

# It Pays To Be Prepared!



strangers to fires, floods, earthquakes or even acts of violence, and although these emergencies may seem different on the surface, they all have one thing in common; they can be survived. The trick, however, is to be prepared, and the best time to start preparing for such events is now, before they happen.

Whether the disaster is small and personal (a power outage or fire at your house), to large and more far-reaching (a large-scale disaster that knocks out utilities and public services for an extended period), all emergencies and disasters share one common trait - if you can identify your needs now, you can plan for them and hopefully lessen the impact of the event on you, your family and your business.

So, what should you do to get the ball rolling? Consider the following six steps, which will take you from a state of non-prepared to the beginnings of self-reliance, and ultimately, better peace of mind:

## 1. Make a Plan:



Identify known and possible risks where you live and work. Determine evacuation routes out of your

home; designate meeting places outside your home and your neighborhood; agree on who to call, including out-of-state contacts, after a disaster.

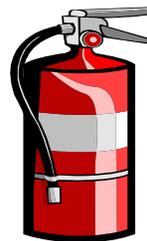
## 2. Assemble an Emergency Kit:



Keep food and water on hand for at least five days, and remember to include foods that need minimal

cooking and/or refrigeration. Flashlights, gloves, basic tools and a battery powered radio with weather bands are a must, as are extra batteries and dry clothes. Don't forget prescription medications or the needs of your children and pets.

## 3. Reduce Hazards:



Conduct home and workplace safety inspections on a regular basis, maintain safety items like smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

Become more aware of your surroundings and work on mitigating the potential dangers in everyday activities.

## 4. Learn Skills:



- Take a first-aid class, and learn CPR.

- Learn how and when to turn off your utilities.

- Learn how to use a fire extinguisher.

What would you do if there was a fire at your place of business right now? Would you know how to escape safely? Chances are you would, because this is something you and your co-workers have rehearsed or possibly discussed in the past, and you have a plan in place. How about if there was an earthquake? What would you do in the event of a large-scale hazardous materials spill? How about a violent attack from a customer, disgruntled co-worker or political extremist?

Some of the above scenarios may seem extreme and uncommon, but don't kid yourself, they happen more often than most people would like to consider. Living in the Pacific Northwest, we are not

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- Learn some basic wilderness survival skills such as fire-making and shelter-building.

## 5. Practice Drills:



Take the time to practice simple drills with your family and co-workers. If you have never practiced "drop, cover and hold," the likelihood of you performing this "quake safe" action when there is an earthquake is only about 10 percent. Every time you practice, you double your chances of doing the right thing. Establish home evacuation routes and meeting places, and practice these on a regular basis.

## 6. Develop a Family Reunion Plan:



The biggest cause of anxiety after a disaster is the uncertainty about the well-being of loved ones. Mobile phone relays can break down or get overloaded, so don't rely on them. Text messages will often go through when cell towers are overwhelmed, but this is not a certainty. Talk with your family now about where you would meet and how you would communicate after a disaster by making a plan.

The American Red Cross offers a site where family members, friends, and loved ones can log status updates about each other during a large-scale emergency event. Visit the site ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)) and become familiar with how to use it.



So what if you never have the misfortune of being stranded by severe weather, never need to escape a burning building and are never caught in the middle of a violent, human-caused event? Why should you prepare for such possibilities now? Well, the choice is up to you. However, when making your decision, remember that you have insured your house, your car, and most likely your life in the event of unforeseen accidents and tragedies. When you think about it, taking the time to examine potential threats in your area, set a list of priorities and create plans to survive in the event of these threats is not a very big investment, and the payoff is much bigger.

Please take the time to assess your needs and preparedness levels. Use the resources you have at hand, such as the internet, to further research this topic and educate yourself

on what you can do now to survive later. Look for terms like "emergency preparedness", "72-hour kit" or "disaster planning". Check out websites like [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov), [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), or [www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/](http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/). All of these sites contain great information and links to other resources which you can use to start planning today for peace of mind tomorrow.

Also, feel free to contact the Roseburg Fire Department for further information on emergency preparedness or fire safety. We can be reached via e-mail at [fireprevention@cityofroseburg.org](mailto:fireprevention@cityofroseburg.org).

