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## In the Event of an Emergency – Are You Ready?

Emergencies can happen so unexpectedly and take everyone by surprise. In only a few moments, electricity, refrigeration, clean tap water and phone services can be gone, leaving close to nothing to help you survive. What do you do? In preparation of an emergency, get ready!

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends the following items to create a disaster ready kit before any indication of an emergency:

- ✓ One gallon of water **per person, per day** for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- ✓ At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food (canned goods, protein bars, granola bars, etc) and a manual can opener
- ✓ Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- ✓ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Whistle to signal for help
- ✓ Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- ✓ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ✓ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- ✓ Local maps
- ✓ Cell phone with charger

Once you have gathered the basic supplies, the following items may be added as well, depending on the needs of your family:

- ✓ Prescription medication and glasses/contacts
- ✓ Infant formula and diapers
- ✓ Pet food with extra water for your pet
- ✓ Cash and change
- ✓ Copies of important family documents (Social Security card, insurance policies, bank account numbers)
- ✓ Sleeping bags or warm blankets
- ✓ Matches in a waterproof container
- ✓ Paper cups, utensils and plates
- ✓ Feminine hygiene products
- ✓ Books, activities for children
- ✓ Change of clothing, including long sleeved shirt, long pants, sturdy shoes

Buying things in bulk can be expensive, so it is good to begin adding to your stockpile in small amounts by purchasing an item or two every trip to the grocery store. Also, it is a good idea to not have your kit in an area that you will be tempted to take from. The kit is meant for use solely in an emergency, so it is recommended that it be placed in a basement or an area that you would seek refuge in your house in the event of an emergency. Be sure to not place your kit close to any solvents or cleaners that can leak liquid or fumes, as they may affect the items,

especially food. If you live in a small home or apartment and have limited space, this process will require you to be creative with the space you have. If necessary, a laundry basket can work as an easily portable kit in the event of an evacuation.

Your emergency supply kit should be checked once or twice a year to make sure that your food and water have not gone bad. Like anything else, water bottles have an expiration date, so it is a good idea to check them and replenish when necessary. Immediately discard cans that are expired, leaky, bulging, rusted or have punctures. Never eat food that has come into contact with a flood or been in a fire.

Once you have collected all of the items and information you will need, it is important to sit down with your family and discuss the information that will be put into the plan. It is also suggested to keep a list of local contact information for places such as local hospitals, local utilities, local American Red Cross, local TV stations, local radio stations, your property insurance management in the case of an emergency and to stay updated on any changes after the storm.

The Central Connecticut Health District has free copies of “Connecticut Guide to Emergency Preparedness” available for any resident of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield who wishes to be prepared in the event of an emergency. This guide has information for all types of emergencies and how to prepare for each of them.

For more information about emergency preparedness in the Central Connecticut Health District, serving the towns of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield, please contact our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Judy Torpey at (860)721-2816.