

Slide 1



In an emergency there may not be time to prepare in advance of the event.

Under these circumstances you will have to rely on the resources that you already available in your home. The purpose of this collection of slides is to identify the sort of questions that need to be thought about in an emergency. Preferably these questions should be considered today before an emergency so that you can build preparations into your home and be better placed to survive the unexpected emergency.



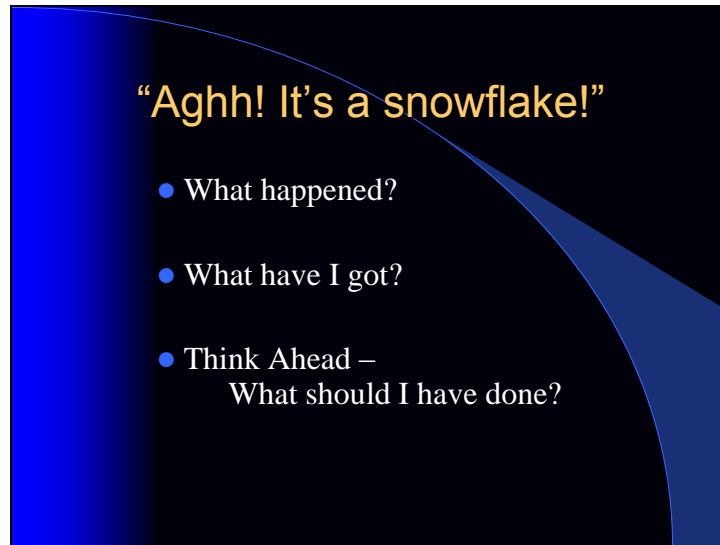
Convenience Lifestyle

- 50¢ / Food \$1.00 – meals outside home
 - Restaurants
 - Take Out/Curb Side
 - Home Delivery
- “Way Home” Shopping
- Home Food Supply ~ 5 days
 - ~1-2 days city
 - ~10-14 days rural

Today we live a convenience lifestyle that our parents and grandparents never experienced. In the past meals were prepared and eaten in the home. Today approximately half of every dollar spent on food is spent at restaurants or on “take out”, “curb side pick-up” or on home delivery. With our highly mobile life-style often food shopping is done on the “way home” with the food purchased eaten within a few hours of the purchase.

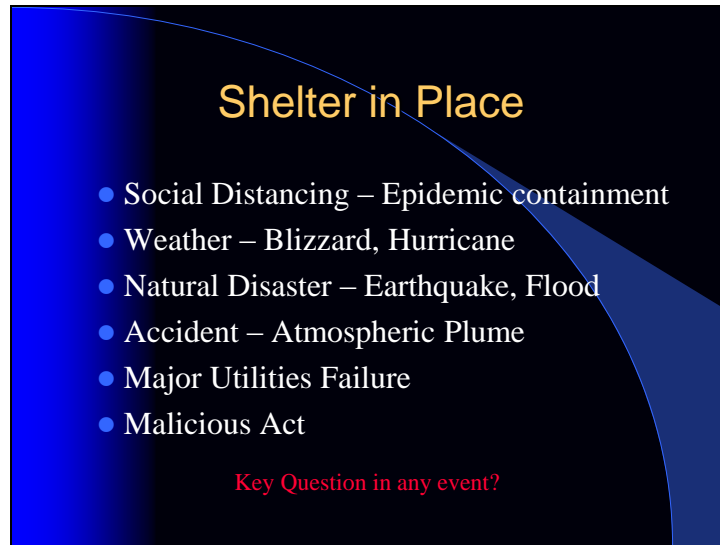
Consequently there is less food in the average home than in the past and it frequently falls more into the category of snack foods – candy, chips, cookies, ice cream and similar products. It is estimated that the average home in a city or major town may have as little as 1-2 days in it with a major reliance on outside sources of food.

In more rural areas habits still tend towards major food purchasing once a week and meals at home due to a more limited access to sources of prepared meals. In a rural setting the average home typically has about 10 days or more of food.



Snow storms present a yearly reminder of how well or poorly we are prepared to sit out a few days in our homes. At the first sign of a snow flake or even just the hint of snow the population descends on local supermarkets to “stock up” on essentials for the days ahead.

Thanks to the development of “just in time” delivery strategies supermarkets rely on almost daily deliveries of food and today only carry limited stocks of many items. The sudden surge of consumers preparing for the worst rapidly exhausts stocks of certain food items and consequently makes sure that everybody does not want to be caught out the “next time” – a self fulfilling recipe for the consumer surge in the future.



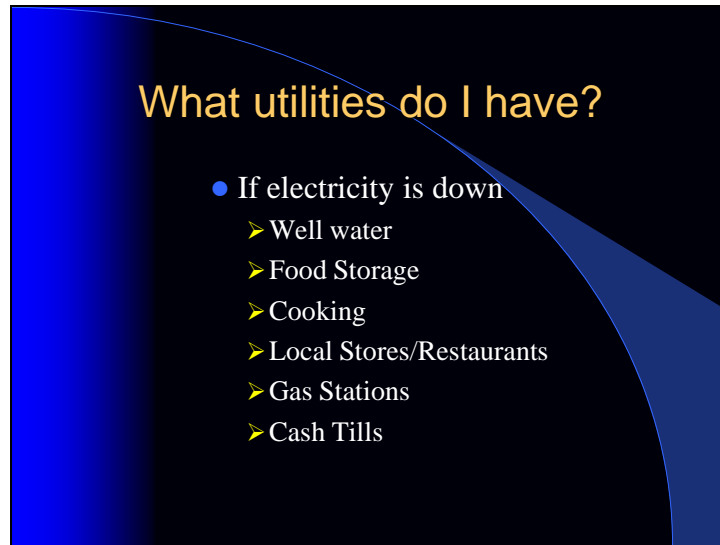
Shelter in Place

- Social Distancing – Epidemic containment
- Weather – Blizzard, Hurricane
- Natural Disaster – Earthquake, Flood
- Accident – Atmospheric Plume
- Major Utilities Failure
- Malicious Act

Key Question in any event?

