

Public Health Preparedness

The Southwest Wisconsin Public Health Preparedness and Response Consortium (including Grant, Iowa, Lafayette, Crawford, Richland and Vernon Counties) encourages everyone to take personal responsibility to prepare for emergency situations and offers the following information to assist families in that preparation.

Create a Family Emergency Plan:

Your family may be separated when a disaster takes place. It may be easier to make a long distance call than a local one due to high volume. Be sure that each family member knows the number to call to make contact with your family. Establish a secret code word that just your family members recognize. Practice your plan with family members on a regular basis. Maintain a brief history on each family member that includes medical information and a recent picture. Do not call 911 unless you have an emergency that requires a response from police, fire, or law enforcement. Plan for care & safety of pets.

Make a Survival Kit

When preparing for a possible emergency situation, consider just the basics needed for survival.

- 1) Water and non-perishable food. Plan for three days of survival needs.
- 2) Clean air. Store and maintain dust masks that will protect your breathing.
- 3) Create a first aid kit. Put simple items in the kit and know how to use them.
- 4) Special needs items. If special supplies are required for any family member regardless of age, like diapers, formula, medications, etc., be sure to include them.
- 5) Supply checklist. List the items that you have and check to make sure they are not outdated.
- 6) Additional items. Battery operated radio and flashlight with working batteries, candles, stick matches, and any special items needed. Remember that space may be limited.
- 7) Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to seal draft areas. This will help prevent contaminants from entering your home.

To leave or not to leave:

Sometimes the best plan is to stay where you are. Your local emergency government director will announce by media to evacuate or stay. If you “stay in place”, consider the following:

- 1) Lock your doors and windows.
- 2) Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced air systems, even if the power is out.
- 3) Take your survival kit with you.
- 4) Gather in an interior room.
- 5) Listen to the radio for current conditions.
- 6) If you decide to leave, take only what you need.

Most businesses and schools have a disaster plan. Get to know the plan. If there isn't one, volunteer to help create one. Learn to use a communication system that everyone

understands and can learn to operate. Ensure that evacuation routes are well identified. Be prepared to shelter in place if directed to do so. Know where your supplies are stored.

What else should I know?

Always have a “back up” plan available. Practice your plan so that everyone is prepared. If you need help understanding, ask someone who does. Be willing to help others.

Questions

If you have questions about emergency preparedness, please contact:

Richland County Health & Human Services, Public Health (608) 647-8821

Richland County Emergency Management (608) 647-8187

Richland County Sheriffs Department (608) 647-2106