

October 2008

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Fall : A Time for Play, Plans and Practice

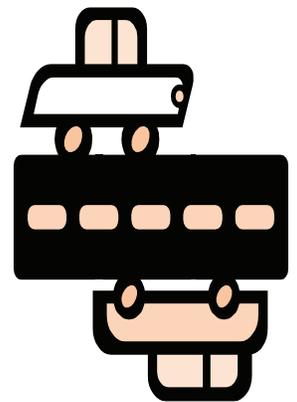
As the first leaves begin to show color, we realize that Fall is upon us, along with the many activities that Fall brings to the Treasure Valley. Outdoor festivals, farmers' markets, football games and Halloween have us planning where to park, packing picnics and looking for the quickest routes to get us into and out of crowded locations. With all this preparing and planning, now is a good time to plan and/or review some elements of the family emergency plan.

ROUTE PLANNING

Whether you're headed to a festival, market or game, you try to be aware of the impact the event will have on the area. Have you done the same level of planning for an evacuation out of your neighborhood in the case of a disaster? Consider the following questions as you plan primary and alternative routes out of your neighborhood.

- ◆ **How many ways are there in and out of your neighborhood?**
- ◆ **Do any of the routes allow you to pick up family/ friends as needed?**
- ◆ **Which route will get you to the interstate or a highway the fastest?**

If you have children, introduce the concept of trip planning by laying out their trick or treat route with them. While younger children should always be escorted by an adult during trick or treating, they can still help plan the walk. Let them use criteria like friends' houses or very decorated homes to establish destinations. Talk to them about safely crossing streets and establish a return time and route home. This will help get them used to the idea of safely staying with a plan. After Halloween, practice the family evacuation route with them.



MEETING PLACE



Anytime you attend a large event with a group of people you run the risk of getting separated. When you first arrive, you should establish a location where everyone would meet if they got separated. This is especially important if there are children in the group. Events are a great place to practice this concept. Once you have practiced it at a large, fun location, practice your two home emergency meeting locations with your household members. The first location should be right outside your home in case of fire. The second should be outside your neighborhood in case of a large disaster. Traveling to the second location can be joined with the evacuation route practice as a group.

DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

Weather conditions can change rapidly this time of year. As you prepare for outings you will often dress in layers of clothes just in case the weather takes a turn while you are out. But have you given the same amount of thought to the spare set of clothes in your 72 hour kit? Take a good look at your spare set of clothes and make sure they are durable and suitable for varied types of weather.

If you have trick or treaters in your household, evaluate their costumes for safety and comfort. Costumes should be loose enough that warm clothing can be worn underneath. Find creative ways to incorporate light sticks or flashlights into the costume. Reflective tape applied to trick or treat bags or buckets will also add to the children's safety. Finally, sew or tape emergency phone numbers on the inside of the costume as a backup to the route planning in case you get separated. Most importantly, have a safe, fun Fall.

