



Kingman County Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Sept. 8, 2017

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Disasters don't plan ahead, but you can

September is National Preparedness Month



Hurricane season has raised awareness across the country to disasters and disaster preparedness. September is National Preparedness Month, a time when everyone is asked to create or re-examine personal disaster plans to be sure you are ready before something happens.

This year's theme is, "Disasters Don't Plan Ahead. You Can." Kingman County urges its residents to take the time to be prepared for an emergency. Don't wait. Do it now.

Here are five things everyone should do to be prepared.

1. **Build a kit.** Be sure you have set aside, in a safe place, enough non-perishable food, water and other basic supplies to take care of your family for at least 72 hours. As the recent hurricanes have demonstrated, help does not arrive five minutes after a disaster. You could be on your own for a while, so be prepared. Other items to include: radio, weather radio, flashlight, first aid kit, batteries, a whistle (to call for help), chargers for portable phones and computer tablets. Customize your kit to fit your family and keep it updated.
2. **Make a plan.** Sit down together as a family and decide how you will communicate during a disaster, especially if conventional communication is unavailable. Pick a meeting place for your family and practice getting there. Plan how you would evacuate your community and what you would take with you. Establish a contact in another community that can be the focal point for everyone to "check in" should you be separated when a disaster strikes. Make sure children know how to communicate with you if you are apart and how to call for help. Once you have your plan, practice, practice, practice!

3. **Be the help.** According to the Federal Emergency Management Association, almost half of Americans expect to rely on their neighbors during a disaster. Know your neighbors and whether they have special needs. Take first aid and CPR classes when they are available. Make sure your family is well prepared – that will help you be able to help others. The aftermath of Hurricane Harvey was a shining example of the importance of everyday people helping each other after a disaster.
4. **Remember your pets.** Include your pets in all your disaster planning. Build a pet kit with the things your pet will need (food, water, toys, leash, collar, kennel). Know where you could stay with your pet away from home or where you could board your pet after a disaster. Depending on the severity of the disaster, a local shelter for pets may be established. But have your own plan and when you practice evacuating, include your pets.
5. **Make a plan for your farm or business.** Every business also should have a disaster plan, including agricultural operations. Draw a farm site map and indicate all buildings, access routes, barriers, locations of livestock, and location of electrical shut offs. Have a list of your farm or business inventory. In addition to equipment, a farm inventory also would include number of animals, acres of crops and any hazardous substances. Know where you can relocate your livestock if needed.

Be aware of the types of disasters that might occur here (tornado, flooding, ice storm, high winds, electrical outage, to name a few). When a disaster strikes, your preparedness actions will not only pay off – they might also save lives.

Don't wait. Plan ahead. More information to help you be prepared is available online at ready.gov and on the Emergency Manager page of the county website, kingmancoks.org. Follow Kingman County Government on Facebook throughout September for daily preparedness tips.

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