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BE PREPARED IN 2014: MAKE PREPAREDNESS PART OF YOUR NEW YEAR

**Written by Darryl
Madden, Director of
the Ready
Campaign.**

For many, the New Year is a time for setting goals and making new resolutions for the year to come. If you are anything like me, each year you find yourself resolving to achieve a healthier lifestyle - eating right, exercising more, losing a few pounds. Setting personal health goals in the New Year is great, but improving overall well-being involves taking actions to be prepared. Knowing what to do in an emergency is vital to the health and safety of you and your loved ones.

This year, the Ready Campaign is challenging you to Prepare in 2014. Start the New Year by connecting with family and friends on the importance of preparedness. Not only can the information shared potentially save a life;

connecting with those you love has an added benefit. People who have strong social connections tend to be healthier and more resilient. I know the hardest part of keeping a resolution is sustaining it after those first few weeks of the year, but you don't have to do it all at once.

First, start by simply having the conversation: who to call, where to meet and what to pack in an emergency.

Build your family's emergency supply kit by picking up recommended emergency items over the first month or two of the year.

Create a preparedness checklist. This should include things such as emergency phone numbers and copies of important documents, and information on how to register for programs such as the American Red Cross Safe and Well website.

Set reminders

throughout the year to talk about and update your family emergency communication plan. If you have children, include them in conversations and planning activities. The Ready Campaign has age-appropriate tools and resources you can use to introduce disaster preparedness to them. And you can learn more about talking with kids after disasters so you're ready to help them through tough situations.

Have pets? Make sure they are a part of your planning process. Create a pet go-bag to help keep them safe during an emergency. Find helpful tips from FEMA on how to plan for your furry friends. Older adults often have special needs in a disaster and may depend on medications or other special requirements. If older adults are a part of your social connection, be sure to include them in your

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#1 Prepare your Car BEFORE your Home.

Why? 90% of Americans own a car and travel in it regularly... far more than any other nation. Your vehicle is almost always with you... whether at home or away. **Keep your Emergency Preparedness Supplies in your vehicle and odds are you will have them handy when you need them.**

#2

Eat the food in your Freezer AFTER the food in your Refrigerator.

Do not open your freezer, if the power goes out, tape your freezer shut. After depleting the perishables in your fridge, move on to freezer items, quickly. If you have items still frozen in there (towards the middle of the freezer) pull the thawed items to your fridge or another cold storage location, work through that, and allow the still-frozen food to remain in the freezer until it thaws. Repeat until all perishable food is consumed and only then move on to your canned and dry goods.

BE PREPARED IN 2014:

CONTINUED

Preparedness planning efforts. Emergencies can and will happen, but being ready can minimize the impact they have on the overall well-

being of you and your family. This year, make disaster preparedness part of your New Year's resolution. Don't forget to use the

hashtag #Prepared2014 whenever you discuss family preparedness on Twitter.

Dogs and cats are not immune to cold weather

Dogs and cats are not immune to cold weather. If it is cold for you, it is cold for them! As the winter months approach, don't forget to keep your pet safe. Create a pet disaster supply kit similar to the one you prepare for yourself. Their kit should include: Food and water for at least five days for each pet;

Sturdy leashes, harnesses and carriers; and

Current identification, medications and medical records.

All pets need appropriate protection against the cold weather. If you have a short haired breed, consider getting a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck for them to wear. While outside, keep your pet close to you to avoid encountering antifreeze, a sweet but deadly poison that may be accessible on roads and in garages

or driveways. Do you know the signs of antifreeze poisoning? Symptoms usually appear 30 minutes to an hour after ingestion.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals lists guidelines to protect your animals when the mercury dips. Taking extra precautions during colder months will make sure your four-legged family members stay safe and warm.

Lamplighter Mobile Home Park Report for 2013

I am the Neighborhood Coordinator. We still have eight group leaders; nine groups but no leader for that so two of us keep them informed. Still have the "Safety and Security Dudes", as they named

themselves. Social events are two potlucks a year plus a Christmas party. We have a few new residents; each has been visited by a group leader and given the COPE packet which includes

the Lamplighter Disaster Information form (kept by group leader with a copy in a locked cabinet); the papers on what to do before and during a quake; list of supplies for home and to-go (emergency prep

Lamplighter Mobile Home Park Report for 2013

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kit); graph on how to shut off gas meter; list of tools and supplies; paper on emergency drinking water; the red File of Life; a CD; and some Neighborhood Watch information.

I just finished reviewing all these and made extra copies for our upcoming group leaders meeting to be sure each leader has the complete set in case some got misplaced or lost. I just gave our manager Joe a packet for

his information. I also forward the eNewsletter to him, as well as to each group leader, and put a copy in the lounge.

