

Family First

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I am very pleased that all of us give of our time and volunteer in ARES / RACES or similar such organizations. I have seen all too often many volunteers run out the door to help other and leave their family stranded, in peril, or at risk.

We are responsible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our families and our selves first and foremost during any disaster. Doing otherwise could cause yourself to become part of the problem, instead of part of the solution. It can also create a serious distraction. That is always thinking if you or your family will be OK. This is dangerous to those you serve and those you are trying to help.

1) Identify and learn about potential hazards and emergencies your family could face

Identify the risks you face where you live. thunderstorms (lightning), tornados, micro-bursts, torrential downpours, floods, hail, wind storm, fire, wildfire, winter storms, extreme heat, extreme cold, droughts / famine, earthquakes, nuclear power plant emergency, explosion, hazardous materials spill, terrorism (CNBR, social engineering), medical epidemic, ... I have excluded those that are unlikely in our area.

2) Prey for he best and plan for the worst.

Clearly preparing for the surprises that mother nature can muster up for us, as well as those events induced by man-kind (Hazardous material spill, Terrorism, accidents, carelessness, complacency, and acceptance.)

3) Be proactive and mitigate any risks you can

Mitigate any known risks you face beforehand if at all possible, rather than having to reactively respond to the outcome of ignoring the risk. Clearly you can't mitigate every situation that can occur; however, you should take steps to remedy as many potential issues as you can. Maybe you have ignored a crack in your roof, which could expand and cause structural damage during the next heavy rain or thaw / freeze cycle. Worse maybe you lost your screen on the breathing tube of your gas valve. Leading to insects making there home inside of your breathing tube. Resulting in a wicking effect sucking in water during any heavy rain or water from when ice on it thaws. Then the temperature drops and the water in your regulator and breathing tube freeze. Resulting in loss of your gas supply at the most in opportune time. Right smack dab on the coldest day of inter 2007. The temperature in our house dropped to the lower 40s fairly quickly,...

- 3) Does your community, school, or workplace have an emergency plans
 - A) Shelters
 - B) Public transportation
 - C) Medical facilities

- 4) Create a family disaster plan
 - A) Evacuation vs sheltering in place
 - 1) Keep gas tanks topped off, spare 5 Gal tanks
 - 2) Alternative transportation
 - 3) Listen to a radio for instructions
 - 4) Evacuate if instructed, use established routes, and exercise caution
Washed out roads, down power lines, flood waters, ...
 - 5) Don't leave let and get trapped
 - 6) Keep maps, compass, and a role of quarters, nickels, and dimes in car.
 - B) Warning systems and signals
 - C) Communications plan
 - D) Insurance and other vital or medical records
 - E) Utility shutoff, protecting your water supply
 - F) Special needs
 - 1) Hearing impaired
 - 2) Mobility impaired
 - 3) Visually impaired or blind
 - 4) Mentally handicapped, young children, or the elderly
 - 5) Special medical needs
 - 6) Single working parent
 - 7) People with no vehicles
 - 8) Special dietary needs
 - 9) Non-English speaking
 - G) Caring for animals

- 4) Assemble a disaster kit

- 5) Practice the plan

- 6) Talk about what might happen and what the family will do in a disaster.

- 7) Test and maintain your communications plan.