



Cochise Health & Social Services

Mary Gomez, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

*** MEDIA RELEASE ***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *Be Informed, Be Ready!*

Information is Critical to Preparedness

Emergency preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Most communities could be impacted by several different types of hazards during a lifetime. These events can vary from those affecting only your family (like a home fire or medical emergency) to those affecting your entire community (like an earthquake, fire, or flood). Americans also travel more than ever, and may visit areas prone to impact by unfamiliar hazards.

A critical component of being prepared is staying informed. Try to have multiple ways to receive warning information and situation updates. Regularly check all types of media – websites, newspapers, radio, TV, mobile and land phones – for global, national, and local information. During an emergency, your local Emergency Management office will give you information on such things as open shelters and evacuation orders.

Natural disasters such as floods, fires, earthquakes, tornados and windstorms affect thousands of people every year. Recognizing an impending hazard and knowing what to do to protect yourself and your family will help you take effective steps to prepare beforehand and aid recovery after the event.

Action Now Could Save Lives Later

Knowing what to do before, during, and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count. Learning what to do in different situations and developing and customizing individual plans for potential local hazards, incorporating the specific needs of household members (including animals), will help you reduce the impact of disasters. It may well also prevent injuries and save lives.

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family emergency plan, are the same for all types of hazards. However, each emergency is unique and knowing the actions to take for each threat will impact the specific decisions and preparations you make. For example, there are significant differences among potential terrorist threats, such as biological, chemical, explosive, nuclear and radiological, that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. By learning about these specific threats, you are preparing yourself to react in an emergency.

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Look into taking first aid, CPR, and emergency response training, participating in community exercises, and volunteering to support local first responders. The Department of Homeland Security promotes emergency preparedness year round via the "Ready America" campaign at www.Ready.gov.

And don't forget these other important preparation steps:

- Post emergency telephone numbers by all phones.
- Teach children how and when to call 911.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off all home utilities at the main switches.
- Be sure you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher, and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a disaster supplies kit.

About National Preparedness Month

On behalf of the County Board of Supervisors, the Cochise Health and Social Services program has participated in National Preparedness Month since its inception and once again encourages all citizens of the county to be prepared in the event of an emergency. Even though September is the specific month of focus for personal preparedness, year-round awareness is essential to the wellbeing of the community. It is hoped that the suggestions provided throughout the month will result in a heightened level of readiness in the county.

For more information contact Program Director Elizabeth Lueck at elueck@cochise.az.gov. For more information about the Ready Campaign and National Preparedness Month, visit <http://community.fema.gov/connect.ti/READYNPM> or call 1-800-BE-READY, 1-888-SE-LISTO, and TTY 1-800-462-7585.

About Cochise Health and Social Services

Cochise Health and Social Services promotes health and quality of life for all Cochise County residents through education, service and leadership. For more information, please visit our website at <http://cochise.az.gov/health>. Recent media releases may be accessed at <http://cochise.az.gov/healthnews>.

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