

Preparation is key to surviving emergency

By Teri Mizuhara

The recent wind event that caused more than a dozen fires in Amador and El Dorado counties found many people without power for three or more days. Those who were prepared did well, but those who did not prepare had a far more difficult time.

“As emergency responders we encourage residents to be prepared to be without water or power for a minimum of 72 hours. Power outages are an occasional fact of life living in the foothills and anyone who hasn’t prepared themselves needs to do so right away,” says Chief Kelly Keenan of the CalFire Amador-El Dorado unit.

“In the fire service, we prepare for the worst case, we train constantly and when the call comes we respond immediately but we can’t be everywhere all the time,” Keenan said. “In a situation where emergency services are being stretched, you may find yourself on your own for a three days. Can you really sustain your family for three days? During the winter months when outside temperatures are dipping into the 30s?”

If you have answered “no”, you now know that you and your family aren’t prepared. You need to begin planning now. Take the first step today and line out a plan so over time you can implement your entire families disaster preparedness plan and rest easy that no matter what, you and your loved ones will be okay.

Here are some key items you will need to think about:

- back-up generator with a transfer switch at your electrical panel to supply power to your home
- generator for your well pump or

- a minimum of 1 gallon of water per day per person properly stored
- non-perishable food and can opener if you need one
- radio, flashlights and extra batteries for both
- medications
- first aid kit
- cash
- supplies for your pets (food, water, medicines, etc.).

Depending on the type of disaster (wildfire, floods/mudslides, snow storm, hazardous materials incident, etc.) and time of year, your needs will change. If you have an infant or elderly or a disabled individual who resides with you, can their specific needs be met without power, running water or heat?

Disaster preparedness begins and ends with you.

You can find more information at our website, through FEMA, and the Humane Society.

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