



Kingman County Commission

Fred Foley, County Commissioner District #1
Carol F. Voran, County Commissioner District #2
John Steffen, County Commissioner District #3

Kingman County Courthouse, 130 N. Spruce, Kingman KS 67068
Office of the County Clerk: Phone: 620-532-2521 / Fax: 620-532-5082

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For more information, contact Nancy D. Borst, 620-532-2037 / nborst@kingmancoks.com

September is National Preparedness Month

Remember the adage about an ounce of prevention? Emergency management officials hope you do, especially during September, which is National Preparedness Month.

The theme of this year's focus is, "You Can Be the Hero." Remember, first responders may not be able to reach you quickly in an emergency or disaster. The most important step you can take is being prepared to care for yourself and those in your care until help arrives. By following a few simple steps, you can indeed be the hero.

Experts urge everyone to prepare and plan for three days without electricity, water service, access to a grocery store or local services. Discuss, agree on and document an emergency plan for yourself and your family. Working together with neighbors, co-workers and others helps build a resilient community. For sample emergency plans, see Ready.gov.

A critical part of your preparations should include assembling an emergency kit. Most people realize such a kit should include provisions such as food and water but do you know how much? Set aside one gallon of water per person per day. You can purchase food grade water storage containers from surplus or camping stores or use commercially bottled water in its original container. Don't use plastic milk jugs or cardboard juice containers – milk protein and fruit sugars can't be completely removed and can promote bacterial growth.

Another option to store water is using two-liter plastic soft drink bottles. To sanitize plastic soda bottles, add a solution of 1 teaspoon non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water. Make sure the solution touches all surfaces inside the bottle, then rinse with clean water. If the water you are storing comes from a well or source not treated with chlorine, add two drops of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach and let the water stand 30 minutes before using.

Choose foods that your family will eat and that are non-perishable. Avoid foods that make you thirsty. Salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content are good choices. And don't forget a manual can opener and eating utensils. Be sure to have a battery-powered radio, first aid kit, moist towelettes, garbage bags, blankets and sturdy shoes. Don't forget prescription medications. Two items you might not think to include are a whistle, to signal for help, and pliers, to turn off utilities.

Keep your emergency kit in a central location, such as a hall closet, pantry or garage. Put all items in airtight plastic bags or in easy-to-carry containers, such as a backpack or duffel. Change water and food supplies every six months and write the date of storage on all containers.

With a bit of planning, you and your family can be prepared in case disaster strikes. For more information about creating a disaster plan or building an emergency kit, contact Fred Simon, Kingman County Director of Emergency Management, at 620-532-5081, fsimon@kingmancoks.com.

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