



30 TIPS FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, PART III

Here's the third and final part of our three-part series of tips for emergency preparedness...

Preparedness Tip #21:

- Read the information on your city, county, and/or state government web sites, as well as Ready.gov or the "Be Prepared" section of www.redcross.org. Print out emergency preparedness information. Be sure to keep a copy with your disaster supplies kit. It can provide telephone numbers, addresses, and other information you need when electronic connections are not available options for obtaining the information. You can view and download our Emergency Operations Plans as well as see other Emergency Preparedness Resources and Tips located on the BCSO website.

Preparedness Tip #22:

- When water is of questionable purity, it is easiest to use bottled water for drinking and cooking if it is available. When it's not available, it is important to know how to treat contaminated water. In addition to having a bad odor and taste, water from questionable sources may be contaminated by a variety of microorganisms, including bacteria and parasites that cause diseases such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis. All water of uncertain purity should be treated before use. Use one or a combination of these treatments:
 - **Filter.** Filter the water using a piece of cloth or coffee filter to remove solid particles. You can also use commercially available water filters such as the [Sawyer Mini Filter](#).
 - **Boil.** Bring water to a rolling boil for about one full minute. Cool it and pour it back and forth between two clean containers to improve its taste before drinking it.

- **Chlorinate.** Add 16 drops (1/8 teaspoon) of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Stir to mix. Sodium hypochlorite of the concentration of 5.25% to 6% should be the only active ingredient in the bleach. There should not be any added soap or fragrances. A major bleach manufacturer has also added Sodium Hydroxide as an active ingredient, which they state does not pose a health risk for water treatment. Let stand 30 minutes. If it smells of chlorine you can use it. If it does not smell of chlorine, add 16 more drops (1/8 t.) of chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Let stand 30 minutes and smell it again. If it smells of chlorine you can use it. If it does not smell of chlorine, discard it and find another source of water.

- Flood water can be contaminated by toxic chemicals. DO NOT try to treat flood water.

Preparedness Tip #23:

- In some emergencies you may be required to turn off your utilities. To prepare for this type of event:
 - Locate the electric, gas, and water shut-off valves.
 - Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.
 - Teach adult family members how to turn off utilities.
 - If you turn off the gas, a professional must turn it back on. DO NOT attempt to do this yourself.

Preparedness Tip #24:

- Understand that during an emergency you may be asked to "shelter-in-place" or evacuate. Plan for both possibilities and be prepared to listen to instructions from your local emergency management officials.

Preparedness Tip #25:

- A disaster can cause significant financial loss. Your apartment or home may be severely damaged or destroyed. You may be forced to live in temporary housing. Income may be cut off or significantly

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Preparedness Tip #25, continued

reduced. Important financial records could be destroyed. Take the time now to assess your situation and ask questions.

Preparedness Tip #26:

- Earthquakes are a risk in our area. Learn about some of the hazards in your exact neighbourhood by viewing [Oregon HazVu:Statewide Geohazards Viewer](#). This online resource is available through ODGAMI (Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries).

Preparedness Tip #27:

- Floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters in terms of human hardship and economic loss. As much as 90 percent of the damage related to all natural disasters (excluding drought) is caused by floods and associated debris flow. Most communities in the United States can experience some kind of flooding. Melting snow can combine with rain in the winter and early spring and severe thunderstorms can bring heavy rain in the spring or summer.
- Regardless of how a flood occurs, the rule for being safe is simple: head for higher ground and stay away from floodwater. Even a shallow depth of fast-moving floodwater produces more force than most people can imagine. You can protect yourself by being prepared and having time to act. The Benton County Sheriff's Office Facebook Page, local radio, TV, or a NOAA Weather Radio, are some good sources of information for flood situation reports and road closures.

Preparedness Tip #28:

- When there is concern about a potential exposure to a chemical or other airborne hazard, local officials may advise you to "shelter-in-place" and "seal the room."

This is different from taking shelter on the lowest level of your home in case of a natural disaster like a tornado. If you believe the air may be badly contaminated, or if you are instructed by local officials, follow the instructions below to create a temporary barrier between you and the contaminated air outside:

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your disaster supplies kit and turn on your battery-powered radio.
- Go to an interior room that is above ground level and without windows, if possible. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- If directed by local authorities on the radio, use duct tape to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room. Tape plastic sheeting, such as heavy-duty plastic garbage bags, over any windows.

Listen to your radio or television for further instructions. Local officials will tell you when you can leave the room in which you are sheltering, or they may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

Preparedness Tip #29:

- If there is an explosion:
 - Take shelter against your desk or a sturdy table.
 - Exit the building immediately.
 - Do not use elevators.
 - Check for fire and other hazards.
 - Take your emergency supply kit if time allows.
- If there is a fire:
 - Exit the building immediately.
- If there is smoke, crawl under the smoke to the nearest exit and use a cloth, if possible, to cover your nose and mouth.
 - Use the back of your hand to feel the upper, lower, and middle parts of closed doors.



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Preparedness Tip #29, continued

- If the door is not hot, brace yourself against it and open slowly.
- If the door is hot, do not open it. Look for another way out.
- Do not use elevators.
- If your clothes catch on fire, stop-drop-and-roll to put out the fire. Do not run.
- If you are at home, go to your previously designated outside meeting place.
- Account for your family members and carefully supervise small children.
- GET OUT and STAY OUT. Never go back into a burning building.
- Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.

Preparedness Tip #30

- Unlike an explosion, a biological attack may or may not be immediately obvious. Most likely local health care workers will report a pattern of unusual illness or a wave of sick people seeking medical attention. The best source of information will be radio or television reports.

Understand that some biological agents, such as anthrax, do not cause contagious diseases. Others, like the small pox virus, can result in diseases you can catch from other people.

In the event of a biological attack, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide information on what you should do. It will take time to determine exactly what the illness is, how it should be treated and who may have been exposed. You should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news including the following:

- Are you in the group or area authorities believe may have been exposed?
- What are the signs and symptoms of the disease?
- Are medications or vaccines being distributed? Where? Who should get them and how?
- Where should you seek emergency medical care if you become sick?

- During a biological emergency:

- If a family member becomes sick, it is important to be suspicious.
- Do not assume, however, that you should go to a hospital emergency room or that any illness is the result of the biological attack. Symptoms of many common illnesses may overlap.
- Use common sense, practice good hygiene and cleanliness to avoid spreading germs, and seek medical advice.
- Consider if you are in the group or area authorities believe to be in danger.
- If your symptoms match those described and you are in the group considered at risk, immediately seek emergency medical attention.

- If you are potentially exposed:

- Follow instructions of doctors and other public health officials.
- If the disease is contagious expect to receive medical evaluation and treatment. You may be advised to stay away from others or even deliberately quarantined.
- For non-contagious diseases, expect to receive medical evaluation and treatment.

- If you become aware of an unusual and suspicious substance nearby:

- Quickly get away.
- Protect yourself. Cover your mouth and nose with layers of fabric that can filter the air but still allow breathing. Examples include two or three layers of cotton such as a t-shirt, handkerchief, or towel. Otherwise, several layers of tissue or paper towels may help.
- Wash with soap and water.
- Contact authorities.
- Watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news and information including what the signs and symptoms of the disease are, if medications or vaccinations are being distributed and where you should seek medical attention if you become sick.
- If you become sick, seek emergency medical attention.

Additional preparedness information is available on the Benton County Sheriff's Office website and on the Department of Homeland Security's Ready.gov site. We hope you have found this series of tips helpful.

"Be Prepared, Not Scared."