



MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Safety Tips: Emergency Preparedness-At Work & Home

We talk, read and write about a host of subjects dealing directly and indirectly with agriculture subjects. One area that we seldom discuss in direct fashion is – **emergency preparedness**. We hear from various media sources about fires, major spills of petroleum and/or chemicals and natural disasters. We seem to have an attitude of “it won’t happen to us.” That’s probably the way some of these various victims of tragedies felt before it happened to them.

Think for a minute. What if we arrived at home after work to find our house on fire or strong winds or a tornado had destroyed our home and family members were in “harm’s way.” Also, it could happen at one of our off-campus stations or on the campus. We have provisions for emergency preparedness, but do we periodically review them so that in case of an emergency incident, we are mentally prepared to put a plan into action immediately?

Following are 13 steps that we can use that will help us to prepare ourselves for such an event at home or at work:

AT WORK-

- ✓ **Learn and get familiar with potential hazards at your station or in your place of work-**
~Know how to react to the situation- Example: For a chemical fire, know where to get to the MSDS; or in a major fuel spill, who to contact and what you can do to protect people and property until emergency help arrives.
- ✓ **Know how to get out alive-**
~In buildings- Memorize where all the exits are so that you can locate alternate escape routes, if needed.
~In an open field in the midst of a wildfire- Have a plan before you start a task to have escape routes so that you won’t get trapped with no outlet.
~If you have someone with you, establish a meeting place before you start so that the folks involved can be accounted for.
- ✓ **In buildings or equipment sheds-**
~Get familiar with location of the fire extinguishers.
~We must assume that you know how to use them correctly due to live demonstrations that we conduct periodically and through detailed instructions on newsletters.
- ✓ **Know where to find the first aid kits-**
~First aid/CPR seminars are conducted at our R&E centers so that we can have as many folks that will sign up certified and recertified every 2 years.
~But if there is an incident requiring first aid and you aren’t qualified, get in touch with someone that is able to assist or help.
- ✓ **Post emergency phone numbers-**
Home- Keep a list posted close to your phones, a copy in your emergency kits, and one in your vehicles.
Work- Numbers should be posted in all high profile locations.

- ✓ **Post emergency phone numbers-**
~Keep a posted list of all pertinent emergency numbers in high profile locations for easy access.
~Keep new employees abreast of the location of the postings.
- ✓ **Keep a card in your billfold with all your personal identification and special medical situations listed-**
(Possible diabetic, allergic or other specific conditions)
- ✓ **Inform your supervisor or immediate superior manager if you have special physical conditions or needs. (In case you might need assistance in case of an incident.)**
- ✓ **Pack a disaster kit-**
~**Prepare a kit for home** – pack items such as canned goods and staple goods where spoilage is not a factor, ample water for each family member, blankets, basic clothing items, flashlights with extra batteries and etc.
- ✓ ~**Prepare a kit for your vehicle** – pack items such as ample water, flashlights with extra batteries, blankets, emergency reflective signs, fire extinguisher, ponchos, basic tools, radio with extra batteries, non-perishable food items, 1st aid kit, 12’ jumper cables, and cell phones with chargers.
- ✓ **Create an evacuation plan for your home-**
~Should include exits for each room (exits for egress of the house showing exits for each room, etc.)
~Include pertinent emergency phone numbers and numbers of family and close friends for potential contacts.
- ✓ **Pick 2 meeting places –**
~ 2 places outside your home and far enough away to miss an injury-prone area around the home.
~On our research stations, we established locations for meeting and accountability of all employees for both inside a building or in a crop area.
~ These plans should be practiced and reviewed annually.
- ✓ **Talk to schools to inform them about your emergency plans-**
~**For your home** - Furnish them with a summary of your evacuation plan and other contact information, with emphasis of a person or persons that you authorize to pick up your kids (in case you can’t get there at the required time of dismissal.)
~**At our research units** – All employees, as mentioned above, should be familiarized with the points of the plan, their team buddy, emergency numbers to use to be sure of ample assistance availability and points of location after the incident for accountability of all personnel.
- ✓ **Coordinate with your neighbors-**
~Meet with them to determine what skills are available for mutual help for either party, whether it is medical or technical.

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