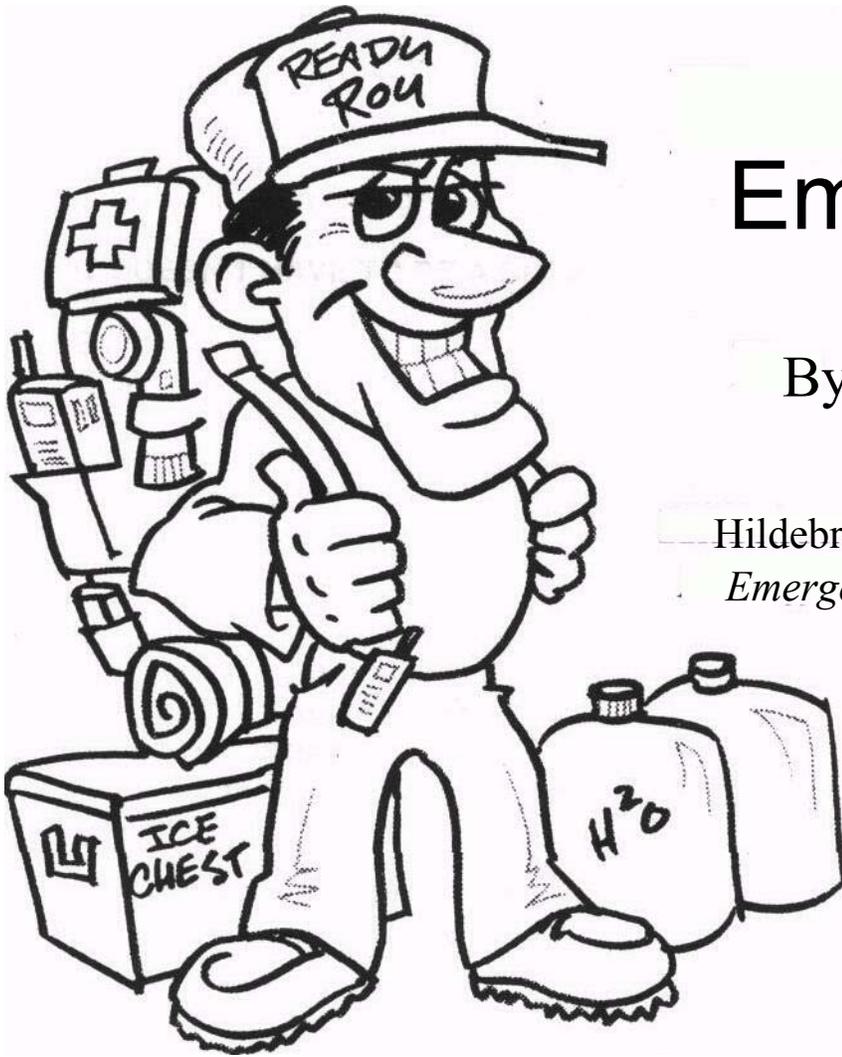


Preparing for Emergencies

By: Mike & JoAnne
Hildebrand

Hildebrand & Noll Associates, Inc.
Emergency Response Consultants



Family Battle Rhythms: Family Preparedness
Sponsored by Work/Life Services
An Occupational Health, Environmental And Safety Services (OHES) Event

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

By: Mike and JoAnne Hildebrand

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mike and JoAnne Hildebrand have been married for 25 years and have worked through many emergencies and crisis situations together and alone. Mike is an emergency response consultant with Hildebrand and Noll Associates, Inc. JoAnne is a professor with the University of Maryland, University College, where she is the Academic Director of the Fire Science program.

EMERGENCY VS. CRISIS

An emergency is any situation that threatens the life and property of people you love and care for. A crisis situation is any emergency that you were not prepared to deal with. If an emergency turns into a crisis events can spin out of control.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A CRISIS

Sometimes there is not much we can do to prevent an emergency, but there is a lot we can do to avert a crisis. We have all heard the Scout motto, "Be Prepared". It sounds like good advice, but what do we prepare for and how do we do it? This pamphlet has been prepared to provide some tips on preparing for one of your worst days. The focus is on preparing for home and family emergencies.

HOW THE PROS DO IT

Did you ever wonder how firefighters, paramedics, and police officers appear to deal with whatever emergency comes along and make it look almost routine? How do they do it? They prepare by planning, training, and developing procedures based on past experience. They also spend a lot of time thinking about what could go wrong and develop contingency plans. Emergency responders always have a Plan B and C, if Plan A doesn't work.

PREPARING FOR YOUR WORST DAY

ATTITUDE

Get An Attitude - If the nature of the work you and your family does takes one or more of you away from home for long periods of time, it is important to adopt the right attitude. You can deal with anything if you are prepared. Being prepared builds confidence, and confidence is directly related to attitude. How well you deal with a crisis is about 80% attitude and 20% what actually happens to you.

