

Preparing for an emergency

In the event of a natural disaster, terrorist attack or emergency, we can care for ourselves, our families and our neighbors.

Short-term disruption of normal access to products and services is an inconvenience. Long-term, it could be life threatening to go without particular products or services.

A simple scenario like losing the electricity can change how we live our everyday life. Being without electricity means that we won't have lights, refrigerators or access to bank cash. It means we won't have computers or internet access.

A simple scenario like disruption of transportation can cause major problems. It could mean our grocery stores are not stocked with food or that gasoline will not be delivered to gas stations.

A simple scenario like losing communication can change how we learn about problems in our area or across the nation. We may not be able to call loved ones, call for an ambulance or the police.

A simple scenario like citizens becoming angry and demonstrating in our neighborhoods could be frightening. It could mean that people start fires, break into stores and steal products or that they attack fellow neighbors.

If we can't go or don't want to go out to the grocery store for food, we should have emergency food stored at our homes. In many instances water will also not be available, so we need to have water bottles. If you hear of an issue in your area and can prepare in advance, you can fill your bathtub with water. At a minimum, you want 10 days of food and water stored. Ideally, you should be able to live 30 days without leaving your home for provisions.

Many people discuss the idea of not having enough space for provisions. If you search around your living space, you will see areas that are not easy to access, so they are unused spaces. Those are ideal for emergency food, paper goods, medicines and water. If you look at the back two corners of your closet, you have two very tall areas that canned goods could be stacked in. Buy foods with expiration dates two years from now. That way, you don't have to rotate the food often. A row of bottled water in cases can be made along a back wall of a closet, under your bed or other space. When storing water, think about the fact that you don't want the bottles to leak or freeze by accident. Put dry goods in plastic pails that have lids with seals. Dry goods can be flour, instant soup or oatmeal. Other items to put in sealed pails include toilet paper, napkins, Kleenex, garbage bags and Ziploc bags. Medicines like Tylenol or prescriptions are good to have in advance if possible. You may need iodine and bandages and antibiotic ointment as well.



In an event that you don't have electricity, canned goods that don't require heating are good. Cans that have pull-tabs are nice, because you don't need a can opener. Most of the time, though, you will need a hand crank can opener. If you need to heat chunky soup, for instance, it is more like a full-course meal and you would need Sterno or some heat source like a propane heating grill. Jars of fruit, tubs of peanut butter and crackers are all good items to stock.



The internet will not be there to use as a resource, so you may want to print out some important information and keep it in a binder. Water purification, food safety, how to dispose of spoiled food from a refrigerator or how to use food from a freezer that has thawed are all good things to know.

If you buy flashlights or hanging LED lanterns for light, it could be very helpful. Hang flashlights in each room along with two extra sets of batteries. If you have hooks in the wall, you hang your lanterns near the sinks in your home.



Sanitation is very important. If you buy Clorox wet wipes, you can clean surfaces. If you buy antibacterial hand sanitizer that will be a form of hand washing that does not need water. Keep

garbage tightly wrapped up and take trash cans outdoors if possible. Surgical gloves are bought by the box and you can wear them and then discard them.



Don't forget about pets! If you have pets, you want to have emergency food and supplies for them as well!

If you have babies or small children, you will need diapers, food, formula, medicines and more.

An emergency radio is vital. The Red Cross NOAA radio is nice. The kind that has a hand crank very often can also charge your cell phone without electricity. The radio will allow you to hear programs with local information and weather warnings as well as national event news.

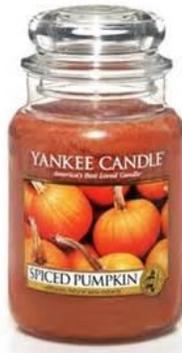


You want to be able to remain safe. If you stay at home, it is good to be able to properly lock your home and other areas such as garages, sheds and cars. In the case of civil unrest, you may want to barricade doors or windows.

A fire extinguisher is a good item to have on hand.



You may need a lighter and candles.



You may need an extra set of clothing and shoes.

You need to have a plan. If you think about a scenario in advance, you will know what to do and where there is a common safe place to meet.

Have a folder that you can take with you in case of an evacuation. Make copies of vital certificates, social security numbers and identification. You should have money in case of emergencies. Have a list of contact numbers of people to call. Don't rely on your cell phone for all of that contact information because the phone may have dead batteries.

These are all helpful ideas that you could consider, but you need to do your own research and determine what is best for you! Disclaimer: this is not advice; it is simply a topic for discussion!