

# CITY CONNECTION

Volume 12, Issue 10

July 2016

## Calendar

### July 2016

- 4 - Independence Day Holiday—City Closed
- 5 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 6 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 7 - Planning Commission -  
City Hall at 12:00 p.m.
- 13 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 19 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 20 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 21 - Planning Commission -  
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 27 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste

### August 2016

- 2 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 3 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 4 - Planning Commission -  
City Hall at 12:00 p.m.
- 10 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 18 - Planning Commission -  
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 16 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 17 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 24 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 31 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection

Submit requests for Heavy Trash pick-up  
before noon on Wednesday,  
the week prior to pick-up,  
at 294-5796.

Learn more about  
City events at  
[www.huntsvilletx.gov](http://www.huntsvilletx.gov)

## How to Prepare a Disaster Supply Kit

*In preparation for the Disaster Preparedness Special Issue of the City Connection, we're sharing prior Deputy City Secretary Kristin Edward's story of preparing her own disaster supply kit from resources mainly around Huntsville (around \$150 for a family of two). It is critical to be prepared and assemble a supply kit now rather than wait until you are in the path of a disaster when resources may be scarce.*

Every hurricane season, it seems like you hear the same advice over and over again. "Make sure your disaster preparedness kit is updated... Keep three days of food and water per person per day on hand... Fill up your gas tank... Be prepared." I went out to local stores throughout Huntsville to try to build – as inexpensively as possible – a go-bag for my house and the additional elements necessary for a complimentary disaster preparedness kit. The steps I took accounted for a two-person household, and I was able to put together everything on FEMA's recommended items list and much of their supplemental list for around \$150.

### Online shopping

Before I even started shopping in stores, I reviewed FEMA's recommended list and one of the items that jumped out at me was the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio. I was fairly confident I wouldn't find one of those just anywhere, so I performed a search online and found a combination AM/FM radio and weather radio for \$15.

I also looked online for the local maps recommended on the list. The City's Geographic Information System (GIS) Web site, [www.huntsvillegis.com](http://www.huntsvillegis.com), is a great resource for the Huntsville-Walker County area. However, while FEMA recommends getting local maps, I ran across quite a few Web sites that emphasized having maps available for outside your local area in the case of a large-scale evacuation in any direction. So, with the help of the local Chamber of Commerce, I got a collection of physical maps together of areas including Trinity County, Madison County, Montgomery County and more. These maps are now available for public use on the City's new Emergency Preparedness page. <http://huntsvilletx.gov/298/Emergency-Management>

### Initial shopping trip

After my Web search, it was time to start shopping in person. FEMA's Emergency Supply List, which is available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), includes both a recommended list and an additional list of supplemental items to consider. (The full list is included on the next page for personal use.)

Both because I wanted to find the most affordable way to put my kit together, and because I knew I was probably going to splurge on a few non-essentials, my first stop was at a local dollar store. There, I was able to get the following items which came directly from FEMA's recommended list: bottled water - \$3.50/24-pack (purchased two 24-packs for a total of \$7); flashlight and extra batteries - \$7; moist towelettes - \$4.50; garbage bags - \$3.50; wrench (to turn off utilities) - \$3; duct tape for \$3.50; and a can opener - \$2.50.

From FEMA's extended list, I also found waterproof matches for \$1.25, paper cups and paper plates for \$2 each, and a three-pack of paper towels for \$1.50.

Finally, I found some other handy items recommended by municipalities and states around the country that were not included on FEMA's list. These included adult ponchos for \$5 each, a utility knife for \$2.50, additional packs of AA and AAA batteries for \$3.75 each, and sandwich and storage bags for \$1 per box.

After my first trip, my total spending included \$27.50 for items on the FEMA recommended list, \$6.75 on items from the agency's supplemental list, and \$33 on extra items.

### Second trip

Still needing several items from FEMA's recommended list, I continued my search at a local department store.

