

Be proactive, prepare for a disaster

In light of the recent natural disasters in Japan and New Zealand, now is an opportune time to prepare you and your loved ones for a potential catastrophic event like an earthquake or tsunami. You may need to survive on your own after an emergency for several days, providing food, water and other supplies in sufficient amounts.

The state's "Ready Alaska" website (www.ak-prepared.com) says local officials and relief workers will be there for help after a disaster. But not everyone will be reached immediately. You could get help in a few hours or it might take days. Basic services like electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment and telephone could be cut off for a lengthy amount of time.

Preparing a basic emergency kit is one of the best ways you and your family can be ready for a disaster. Here are some tips from www.ak-prepared.com:

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Cold weather gear and blankets/sleeping bags
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Indoor-safe heat source such as hand warmers, sterno, emergency candles or propane/butane heat source labeled for indoor use
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.alaska.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.

- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Emergency whistle
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

According to the Institute for Business and Home Safety, 25 percent of small businesses don't reopen after a major disaster. No one can predict the exact moment a major disaster will happen, but you can arm your home or business with a disaster preparedness plan right now.

Learn more about making an emergency plan and stay informed at www.ak-prepared.com or www.redcross.org.

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