Panic Is Contagious - When a serious emergency occurs, your family looks to you to provide some leadership and direction. If you project fear and panic to others around you, they pick up on this and react accordingly. It's OK to be afraid and concerned, you just have to control what you do and say to the people around you. As the leader you set the tone for the whole group.

You Don't Have To Do It Alone - If you need and want help, ask for it. Lots of people are willing to help out during a crisis, but first you have to ask. If you have to leave your family for an extended period of time, let friends know you will be gone and tell your family who they can call to deal with special problems; e.g., who can you call if the hot water heater dies, the furnace malfunctions, and the toilet backs up.

Get Organized - Checklists never panic and they don't forget. Develop emergency checklists for critical tasks, like how to light the pilot light, how to start the generator, reset the circuit breaker, etc. If you know bad weather is coming, call your neighbors and friends and coordinate the jobs that need to get done. For example, if you need to buy batteries, milk, and bread, organize and work as a team.

Know How To Call For Help - Post emergency numbers by the telephone. Teach the little ones how to dial 911 and your address.

Fire Exit Plan - Make sure everyone in your home knows how to get out if there is a fire. Discuss the plan with children and establish an assembly point outside so you can make sure everyone got out. Practice your fire exit drill with your entire family.

Stop, Drop, And Roll - Teach your family what to do if they catch on fire. Tell them to stop (don't run), drop to the ground, and roll until the fire goes out. Practice doing this with your kids.

Smoke Detectors - Smoke detectors save lives. Place a detector on every floor of your home. Change the batteries every year on your birthday.

Fire Extinguishers - Getting everyone out of your home when there is a fire is the first priority, but many small fires can be extinguished rapidly, if you have an extinguisher and know how to use it. Many fires start in the kitchen. A box of baking soda can be an effective fire extinguisher for a grease fire on the stove.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Know How To Get Help - Calling 911 isn't enough. Know someone in your neighborhood you can call to help in a medical emergency. Post phone numbers for the Poison Control Center, family physician, veterinarian, etc.

Know First Aid and CPR - Everyone in your family should know some basic first aid to deal with ABC emergencies (airway, bleeding, and circulation). Adults and baby sitters should also know how to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Contact your local hospital, Red Cross, or Fire Department to sign up for training.

First Aid Kits - Your home and each automobile or boat should have a first aid kit. The type and size of first aid kit should be matched to your training and skill level. The worst feeling in the world is to know what to do and not have the tools to do it.

AUTOMOBILES

Preventive Maintenance - Think of your car as an emergency response vehicle. It can take you to the hospital, get you supplies, and evacuate your family. Fix the important things on your car before they break and the car leaves you in the driveway. Stay on top of the health of your battery, tires, belts, starter, alternator, and wiper blades.

Know The Basics -If you are not the "car person" in your family, learn how to take care of the basics like checking the oil, transmission, and coolant levels, how to jump start the battery, and how to change a tire. Practice changing a tire.

Prepare Your Car - It's not a car, it's a "Self-contained Survival Unit". If you know a crisis is looming on the horizon, make sure your car is ready for anything. Fill up the gas tank; check the fluids and the spare tire. Standard equipment should include: flashlight, jumper cables, first aid kit, blanket or sleeping bag, highway maps, driving instructions to the hospital, spare can of oil and coolant. If you think you might have to leave in a hurry, pack a "Go Bag" with a change of cloths, some water, childcare items, medications, and some munchies.

YOUR HOME

Ready For Anything - Unless you have a fire or medical emergency, your home is the best place to deal with an emerging crisis. Make sure you have everything you need. Think about what could go wrong or what you might run out of and stock the supplies you might need.

Storms - Storms have a way of leaving you with no electricity. Without electricity you don't have lights, refrigeration, heating, air conditioning, and sometimes running water and telephones. What is Plan B going to be?

Use Battery Powered Lanterns - Candles are nice, but they can start fires. Have enough flashlights and battery powered lanterns on hand to get you through at least 24 hours of darkness. Keep plenty of batteries on hand. If you have to shop before a storm, you waited too long.

Propane Stove - A two burner folding propane fueled camping stove is a good choice for a back-up cooking source. Propane is a clean, non-toxic burning fuel, but should be used in well-ventilated areas. An outdoor propane BBQ grill is another good back up. Stock spare gas cylinders and keep your tank full.

Ice Chest - Your refrigerator and ice chest can usually stay cool and within the safe zone for 12 to 24 hours without electricity, providing you keep the door closed. A large ice chest is a good back up. Transfer the frequently used items to your ice chest.

Water - Water can be a problem if your supply comes from a well and the holding tank is supplied by an electric pump. Keep at least one empty 20-gallon plastic water storage container on hand that you can fill for emergencies. Even if you have bottled water, you need water to flush the toilet and clean up.

