

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department



Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer

Contact Susan McNabb, Volunteer Coordinator at 209-8068 or e-mail at susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov Spring 2008

Emergency Telephone Tips for Severe Weather

Disaster preparedness and knowing the steps to follow before a disaster occurs will give you and your family more confidence in responding to an emergency. A communications plan is essential for every family during an emergency. Designate someone outside your calling area as the central contact person. Make sure that each family member has that person's contact information. During natural disasters, such as tornadoes, wire line services can be interrupted for extended periods of time due to damage caused by high winds. Communication is important to achieve as quickly as possible after a disaster occurs, and wireless phones may serve as an alternate means of communication.

Locating and knowing that family members are safe will raise your comfort level during a disaster. The following tips will help to keep you and your family members "in touch" during an emergency.

Have a "Severe Weather Phone". Make sure that you have at least one corded telephone that is not dependent on electricity in case of a power outage. Cordless phones

usually have receivers that are electrically charged and will not work if there is a power outage. Keeping a basic hard-wired phone and a wireless phone on hand for emergencies will enable you to communicate with loved ones even when the power is out.

Program all of your emergency contact phone numbers into your cell phone. These numbers should include the police department, fire department and hospitals as well as family members.

Keep your cell phone charged at all times. Have an alternate plan to recharge your cell phone in case of a power outage such as a car charger or disposable cell phone battery.

Keep your wireless phone dry. The biggest threat to your cell phone is water, so keep it safe from exposure to the elements.

Forward your home phone number to your wireless number in the event of an evacuation. Since call forwarding is based out of the phone company's central office, you will receive incoming calls from your landline phone even if your local service is disrupted to your home.

Keep in mind that, during an emergency, many more people are trying to use their cell phones at the same time compared to non-emergency times. When more people try to call at the same time, the increased calling volume may create network congestion leading to fast busy signals from wireless phones. You may even hear a message that says, "Your call cannot be completed at this time." If you hear this message, hang up, wait a few seconds and try the call again. This allows your original call data to clear the network before you try again. You may also experience a slow dial tone during high calling volume. If you don't hear a dial tone immediately, wait a few seconds or hang up and try your call again later.

Try wireless text messaging service. Text messages will often go through more quickly than voice calls during an emergency.

Keep non-emergency calls to a minimum and limit your calls to the most important ones. For more information on using phones during an emergency, contact your local service provider.

Training for Your Role as a Volunteer

Have you ever wondered what your response would be if Hamilton County had wide-spread damage resulting from severe weather? Recently, several counties in Tennessee received extensive damage resulting from tornadoes. As a volunteer, you are offered training opportunities to prepare you for an emergency response. **The next training opportunities are listed on the back of this issue.**

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Disaster Mental Health—How to Deal With Stress prepares you for recognizing the impact a disaster has on your personal mental health as well as the effect the disaster has on those around you. You will receive information on the challenging role of reaching out to those who are victims of a disaster. During the period following the impact of the disaster, survivors are beginning to comprehend the magnitude of the situation and may become overwhelmed. Very effective mental health assistance can be provided by helping victims concentrate on meeting their basic needs. In this training, you will also learn what is a normal reaction versus an abnormal reaction to a disaster by utilizing good listening skills combined

with recognizing the immediate needs of a survivor.

Personal Preparedness/Packing a "Go Kit" will prepare you and your family to be self sufficient for at least three days following a disaster. Disasters can happen quickly and can force you to evacuate your home, or make you shelter in your home. What would you do if your water, electricity and essential services were suddenly unavailable? In this training, you will receive information about a family communications plan, establishing a meeting place, assembling a "Go Kit", and knowing what to do if an emergency does strike.

Visit us on the web at health.hamiltontn.org



CHCHD Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department
 Office of Emergency Preparedness and Planning
 921 East Third Street
 Chattanooga, TN 37403-2165

March is National Nutrition Month

March is a good month to reflect upon what we are eating. The choices we make for what we eat (or don't eat) are reflected in how we feel today. Those choices also impact our future health. This is a good time to take a look at our food buying habits and make some changes. This includes grocery buying, eating out at restaurants and the snacks we buy.

Choose fruits and vegetables. Eating an array of colors will ensure that you are getting a variety of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Eating whole grains will give you fiber and nutrients which processed white flour will not have. Lean meats, fish, beans, nuts and eggs are good sources of protein. Limit your intake of sweets and oils as they are high in calories.

Try something new! Don't be afraid to explore new foods and new cuisines which incorporate more vegetables into your diet. Explore new foods and flavors to expand your taste bud horizons! You may find a new favorite food. Make it easier to make good choices by frequenting places that have tempting and healthier foods.

For more information on healthy eating, visit www.cdc.gov, click on Healthy Living and then "Nutrition for Everyone."

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department will host volunteer training sessions in the upcoming months on the topics listed below. As a part of the Medical Reserve Corps Program and part of the Surgeon General's Community Initiatives, we not only respond to a public health emergency, but we are also a part of the community education plan.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PRESENTER</u>
May 8, 2008	5:30 p.m.— 7:00 p.m. (Light Dinner Provided)	Health Department	Disaster Mental Health — How to Deal with Stress	Angela Frame, Health Department Nurse Trainer
July 15, 2008	5:30 p.m.— 6:30 p.m. (Light Dinner Provided)	Health Department	Personal Preparedness/Packing Your "Go Kit"	Susan McNabb, Volunteer Coordinator

Please RSVP (so we will have a head count for space and food) to Susan McNabb, 209-8068 or e-mail at susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov.

Park in the garage behind the Health Department building and follow the signs once you exit the elevator on the first floor. Bring your parking ticket with you to be stamped for \$1.00 parking.

Volunteer Information Update

If you have moved, changed telephone numbers, or are no longer interested in being a volunteer, please complete the form below and return to the address at the top of this page or e-mail Susan McNabb at susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov.

Name _____ Home Phone _____ Cell _____ Work Phone _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Work Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Email _____

_____ I am unable to be a volunteer at this time. Please remove my name from the active volunteer list.