

Daily Union Article  
Saturday, September 14  
Title: Surviving a Disaster

You've made your family home disaster supplies kit plus have similar kits in your car and at your office. You've written out your contacts, family meeting plans and home inventory. You've gathered and safely stored your important documents.

But when a disaster strikes, you'll need to apply what you know to ensure your survival and comfort, possibly without electricity and on your own for several days.

### **Communication**

- Follow your family disaster communications plan yet be flexible
- Text your out-of-state family emergency contact
- Register on American Red Cross Safe and Well and Facebook Safety Check
- Follow local announcements: radio, web, app

### **Shelter**

- Follow official instructions
- Evacuation
  - grab go-kits, including medications and important papers
- Shelter in Place
  - if told, turn off ventilation and seal room
  - To stay warm – use alternative heat safely: keep flammable materials, children and pets away; have a fire extinguisher close; ventilate
  - To keep cool – use drapes, windows, fans, neck coolers

### **Water**

- Minimum 1 gallon per person per day for drinking and food preparation and 1 1/2 to 2 gallons per person for sanitation (brushing teeth, bathing, washing dishes)
- 1 gallon per day per pet
- Stay hydrated
- If local water supply is contaminated, turn it off where it enters your house
- Use potable water in your house (pipes, water heater, toilet tank)
- Collect outside upstream, running water
- Purify all collected water:
  1. Strain
  2. Purify by rapidly boil at least 1 minute; or adding 6 drops of 8.25% unscented chlorine bleach per gallon of water; or using purification tablets, iodine or a filtration system
  3. Aerate and add a pinch of salt to improve flavor

### **Food Safety**

- Open fridge and freezer as little as possible
- Food with ice crystals is safe to eat or refreeze
- Cook seafood, then ground meat, then thinner cuts
- Throw leftovers, raw meats, seafood, milk, soft cheese, refrigerator rolls that have been above 40 degrees for two hours or more
- Toss anything that looks, smells or feels odd. If in doubt, throw it out.
- Discard food packaged in plastic, paper, cardboard or cloth that is water damaged
- Toss all cans that are open, dented, rusty, damaged or bulging
- If cans have been in contact with contaminants, remove labels and use a permanent marker to re-label. Scrub cans in a strong detergent solution then immerse for 1 minute in solution of 2 teaspoons bleach and 1 gallon water. Air-dry before opening.

## **Food Preparation**

- Dishes, utensils, surfaces:
  1. Scrap
  2. Scrub with warm, soapy water
  3. Rinse
  4. Sanitize – surfaces: 1 teaspoon bleach per quart warm water in spray bottle; dishes and utensils: soak 2 minutes in 1 tablespoon bleach per gallon warm water; air-dry both
- If no electricity, use gas range, woodburning stove, camp stove, fireplace, solar oven, barbecue, fire pit, thermos, etc.
- Eat frozen and refrigerated food first

## **Sanitation**

- Separate garbage into cans, glass, plastic, wet garbage and burnable
- Use buckets with tight-fitting lids as toilets and for short-term storage if necessary
- Bury human waste and biodegradable garbage. Dig a hole 12 to 18 inches deep and at least 50 feet but preferably 200 feet or more downhill and away from water supply. Fill hole with the refuse and cover with dirt.
- Add disinfectant and kitty litter to toilet after each use
- Wash hands and use sanitizer often

## **Lighting and Power**

- Use flashlights (battery, solar, crank), headlamps, emergency candles, lanterns, solar lights, glow sticks
- LED bulbs are brighter and use less energy
- Be careful with candles, lanterns, oil lamps
- Operate generators only outdoors away from windows, doors, vents
- Dry hands before touching generator
- Plug appliances directly into generator or use a heavy-duty extension cord. Make sure extension cord is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to sum of connected load.
- Never plug generator into a wall outlet in a house or other circuit
- Let generator cool before refueling

## **Recovery**

- As soon as possible, contact insurance company
- Take photos of and inventory damage (Disaster Recovery Log app)
- Gather important documents

September is National Preparedness Month. It is also K-State Research & Extension's annual Prepare Kansas online challenge. Prepare Kansas 2019 will provide tips on keeping food safe in emergency situations. Kansans and anyone interested in planning ahead for emergencies can follow the K-State Research and Extension Facebook page or the Prepare Kansas blog (<https://blogs.k-state.edu/preparekansas/>) at any time during September, pick up handy information and interact with K-State extension specialists and agents. No registration is required.

I hope you'll never have a disaster that leaves you and your family on your own, but with your preparedness to be informed, make a plan and get a disaster supplies kit, and this information, you should be able to meet your basic family needs. Be resourceful and safe to survive a disaster. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!