

This *Partners in Preparedness* newsletter is intended to update leaders of faith-based and community-based organizations regarding important emergency preparedness issues. As a trusted leader, you have the ability to influence people to make decisions that will make a real difference in how well our community responds to emergencies. Read on to learn more.

BULLETIN BONUS: It's the time of year when many people head home for the holidays. Drop the information below into your bulletin or newsletter so your congregants or clients can be better prepared in case of a travel emergency.



**“Shelter-in-place”
What does it mean?
Why does it matter?**

Get on the Road to Safety

There's an old song, “Over the river and through the woods to Grandmother's house we go.” Especially as the holidays approach, it's natural to want to be with friends and family. But there are times when it's just not worth the trip!

As a general rule, when winter storms strike, do not drive unless necessary. If you must travel, take safety precautions. Make sure your car is stocked with survival gear like blankets, a shovel, flashlight and extra batteries, extra warm clothing, set of tire chains, battery booster cables, quick energy foods and a brightly-colored cloth to use as a distress flag. Keep your gas tank full to prevent gasoline freeze-up. If you have a cell phone, have it with you while traveling and keep the battery charged. If you should become stranded, you will be able to call for help. Make sure that someone knows your travel plans, including what route you will take and when you expect to arrive. Finally, always match your speed to road and weather conditions. Getting there in one piece is the best gift you can give to your loved ones.

In a disaster, many people say they wouldn't know what to do if they were told to “shelter-in-place.” Some think they would be expected to leave their homes and go to an emergency shelter. Others have no idea what the term means. That's a problem because shelter-in-place is an important tool to keep families safe

“Shelter-in-place” means to take immediate shelter where you are—at home, work, school, or in between. It may also mean “seal the room.” In other words, take steps to prevent outside air from coming in. This is because local authorities may instruct you to shelter-in-place if chemical or radiological contaminants are released into the environment. It is important to listen to TV or radio to understand whether the authorities wish you to merely remain indoors or to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family. **(MORE)**



How can people prepare?

- Choose a room in advance for your shelter. The best room is one with as few windows and doors as possible. A large room, preferably with a water supply, is desirable—something like a master bedroom that is connected to a bathroom.
- Contact your workplace, your children's schools, nursing homes where you may have family and your local town or city officials to find out what their plans are for shelter-in-place.
- Find out when warning systems will be tested. When tested in your area, determine whether you can hear or see sirens and/or warning lights from your home.
- Develop your own family emergency plan so that every family member knows what to do. Practice it regularly.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit that includes emergency water and food supplies.

How will we know if we need to shelter-in-place?

Fire or police department warning procedures could include:

- “All-Call” telephoning - an automated system for sending recorded messages, sometimes called “reverse 9-1-1.”
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcasts on the radio or television.

- Outdoor warning sirens or horns.
- News media sources—radio, television and cable.
- NOAA Weather Radio alerts.
- Residential route alerting (messages announced to neighborhoods from vehicles equipped with public address systems).

Make sure you're also prepared to shelter-in place at work, if necessary. Your work site should have a disaster supplies kit, and it should be checked on a regular basis. Supplies can sometimes disappear when all employees know where the shelter kit is stored. Radio and flashlight batteries should be replaced regularly. **Source: CDC**

Did you know? If someone you know is elderly or dependent on life-sustaining or health-related equipment such as a ventilator, respirator or oxygen concentrator, you should make plans now to ensure their needs are met during severe winter weather and possible power outages. Check on them after a storm or power outage. Register them as a special needs customer with their utility so they will become a priority customer. Notify others who could provide help such as neighbors, relatives, nearby friends and local emergency responders.

Reminder: It's flu season and even if you got the H1N1 vaccine last year, you still need seasonal flu vaccine which will protect you against three strains of flu virus that are expected to be circulating in 2010-2011, including H1N1. People between the ages of 2 and 49 who do not have chronic health conditions may opt for the nasal spray vaccine, instead of a flu shot.

