



Emergency Management  
Fax: (509) 628-2621

## BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

651 Truman Avenue  
Richland, Washington 99352  
(509) 628-2600



Southeast Communications Center  
Fax: (509) 628-2622

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Contact: Elizabeth Smith  
509-628-8470  
509-539-0312

# For Immediate Release

## SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Imagine this..... Your family is sound asleep. It is 5:30 on Friday morning. You hear an explosion and smell smoke. You stumble downstairs but shriek in pain because you stepped on broken glass. Your feet are badly cut and bleeding. Sharp glass is on every surface imaginable and there is an electrical pole halfway in your living room. The front door is unattainable. Part of your family is trapped upstairs, and the other part is trapped downstairs. Your elderly mother-in-law, who is unable to walk unassisted, is in the room next to the living room and your six year old is in the room next to hers. You are unable to get to either of them. Your husband is out of town and you are alone with the kids and your mother-in-law. The living room is now engulfed in flames and the house is rapidly filling with black smoke. You scream to your mother-in law and young child while running upstairs with your badly injured feet. You attempt to dial 9-1-1 and the phone line is dead. Your cell phone is charging on the kitchen counter, but you can't get it because of the crackle and snaps coming from the electrical pole in your living room. Do you have a way to quickly and safely get everyone out?

Are you prepared for this emergency? This is not an uncommon scenario. Most people live by these incredibly crazy words. **IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN TO ME.**

As soon as you say that, it will. Having a plan in case of an emergency is paramount. This scenario could be a life and death situation. It can mean the difference between safely exiting the premises... and preparing for a funeral, because there was no emergency preparedness. That may sound scary, but it is all too true this day and age.

The most important aspect of planning is communication. It takes time and effort to make sure that everyone in the family knows the drill, should an emergency occur. Formulate a plan and practice it.

In simpler terms, your senior manager gives you a twenty page PowerPoint presentation with graphs and statistical data. She says you have five minutes to look it over before giving it to the board of directors. You quickly glance at it, but are totally unprepared. In the workplace, meetings can be rescheduled. You would not give a presentation to the board of directors without

first glancing at the contents. In real life, you cannot reschedule an emergency.

Please take the time to formulate a plan. The dinner table is a great place to start talking about this. Get input from all your family members, even the younger ones.  
Safety is key. September is National Preparedness month.

For more information log onto to [www.bces.wa.gov](http://www.bces.wa.gov) and click on family prep.

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