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EVERYDAY HERO CT ASKS RESIDENTS, “ARE YOU PREPARED?”

Volunteer Firefighters Share Information About How to Get a Kit, Make a Plan, and Be Informed

August 18, 2017 | Cromwell, CT – September is National Preparedness Month. It’s a time for people across the country to explore and revisit the steps necessary to ensure they’re ready in the event of an emergency – whether it’s a natural or man-made disaster. To help members of the community prepare, The Everyday Hero CT volunteer firefighter recruitment program is sharing important information about how to make an emergency kit, create a plan, and be informed.

“Whether it’s a natural disaster, an act of terrorism, or a disease outbreak, people can take steps now to prepare themselves and their loved ones for a public health emergency,” says Chief Fred Dudek, Everyday Hero CT program manager. “Just like making and practicing an escape plan in the event of a home fire, people can ensure their families and neighbors have the tools they need to cope with the unexpected.”

The [Ready](#) and [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) websites are chock full of great information for people looking for advice about how to prepare. In general, there are three key components of emergency preparedness. They are:

Get a Kit

According to the [CDC](#), an emergency kit should include:

- Food and Water for Three Days – One gallon of water per person per day and foods that are non-perishable and easy to make (e.g., canned soup, dry pasta, powdered milk). Don’t forget a can opener and basic utensils.
- Health Supplies – At least a three-day supply of all medicines as well as any medical supplies such as syringes, walking canes, and extra batteries for hearing aids.
- Personal Care Items – Soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, baby wipes, glasses.

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- Safety Supplies – First Aid kit, blankets, multipurpose tool, and a whistle.
- Electronics – Radio, flashlight, cell phone with charger, extra batteries.
- Documents – Insurance cards, medical records, family emergency plan, emergency contact information
- Extra cash, local maps, extra house and car keys.
- Don't forget about pets and children – Be sure to bring enough pet food, medications, supplies, and documents, and pack games and activities for children.

Make a Plan

The [CDC](#) recommends the following:

- Make a Family Communication Plan – This includes a contact card for each family member, selecting an emergency contact, making sure everyone knows how to send a text, and knowing emergency phone numbers.
- Make a Family Disaster Plan – Identify the safest places in the home for different types of possible disasters, choose meeting places (they may differ depending on the situation), map out escape routes from the house (two ways out of each room), and practice by running drills. Don't forget pets and that they may not be allowed in shelters.
- Get Kids Ready – Teach kids how to dial 911, quiz them on the plan, include them in the planning and drills. [Ready Wrigley](#) is a great resource.
- In addition, check insurance policies to make sure coverages are adequate for potential disasters, know how and when to turn off water, gas, and electricity at main shut-off locations, make sure each family member knows where fire extinguishers are and how to use them.

Be Informed

In Connecticut, residents can sign up for the CT Alert Emergency Notification System. It uses the state's Enhanced 9-1-1 database for location-based notifications to the public. Visit the [CT Alert website](#) to learn more.

Volunteers Needed

Eighty percent of all fire personnel in Connecticut are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called upon.

“The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others,” says Chief Dudek. “Those who join their local fire departments sign up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they'll ever have.”

About Everyday Hero CT

A partnership of the [Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association](#) (CFCA) and the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#) (IAFC), the Everyday Hero CT campaign is a Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce fire departments throughout the state. Everyday Hero CT is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the CFCA by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. For more information, visit www.EverydayHeroCT.org.

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