



Safety Matters

September is National Preparedness Month



Homeland Security is initiating a nationwide effort to encourage us to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in our homes, schools and businesses. The goal is to increase public awareness about the importance of being prepared as well as to encourage individuals to take action.

At home, you need a family emergency plan that contains such things as everyone's contact numbers and an out-of-town contact, evacuation plans in case of fire (or shelter plans in case of a tornado), and a designated place for everyone to meet outside of the home. You also need a first aid kit with any necessary medications, along with a flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries, food and water. Families can add extra items according to their needs.

At work, you need a department emergency plan that contains such things as everyone's contact numbers and a couple of main department contacts, evacuation plans in case of fire (or shelter plans in case of a tornado), and a designated place for everyone to meet outside of the building. You can also keep a first aid kit, a flashlight, portable radio, and extra batteries. Departments can make more detailed plans that meet their special needs.

Preparedness at OSU includes such things as Contingency Plans, Chemical Inventory Lists (CILs), and Emergency Notification signs. To help all OSU departments plan for disasters, EHS provides a Contingency Plan Checklist that can be used to collect needed information.

CILs must be updated annually, with a copy sent to Environmental Health & Safety every July. This is an important document that can aid emergency response personnel in the event of a fire or other disaster. No one will rush into a burning lab without knowing what it contains. Injured occupants will receive faster care, important research may be spared, and damage kept to a minimum in the time saved by having an up-to-date CIL on file with EHS.

Blank forms for Emergency Notification signs, Chemical Inventory Lists, and Contingency Plans can be found on the EHS website at www.ehs.okstate.edu/forms.

October 7-13 is Fire Prevention Week. This year's theme is "Practice Your Escape Plan." That is a good way to get started on your family emergency plan.