

Southwest Health & Human Services MN

Responds/Medical Reserve Corps

Quarterly Newsletter

December 2017

Winter Weather Awareness

Even though the weather has not been normal for the months of November/December lately, we still need to prepare for the winter weather that will be coming our way eventually. The cooler temperatures will bring snow, sleet and ice which can cause us some serious headaches if we aren't ready.

First thing you should do to prepare for the winter weather is create a [Family Communications Plan](#) with your family. This will make sure that you are all on the same page when it comes to any type of severe weather happening in your area. Another good idea is to do a few practice runs before the severe weather happens and make sure that each one of your family members who live in your household knows what to do.

Second thing to get ready for winter weather is to prepare your home. Keep your home well insulated with weather stripping around your doors and windowsills to keep the warmth inside. Check your carbon monoxide detector as well as your fire alarm so they are working properly. With all of the Christmas decorations up and the heater being used, homes are at an increased risk for having a house fire. Keep fire extinguishers on hand and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them.

Third thing you will need to do is prepare your vehicle for the winter weather conditions. Make an appointment with your nearest mechanic so they can check the antifreeze, brakes, heater and defroster, tires and the windshield wipers. During the winter, keep your gas tank at least half full at all times. Put an extra emergency kit in your car with additional materials like an extra blanket, portable cell phone charger, jumper cables and sand for traction.

Most important thing is to keep you and your family safe and healthy during this holiday season. Enjoy this time with all of your loved ones. Happy Holidays!



PUT A ON FREEZE WINTER HOLIDAY FIRES

It's fun to decorate for the winter holidays, but holiday decorations can increase your risk for a home fire. As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart.

Read manufacturer's instructions



for the number of light strands to connect.

Although live Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are dangerous. On average,

1 of every **34**

reported home **Christmas tree fires** resulted in **death**.



2 out of **5** home decoration fires are started by candles.



The top **4** days for home candle fires are

Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

A heat source too close to the Christmas tree causes



1 in every **4** of the fires.

Make sure your tree is at least

3 feet away from heat sources

like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles or heat vents. Also, make sure your tree does not block exits.



Keep candles at least

12 inches away from anything that burns.



Get rid of your tree after Christmas or when it is dry.

For more information on how to prevent winter fires, visit: www.usfa.fema.gov and www.nfpa.org

U.S. Fire Administration



Flu Season

The flu season will begin in December and usually runs all the way until March. The peak time for the flu is January - March, however that doesn't mean you cannot get the flu in as early as October or as late as April. If you or any of your family members have not received your flu shot yet, there is still time. The only flu vaccine that is recommended for this year is the injectable flu shot and not the flu mist. Don't let the flu get you down this season. Make sure to be proactive and protect yourself before the peak flu season begins!



Volunteer Opportunities

Salvation Army Bell Ringers Needed!

Lyon County: Call Paul Bridgland at 507-532-6474 or email him at bridgland@charter.net. The campaign runs from November 17th through December 23rd. Bell ringing sites are located at Hy-Vee, Runnings and Shopko in Marshall.

Redwood County: Season runs from after Thanksgiving until Christmas Eve. Locations for bell ringing are Tersteegs and Walmart in Redwood Falls. Use this link to sign up <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0c4caca828abf49-come>. Otherwise, call A.C.E. of SW Minnesota office at 507-627-1016 to get signed up.

Murray County: Call the Chief of Police Brian Christianson at 507-836-6460 to become a bell ringer in Slayton, MN at Jim's Market.

Pipestone County Volunteer Opportunities: Food Shelf in Pipestone is open on Thursdays from 2:00-5:00 PM and is in need of volunteers weekly. Call 507-825-4414 or email pipestonefoodshelf@vastbb.net for more information. Volunteers In Mercy is looking for volunteers for driving opportunities, ideas for specific donations and more. Call LuAnn Bosma at 507-215-0155 if interested.

Minnesota Responds



Southwest Health & Human Services—Serving Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, and Rock Counties

Lauren Mellenthin—Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
MN Responds/MRC Unit Coordinator
607 West Main Street, Suite #200
Marshall, MN 56258
lauren.mellenthin@swmhhs.com