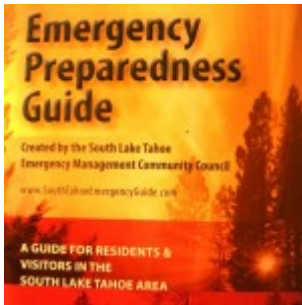


Emergency guide designed specifically for Tahoe residents



By Kathryn Reed

What would you take in an emergency? Who would you call? Where would you meet? What happens if all your contacts are on your computer and it's not with you or your cell phone doesn't work or the battery dies?

Those are just some of the questions the "Emergency Preparedness Guide" makes people think about.

The South Lake Tahoe Emergency Management Community Council created the free 32-page document. The council is a mix of emergency responders from El Dorado, Douglas and Alpine counties.

"We talked about it before the (2007) Angora Fire. The fire gave us the drive to get it done," Darcie Carpenter, chairwoman of the council who is also the director of Emergency Management and Infection Control for Barton HealthCare System, said of the guide. "We wrote it so the material would not be outdated tomorrow."

She does hope it could be updated every five years to make sure things are current. Former El Dorado County Sheriff Jeff Neves' introductory page outdates it because he is no longer in office.

A slew of people were involved in the project. Experts in a particular field were responsible for suggesting what to do in an emergency. For example, it was school officials helping to write about what happens in an emergency if school is in session. It was South Tahoe Public Utility District talking about the precautions to take before tragedy strikes in regards to water issues.

It's not a generic guide, but it's not too detailed either to be something people wouldn't read or do when it comes to the checklists.

"The risks here are specific to Tahoe," Carpenter said.

Wildland fires, floods, air quality and extreme cold weather are some the issues in the guide

A list of documents that should be able to be retrieved quickly is listed. They range from passports to wills to immunization records.

The guide lists what should be assembled for a disaster preparedness kit. In part this includes water, an extra pair of glasses, phone numbers, sanitary supplies and cash.

Something that is often not talked about when it comes to emergencies is what to do if you are work. One entry says, "Do not rely on electronic lists, direct-dial phone numbers or computer organizers that may not work in an emergency." Thus the need to print some of that information before disaster strikes.

The council printed 14,000 copies of the guide. The Red Cross, one of the partners in the project, has distributed guides out at schools. The council will be handing them out at various community events and they are available for free at South Shore fire stations.

State grants helped pay for the printing as well as a slew of

sponsors who are listed in the guide.