

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

## Are you ready?

## How to insulate your home against a deadly fire

As fire prevention awareness efforts gear up across North America, the National Fire Protection Association and insulation company, Roxul Inc., are spreading the word to Americans from coast to coast about the importance of fire preparedness.

Through the "Hear the BEEP where you SLEEP" campaign and Roxul's "When Seconds Count" initiative, Americans are reminded that simple steps can cut their chances of dying in a fire in half.

Here are some measures you can take to dramatically reduce

your risk:

- Be sure to have a smoke alarm on every story of your home and outside sleeping areas.
- Develop a fire escape plan and practice it.
- Use non-combustible materials when renovating. The choice of insulation can make a big difference. Opt for a product with the highest fire resistance possible, like Roxul mineral wool insulation, which, in the event of a fire, will not produce harmful gases, toxic smoke or promote the spread of flames.
- Purchase a multi-use fire

ladder for each bedroom in your home and practise using it.

- Place fire extinguishers within reach throughout your home.

- In the event of a fire, leave through the closest exit. Do not stop to collect belongings and never reenter a home once safely outside.

Additional fire safety tips are available at [nfa.org](http://nfa.org). You can also improve your fire safety knowledge, with a contest incentive, by visiting [roxul.com](http://roxul.com).

## Ready Kids

None of us would consider going on any kind of road trip without a spare tire. Few women would entertain leaving the house without their purse. Just in case. If you are low on Band-Aids at your house, you stock up, just in case. Yet often the same people can't see the need to prepare for a disaster, just in case. Go figure.

A really great resource is FEMA's "Fun For Kids" link. Go to [www.ready.gov/kids](http://www.ready.gov/kids). There are games, exercises, puzzles and even a scavenger hunt to get the kids involved in being prepared. Even a section for parents and another for teachers. Every child needs their own kit and this will help include them in the conversation. Kids like to be a part of what's going on

with preparations. To them it's like getting ready to go camping. In fact when you do go camping, take their kit along as a sort of shake-down cruise to see whether or not you've missed anything.

Back to the FEMA page, a couple of games will have your kiddos sharpening their skills in no time. "Disaster Master" takes your kids through several different types of disaster with an interactive approach to learning about preparing for wildfires, tornados, blackouts, earthquakes and more. Then the "Build a Kit" game provides the kids with choices of what to put in their kit. Lots of fun and very educational for the kids.

Each child should have their own backpack with extra

clothes, flashlight, games, and other items they would need in the event of a disaster. Use your judgement in supplying age-appropriate items such as a pocket knife, hatchet or fire-starting implements. And remember to keep it positive! Do your best to keep out the fear-factor. Keep in mind you don't have a spare tire because you're afraid, you have it "just in case."

Finally there is a bit on WEAs. Wireless Emergency Alerts are emergency messages sent to cell phones by authorized government agencies to let you know about dangerous weather conditions, emergencies, and other local hazards. Check out this fun and very informative website.

## Wildfire evacuation

When it is no longer safe to live in your home, then it's time to evacuate. Some evacuations are middle-of-the-night, grab what you can and run because the water heater just set the house on fire. But more often we think of evacuating in the face of a hurricane, tornado, or other cataclysmic event. Then there are the times that you have a little more warning. In past columns, I haven't dwelt too much on evacuation because in our region, hurricanes and tornadoes are just not that common.

Recent wildland fires in northern Alberta, Canada, have underscored the fact that evacuation can be a reality. According to news reports, over 80,000 people have fled their homes as a result of out-of-control fires in the region. When it comes to wildland fires, our local officials tell us there are three levels of evacuation notices. Level 1 is to

be ready. Residents are encouraged to move livestock and pets out of the area. Check your plan and begin to make preparations to bug out. Gas up your car. Evacuation is voluntary at this point. Level 2. Residents are ordered to leave soon! Roads are usually closed and entry to evacuated areas may be denied. Residents may have time to gather necessary items, but will do so at their own risk. The time for making a plan is past and it is now time to gather your family, supplies and head for safety. A Level 3 notice is an order to leave immediately, that imminent danger exists and there is no time to gather personal belongings. Jump in your car and hit the road.

Fire officials noted some folks were more "disaster-ready" than others. Each family was told to consider the 5 "P's" when making plans to evacuate. The 5 "P's" include (1) People

and Pets (and livestock too), (2) Papers (important documents), (3) Prescriptions, including hearing aids, eyeglasses and your medications, (4) Photographs, so your memories are preserved and finally is (5) your Personal Computer. There is often invaluable, irreplaceable data on your hard drive.