Flooding - If you know heavy rains are on the way (hurricane) make sure your roof gutters are cleaned out and excess leaves are removed from the roof. Clogged storm drains contribute to basement flooding. Have an emergency roofing kit handy. The kit should include a roll of tarpaper, duct tape, plastic sheeting, a tarp, roofing nails, and a claw hammer.

Radio - Have a good battery powered AM/FM radio on hand to get the latest news and to stay in contact with Emergency Preparedness Agencies. An inexpensive NOAA weather radio is a good investment. The better models have an emergency weather alert feature, which turns the radio on when there is an emergency broadcast.

Generator - A generator can solve all of your electrical problems in an emergency, but not everyone has the extra cash lying around to go to this level of preparedness. If you live in a rural area where the power goes out frequently, or you are a telecommuter, a generator can be a worthwhile investment.

Staples - Let's face it, life without toilet paper and diapers can be rough. Staples like, bread, milk and cereal, along with toilet paper and paper towels is the first items to go at the grocery store. Stock up ahead of time.

Medication - Check prescription bottles and make sure you have enough meds to carry you through. Keep prescriptions current with your doctor.

SHELTER IN PLACE

Your home is a cocoon - If your home is near a chemical plant, pipeline, rail yard, train track, or highway, you need to be prepared to deal with a hazardous materials release. When you are alerted that a HazMat emergency is under way, the first thing you should do is gather your family and go inside your home and shelter in place. Turn on the television and radio and follow instructions from public safety agencies. The exception to this is when you have been ordered to evacuate by authorities or are you in immediate danger. In other words, your life is at risk, and escape and evacuation is the prudent thing to do to rescue yourself.

If you shelter-in-place you should do the following:

- Close all doors and windows. Lock the windows, (locked windows seal better). If you have a fireplace, close the damper.
- Shut off your air conditioning and heating unit. The idea is to seal in the good air and seal out the bad air.

Seal the cracks in your home. Use damp towels at the base of the door and use duct tape to seal cracks around your windows.

- Stay tuned to the TV and radio.

HELP FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Want to learn more? The following web sites are our favorite picks. There is a wealth of information on these sites that can help you and your family prepare for anything. Use these sites to build your Home Emergency Response Plan.

Poisoning Emergencies

<http://ace.orst.edu/info/npic/poison.htm>

This page provides access to phone numbers and addresses for regional and state poison-control centers.

Automotive & Home Inspection and Safety Guide

http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/cars/natsafe/natsafe.htm

Extensive but practical checklist will assist you in locating potentially dangerous areas on your automobile and around your home.

Automobile Tips

http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/cars/glovebox/glovebox.htm

Five brochures by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, including "Getting your Vehicle Ready for Winter" and "Getting your Vehicle Ready for Summer."

Making Your Home Safe from Fire and Carbon Monoxide

<http://www.pueblo.Qsa.Qov/cic text/housing/safefromfireco/firesafetv.htm>

Tips for a safe and worry-free home

Safety Tips for Grandparents taking care of Grandchildren

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic tex\children/grandparents/grand.htm#chart>

Product Safety Commission's Grandchild Safety Checklist

Travel Safety

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic text/travel/t-smart/travel.htm>

Travel Safety Tips from the U.S. Department of State. Includes valuable links to embassy and consulate locations, consular information sheets, travel warnings, and public announcements.

Preparing for Natural Disasters

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cfocus/cfdisaster02/focus.htm>

Well-linked information on preparing for hurricanes, floods, tornados, extreme heat, fires and accidents. Includes information about pets, disaster supplies to keep on hand, evacuation and other key topics.

Family Disaster Supplies Kit

<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic text/misc/disaster/familykit.htm>

Checklist of supplies that should be gathered in advance, including those items that should be included in as easy-to-carry evacuation kit.

Disaster Safety

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/>

This American Red Cross site provides concise information on preparing for and dealing with virtually all major emergencies, including natural disasters, chemical emergencies, and terrorism. Similar information on well-organized fact sheets are also provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency FEMA at:

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/>

Includes nuclear power plant emergencies, dam safety, and winter storms

Preparing for Terrorism

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/unexpected.html>

This American Red Cross site (also in Spanish) covers terrorist incidents and what families can do to prepare for the unexpected.

Disaster Preparedness

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/>

More information from the American Red Cross on preparedness concerns of children, the elderly, and people with special medical concerns. This page also covers financial preparations to help minimize property damage and financial risks, and animal safety during emergencies.

FEMA for Kids

<http://www.fema.gov/kids/>

Designed for kids, this site from the federal Emergency Management Agency helps youngsters prepare for disasters.

Home Maintenance and Repair

<http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/mod02/master02.html>

There are many resources for handling routine and emergency home repairs. One of the best online sources with an A to Z index is Michigan State University Extension site on Home Maintenance and Repair. Here you'll find straightforward instructions on hundreds of problems such as thawing frozen pipes, fixing plugged sinks, coping with wet wall-to-wall carpeting, and what to do when your freezer quits working.