

Are you ready?

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Five ways to increase home fire safety

An average of seven Americans die each week as a result of house fires. Most fires occur in residential buildings between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., when occupants are most likely to be asleep. Your first line of defense is fire preparedness.

Here's five things you can do to increase your chance of survival in a fire:

- Install smoke alarms on every story of your home and outside sleeping areas. Be sure to test them monthly, clean them every six months and replace batteries in spring and fall. Having working fire alarms can cut your chance of dying in a fire in half!

- Have a fire escape plan for your family and practice it. A small fire can spread rapidly - you may only have minutes or seconds to escape. When going

over the details of your escape plan, check windows and doors to ensure all open easily. Know your local emergency number (911). Never stop to gather belongings or reenter a home after safely outside.

- When renovating, consider using fire-rated, noncombustible products. Your choice of insulation, for example, can be vital. Stone wool insulation, like that produced by Roxul, resists temperatures up to approximately 2,150 F. When directly exposed to fire, it will not off-gas, contribute to toxic smoke or promote flames. Fire-resistant building materials can give you extra time to escape when seconds count.

- Purchase a multi-use fire ladder for each bedroom in your home and practice using it. A fire ladder may be your only es-

cape option if flames block critical exits.

- Place fire extinguishers on every level of your home, especially in high-risk areas like the kitchen, near fireplaces and in the garage. Use only for small, contained fires that are not spreading rapidly. Know how to operate your extinguisher before an emergency occurs using the PASS method: Pull pin, Aim low, Squeeze lever and Sweep from side to side. The safest option is always to evacuate your home and call for help.

Fire prevention measures are a serious matter in every home. Find out how to keep your home and family safe at nfpa.org or improve your fire safety knowledge by visiting the Roxul website.



Jump starting your food supply

Whenever a person thinks of prepping, the first topic that usually comes to mind is food. What to store, how much to store, how to store, and which store to go to? There are all kinds of food packages you can purchase. You can get a year's supply of dehydrated or freeze-dried fare for \$4,000 or a 72 hour kit for one person at WalMart for \$64.00.

I'm going to give you a list of items you can buy at your local grocery store, things that you would probably have on hand anyway. The dehydrated kits you buy generally tout a 25-year shelf life. So the normal things you purchase, should be rotated out every few months or so. One rule of thumb when it comes to storing up food is; buy food that your body is accustomed to eating! During a disaster, your system will be on overload anyway, and there is no benefit to introducing a whole new menu to your gastric system in a time of crisis.

Some people lay in backpacking freeze-dried food to be eaten when the time comes. That is all well and good, unless you have never tried those entrees and you experience a revolt of sorts when you're already stressed out anyway. Store food

to which your body is already accustomed!

Here's the beginning of a shopping list: (The second half will come next week.)

1. 20 lbs of rice. Rice seems pretty boring, but it is filling, nutritious and adaptable to a wide variety of entrees.

2. 20 lbs of pinto beans. Beans are also a valuable part of every storage plan. Combined with rice they fulfill a protein need in your menu.

3. 20 cans of vegetables. Green beans, peas, corn and canned tomatoes are a good start. Buy what you already eat and enjoy.

4. 20 cans of fruit. Peaches, pears, pineapple, fruit cocktail, all to your taste.

5. 20 cans of meat. Chicken, tuna, shrimp, salmon, vienna sausages, beef stew and don't forget Spam. Those square cans fit really well on the shelf and if it's fried, you can make the kids believe it is "camping bacon." It worked for my kids anyway. I even recently found some canned roast beef.

6. 4 lbs of oats. A warm bowl of oatmeal can be a welcome meal any time of day. Topped with some canned fruit, it makes a refreshing treat.

7. 2 (or more) large jars of

peanut butter. A good source of protein and surprisingly filling. Tastes good too!

8. Pick up a supply of powdered drink mix. Tang, Crystal Light or similar product. Make sure it's loaded with vitamin C.

9. 5 lbs of powdered milk. It's great protein and is loaded with other nutrients. It's filling and can be used on that oatmeal as well.

10. 5 lbs of salt. Salt is an essential for survival as well as a food enhancer. Our bodies need salt to survive.

You don't need to fill this shopping list all at once. Watch for sales. Pay attention to the "buy one, get one" promotions. Use coupons. One reader told me she saved several thousand dollars in just one year by using coupons. At the same time she built a substantial pantry for use in a disaster.

As always, send your comments and questions to disaster-prep.dave@gmail.com. Previous columns can be found on my blog at www.disasterprep-dave.blogspot.com. Dave Robinson is the Postmaster in Bandon, Oregon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest of Us," available on Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, and other online booksellers.

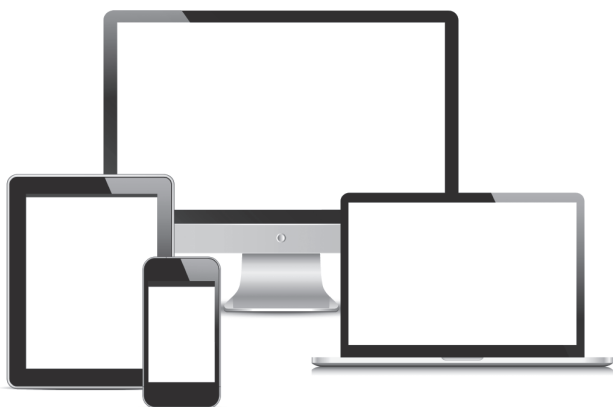
Did you know?

The American Red Cross, one of the most distinguished humanitarian organizations in the world, traces its history back to the 19th century. In 1881, former American Civil War nurse Clara Barton and her circle of acquaintances founded the American Red Cross in Washington, D.C. That idea was inspired by a postwar visit Barton made to Europe, where she first encountered the International Red

Cross. Though many women did not work outside the home during Barton's era, the Massachusetts-born nurse would serve as the head of the American Red Cross for 23 years, during which time she aided the United States military in the Spanish-American War. Barton also successfully campaigned for including peacetime relief work as part of the global Red Cross mission. Today, the American Red

Cross continues to help millions of people in need. Among the organization's many missions are helping Americans affected by natural disasters, supporting military personnel and their families, collecting blood for processing and distribution, providing health and safety education and training, and providing international relief.

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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.
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