

Are We Prepared?

EMC228 Are We Prepared?

If we have never experienced it, do we REALLY comprehend the results of a major disaster? Amateur Radio licensees and those active in Emergency Response or Communications Units may have their equipment prepared, but what about the family and the family home?

We may think we have prepared, but it's a real shock when there is no water, no electricity, no heat, no transportation and no way to get them. Consider just the loss of electricity. Do we realize:

- a. that public and private wells may not pump water?
- b. that service stations have no means to deliver gasoline?
- c. that grocery stores close because computer connected cash registers and bar-code readers cannot function?
- d. that refrigerators and freezers won't keep food
- e. that traffic and street lights don't work?
- f. that sewerage disposal system pumps may not function

Can we internalize the effect such events will have on us and our family? Few can, so we ignore the travail, the trauma and tragedy. Yet, any moderate disaster can cause significant destruction, injury and death, whether earthquake, hurricane, severe winter storm or extended flooding. Partial or entire systems - roads, water, electricity, gas - can be disrupted or destroyed. There may be days, weeks, months or years without public services.

Disasters are not selective and occur anywhere, anytime-no matter how lulled to sleep we may be in communities that have not suffered such events. We read about these events and watch them on TV, yet how do we interpret that to our own lives? More often than not we don't.

It's just too much to think about contaminated water sources, or wells that won't work, about no electricity or no gasoline, no heating oil, gas or propane; of life being totally changed. We shrug it off and go about our daily lives, particularly if we live in an area that was NOT affected.

Yet, questions do arise. Some officials who were saying, "prepare for at least 3 days" (i.e., loss of public services) are now saying "prepare for a month." One official recommended storing 200 small garbage bags for human waste disposal, intending they be put over 5 gallon buckets, then closed and disposed of by digging a hole in the ground. This is likely a reaction to massive disasters around the world causing the realization that nature is in control, not mankind; that massive events WILL leave some communities without services for extended periods.

So, let's sit down and review our situation. How will we heat the family in the dead cold of winter, or store food in the stifling heat of summer? How can we have water for a self-sustaining family for, say, thirty days? Maybe 50-gallon storage drums? One source predicts a 55-gallon drum will supply a family of 4 for 2 weeks, just squeaking by.) Think solutions and implement.

Once we solve that, then let's help a friend or neighbor do likewise. Yes, it may never happen, but who knows, tomorrow the preparation that we do may help in ways we least expect!

For the information of anyone wishing to know more about WHERE this originated, I refer you to the info below.

- To subscribe to bulletins, use the Subscription Services web page at <http://acs.oes.ca.gov/subscribe.html>

- If you don't have web access, just send an e-mail message to emcomm-bulletin-sub@harthaven.com>.
- Articles for these bulletins are actively solicited. They are for the benefit of all EMCOMM units, whatever the name.
- Please send suggestions, topics or submissions to cary.mangum@macnexus.org or cary_mangum@oes.ca.gov
- Bulletins are on the ACS Web page: <http://acs.oes.ca.gov> and a |Landline BBS: 916-262-0856 (graphical & standard interface); and
- Archive: [ftp.ucsd.edu/emcomm](ftp://ftp.ucsd.edu/emcomm) and [ftp.ucsd.edu/hamradio/races](ftp://ftp.ucsd.edu/hamradio/races).

Source: Kentucky Amateur Radio Web Site – www.kyham.net