



... *Caring People Providing Quality Service*

FIRE DISTRICT OF SUN CITY WEST

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NEWSRELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
8 A.M. MT, September, 2009

September is National Preparedness Month- *Are You Ready?*

(SUN CITY WEST, AZ), (SEPTEMBER, 4), 2009 - Research on preparedness shows that people who believe themselves to be “prepared” for disasters often aren’t as prepared as they think. Forty percent of survey respondents did not have household plans, 80 percent had not conducted home evacuation drills, and nearly 60 percent did not know their community’s evacuation routes.

September is National Preparedness Month and the Fire District of Sun City West wants to help community members get *Ready*. The focus of the “*Are You Ready?*” program is to help prepare community members in case there is an emergency or disaster in our community. Whether community members stay in their home or evacuate will depend on the incident but the most important factor either way is that they must be prepared. Having a plan, communicating that plan with family members, preparing an emergency supply kit, and preparing our homes for emergency situations is essential.

Nearly 20 percent of survey respondents reported having a disability that would affect their capacity to respond to an emergency situation, but shockingly only one out of four of them had made arrangements specific to their disability to help them respond safely in the event of an emergency.

Community members can address emergency preparedness and their specific needs by filling out a special need form so that, in an emergency or disaster, emergency rescue

officials can help with needed assistance or evacuation. Forms are available throughout the Sun City West community at the Fire District administration office, Posse, PORA, Interfaith Community Care, Sun City West Foundation, Recreation Centers, library, and pharmacies. Residents can fill out the form and mail or bring it into the Fire District Administration Office, 18818 N Spanish Garden Dr., Monday-Friday from 8:00-4:00 excluding holidays.

Our nation's emergency managers, firefighters, law enforcement officers, EMT/paramedics, and other emergency responders do an incredible job of keeping us safe, but they can't do it alone. We must all embrace our individual responsibility to be prepared – in doing so; we contribute to a safer, stronger, and better prepared community.

Becoming more prepared in case of an emergency is easier than you might think. Whether it's your home, your neighborhood, your place of business, or your school, you can take a few simple steps to prepare yourself and your community. For additional information or to request an "Are You Ready?" presentation on emergency preparedness, contact Holli Sandeen at (623) 584-3500.

Here are some other things you can do right now to be safer!

- Check and change the batteries in your smoke alarms and replace all alarms that are more than 10 years old.
- Make sure you know where your local fire department, police station, and hospital are and post a list of emergency phone numbers near all the telephones in your home.
- Organize and practice a family fire drill -- make sure all family members know what your smoke alarms sounds like and what to do if it goes off especially if they are sleeping.
- Plan to sign up for a first aid training course and bystander Continuous Chest Compression CPR (CCC-CPR) class. Call the Fire District at (623) 584-3500 for upcoming classes or visit <http://www.azshare.gov/> and click on Attend a Free Class.
- Locate the utility mains for your home and be sure you know how to turn them off manually: gas, electricity, and water.
- Create an emergency plan for your household, including your pets and individual abilities. Decide where your family will meet if a disaster does happen: 1) right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire and 2) outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home – ask an out of town friend to be your "family contact" to relay messages.
- Prepare a 3-day disaster supply kit, complete with flashlights, batteries, blankets, and an emergency supply of water and food (and pet food!).

- Plan to hold a Neighborhood Watch meeting – your local Sheriffs' Posse office or police station can help you get started for more information.
- Check the expiration dates of all over-the-counter medications – discard all that are expired and replace any that are routinely needed.
- Make sure all cleaning products and dangerous objects are out of children's reach.
- Visit with your neighbors and discuss how you would handle a disaster in your area. Talk to neighbors with special needs and help them become safer too!

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