



Commentary

by:

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Emergency Preparedness

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Your pulse is racing; adrenaline is rushing, its fight or flight time. This is not the time to begin planning for an emergency. Its human nature to avoid envisioning a destructive situation, but the reality is that many of us will be directly or indirectly impacted by an emergency in our lifetime. Although it may seem difficult to plan for the unexpected, there are several measures that you and your family can take to better prepare you to respond quickly to a crisis.

To begin, walk around your home regularly to ensure that an emergency is not invited. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms should have their batteries changed once a year. Also, take the time to clear your property and surrounding areas of all overgrown and dead brush, flowers, and trees, to eliminate potential fire hazards. In addition, have a plentiful supply of bottled water, non-perishable goods, matches, batteries, medications, and first aid items just in case you are unable to leave your home.

Take the time to create a disaster plan. Ensure that each family member, including children, understand how to safely evacuate to a common location, and don't forget to put someone in charge of family pets. To save precious seconds, store important documents, such as photo IDs, medication records, and insurance information, in an easily accessible and obvious location.

Sometimes emergencies happen and we are unable to help ourselves. The Peoria Fire Department offers a Residential Lock Box Program to help first responders access your home quickly and safely during an emergency. A specially designed metal box is secured on your property with a single key to open your front door. This secure lock box can only be accessed by Police and Fire in an emergency. The Lock Box Program has been active and successful in many communities across the nation, including Sun City. For additional information, contact the Peoria Fire Department at 623-773-7919.

Although these are only a few tips to help you prepare, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a variety of resources to help guide you in your emergency preparations. For additional information, please visit www.ready.gov.

To keep updated about what is happening in your city, register for the Mesquite District electronic news alerts by visiting www.peoriaaz.gov/mesquite. Contact Councilmember Cathy Carlat at Mesquite@peoriaaz.gov or by calling 623-773-7306.