



I. C. E.

In Case of Emergency

Guidelines for Emergencies and Disasters

FAMILY PLANNING

We are all familiar with the term “Family Planning”, but usually not in this context! When asked what the single most important thing to do in an emergency or a disaster is, my answer is: “planning before it happens.” Just the simple act of thinking “What if?” and figuring out the answer can have a profound effect on the health, safety and peace of mind for you and your family. That’s all planning is—thinking about something before it happens.

What if: there were an earthquake during the day when the parents were at work and the kids were in school?

- What would the parents do? Stay at work? Pick up the kids? Go home and wait?
- How would you contact each other if cell phones didn’t work?
- Where could you meet if the house was destroyed?
- How are the pets cared for if you can’t use your house?

The list can go on and on, and the most important thing is not the answers, as important as they are, but the fact that you thought about them ahead of time and discussed them with your family so that they know what each other will be doing.

Working for federal and local governments most my life, it was always assumed that the employees would stay at work to help with the emergency while history shows that in fact many folks leave to go home and check on their families. That’s as it should be, because your family is more important than your job. Wouldn’t it be better if you know

what your family will do because you had talked about it ahead of time? You still may need to go to help and make sure they are taken care of, but think about how far ahead of the game you are compared to those who have no clue of what to do when all things normal cease.

You don’t need big, or elaborate or fancy emergency plans. Simple ones are probably better. What do you do? Where do you go? How do you communicate? Start small with something like a fire evacuation plan for the house. Pretend it is night time with everyone in bed and the fire alarm goes off. What’s the signal to tell you to get out of the house? What are the primary and alternate routes to get out from each room, depending on where the fire is? Who needs help getting out? What do you bring with you? Where do you meet once outside? You don’t need written plans and fancy maps. Just talk about it with the family. Have a practice if you have kids. Merely taking the time to talk about it, examine the alternatives and map out a plan of action will put you miles ahead of most families. It may save lives!