Of course, having a complete 72 hour kit at the ready is going to ease the task of deciding what to take, and as always having a plan in place will eliminate a whole lot of confusion when the time comes to evacuate. When you have a plan, the panic factor, not to mention the stress on the marriage and overall volume of the conversation, is greatly diminished.

Get a Kit, Make a Plan, and Be Informed is still the theme for every disaster. The best time to make ready is now, before the fire department comes knocking.



## Mapping your neighborhood

Let's play a little game of pretend. A major disaster has hit your neighborhood. The electricity just went off all over town. Maybe a tornado or earthquake or hurricane-force winds. You're pretty sure there's damage to your neighbor's house so you pick up the phone to call 9-1-1. The line is dead. Cell phone, "Sorry all circuits are busy try your call again later," in that irritating, metallic voice you hate to hear. You can't reach anyone. But you feel a responsibility to your neighbor, an elderly lady who lives alone and someone really should go check on her. After all a big tree just fell across her house. She could be injured. You try the cell phone again. Same answer. Pick up the landline, still dead.

The reality is that during a major catastrophic event, YOU are often the first responder. Y.O.Y.O. (You're on your own.) The police, fire and ambulance personnel are probably not going to respond to your emergency. They are already stretched beyond their resources. This is why neighborhoods all across the country are instituting a program called 'Mapping Your Neighborhood'. In my opinion, this is the most important and effective thing you can do to

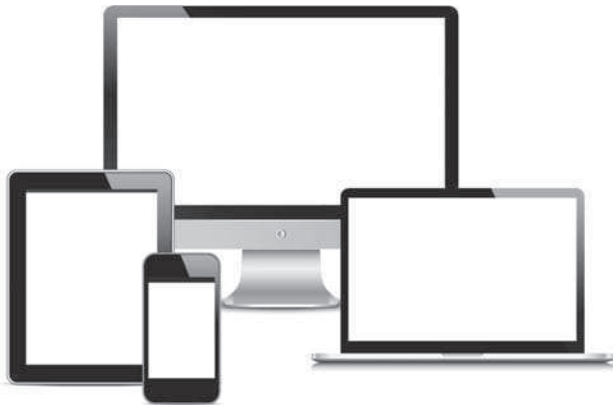
prepare for an emergency. And it doesn't cost a cent. Mapping Your Neighborhood is a simple grassroots plan that relies on people organizing their own neighborhoods and building a network of contacts based on who lives on your block or in your immediate vicinity. Generally made up of fewer than 20 homes, a list is compiled of who lives where. Do they have natural gas or a propane tank? Is there an elderly person in the home, one who may need assistance in the event of a disaster. Are they on oxygen? How about insulin? Does anyone have a toddler or infant in the home? On the other hand, is anyone in your neighborhood equipped with a backhoe, generator, chainsaw or other item that could come in handy during a crisis. How about skills? Is anyone trained in medical care, maybe a nurse or someone who can give care to an elderly person or a young child? Does anyone have carpentry, electrical or plumbing skills? Anyone skilled in counseling, maybe a minister?

All these questions will be answered at your first neighborhood meeting. What is needed is for someone to grasp the vision of seeing their neighbor-

hood come together and get organized on a very local level. Most groups also agree on a plan to check on your neighbors immediately after a disaster. Remember Y.O.Y.O. Only one meeting per year is really necessary and only then to update files. Some groups simply compile a list of their neighbors and make a basic plan while others do fundraisers to buy needed equipment like fire extinguishers, generators or community-owned chainsaws. How far you want to take it is strictly up to your local neighborhood.

To begin, contact your local office of Emergency Management or search online for "Mapping Your Neighborhood." You will find information you can print off to get you started. If you want to contribute to your neighborhood, this may be just the opportunity for you. There is no federal funding, but most cities have someone who is designated to assist with disaster preparedness. As always you may contact me at [disasterprep.dave@gmail.com](mailto:disasterprep.dave@gmail.com). Other information can be found on my blog at [www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com](http://www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com). Dave Robinson is the Postmaster in Bandon, Oregon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest Of Us."

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## Learn Something

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## PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.  
South Lane Fire & Rescue • 233 Harrison Ave, Cottage Grove 541-942-4493 • 55 South 1st Street, Creswell 541-895-2506



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