



Are you prepared?

September is National Preparedness Month and the Derry Fire Department is asking, are you prepared to protect yourself, your family, your pets, and your home in the event of a disaster?

Wait a second, disasters don't occur in Derry, right? Wrong. Ask those whose homes were flooded a few years ago, and don't forget the last years ice storm when many people had to leave their homes, and some had to go to shelters.

So what does it take to be prepared? Three simple steps: *Get a Kit, Make a Plan, and Keep Informed.*

1. **Get a Kit:** Put together a home disaster kit, this kit should contain enough items for you and your family to shelter in your home for a few days, even if you do not have power. The kit should contain non-perishable food items, water, hygiene supplies, a portable radio with spare batteries, flashlights with spare batteries, games to pass the time, and spare batteries for smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. For a complete description go to www.ready.gov and click on "Get A Kit."
2. **Make a Plan:** If you lose power for several days, what is your plan? Are you going to stay home? Are you going to a friend's house? What about your pets? What about elderly or disabled family members? Do you have alternative plans? There is a planning guide available at www.ready.gov and click on "Get A Plan."

The Derry Fire Department also recommends you take these additional steps as part of your plan:

- Consider Flood Insurance. If your home has been flooded in the past or is in an area where flooding is a risk, consider purchasing flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program. For more information go to www.floodsmart.gov
- Did you buy a generator last year? If so now is a good time to have a generator transfer switch wired for your home, if you have not already done so. Also, have you done the preventative maintenance and, if needed, added fuel stabilizer to your generator? Remember proper generator safety: Never run them inside a garage, make certain the



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exhaust is vented well away from the house. Improperly located generators will cause fires and rapidly fill your home with dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. See the factsheet on portable generator safety located on this web site or go to

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=24340>

- If you have to leave your house, do you know how to secure your electricity, water, and gas? If you have gas contact your gas company and they will instruct you on how to shut the gas off. Never turn gas back on yourself, have a service technician do that. If you have lost power and are going to be evacuating your home: (a) unplug all electronics, (b) shut off each breaker one at a time, (c) then shut off your main breaker. To restore power start at your main breaker then your individual circuit breakers. If there is any chance of freezing, turn off your water. Turn off your main water valve, open up faucets on each level, flush your toilets to empty the water out of your toilet tanks – leaving some in the bowl, pour bio-degradable and septic safe anti-freeze into your toilet bowls.
- For more information on Utility shut-off and Safety go to <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/utilityplan.shtm>
- Do you have pets? What is your plan for your pets in the event of a disaster? For planning information go to <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/animals.shtm>
- If you plan on using a fireplace or woodstove to heat your home in the event of a disaster now is the time to get them serviced. Chimney fires often occur in fireplaces and woodstoves that are rarely used or serviced. Poorly maintained fireplaces and woodstoves also increase the risk of carbon monoxide build up in your home. If you are going to use woods as a fuel, make certain you have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors with battery back-ups, and some spare batteries in your disaster kit.
- Do you heat with a pellet stove? Many pellet stoves require electricity to run their augers and power vents. Does your pellet stove have a battery back-up and do you have spare batteries. Often battery power only lasts for 4 to 8 hours.



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- Talk to your friends and neighbors. Find out what their plans are and how you can help each other.
3. **Be informed:** There are a variety of ways to stay informed of events in a disaster, many things can be found by clicking on “*Be Informed*” at www.ready.gov If you live in Derry you have several additional options:
- Register for “CODE RED” on this website, we will send important information using Code Red to your home phone and cell phones.
 - Radio AM 1610 is the Derry Emergency Management radio station.
 - Twitter: Sign-up to follow the Derry Emergency Management tweets at <http://twitter.com/DerryNHBEM>
 - Twitter: Sign-up to follow the Derry Fire Department tweets at <http://twitter.com/DerryFire>

Hopefully, Derry will not experience any more disasters but with weather in Northern New England, anything can happen, so: *Get a Kit, Be Prepared, and Stay Informed.*