



## CITY NOTES

September 14, 2017

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### PREPARING FOR A NATURAL DISASTER

The City Council has declared September to be “Emergency Preparedness Month” in Fort Bragg. This is an opportunity for each of us to assess how prepared we are for a natural disaster. Recent news reports of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Harvey in Texas, Hurricane Irma in Florida, and a magnitude 8.0 earthquake in Mexico help to amplify the importance of planning for natural disasters. In Fort Bragg, we are at risk of earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, winter storms, wildfires, landslides and other natural and man-made disasters. Disaster preparedness is everyone’s responsibility. Local governments and first-responders will respond to a natural disaster at a community-wide or regional level. Each of us is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of our families and ourselves.

Here are some pointers on how to prepare for a disaster compiled from Be Prepared California and other websites:

- 1. Have a plan for how you will communicate with your family during a crisis.** Pick a meeting place outside of your home, and another meeting place outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. How will you let others know that you are alright? Ask an out-of-state friend or family member to be your “family contact” person as it may be easier to make long distance calls. Be prepared to react to an emergency from different locations, including your workplace or car. Prepare your children- talk to them about what the risks are and what your family will do if disaster strikes.
- 2. Think about what to do in an evacuation.** Determine the best escape routes out of your home. Decide ahead of time where you will go in case of an evacuation. If possible, bring clothing and bedding (sleeping bag or warm blanket) for each person. Remember to bring personal hygiene items, prescription medications, eye glasses, copies of insurance cards and other family documents. Plan for how to take care of your pets. Have them microchipped. Keep a pet emergency kit on hand.
- 3. Prepare a checklist.** Keep a list of emergency numbers. Each family member should know how, when and where to turn off water, propane, and electricity. Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in your home. Test your smoke detectors and recharge fire extinguishers regularly.
- 4. Create a disaster supply kit for your home.** Stock emergency supplies. Keep a three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Keep a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Replace stored water every six months. Keep a portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries. Include a manual can opener. Keep a flashlight and extra batteries. Include a basic first aid kit. The key is to have this assembled in one place and ready to use.
- 5. Check your insurance coverage and prepare an inventory of your residence.** Keep a copy of all vital documents either in a safe deposit box or at an off-site location.

6. **Talk to your neighbors.** Discuss how you can help one another in a disaster. During an emergency, check in with your neighbors to see if they are okay.
7. **Don't procrastinate.** The motto of National Preparedness Month is "Disasters don't plan ahead, you can!" Now is the time to prepare.

*City Notes is published on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. If you have questions or suggestions regarding this column or any matter of City business, feel free to contact City Manager Linda Ruffing at [LRuffing@fortbragg.com](mailto:LRuffing@fortbragg.com) or (707)961-2829.*