COMMUNITY CORNER

Being ready, making plans helps us prepare for emergencies

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

Col. Brown

In the Army we are constantly training. During a mission, everyone is expected to know their place and what they should do. We practice our actions to ensure we can perform in times of stress. Implementing the same methods for your Family when it comes to disaster preparedness can save lives. Think about what your Family would do in case of an emergency. Get a kit; make a plan and be informed.

Ready Army Week is set for Sept. 14-18. This is the perfect time to think about what your Family might need in an emergency.

What if your house is struck by a tornado? Do all of your Family members know where to go for safety? If you are separated, do you have a plan in place that spells out how you'll meet up or get a hold of each other?

What if there's a fire? Where will you meet? If the house is on fire, do your children know they shouldn't hide from firefighters?

What if you lose power? Do you have a battery-powered weather radio? Do you have a car charger for your cell phone?

While we may think we have everything covered, it never hurts to revisit our plans.

Ready Army, the Installation Safety Office and other organizations across post will be working to help you get prepared. Check out the Ready Army booth at the Fall Apple Day Festival Sept. 19 on Artillery Parade Field. Ready Army provides lists of items to be included in home, car, work and portable emergency kits.

Ready Army suggests these items for a home kit:

• Water—at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days

• Food—non-perishable food for at least three days (select items that require no preparation, refrigeration or cooking such as high energy foods and ready-to-eat canned meat, vegetables, fruit)

• Manual can opener (if the food is canned), preferably on a multi-tool

• Reusable plates, cups, utensils, saucepan (note, a metal bowl can double as a cup or plate)

• First aid kit

• Prescription medications and medical equipment/care aids

• N95- or N100-rated dust masks

• Personal sanitation supplies, such as moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties

• Hand-crank or battery operated flashlight

• Hand-crank radio or battery operated cell phone charger

• All-hazards NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) weather radio

• Extra batteries at the size required

• Brightly colored plastic poncho (can be used as shelter, clothing or a marker)

• Weather appropriate clothing to keep your family warm and dry

• Cash in the local currency

• Any tools needed for turning off utilities

• Local maps and your family emergency plan

• Your command reporting information – know the Army Disaster Personnel Accountability and

• Assessment System (ADPAAS)

• Important documents, including will, medical and financial power of attorney, property documents, medical instructions

• Emergency preparedness handbook

Additional considerations:

• Infant formula and diapers if you have young children

• Pets supplies, including food, water, medication, leash, travel case and documents

• Disinfectant

• Matches or flint in a waterproof container

• Sleeping bag or other weather-appropriate bedding for each person

• Coats, jackets and rain gear

• Fire extinguisher

• Paper and pencil

• Books, games, puzzles, toys and other activities for children

• Any items necessary for a specific type of disaster

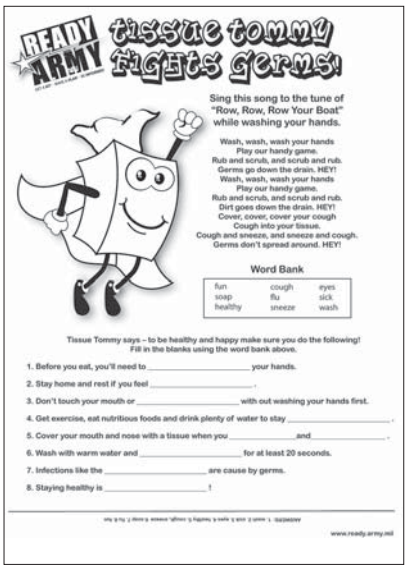
With the expected resurgence of H1N1 this fall, Families and individuals should be prepared to stay home for at least a week if they become ill. Additional items to make sure you have on hand for this include medications to treat flu symptoms and a thermometer.

Portable kits should include items you may need in case you need to evacuate your home or workplace. Keep the kit in a backpack or other bag so it's easy to grab on your way out. Make sure everyone knows where the kit is. For a portable workplace kit, Ready Army recommends including comfortable walking shoes, food, water and a first aid kit. In case you are stranded with your vehicle, a vehicle kit should include at a minimum food, water, a first aid kit, signal flares, jumper cables and seasonal clothing like coats or rain gear. Check your kits regularly to replace any expired items.

Being prepared includes more than just keeping extra water on hand. Once you have your kits assembled, make sure your Family has a plan in place to use them. It's important to practice your plan and make sure each Family member knows what to do. And don't just practice once. When you set aside time to check the items in your kit, have the kids help and go over why they might need each item. Circle the first day of each season on your calendar and talk with your Family about the types of natural disasters associated with that season. No matter how your Family decides to practice, this is a critical component for keeping everyone safe.

Visit www.ready.army.mil for more information on emergency kits, activities for children and other resources to help us stay prepared for whatever comes our way.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, e-mail rile.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil.



Post fire department offers advice for fireplace, wood stove safety in homes

FORT RILEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

More than one-third of Americans use fireplaces, wood stoves and other fuel-fired appliances as primary heat sources in their homes. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the fire risks when heating with wood and solid fuels.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration heating fires account for 36 percent of residential home fires every year. Often these fires are due to creosote buildup in chimneys and stovepipes. All home heating systems require regular maintenance to function safely and efficiently.

The Fort Riley Fire and Emergency Services encourages you to practice the following fire safety steps to keep those home fires safely burning.

• Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.

• Do not store combustible materials such as papers, magazines, carpet or furniture directly around your fireplace.

• Always use a metal screen to prevent burning embers from escaping.

• Never use flammable liquids to start a fire.

• Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or yard debris in your fireplace or wood stove

• Never leave a fireplace unattended. Extinguish the fire before leaving the house or going to bed.

• Stack firewood outdoors at least 30 feet away from your home.

• Keep the roof clear of leaves, pine needles and other debris.

• Cover the chimney with a mesh screen spark arrester.

For more information on fire safety, visit the fire department's page at www.riley.army.mil.

ACT composite scores rise at Manhattan High School

SPECIAL TO THE POST

MANHATTAN, Kan. – The Manhattan High School ACT composite score continued to rise. The 2009 composite score for Manhattan High School was 23.7. The state average was 21.9 and the national average was 21.1. Last year's MHS composite score was 23.6.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment for Manhattan High School in particular the students, faculty and staff. It is a positive indicator that affirms our efforts," said Manhattan High School Principal Terry McCarty. "We are really proud of these scores."

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement exam designed to measure the academic skills that are taught in schools and deemed important for success in first-year college courses. ACT scores are accepted at all four-year colleges and universities across the country. ACT scores also are used to make appropriate course placement decisions by the majority of four-year schools in the U.S. The ACT is administered in all 50 states and is taken by the majority of high school graduates in 26 states.

AT THE MOVIES

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Shows start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Tickets cost $4 for adults and $2 for children 11 and under. Children under the age of 5 are free except during children's matinees or expected sell-outs.

Sept. 11 - Aliens in the Attic, PG
Sept. 12 - The Hurt Locker, R
Sept. 13 - Aliens in the Attic, PG, 5 p.m. showing
Sept. 17 - Funny People, R
Sept. 18 - G.I. Joe: Rise of the Cobra, PG-13
Sept. 19 - Bandslam, PG
Sept. 20 - G.I. Joe: Rise of the Cobra

For more information, call Barlow Theater at 785-239-9574.

HOUSE FILL AD