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## JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

*NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING: January 19 (Wednesday), 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Latah County Fairgrounds – Classroom. Any rescheduling will be sent by email by 10:00 am on the day.*

*CERT Curriculum Training – Unit 1 Disaster Preparedness: February 2 (Wednesday), 2022 at 6:30 pm at the Latah County Fairgrounds – Classroom*

**NEW YEAR TOPICS – More Lists – Be Ready, Smoke Alarms, and Communications plans!**

Winter is definitely here! Hopefully, everyone read our great winter survival tips in the December newsletter. Since that addition, a great winter preparedness checklist from NOAA for the home and car has come to light and is so helpful that is copied into our distribution email for everyone to see.



### RESOLVE TO BE READY!

*Yep, it's that time of year to think about your goals and objectives for the coming 12 months. So, we have another list from Ready.gov to help us focus on things we may not think about too often!*

- Make an emergency plan: choose a safe place to meet, learn evacuation routes, and establish an out-of-town contact.
- Take a current photo of you and your pet together in case you get separated during a disaster. (<https://www.ready.gov/pets> has great information!)
- Get to know your neighbor and invite them to be a part of your emergency plan.
- Snap photos of important documents and save them in a secure place or online.
- Set up group text lists so you can communicate with friends and family during emergencies.
- Take a class in CPR and first aid.
- Keep and update emergency supplies; remember to include cash.
- Have back-up power sources available to charge devices in case of a power outage.
- Snap pictures of your property for insurance purposes.
- Check your insurance for coverage on disasters like floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes.
- Sign up for alerts and warnings. Download the FEMA app to get real-time alerts, safety tips, and locate open shelters.
- Save for a rainy day! Start and grow your emergency fund.
- Financially prepare for the New Year. Find out how with the [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#).
- Spend within your means. Use a personal budgeting worksheet to help plan for holiday expenses and beyond.
- Build up your savings. Put a small amount in your account the first of every month beginning January 1.



## Check Your Batteries!

It's important to have smoke alarms in your house, and it's also very important to check your smoke alarms on a regular basis to ensure that they will function correctly if a fire breaks out in your home. A properly working smoke alarm can make the difference between life and death for you, family, friends, housemates, and pets.

While this article provides information on how to check your alarms, you should also make sure that you have enough smoke alarms in your house. The installation standards have changed over time, mostly due to changes in construction materials and standards. Take a few minutes to click on the National Fire Protection Association website at [Installing and maintaining smoke alarms - NFPA](#) which contains an installation guide and other helpful information on maintaining and checking your alarms.

### Testing Smoke Alarms (from the same website)

- Smoke alarms should be maintained according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test smoke alarms **at least once a month using the test button.**
- Make sure everyone in the home understands the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning to keep smoke alarms working well. The instructions are included in the package or can be found on the internet.
- Smoke alarms with non-replaceable 10-year batteries are designed to remain effective for up to 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- Smoke alarms with any other type of battery **need a new battery at least once a year.** If that alarm chirps, warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- When replacing a battery, follow manufacturer's list of batteries on the back of the alarm or manufacturer's instructions. Manufacturer's instructions are specific to the batteries (brand and model) that must be used. The smoke alarm may not work properly if a different kind of battery is used.

## Month 1 of Preparedness in a Year: Communications Plan

See page 3 of [Prepare in a Year Guide](#) (ctrl + click to follow link) for more information

When disaster strikes, normal communication methods may not be readily available. Being prepared can help keep you and your family from panicking in case you aren't able to reach one another. You can take small steps to prepare a communications plan, including:



1. **Sign up for local emergency alerts**, this can give you time to evacuate, take cover, or get in contact with someone. (See Dec 2021 newsletter.)
2. **Ask an out-of-area friend/relative to be your contact person**, they will help link you and your family members together in case cell phone signals or internet is down.
3. **Write down the contact information** for household members and keep with you at all times. ([Attached to email is a handy card to print out and fill in.](#))
4. If you are unable to get through to your loved ones after a disaster, **ask your out-of-area contact(s)** to try to reach them.
5. When the danger has passed, register at the American Red Cross "Safe and Well" website and/or **mark yourself 'safe after disaster'** on Facebook, so that people know you are okay.