the better for everyone. Talk to your local or county emergency manager about how you can contribute to your community's resilience.





Put your plan in action.

Put a copy of your phone list by each phone, and keep a copy in your wallet or car. Think about friends and relatives who might need help in an emergency. Help them make a plan. Practice! Do evacuation drills, and telephone drills – make it a game with your kids but also make sure they understand that it could really happen.

For more information on family, business and community emergency preparedness, visit: Maine Prepares: <http://www.maineprepares.com>

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Note to editors: Information for the media is always available at <http://www.maine.gov/mema/media> . This includes access to the full Maine Prepares library of more emergency preparedness and safety information.

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