



# 12 Months of Preparedness



## *December Newsletter*

### **MAKE A PLAN**

December concludes this campaign. Think of preparedness as an on-going project: continue to update your plan and contact numbers; rotate the go kit items; and practice using the radio. Offer to help relatives and neighbors with these plans so that in a crisis, informed and prepared persons will be able to act quickly.

Thank you to all who followed the campaign and are READY. The drawing for prizes will take place late December. Winners will be contacted by phone.

### **CONTINUE TO BUILD A "GO KIT & STAY KIT"**

The "*Items for December*" include clothing/footwear and a blanket or sleeping bag. Include seasonal need such as raingear, hats, gloves/mittens, scarf, long underwear or other items for your or family member. Label items.

### **BE INFORMED**

Since 9/11, awareness of emergencies other than a natural disaster or disease outbreak is part of emergency preparedness. By learning about the specific threats, you are able to prepare to react.

A **biological** threat is the deliberate or accidental release of germs or other biological agents that cause illness. Biological agents can be dispersed by spraying them into the air, by infecting animals that carry the disease to humans and by contaminating food and water. Some are contagious and can be easily spread from person to person. If a biological event occurs, health officials will provide information on what you should do to protect yourself until the level of danger is determined. Check the TV, radio or Internet for guidance from local authorities. Often symptoms look like everyday illnesses; do not automatically go to an emergency room. Use common sense, practice good hygiene to avoid spreading germs and seek medical advice.

Check with your doctor to ensure all required or suggested immunizations are up to date. Children and older adults are particularly vulnerable to biological agents.

A **chemical** threat occurs when a hazardous chemical has been released and has the potential for harming people's health. This could occur with an industrial accident or

intentional as in a terrorist attack. If you are caught in or near a contaminated area, you should take action to get away from the area. Move away immediately in a direction upwind of the source. Find shelter as quickly as possible. Follow the instructions of local emergency authorities. You may be instructed to “shelter in place”. Refer to the March newsletter for these guidelines. If you may have had contact with a chemical, remove the outer layer of clothing but do not pull clothing over your head. Place contaminated items in a bag and seal it if possible. Wash your hair and body. Seek medical attention.

A chemical threat can also exist in your home. It is critical to store household chemicals in places where children cannot access them. Remember that products such as aerosol cans of hair spray and deodorant, nail polish and nail polish remover, toilet bowl cleaners, and furniture polishes all fall into the category of hazardous materials.

A **radiological** threat could occur from a dirty bomb. This device uses conventional explosives to spread radioactive material in the form of a powder or pellets. While the blast is obvious, the presence of radiation may not be clearly defined until trained personnel with special equipment arrive. The primary dangers from a dirty bomb are the injuries associated with the explosion, such as burns or a broken bone. You may also have skin damage such as swelling, itching, and redness. Possible symptoms of minor radiation sickness include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. A dirty bomb is unlikely to produce a level of radiation high enough to cause severe radiation sickness. Follow up with medical care if you were in the immediate area of the blast and injured. Again, follow the guidance of local emergency authorities.