

Family Drills

Planning is important, but rehearsal is vital. Rehearsals test your plans and help you to identify flaws in those plans. Rehearsal is simply pretending you and your family have just experienced a major disaster and acting accordingly. The following are some examples of "drills" that you can try:

- Live for a weekend without electricity. You can do this for real by shutting off the breaker (to prevent cheating) or the easy way by just "pretending." If you decide to run this drill the easy way, set a "fine" for each violation of the rules. Make the "fine" something fun or monetary or both. (But not so fun that everyone cheats on purpose!) This drill will teach you that boiling water over a camp stove or a fire in the back yard just to make your morning coffee can really wreck your normal morning routine. But hopefully the drill will also help you identify missing supplies, bad ideas and be the springboard to a better plan.
- Evacuate your family to another location over a weekend. Visit a friend or book a motel room that's at least 100 miles away from your current location. Give your family 20 minutes to pack and take off, ready or not. Once you've reached your destination, make a list of everything you forgot to bring and then add it to your emergency evacuation bag. Once you've settled in at your destination, take a minute to think about and discuss how you would feel if everything you left behind was destroyed in a fire. Or how you would feel if everything below the second floor of your home was damaged or destroyed by a flood. These reflections will give rise to ideas of how you can revise your storage and survival plans.
- Take your family for a drive on a Saturday afternoon in the fall. Pull over in a remote area (as long as its safe to do so) and spend the night there with only the supplies on hand in your car. By morning you'll know exactly what you should have in your car kit as well as what is rather useless.
- Try eating only your survival foods for a weekend - or, if you're really brave, do it for a whole week. This is an excellent drill to conduct if you're ready to rotate and replace your emergency food supplies. It will also help you identify any menu selections you just can't stand as well as those items you want to add to your stash (including recipes).

These are just a few examples of what you can do as a family to test your preparedness plans. Be creative. Come up with your own unique scenarios. Execute them and then let us know what you did and how it fared. We'd love to add yours to the list for others to try. Send your ideas and experiences via email to prepare@pep-c.org or by snail mail to: PEP-C PO Box 1217 Gig Harbor, WA 98335-321