With respect to food, of which FEMA recommends having at least a three-day supply per person, I purchased a combination of protein bars, canned foods, crackers and cereals that totaled to \$17 for each member of my two-person family. Also from the recommended list, I found First Aid kits for \$9 each – buying two so I could have one in my go bag and another in my car – a whistle for \$4, a tarp (which I substituted for plastic sheeting) for \$14, and a package of dust masks for \$4. From the supplemental FEMA list, I found a fire extinguisher for \$30, sleeping bags for around \$33 each, and a waterproof container for \$6.

Finally, I picked up a couple of waist packs for \$7 each and a camping backpack with plenty of compartments on both the inside and the outside for \$30 which became my "go-bag." I chose it not only because it looked like it would hold plenty of supplies, but also because the straps were wide and reinforced with thick padding. Having read online about the possibility of carrying go-bags for hours at a time, I wanted to make sure I had something that wouldn't hurt my shoulders on a long walk.

During my second trip, I spent an additional \$74 on items from FEMA's recommended list, \$36 on supplemental list items and \$44 on other items.

Taking everything from both trips and my online purchases into account, this brought my grand totals to \$116.50 for the FEMA-recommended items, \$42.75 for supplemental FEMA items and \$77 on extra items.

### Second trip

Still needing several items from FEMA's recommended list, I continued my search at a local department store, and I was able to find all remaining items on both that list and the supplemental list.

With respect to food, of which FEMA recommends having at least a three-day supply per person, I purchased a combination of protein bars, canned foods, crackers and cereals that totaled to \$17 for each member of my two-person family. Also from the recommended list, I found First Aid kits for \$9 each – buying two so I could have one in my go bag and another in my car – a whistle for \$4, a tarp (which I substituted for plastic sheeting) for \$14, and a package of dust masks for \$4.

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During my second trip, I spent an additional \$74 on items from FEMA's recommended list, \$36 on supplemental list items and \$44 on elected items.

Taking everything from both trips and my online purchases into account, this brought my grand totals to \$116.50 for the FEMA-recommended items, \$42.75 for supplemental FEMA items and \$77 on elective, extra items.

### Remaining items: Building from home

FEMA's supplemental list includes several other important items that I did not purchase either because I already had them at home or they did not apply to me.

Some items – like prescription medications, glasses, pet food and extra water for my dog, blankets, complete changes of clothing for each family member, personal hygiene items, bleach, writing supplies and books and games – were already in ample supply in my home and would not take long to collect.

From the additional lists I found online, I would bring work gloves, sunscreen, sunglasses, decks of cards, and hand sanitizer from my home.

Cash and change are also critical, and I found valuable specifics about what denominations of money to include. According to a publication released by the New York Office of Emergency Management, your kit should include at least \$100 in small bills – meaning nothing larger than \$10 notes – so if you run into a situation where change cannot be made, you're not losing much. Keeping enough quarters on hand (at least \$20 worth) can come in handy at toll booths, for dialing pay phones if/when cell phones are not an option, or for buying snacks from a vending machine.

A point I encountered repeatedly was that each family or individual preparing a disaster kit should consider their individual needs when planning for emergencies. If you have a prescription that runs out quickly, think about getting an extra refill to have on-hand. If you have a child who suffers from allergies, make sure to include a package of antihistamines as there is no telling which allergens may be present in the event of an evacuation. Make sure to look around your home and think about what you would really need in case of an emergency.

### Family documentation

A facet of the disaster kit preparation process that might take some effort is the collection of personal and family documents including insurance policies, identification and bank account records.

As stated in “How to Prepare an Emergency Grab & Go Kit” by Rianne Hill Soriano, “Prepare a plastic envelope (or other waterproof container) where you can safely place documents and lists of phone numbers, addresses and email addresses of families, friends, schools, work, medical and financial advisors, utilities and service providers, hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and media. Also, write down current prescriptions and medical histories of (each member of) the family. Gather all information about your credit cards, bank, brokerage, mortgage and bank accounts and their contact numbers, websites and emails.”

