

Be Ready!

The Bedford CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) has coordinated with Town Public Safety officials in preparing some tips for you to ensure that you ARE ready. The Town of Bedford has many resources to help residents deal with emergencies of various types. In most cases, however, YOU, the resident, are the first line of defense against “unplanned events”. One of the best things you can do is EXPECT the UNEXPECTED and prepare for situations which may arise. Planning ahead and having some essential supplies on hand can help you to “weather the storm”, whatever form it may take.

Last September, designated as “Disaster Preparedness Month”, Police Chief Robert Bongiorno and Fire Chief David Grunes published some great suggestions for preparations which everyone can make. To quote Chief Grunes, “We want residents to be prepared for any type of emergency and be proactive in developing a plan that will keep their families and themselves safe ... You don’t want to wait until disaster strikes to make a plan or gather supplies, so it is important to take time now to plan”. All residents are urged to review this article, which may be found [here](#), on a regular basis and to follow the recommendations provided.

Winter is Coming (with apologies to “Game of Thrones”!)

While many of the steps mentioned in the Chiefs’ article apply year round, winter brings its own set of challenges and deserves some special preparation, particularly winter storms leading to extended power outages, loss of heat, and hazardous (if not downright impossible) travel resulting from icy, snowy, or blocked roads. Here are a few basic items, extracted from a longer list, which become particularly important in the winter:

- Face masks and hand sanitizers to be safe while interacting with others during the pandemic
- Warm clothes – think layers, and don’t forget hats and mittens – you lose a lot of heat through uncovered arms, legs, and head
- Batteries for radios and other electronic devices, or maybe a hand-cranked radio
- A battery bank and/or car charger for your cell phone(s) so you can stay in contact with the “outside world” for at least a few days
- Blankets, sleeping bags, comforters, hand and toe warmers to stay warm if you have no heat
- Flashlights – particularly as the days get shorter. Check to make sure they work! LED flashlights are preferred, as the batteries will last longer
- Food and water for several days, which does not require refrigeration (don’t depend on that snowbank outside the back door...)

Here’s a picture of what a “winter kit” might contain:



These are just a few of the most important items among many which will help you be ready for whatever winter may bring. Please refer to the [above article](#) for a comprehensive list of recommendations. More information and recommendations from FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) may be found [here](#).

Fire Safety becomes more important in the winter with increased use of fireplaces, candles, and maybe a generator in the event of a power loss. Click [here](#) for some Fire Safety and Prevention Tips from the Fire Department.

This article is brought to you by Bedford CERT (the Community Emergency Response Team), a volunteer group which supports the Town of Bedford and its emergency response organizations in preventing and mitigating emergencies. Click [here](#) for more information about CERT in Bedford. Watch for future articles to help you to be ready for any emergency which might come your way.