

Organizing Tips for An Emergency Evacuation

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September is the National Emergency Preparedness Month. When faced with an emergency evacuation, most people have only 10 minutes to quickly gather their belongings. Organizing important documents and a few supplies prior to an emergency can help minimize unpreparedness fears. Here are a few tips to get you started:

Tip #1: Prepare a Grab-n-Go Bag

Having a bag prepared for each family member in case of an emergency will allow you to grab the most vital items and get out of your residence quickly. Here is a list of some items to consider packing: cash or credit cards, medications, granola bars, trail mix, water bottles, small flashlight, infant formulas, diapers, drivers license, photograph of each family member, and so forth. To find out more information about packing an emergency kit, visit www.ready.gov

Tip #2: Keep Vital Records in Multiple Places

By having key information in multiple places and formats, recreating your vital records will be less daunting. Here are a few ways to consider storing important documents and photographs:

- Scan documents into a computer and email them to yourself.
- Photocopy originals and send them to a trusted friend/family member who lives out of state.
- Download scanned documents to a USB drive and store in a bank safety deposit box.
- Place originals inside a PVC pipe and store in your grab-n-go bag.
- Keep a backup of your documents and photographs on an external hard drive and store it in a safety deposit box. Keep the safety deposit box key in your grab-n-go bag.

Tip #3: Prepare Young Children Now

Have periodic emergency evacuation drills with family members to practice meeting in designated areas. To help younger children learn preparedness skills without alarming them, you can download a PDF of "Let's get Ready! Join Grover and Elmo to learn how families get ready for emergencies". Also check out the FEMA for Kids website where children can play preparedness games and watch preparedness videos starring Grover and Elmo. All of these resources can be accessed by visiting www.simplyinorder.com and following the links.

Tip #4: Keep Your Vehicle at Least Half-Full

Never let your gas tank drop below the half gage mark. In an emergency evacuation, often there are long lines of vehicles trying to leave at once causing traffic congestion and gas consumption.

Tip #5: Print & Post Monthly Organizing Checklist

Each month there will be a new checklist for you to print and post in a visible location. These checklists will include the most common tasks to accomplish each month to help keep you on track all year long. This month's checklist can be found at www.simplyinorder.com

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