Finally, Soriano advises that families “assemble copies of passports, birth and marriage certificates, current photos of each family member, health insurance policy information, claim forms and copies of insurance cards.”

On the City's new Emergency Preparedness page, we have also provided a link for FEMA's Emergency Financial First Aid Kit. It provides space to fill in personal household information and identify professional advisors, and also includes checklists of important legal documents to collect.

Your documentation container would be an ideal spot for planned meeting spots in the event of an emergency. I would recommend using your area maps to designate locations locally, in contingent counties and in other states as applicable. These spots could be anything from the home of a friend or family member to a specific hotel – just make sure each family member is aware of the plan and its location in your kit.

### Concluding thoughts

Finally, take the time to visit some of the Web sites I utilized in putting together this story. Ready.gov has great advice for preparing pets, infants, young children and seniors for emergencies, in addition to providing FEMA's recommended and supplemental supply lists, the site also includes supplies for unique needs based on climate and other considerations. There is great information on emergency food choices, cooking methods and sanitation.

The Texas Department of State Health Services' preparedness Web site, [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/preparedness/e-prep\\_public.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/preparedness/e-prep_public.shtm), also offers emergency supply lists, planning strategies and suggestions for those with special needs.

Please take the time to visit our Emergency Preparedness page. From emergency supply lists to maps of surrounding counties, it provides many valuable tools that we hope local families will take advantage of.

Thank you for reading, and happy preparing!

**KEEP IN TOUCH**  
to make sure assistance isn't delayed



Visit [disasterassistance.gov](http://disasterassistance.gov) to update  
and track your application



Give us a call at 800-621-3362  
(TTY 800-462-7585)

## Emergency Supply List

Compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency - Available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

### Recommended Items:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps

### Additional Items:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

## State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)

Call 2-1-1 to register today!

The State of Texas offers residents the option to register with the STEAR program, a free registry that provides local emergency planners and responders with additional information on the needs of their community.

While registration is voluntary and does not guarantee specific services, joining the 2-1-1 network allows local responders to maintain an up-to-date database of those individuals who may need special assistance during emergencies.

#### Required information to register:

Name, address, phone number, primary language

#### Who should register?

- People with disabilities;
- People with access and functional needs such as:
  - (1) Those with limited mobility;
  - (2) Those with communication barriers;
  - (3) Those who require additional medical assistance during an emergency event;
  - (4) Those who require transportation assistance; and
  - (5) Those who require personal care assistance.

#### Additional questions asked to capture vital information for local emergency planners and responders:

Emergency contact information; caregiver information; any necessary information related to pets; transportation assistance for home evacuation; communication barriers; disability, functional or medical needs.

#### How to register:

Dial 2-1-1 or use a video phone relay option. Alternatively, contact Emergency Management Coordinator John Waldo at (936) 291-5945.

For more information, visit <https://www.211texas.org/cms/>.

## Code RED

The City of Huntsville and Walker County have an emergency notification system called CodeRED; an ultra high-speed telephone communication service. This system allows us to telephone all or targeted areas of the City and Walker County in case of an emergency situation that requires immediate action (such as a missing child or evacuation notice). The system is capable of dialing 60,000 phone numbers per hour, delivering emergency notifications to any number you have registered in the system.



To sign up to receive Code RED notifications go to <https://public.coderedweb.com/cne/en-US/16BD18D433BA>, and follow the steps to ensure you will be notified promptly in an emergency in your area.

# Don't Forget About Fido



Just like you prep for your family, remember to prepare supplies for your four-legged family members. Think basics for survival first by including at least three days of food in an airtight container and three days of water specifically for your pet. Be proactive and talk with your veterinarian about what is most appropriate for your pet's emergency medical needs. Most kits for pets should include cotton bandage rolls, bandage tape and scissors, antibiotic ointment, flea and tick prevention, and any medication your pet takes on a regular basis.