Each group leader has a COPE protocol folder, made by Bob Harris, which covers about everything we may need to do in an emergency. We also have first aid materials in the locked cabinet.

We set the lounge for our "operations" room,

and I am now waiting reply from Joe to see if we can, if the lounge becomes unusable, use another structure or an empty rental as an alternate place for group leaders to meet in a disaster.

We will have a group leaders meeting in a couple months. During these meetings we test our 2-way radios and review everything.

Peg King

Acacia Senior Apartments Plans for 2014

In 2013, I helped organize the Acacia Lane Senior Apartments preparedness initiative. This gives our tenants a foundation for effective response to common emergency

scenarios and created a core group of emergency situation facilitators. This coming year, the floor supervisors will meet perhaps every 6 months to consider

improvements to our knowledge base or any new data from official emergency response organizations here in Sonoma County.

Walter Radtke

DO YOU HAVE an emergency preparedness kit, with water and food for everyone in your family, including your pets, that will last at least 5 days? Do you have basic first aid supplies? Do you have batteries and flashlights? How fast can you get equipment into your car and leave if a fire threatens your home?

#3 Do Not Flush Your Toilets (Yet)

Some sources may tell you that the water in the tank of your toilet is drinkable. I would not recommend this. Save that water in your tank to flush your toilet following this old mantra: If it is yellow let it mellow. If it is brown, flush it down. Having containers, such as empty cat litter plastic containers filled with water and stored ready to use, will facilitate keeping the toilet flushed when power is out or water supplies are disrupted. Of course, if the sewer mains are damaged and we cannot flush at all, then we need to go to an entirely different system.

#4 Change your flashlight and emergency radio batteries every time you adjust your clocks.

Why? This is an easy way to remember to keep your emergency supplies ready to use. Each time you adjust your clocks forward or back, change the batteries in your emergency supplies and while you are at it, check the condition and expiration dates of everything in your supply packs... it may be time for replacements or to augment what you have gathered with additional supplies.

Go to www.srcity.org/cope for more helpful hints on survival.

If you are in a car when an earthquake occurs, pull over to the side of the road and stop safely. Do not stop under a bridge or any structure that can fall on you. There will be aftershocks. Obstacles and debris may block the roadway. Have emergency equipment and water in your car at all times. If a power line lands on your car, stay inside until a trained person can remove it.

RADIO CORNER

Santa Rosa Radio Communicators Group held its first radio training sessions on January 23 and 30th with the newly licensed ham radio operators, five individuals who are ready to start their journey toward licensing, Non-licensed COPE Leaders who are training to assist the licensed radio operators, and members of the SCRA Radio Club who will be mentoring and facilitating formal training and licensing of Santa Rosa COPE Neighborhood Leaders and interested individuals. Much needed 'hands on' training with basic radio techniques, message handling,

and radio protocol was covered in these first training sessions. It is highly recommended that all neighborhood groups identify one or two individuals within their community to be designated as the radio contact from their neighborhood to the fire station to the Emergency Operating Center. Requests for help or simply letting the City/County know that your neighborhood is organized and taking care of itself is important information to share. Future training will be scheduled and announced here in the COPE eNewsletter.

EARN YOUR AMATEUR RADIO TECHNICIAN LICENSE

The dates being offered by the Sonoma County Radio Amateurs (SCRA) for their 2014 Radio Technician Licensing courses have been released:

March 7,8 & 9
April 4, 5 & 6
August 22, 23 & 24
November 7, 8 & 9

Cost: \$15 includes study guide only, or \$30 includes, study guide, and FCC exam

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NEVER COULD HAPPEN HERE BUT WHAT IF?

"Never" is not a word we can speak with confidence any more. Unexpected and terrifying disasters happen. They have serious, long term consequences for those people and organizations involved. Their resilience to, and recovery from, such emergency events is dynamically linked to levels of forward planning, preparation and training. But

being ready is easier said than done. There are too many scenarios requiring more complex preparation than simply walking outside and gathering in the street or parking lot. But it can be done! Prepare a plan, practice the plan, then make changes to the plan and start over. We cannot predict what will work so we have to keep changing the

plan until we get it right – for our own neighborhood situations. The Emergency Preparedness Team of each neighborhood will lead the planning, hold meetings, and direct drills. These team members need to be dedicated and concerned for the welfare of their own families and the welfare of each and every neighbor.

So the first step for any successful neighborhood organizing to prepare for disasters is to gather strong leaders, an **Emergency Preparedness Team**, and develop an initial plan that will cover all possible disasters. Then work the plan! COPE is standing ready to assist Emergency Preparedness Teams in any way possible to help you reach success.