

Wow, time travels fast when working to prepare you and your family for emergencies!! :) This is now week 5. This is where most you should be:

- Water is now stored for each member of your family
- You have at least discussed if not written an emergency plan
- You have established contacts outside of your neighborhood who members of your family can contact
- A backpack or duffel bag has been filled with food and supplies for each family member
- An alternative method of cooking has been established
- Other tools and supplies have been added to your emergency pack

This week will focus on your pets and other miscellaneous items that may be needed your emergency packs. In most emergencies, pets are not welcome at emergency shelters. If you have pets or livestock, plans must be made to ensure their safety as well. Check with your county animal shelter to determine if there is a plan in place for the evacuation of animals. If you plan to shelter in place at your home, make sure you have an emergency supply of food and water for your pets as well. Other items for your pet should include a leash, blanket, if weather is cold, toys, etc.

All pets should have an identification tag or an inserted identification chip. Many animals are lost during emergencies and many who had families are killed because there was no way to find owner. Rabies records will be important, because if shelters do accept small animals proof of rabies vaccination will be required.

Activity: Plan a fire drill for your family. Talk about your fire escape routes before the drill. Practice opening windows as an alternative method for escape. Then practice. Find a location outside your home where all family members know to meet if a quick escape from a burning home is necessary.

At the end of the week, complete your emergency preparedness form and send the entire form to me. The drawing for the backpacks will take place a week from Friday on May 13. Only those that fill out the form will be eligible to win. Remember, take a picture of your preparedness activities, and you will double your chances to win. Good luck and may you and your families live in safety and health.