Your pet should wear a collar with its rabies tag and identification at all times. Be sure you also include a backup leash, collar, and ID tag in your pet's supply kit. Place copies of your pet's registration, vaccination, and medical records in a waterproof bag to keep in the kit at all times.

If you become separated from your pet during an emergency, a picture of you and your pet together will help you document ownership and also will allow others to assist you in locating your pet.

Lastly, put a few of their favorite treats and toys in the kit. These familiar items can help reduce stress for your pet. Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities on the scene. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected. Those who take the time to prepare themselves and their pets will likely encounter less difficulty, stress and worry. Take the time now to get yourself and your pet ready.

## What You Need to Know

**Shelter-in-place** Means selecting a small, interior room, with few or no windows, and taking refuge there. It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building. In the event of a shelter-in-place it is advised to shut off the air-conditioning, tape the door frames off and plug vent holes. In any emergency you need to always keep a head-count of the individuals with you. If you believe you will be stuck in that place for an extended period of time call 911 and let them know your location. If an evacuation of your space needs to be made during the event emergency crews will know exactly where to rescue your group.

**Flash Flood alerts** If you see water on the roadways, *Turn Around, Don't Drown*. You may not be able to see the road conditions under the water. The roadway could be weak and washing away even if the water is still relatively low. If you see a barricade blocking a roadway, turn around. Emergency crews put the blockades out to keep you safe so don't endanger yourself and emergency crews by ignoring safety precautions.

**Flood Water** If you are in an area with high flood waters, do not enter the water for recreational use. In many cases the flood waters are contaminated with gas and oil. The flood waters are also home to many snakes, broken glass and sharp objects. There are often man-holes which the covers have been swept off which creates a dangerous current and can sweep people under.

**Bomb Threat** If your area receives a bomb threat, evacuate immediately. Your team should have a plan already in place for a safe evacuation spot and leaders who will be responsible for keeping a head-count of everyone inside to assure everyone got out safely.

**Evacuation** Know where to go and have your emergency kit for your family and pets ready. If you are at your workplace, have a leader to keep a headcount of the individuals who were inside. Know where your safe spot is.

## Make Things Easier After a Disaster by Documenting Your Items Now

Every firefighter, police officer or first responder we have interviewed says that a home inventory is the most important thing a family can do. Why... It's easier to write the details now - it's harder after a traumatic event.

A home inventory is a list or videos/photos of everything in your home.

Make a home inventory folder, box, or binder to hold videos, photos, written lists and documents of your belongings. Label it!

Need a guide?

Do one room at a time.

Video tape and narrate. Focus on the big items like couches, tables, electronics, art, etc. Turn on the time and date function to show when you recorded your home and possessions.

Include information like "I bought this TV in 1998 with my VISA card. I got it at Best Buy and it cost \$400. The receipt and warranty are in (file cabinet, safe deposit box, etc.)."

No video camera? Take photographs and label them with the same info above. Consider holding a ruler next to items to show the dimensions.

If you use a digital camera, you can load the inventory list on the same CD as your photos. Another way to ensure safe keeping of your records are to upload them to the cloud or email the documents to yourself.

Write or describe each item, its brand name, make, model, serial numbers and the price. Include any other information you think might be helpful.

Doing the preparation in advance will help you when submitting insurance claims. Find more tips from people who have survived natural disasters at

<http://www.whathappensnow.com/>

**Storm Damage?**

- 1 Before you start cleaning up, take photos of the damage to your home and belongings.
- 2 Make a list of damaged/lost items, and gather any original receipts you have for those items.
- 3 Call your insurance agent to submit a claim.

Having this info on hand will help speed up the process with your insurance company and other programs.

FEMA

Be on the lookout for an extended Preparedness issue of *This Week in Huntsville* to be released mid-July.

Sign up to receive the digital newsletter at <http://huntsvilletx.gov/list.aspx>