

## Emergency Preparedness – OH MY: Wait Let’s Break It Down

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Recent events like the earthquake in Haiti and the tornadoes last spring in the Kirksville area bring to the forefront the need to prepare. (Yes Severe Storm Season in Missouri is fast approaching.) Yet even if we believe it’s a good idea -- many of us delay, may start and stop, or may believe there is no point. Research has shown that preparedness usually results in better outcomes including a more rapid recovery. A couple of reasons people might not prepare is that they feel overwhelmed by the process and feel they can’t afford to do “all that stuff”. A better way to look at preparedness is to see it as a process that we do over time. The main thing is to get started. It is like any other goal we undertake. We break it down into manageable parts. This also can make it more affordable, perhaps \$20 per month more or less. One way to break this goal down is to consider doing a set of preparedness targeted activities and purchases each month. For example in January here are items and activities to do:

### **Purchase:**

- Water -3 gallons per person & pets (remember you can use tap water and a suitable container)
- Hand-operated can opener (no electric ones we might not have power)
- Instant drinks (coffee, tea, powdered soft drinks, etc.)
- 2 flashlights with extra batteries or purchase ones with a hand crank recharger

### **Activities:**

- Make your family disaster preparedness plan\* (Include the family so they know about it)
- Inventory disaster supplies already on hand, this can include camping gear
- When filling your own water containers, mark them with the date filled
- Water/food containers need to be dated if they are not
- Conduct a home hazard hunt\*

\*Contact your local University of Missouri Extension office for more information on this activity. Or access the family plan information at: <http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=EMW1011>

An important aspect regarding these disaster preparedness activities is to get your family involved. This way everyone knows about the plan, how it works, and the work load can be shared. For February and the subsequent months, we can continue with additional activities for constructing our disaster preparedness plan.

The January month example above comes primarily from the Washington Co. Emergency Management site in Oregon [http://www.ocem.org/families\\_and\\_individuals.cfm](http://www.ocem.org/families_and_individuals.cfm). Another example is a 24-Week Preparedness Calendar from the Seattle Red Cross Office <http://www.seattlredcross.org/custom/11/1124/misc/PrepCal.pdf>

Again the idea is to find what works for you and your family so you are prepared for disasters and emergencies. For more information on disasters and emergencies you can explore the University of Missouri Extension Community Emergency Management website at <http://extension.missouri.edu/main/DisplayCategory.aspx?C=10> You can also call your Marion County University of Missouri Extension office at 573-769-2177 or e-mail at [nelsons@missouri.edu](mailto:nelsons@missouri.edu).