

Gentle Persuasion

Special Interest Articles:

- Public Enemy Number 1.
- Skagit County Risks.
- Emergency Preparedness

Individual Highlights:

Skagit County Risk 2	
What to Prepare	2
YOYO?	2
Supplies	2
Just Start	3
H7 Bird Virus	4
Resources	5
Realities	6

Skagit County Public Health Department Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

The Challenge of Complacency

“**Public Health Enemy No. 1 is the challenge of complacency** and our inability to maintain a focus on threats when they are around the corner or potentially in our backyard,” Dr. Julie Gerberding, head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told a health conference in Malaysia.

“A pandemic would be a

catastrophic human health event if it had any of the characteristics of the previous pandemics in terms of transmissibility and case fatality rate,” she said.

Although much progress has been made in preparing for a possible flu pandemic, “the bad news is, it’s a long way to go,” Gerberding added.

She urged people to remain vigilant.

World wide the number of laboratory confirmed cases of H5N1 total 385 with 243 deaths in 15 countries. Bangladesh has just confirmed its first case of human infection with H5N1 avian influenza. The virus continues to spread in birds throughout the world. And While Bird Flu or the H5N1 virus

What Are Skagit County’s Risks?

Skagit County Hazard Vulnerability Analysis shows the county is at risk for floods, land movement, (including earthquakes) winter storms, both snow and wind, wild land fires, dam failures, volcanic eruptions, chemical incidents, tsunamis, terrorist acts, and communicable disease to name some of the more obvious risks. Skagitians need to prepare for emergencies of all kinds. This is called ‘All

Hazard’ preparation’. Remember, “It wasn’t raining when Noah built the Ark.” as author **Howard Ruff**, once noted. Disaster can strike quickly and without warning.

Preparing for hazards is a process and takes some time. Mark Watkinson of Skagit County Department of Emergency Management suggests you start by preparing for winter storms. When the severe winds and snows

come they affect any number of our essential services. When you are prepared for those conditions you really have a good start. See attached article from the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management on page 6. (Photo: King5.com)



“Being prepared for emergencies is crucial at home, school, work and in your community” according to the American Red Cross.



What to prepare

You and your family should be the first things you start to prepare.

Educate yourselves about your particular risks, find out about warning signals where you live, work and go to school; find out about disaster plans at work, school, daycare or where your family spends time.

Then sit down and create

a *family plan*. A family plan should include your pets, too. Your plan should address these issues: Communications: who to contact out of area as a family contact, everyone should know or have all the needed phone numbers; Where to meet outside the home for home emergency and outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home;

how and when to turn off utilities; best escape route from your home or site; what supplies you need to stay home (shelter in place) or to take with you in an evacuation.

Get some preparedness training from your local Red Cross, DEM, or MRC. Collect the supplies and equipment, and finally practice your plan, at least every six months.

YOYO: You're on Your Own Say the FEDS

“Any Community that fails to prepare with the expectation that the federal government will at the last moment be able to come to the rescue will be tragically wrong...’ HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt

Our government has recognized it cannot provide relief to the entire nation at once during a nationwide disaster.

The secretary was speaking about a pandemic when he made this reference. However, in any disaster you are your own first responder. In major events such as earthquakes or severe storms even our first responders may have trouble getting to you. Our winter storms last year are a good example of how our resources can be

stretched.

As members of the health department there is an expectation that if you are able you will be there to help protect the public. Thus Skagit County Public Health Department Director, Peter Browning is encouraging us all to be prepared and make family plans to protect and provide for those you love, including your pets.

Disaster Supplies

This is the list everyone knows about, however, the fundamentals are for each person:

Water 1 Gallon per day

Food 3 – 5 days ready to eat, canned, boxed, powdered

Clothes outerwear, raingear, footwear

Medicines 3 – 5 days min.

Flashlight extra batteries

Can Opener, hand operated

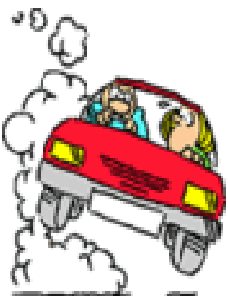
Radio, crank, solar powered, shake or extra batteries

Hygiene items, such as toothpaste and brush, toilet paper

First aid kit, pet supplies, contact information and important papers, basic tools,

Copies of essential papers.

On the resource page are several lists from various organizations of items to set aside for disasters.



COMPLACENCY

continues to be the “single greatest risk for our world today” (Michael Osterholm, Director for Centers for Disease Control) studies show preparedness lags behind awareness.

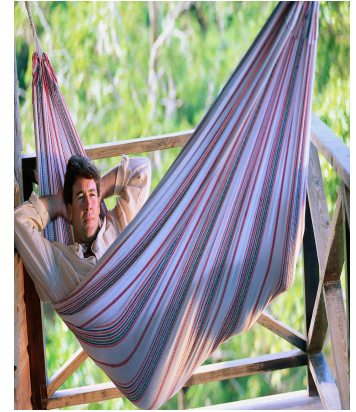
The public is tired of hearing Chicken Little about the bird flu descending upon us. What the experts know and the general public does not know is “seasonal flu viruses are developing the ability to evade influenza drugs globally, but how and why this is happening

is not clear. Experts fear drugs may become quickly useless to fight an unusually severe flu season or the emergence of a new strain of flu that may cause a pandemic. They (experts) have been stressing the need to develop new flu drugs and also quicker and better ways to make vaccines”, according to Maggie Fox, Health and Science Editor at Ruegers.

Overcoming complacency to the idea of emergency preparation is an ongoing

struggle faced through out the world today and right here in Skagit County.

