

This *Partners in Preparedness* newsletter is intended to update leaders of faith-based and community-based organizations about ways to foster individual preparedness and community resilience. As a trusted leader, you have the ability to influence people to make decisions that will make a real difference in how well our community responds to emergencies. Read on to learn more.

Be Aware and Prepared!

Your congregants or clients may be wondering how they can follow advice to be prepared for emergencies. Many people today are facing difficult economic times and cannot afford to stockpile emergency supplies. But by using community resources, information from the Internet and even items from their own home, families can develop an effective emergency plan that provides peace of mind without a big price tag.

For instance, the Internet is a great place to find free templates for phone lists and ID cards, emergency plans and event notices. The American Academy of Pediatrics has emergency family card templates at www.aap.org. The Internet also has evacuation plans, personal assistance plans and recommended emergency supply lists for people with disabilities. Libraries offer free Internet services for people without personal computer access.

BULLETIN BONUS: Sometimes bad things happen to good people! Below is important information you can drop into your bulletin or newsletter that could be vital in case of an emergency.

Who Do You Have on ICE?



If you're a "glass half full" type of person, you may be convinced that you'll never need emergency assistance. Let's hope that's true. But just in case it's **not**, take a moment to put your cell phone on ICE! Anyone who has a cell phone should make sure to have an "ICE" entry in their contacts list. ICE stands for "In Case of Emergency" and first responders are trained to look for it if people are injured or ill and cannot speak for themselves. This number should dial the person who can make medical decisions on your behalf. List backup emergency contacts as ICE1, ICE2, etc. Visit <http://www.ems-options.com/> to learn more.

Plan to be Prepared!

It doesn't cost anything to develop a comprehensive family emergency plan. Recycle a binder and keep these materials together:

- A plan to get out of the house in a hurry if you have to. Have periodic rehearsals, including some with the lights out. In an emergency, the electricity may be off.
- A location where family members will meet if they are separated and unable to return home. Review this with everyone.
- A family and friends contact sheet. Include an out-of-state person that can help coordinate your family's whereabouts if local phone service is off.
- All emergency plans at school, work and home. Adults and children should know them.
- Copies of essential items, including identification cards, credit cards, extra set of house and car keys, insurance and health policies, current family photos and cash.
- A list of medications, medical history, allergies, blood type and other critical information for everyone in the household.
- Pet information, including photos, vet records, and boarding information. Most emergency shelters do not allow pets. Contact your County Emergency Management Office and ask where you could leave your pet if necessary.

Here are some other things to do to be prepared:

Attend emergency preparedness events, including fairs, exhibits, first aid training, and children's photo identification programs. These events often offer emergency planning kits, first aid kits, flashlights, and information on sheltering and emergency pet care. Take advantage of photo identification cards for your children. Some schools, in conjunction with school photography businesses, offer ID cards. Visit www.essortment.com/family/photoidentification_sljl.htm for other options.

FREE Help to Stay Alert!

The New York State Emergency Management Office offers a helpful service called "New York Alert." To sign up go to www.nyalert.gov. This website contains critical emergency-related information including instructions and recommended protective actions developed in real-time during an emergency. The website includes severe weather warnings, significant highway closures, hazardous materials spills, and many other emergency conditions. The same information is available via email, cell phone and other technology to subscribers. Signing up for NY Alert is free. Your information is protected and never shared with any one else. You can modify what type of information you receive or unsubscribe at any time. It is a tool to provide you with critical information when you may need it most.

Did you know? Although flu activity remains relatively low nationally, internationally, the H1N1 virus is still circulating, including in the Southern Hemisphere, which is just starting its flu season. Anyone traveling to an area where H1N1 flu might be circulating should get H1N1 vaccine. Children 6 months to 9 years of age need two doses of vaccine to be protected.