



## **Article 2: Preparedness Corner: Take the Preparedness Challenge**

Perhaps the greatest challenge when preparing for an emergency is taking the first step. Creating a plan so that you and your loved ones are prepared for a catastrophic event may seem especially challenging. Our region is prone to earthquakes, volcanic activity, paralyzing snow storms, strong, damaging winds and flooding. There are also events that can adversely affect our community and homes such as a toxic chemical event, fire, power outages or a combination of events. With so many potential disasters it is difficult to know where to start. Consequently, we can easily feel overwhelmed by the perceived time and expense that preparation may require. Starting out slowly and committing to a weekly or monthly preparedness activity will not only alleviate the anxiety, but will add confidence when disaster strikes.

The first step is not as difficult as you might think. Something as simple as a flashlight in each bedroom will get you started. Since disaster can strike at anytime you will want an accessible light source and footwear close to each family member's bed. A severe earthquake can spin the bed around and displace items, so place the flashlight and an old pair of shoes in a mesh bag and attach the bag to the bedpost. Make sure you check the batteries in the flashlight twice a year when you reset your clocks. If you do this by the end of this weekend, you will take your first steps for emergency preparation. The next steps are just as easy!!

The American Red Cross has a comprehensive "24-Week Calendar" that can help you put together an affordable emergency kit. The Calendar breaks down the overwhelming task of emergency preparedness into an achievable week-by-week shopping and "to do" list. In addition, the Calendar can be adjusted to the size of your family or even multiple families. The City of Woodinville website, <http://www.ci.woodinville.wa.us/Live/DisasterPreparedness.asp>, provides a link to the Red Cross "24-Week Calendar". It can also be found on the Seattle Red Cross website at <http://www.seattlredcross.org/show.aspx?mi=4006>, and click on Disaster Preparedness Calendar. Being prepared for a disaster does not have to be difficult. Subsequent articles will provide information to help you and your family prepare for an emergency. So, get your family involved and your neighbors, by using the 24 week calendar. Since we never know when the next emergency event will occur, it makes sense to start your preparedness program now.

For other printed emergency preparedness information, please visit City Hall. The Emergency Preparedness Commission meets the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, at 17301 133<sup>rd</sup> Ave NE.