Flu season may be over but flu pandemics don't know a season. Other disasters may be as personal as a home fire or flood. Somehow we must find a way to convince ourselves and the community to prepare for events like pandemic flu, one hundred year floods and, the still unbelievable thought; we might become once more victims of terrorists. We cannot afford to be complacent.



JUST START

Most people cannot go out and get all they need for preparedness at once due to the cost. However, start, and over time you can prepare your emergency kit, even doing it cheaply.

Local Emergency Response Coordinator, Donna Smith, set out to achieve this goal. She shopped the second-hand stores and got a rolling bag to put items in. She also found flashlight, sans batteries, silverware, and a

hand operated can opener there. Going from there to the dollar store she found a rich abundance of items for the kit. The precooked can food variety was abundant, as were the personal items, books, medications, work gloves and first aid supplies.

Bottled water, pet food and supplies, cards, dice, batteries, garbage bags, snacks, sweets, dust masks, tools, duct tape, pad and pen and pencils were found there, too.

Blankets and sleeping bags were cheap at the second-hand store for those who would need them. But these items may be at home along with a change of clothes, dry socks, boots, coats Your kit should be customized based on your own personal needs. Keep your emergency supplies in a place that is accessible to you and other family members (garage, shed, or utility closet). Rethink and update every 6 months.

“Prepare for a winter storm. They can affect any number of our essential services.”

Mark Watkinson, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management

“On May 19, 2008, Reuters reported that seasonal flu viruses are developing the ability to evade influenza drugs globally...”

(Not Ms. Bruner's home)



Potential for H7 Bird Virus to Mutate Increases

June 10, 2008

ATLANTA, Ga.-The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released results of a study suggesting that some North American avian influenza A H7 virus strains have properties

that might enhance their potential to infect humans as well as their potential to spread from human to human.

The study was recently published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*. Avian

influenza A H7 viruses are fairly common in birds, but rarely infect humans. Most cases of avian influenza infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces.



Are You Prepared for a House Fire?

July 2, 2008

PolitickerWa.com reported on Darcy Burner's home fire. She stated while her campaign for office would go on, "Mike and I have begun the long process of restoring what we have lost. I bought a new pair

of glasses and we visited Value Village in Redmond to buy some clothes. Mike and I are replacing our drivers' licenses, credit cards and other critical items we lost in the fire."

My friend, a grown man, whose home burned, said

it felt "like rape". Imagine ...All your valued possessions gone. You do all you can to prevent a home fire but make sure to have the essentials, including papers and money somewhere safe or quick to grab. The next emergency may yours.

CDC Says Use Face Masks in Pandemic

On June 3, 2008 the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) reported that proposed pandemic preparedness guidance released by the federal government recommends that people wear face masks if they have to go into crowds during an influenza pandemic and that critical infrastructure businesses should

consider stockpiling antiviral drugs, among various other suggestions.

The guidance from the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) also spells out a role for preventive use of antiviral drugs in a pandemic but says that antivirals used preventively will have to come mainly from private stockpiles, because government stockpiles

will be used primarily for treating the sick. As responders you may need to have a different level of mask.

For more information on these proposed guidelines, please visit <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/panflu/news/jun0308guidance-jw.html>.



REALITIES OF DISASTER

THE SURVIVAL OF THE BEST PREPARED

Skagit County Department of Emergency management

In the event an emergency or disaster should occur, please consider the following:

Environmental conditions could involve heavy rain or snow, cold temperatures, strong wind, and darkness.

Electrical distribution, telephone, computer and possibly two-way radio systems may be damaged or overloaded.

There may be numerous fires in the area due to broken natural gas lines.

Buildings may be unsafe to occupy due to severe structural damage.

Roads and bridges may be unusable due to structural damage or large amounts of debris.

Police, fire, and emergency medical services will be totally overwhelmed.

Do not expect a response to your location by fire or police within the first several hours following the disaster event. Upon arrival, emergency crews will be staffed to minimum levels and will be unable to conduct major search and rescue operations or extinguish large fires.

Any response by government will be delayed for several days. Their staff may be dislocated or severely affected by the disaster and not able to report to work.

You may not be able to go to the grocery store, gasoline station, or bank - they could all be closed because the disaster has also affected them.

Be prepared to help yourself, your family, and your co-workers for a minimum of three days following a major disaster event.

Learn first aid and assemble a disaster preparedness kit for yourself and your family.

Teach your children what they will need to know to help them survive the disaster and where your family re-location place is so they can find you after the event.

If we were to experience a disaster event today would your family be prepared?

Would your children and other family members know what to do, where to go, and how to contact you?

PREPARE ... BECAUSE YOU CARE!

RESOURCES

Preparedness Information

American Red Cross (Preparation classes, items and guides)

anacortessanjuan.redcross.org

www.mtbakerredcross.org

Government Guides (Current situation and preparedness guides)

pandemicflu.gov

<http://espanol.pandemicflu.gov>

http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/handbook/hbk_pdf/Emer_Res_Guide07.pdf

Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizens Preparedness

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is22.asp>

Disaster Supplies List

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/apendixb.html>

http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/handbook/hbk_pdf/Emer_Res_Guide07.pdf

<http://inside.skagit.local/Common/asp/default.asp?d=HealthDiseases&c=General&p=EmergencyPlanSupplies.htm>

How Prepared Is America?

The American Preparedness Project: The Gap between Perceived Threat and Personal Preparedness

Did you know over one third of Americans believe that in the vent of a catastrophic disaster, help would arrive to assist them within the hour.

<http://www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu/files/NCDP07.pdf>

Mandatory Classes For all PH Staff By October 08

Choice one of the first two, send *copy* of certificate to Billie or Donna

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100.asp>

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100HC.asp> (recommended for the nurses but may choice either)

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>

More resources and stories next issue, maybe even from you!