

Answers to Ten Emergency Preparedness Questions

Question 1: How can I prevent carbon monoxide poisoning?

Invisible and odorless, carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that is produced when any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal is burned. It can kill a person in minutes.

Never burn charcoal inside any enclosed area or use gasoline-powered equipment indoors. Never use a gas oven or an unvented gas or kerosene heater to heat your home. Have oil and gas appliances, fireplaces and wood stoves checked every year by a trained professional.

Symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, dizziness, fatigue, weakness, confusion and nausea. If you suspect CO poisoning, get to fresh air immediately and call 911.

Question 2: What radio station should I listen to?

KIRO Radio 710 AM is the primary Emergency Alert System (EAS) radio station in the Puget Sound area. You can also obtain "first alert" emergency messages by having a weather radio, available at many electronic stores and at www.emd.wa.gov.

Question 3: What should I do if my child is at school or daycare during an emergency?

All schools and daycare facilities are required to have emergency procedures that address safety, emergency provisions, evacuations, school lock downs and plans for reuniting parents with students. Incorporate this plan into your family plan.

Question 4: Where do I buy emergency supplies?

All major hardware, food and variety stores will have components of what you would want in your supply kit. There are also a number of vendors who can help you build a kit or offer ready-made kits. Visit the American Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org or use your computer search engine to query emergency supply sites to find a vendor.

Question 5: What if I am at work?

Businesses should also have an emergency plan and supplies. Become aware of your office's emergency preparedness plans.

Question 6: As a senior citizen, how can I be better prepared?

Make sure your plan identifies a support network of people who can help with specific needs such as evacuating your home, using any life saving equipment you may have and administering medicine in case of emergency. These people should have a key to your house. Keep a list of the medications and medical equipment you are using and copies of your medical cards and emergency contact information in a waterproof container to protect it from water damage.

Question 7: Do I shut off my gas immediately after an earthquake?

Not unless you smell or hear gas escaping. If you do suspect a gas leak, follow the directions on the facing page to shut it off. Only the gas company should turn the gas back on. Call PSE so they can perform an inspection, turn it on and relight pilot lights.

Question 8: What do I do with my pet?

Taking care of your pet in an emergency needs to be part of your preparedness plan. Have food, water, sanitation and first aid items for your pet. Make sure your pet has an ID tag or microchip. Develop a buddy system with others to make sure someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible. Since animals may not be allowed inside public shelters, plan alternatives.

Question 9: Where are the shelters/feeding stations for my neighborhood?

If a shelter is needed, the Red Cross and City of Clyde Hill will choose a shelter based on what location is structurally sound, has power and is located in a safe place. Since the location will depend on the emergency, we do not publish a list of potential shelter options. If we do need to open a shelter in Clyde Hill, we will use all mediums of communication available to inform the community about its location.

Question 10: How long before the Fire or Police Department will come and check on me?

Depending on the disaster this could minutes to days. In an emergency, these "first responders" assess the extent of the disaster, prioritize where resources should be sent to help the most people and begin rescue operations. Individuals need to be ready to take personal responsibility for their own safety and care for a number of days in an emergency. Build a kit, have a plan and learn how to do first aid, administer CPR and turn off your utilities.