



## HOME AND FAMILY FIRST

### Should you leave at all or stay Sheltered-In-Place?

There are times when your family may need you as much or more than your Western Kern County ARES®. Obviously, this is a decision that only you and your family can make. If a family member is ill, your spouse is unsure of their ability to cope without you, if evacuation will be difficult, or any similar concern arises, staying with them may be a better choice (**Shelter-In-Place**). If there is ever any doubt, your decision must be to stay Sheltered-In-Place with your family. This is also something you should discuss, and come to an agreement with your spouse about well before any disaster, in order to avoid any last minute problems.

Before leaving on an assignment, be sure you have made all necessary arrangements for the security, safety, and general well being of your home and family. Family members, and perhaps friends or neighbors, should know where you are going, when you plan to return, and a way to get a message to you in an emergency. More information at <http://www.kcprepared.com/>

If you live in the disaster area or in the potential path of a storm, consider moving your family to a safe location before beginning your volunteer duties. Take whatever steps you can to protect your own property from damage or looting, and let a neighbor or even local police know where you are going, when you plan to return, and how to reach you or your family members in an emergency.

In addition to your Western Kern County ARES® deployment checklists, you might want to create a home and family checklist. It should cover all family needs and your pets while you are gone. Here are some ideas to get you started:

#### House

- Put lawn furniture and loose objects indoors if high winds are likely
- Move valuables to upper levels if flooding is possible
- Heating fuel tanks should be filled
- Drain pipes if below freezing temperatures and power loss are possible
- Shut off power and gas if practical and if structural damage is possible
- Board up the windows

#### Family

- Designate a safe place to stay if needed, preferably with friends or relatives
- Reliable transportation, with fuel tank filled
- Adequate cash for regular needs and emergencies (not ATM or credit cards)

Western Kern County ARES®  
Revised: December 2012

- House, auto, life, and health insurance information to take along if evacuated
- Access to important legal documents such as birth certificates, social security cards, marriage license, passports, wills, property deeds, family history, etc.
- Emergency food and water supply.
- AM/FM radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries, bulbs
- Generator, fuel and safe operating knowledge
- Adequate supply of prescription medications on hand
- List of emergency phone numbers
- Pet supplies and arrangements (shelters will not take pets)
- List of people to call for assistance
- Maps and emergency escape routes
- A way to contact each other
- A plan for reuniting later
- How you will communicate if cell phones and Internet are out