

Take “5” to Survive

Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services

(320) 231-7800 ext 2536 karen_a@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

If you find it difficult to set aside time to prepare for emergencies, you're not alone. Public surveys list "lack of time" as a primary reason people give for not taking the steps necessary to prepare themselves and their families for emergencies, even though they know that emergencies have struck and will strike again.

Rather than viewing "emergency preparedness" as an insurmountable undertaking, consider what you could accomplish in just five-minute increments. Set yourself a goal to complete a certain number of preparedness recommendations from our "5-minute" projects list monthly. Make it a team effort – involve your whole family. Once you meet your goal – celebrate! You're better prepared for the emergencies ahead.

Five-Minute Projects List:

1. Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire dept, police dept, etc). Teach children how and when to call 911 for emergency help.
2. Discuss how your family will re-unite if an emergency separates you.
3. Practice your fire escape plan. Every room should have 2 exits mapped out. If windows are an exit – make sure you can get them open easily.
4. Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.
5. Decide how your family will stay warm and safe if you lose power.
6. Choose who will be your family's "out-of-state" contact person. Instruct family members to call this person to relay information on their welfare if they're separated from the rest of the family and local phone lines are not working. If using text messaging – make sure all contacts know how to send and retrieve text messages (many older relatives may not).
7. Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Put on the calendar to check monthly and replace batteries twice yearly (change your batteries when you change your clocks).
8. Store bottled water – one gallon per person, per day for at least three days.
9. Teach your adult family members when and how to shut off your utilities.
10. Work with your doctor to make sure you and your family members have at least a one-week supply of necessary drugs.
11. Verify that each person in your home has a working flashlight by their bed and extra batteries handy.
12. Place a pair of sturdy shoes and socks under the bed – cut feet are a common injury.
13. Next time you're at the bank, get some extra cash to have on hand. ATMs may not work following a significant event or power outage.
14. Place 2-way (FRS/GMRS) radios in your car(s) and home(s). For short distances (up to 3 miles) they are more reliable following a disaster than cell phones.
15. Verify that your dogs and cats have tags or I.D. chips in case an emergency frightens them and they become separated from you.
16. Make sure all adults in your home know how to use your fire extinguisher(s). Show everyone where they should be kept (kitchen, garage, by furnace). Test the fire extinguisher. Check tag and get recharged if needed.
17. Double check that every family member has an up-to-date Emergency Contact Card in their purse, wallet, backpack, somewhere. Backpack: keep it in a small zip lock baggie with a few coins to use a pay phone if needed.
18. **MONTHLY:**
Check your "Preparedness Calendar" and see what "Supplies and Preparedness Activities" need to be checked that month. Check expiration dates of foods / rotate out foods. Check off as items are completed.