



Ask An Angel...

Our *Ask An Angel* correspondent is Arlene Petersen, Certified Senior Advisor and Life Care Navigation Specialist in the area of senior home care.

Q. I live alone. How can I prepare myself and my home for an emergency?

A. Emergency situations are never planned, that is why we call them emergencies! I have two sons who are both newer drivers and when they leave the house I tell them to drive carefully. They grow tired of me telling them that and in fact their typical canned response is, “*I’ll be fine, I am not going to get into an accident.*” Of course an emergency is not on their agenda for today. An emergency or accident is not written on their calendar like a doctor’s appointment or work schedule would be. But that is why we label those life events as emergencies, right? They are unplanned and unscheduled interruptions in our life that can take us off guard. It is best to prepare for an emergency before it happens because at the time of a crisis, we can often find ourselves fumbling around for things we need. While we cannot plan for every type of emergency, we can easily take some simple steps that can be of big help to us in a crisis situation. I suggest a simple 3-step emergency preparedness plan for home. **PREPARE**, **PACK**, and **STOCK**.

The first step is to **prepare** and think about the type of emergencies that have the likelihood of occurring. For instance, our weather patterns have been unusually turbulent this year with threats of tornados or severe winds. It would be a good idea to plan ahead for an area of your home that you would retreat to in those situations. If you don’t have access to a basement, take cover in an interior room without windows, such as a bathroom, and consider using the bathtub as a place to take cover during a severe storm warning. But an emergency may be health related, such as an unexpected trip to the emergency room. The second step is to **pack an**

emergency bag that would include basic medical information about you (medications, drug allergies, medical history, etc.), contact information for your family & doctors, power of attorney information or living will, proof of insurance, and identification. I recommend that this emergency bag also include change of clothing, pajamas, robe, slippers, small travel size toiletries, and toothbrush. This bag will now serve a dual purpose of assisting in a health emergency or sudden evacuation. **Third**, prepare an **emergency stock box** filled with canned goods, non-perishable foods, and bottled water. Be sure to have at least 2 flashlights and plenty of spare batteries to use in case of a prolonged power outage. I also recommend battery operated candles for additional lighting. Other items to include are: battery operated radio, blanket, plastic bags, matches, an extra house key, and an extra phone charger. Store this box in a basement or that interior room without windows. If you use a cell phone, make sure your I.C.E. (In Case of Emergency) contacts are programmed into your phone. Emergency personnel will look for these contacts. That is a simple step of programming a close family member or friend in your cell phone contact list under the name of I.C.E.

So, the simple steps are PREPARE, PACK, and STOCK. Creating an emergency plan may require time and a little bit of work on your part, but following the simple steps I described will help you with your plan and will give you peace of mind.

If you would like to have a complimentary Emergency Bag, please contact me at AskAnAngel@att.net

Have a question for our angel correspondent? You can send our angel an email to AskAnAngel@att.net or send your question via mail to Ask An Angel, 65 Woodbury St., South Elgin, IL 60177.