For any one of a number of incidents the guidance could be to stay at home and shelter in place. In general this will mean that it is considered to be safer to remain in your home rather than venture out provided you're your home can still provide you with shelter against the threat.

In an emergency there is one key question that needs to be considered



- Do I have electricity?

In today's modern homes we are very dependent on our electricity supply. Without it, for many homes in Maryland water becomes an immediate issue because of the use of individual wells. Food storage becomes an issue due to the loss of refrigerators and freezers and cooking may present a challenge.

Even if you have a gas supply for heating and cooking the equipment may be knocked out of operation because the individual pieces of equipment rely on the electricity supply for their control circuits.

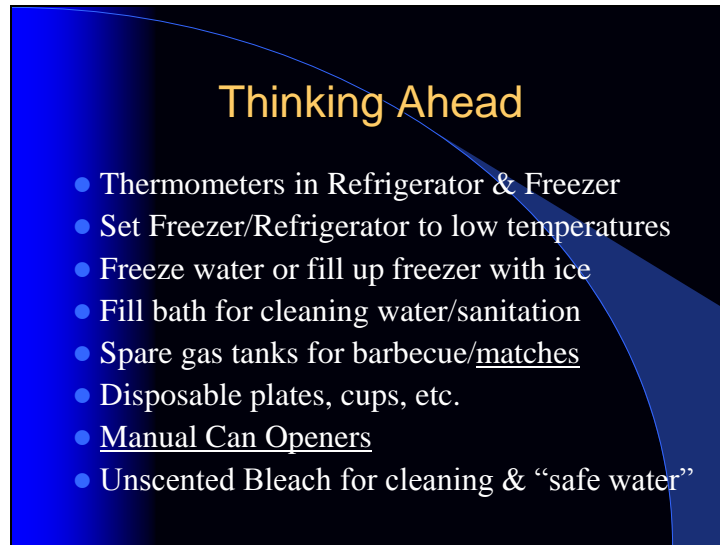
Outside of the home, loss of electricity will stop local stores and restaurants from functioning and opening for business. Similarly gas stations will also be unable to supply gas so movement will also be restricted to the fuel in your tank. Additionally cash tills and credit operations will also be blocked by the lack of power.



Looking at the “food cupboard” the first target should be the food in the refrigerator. If kept closed the refrigerator will probably hold its temperature for about 4 hours but after that it will begin to warm up. If the food is above 41°F then after four hours it becomes at risk and should not be eaten.

For the freezer, this will normally remain below freezing for about two days but after that the food becomes at risk. If the power comes back on provided the food still contains ice crystals it can generally be re-frozen although the quality of the food may have deteriorated. Insulating the freezer with blankets will help to keep the cold in and maintain the temperature longer.

For shelf stable foods – canned foods, cartons, boxes and bottles – the enemy is not temperature but the threat of flood water which may penetrate the containers or contaminate the outside of the containers in ways that can be cleaned.



Some simple strategies can help to deal with emergencies.

You should equip your refrigerator and freezer with thermometers for day to day use just to check on their normal performance. In an emergency there is then no need to guess your food temperatures. If the emergency can be anticipated, such as with a hurricane, setting the refrigerator and freezer to their lowest temperatures will help to cool everything down. Equally the refrigerator and freezer normally contain a lot of air spaces between foods. Filling these gaps with bags of ice will help to increase the ability of both units to store “cold”. Note freezing bags of water is not a good strategy as most freezers can only freeze about two gallons of water per day.

If you live on a well and can anticipate the emergency, filling the bath with water for cleaning and sanitation is a useful precaution.

Spare gas tanks for the barbecue provide a backup cooking capability but never to be used indoors because of the risk of carbon monoxide. Things not to forget – matches and a manual can opener.

Unscented bleach can be used both for cleaning and water treatment if your water supply is suspect. The Red Cross website carries instructions for treating water under these circumstances.

(http://www.redcross.org/preparedness/cdc_english/foodwater-2.asp)

Thinking Ahead - Food

- Water – 1 gallon/person/day
- Shelf Stable Foods – commercially canned
 - Soups, stews, meats, vegetables, fruit
- Storage Sensitive Products – kept dry
 - Tea, coffee, creamer, fruit juice (singles)
 - Nutrition/high energy bars
 - Low/No salt crackers/nuts
 - Dry Cereal

Food for Thought.

Useful References

- <http://www.familyfirst.md>
- http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/News/emergency_prep/caringpreparing.html
- <http://www.ready.gov>
- <http://www.redcross.org>
- <http://www.fda.gov>
- <http://www.usda.gov>