**72 – Hour Family Emergency Preparedness**

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# OBJECTIVE

The objective of the 72-Hour Emergency Kit is to have, in one location, all of those essential items you will require during the 72-hour period following an emergency.

Survival in this modern day and age is generally a short-term situation. Seventy-two hours is usually the maximum amount of time it would take local, state, and federal emergency relief crews and supplies to arrive at virtually any given locations.

**SITUATION**

Emergencies and disasters have occurred in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and will occur again. The most common hazards we face locally are related to severe weather: flooding, tornado, lightning, severe hailstorm, and winter storm. Most of these events are generally very localized and affect a very Iimited segment of the population. However, a regional winter ice storm could be devastating.

In December 2000, a severe ice storm crippled northeast Texas, missing the Dallas area by only about a 30-minute drive. The largest cities affected were Tyler and Texarkana. A lot of very significant information was obtained by talking with fire and emergency management officials in both cities.

* Electrical power was lost for a minimum of 2 days in the larger cities, with power outages of 7-21 days being common.
* Once power goes out, local water delivery systems can operate for only a few hours using auxiliary generators to produce power.
* Power outages result in the failure of telephone, cellular and pager systems, severely hampering all communications.
* Loss of power caused a shortage of diesel, propane, and gasoline supplies because there was not power to run the pumps / delivery systems.
* Because the ice storm was an area wide (49 county) disaster, outside assistance was very slow in responding.
* Due to communication and fuel delivery problems, support services such as Red Cross and Salvation Army were affected. Local support services were out of heat, electricity, and telephones for 3 days.
* Most roads were impassable or inaccessible because of debris and power lines in the roadway.
* Public shelters did not have water, electricity, or heat. Without power, the water and sewer plants went down and toilets were unable to be flushed.
* Providing food to rescue workers was a problem because of the lack of water, electricity, and fuel delivery.
* All emergency supplies became immediately scarce. Food, water, fuel, batteries, and other essential supplies disappeared rapidly from store shelves.
* Most structure fires were left to burn because there was no way to deliver water to the fire pumps.

Disaster response efforts can be affected by equipment and facility damage, communication failures, inclement weather, responder injury and death, and many other limiting factors. In the event of an emergency or disaster that exceeds the available resources, the public should expect and be prepared for a minimum of 72-hour delay for emergency response services. Turmoil and chaos resulting from a disaster usually place limitations upon the transportation and delivery of goods and services that may force you to move your family to a safer or more secure location.

The success or failure of your family’s efforts to remain safe will depend upon their ability to adapt to the emergency and solve the problem of providing the necessities of life: air, water, food, shelter, warmth and energy long enough to get yourself out of the predicament, or long enough for others to bring those necessities to you.

Often, the disaster’s aftermath takes the largest toll on life and health. Lack of clean water, food, heat, light, first aid equipment and trained medical help, or in other words, the lack of preparation and not the disaster itself, is usually the killer.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

You are responsibility for your own welfare and safety in the initial phases of an emergency or disaster. Not your Bishop nor anyone else in the Church. They and others will have themselves and their own families to look after. You probably won’t be able to reach any of them anyway. You cannot simply cannot sit back and hope disaster won’t occur. Disasters seldom give warning – they just happen. However, with wise preparation, you can increase your family’s chances of staying safe, reducing injuries and suffering, and being able to cope better should a disaster occur.