

Emergency Preparedness:

Are You Ready?

Disasters disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property. If a disaster occurs in your community, local government and relief organizations will activate to provide assistance, but you need to be able to help as well. Local responders may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere to prevent loss of life.

You should know the type of disasters that could occur in Berrien County—thunderstorms, tornados, severe winter weather, and flooding. You should also be ready to be self sufficient for at least three days. This may mean providing for your own shelter, first aid, food, water and communications needs while waiting for further assistance.

FREE Customized Family Preparedness Guides Available
Are available while supplies last at IPC Print Services
2180 Maiden Lane, St. Joseph

Come by to receive a guide customized for your family. Or call (269) 208-8893 or e-mail rbutterw@ipcprintservices.com for help making a plan for your family.

The Steps: #1 Make a Plan. #2 Build a Kit. #3 Practice your Plan.

Step #1 Make a Plan: Complete a customized Family Preparedness Guide from the IPC Print Services; or visit www.ready.gov to create your own plan. If you have special needs, you may fill out a card which can be found in the calendar mailed to

residents of Berrien County by the DC Cook Nuclear Power Plant, or contact the **Berrien County Emergency Management Office** at (269) 983-7111 ext. 4915.

Involve your family by talking about who will be responsible for what when a disaster occurs in your home or community. Know how you will stay in contact with each other, and agree on a meeting place if you are advised to evacuate. Do not rely on mobile phones- circuits may quickly become overwhelmed.

Step #2 Build a Kit: Your kit should contain essential food, water, and supplies for at least three days. Keep this kit in a safe place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. The following items are recommended in your basic kit:

- 3-days worth non-perishable food.
- Three-day supply of water – one gallon per person (and pet), per day.
- Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit and manual.
- Sanitation and hygiene items (moist towelettes and toilet paper).
- Matches and waterproof container.
- Whistle.
- Extra clothing.
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils, including a can opener.
- Photocopies of Credit cards,



ID cards, and other important documents.

- Cash and coins.
- Special needs items, such as prescription medications, glasses, contact lens solutions, and hearing aid batteries.
- Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers.
- Other items your family needs.

Since we live in a cold climate, you must think about warmth. It is possible that you will not have heat. Clothing and bedding supplies should include: jacket or coat, long pants, long sleeve shirt, shoes/boots, hat, mittens, scarf, sleeping bags or warm blankets.

Step #3 Practice your Plan: Once you have developed your plan, you need to practice and maintain it. For example, ask questions to make sure that your family remembers places, phone numbers, and safety rules. Be sure all family members know where the disaster kit is located. Conduct drills. Test fire alarms, smoke and CO detectors. Update disaster supplies. Remember....check expiration dates on food, water and medication supplies, update photocopies of important documents as they change, clothing as sizes change, and batteries may need to be replaced.

What about my pet?

Pets are also important family members and must be included in your disaster plan. Your kit, as well as a plan for sheltering should you be advised to evacuate. A pet water, food, treats, veterinary records, leash and/or pet carrier, ID tags, and plastic bags for waste disposal. Know that, with the exception of service animals, pets are typically not permitted in emergency shelters as they may affect the health and safety of other occupants. Therefore it is important to prepare to shelter your pets: Have a pet crate or carrier available; find out which local hotels and motels allow pets and where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to research some outside your local area in case local facilities close due to the disaster. Identify some friends or relatives out of the area who may be able to shelter your pet during a local disaster. **For more information, call the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at 269-927-5621.**



Your pets need to have a disaster kit may include: newspaper or animals, pets are and safety of other