It's hard to believe this month is our seventh monthly meeting that has been cancelled due to Covid-19. I hope you are all taking good care of yourselves. We sure miss not being able to meet in person.

Just a friendly reminder: If you live alone, please sign-up for our new Senior Wellness Check Program! We have a lot of vetted volunteers who would be happy to call you on a regular basis to check on your wellbeing. To sign-up, call 564-397-3380 or email sheriffcommunityoutreach@clark.wa.gov. There is no cost for this service.

There are a lot of memes on social media about 2020. This is my favorite.

I'm not turning my clock back on November 1st. Seriously, nobody needs an extra hour of 2020.

To receive the free monthly S.A.L.T. Times Newsletter, call 564.397.3380 or send an e-mail to: sheriffcommunityoutreach@clark.wa.gov. **For other formats:** Clark County ADA Office, **Voice** 564.397.2322 **Relay** 711 or 800.833.6388 **E-mail** ADA@clark.wa.gov

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S.A.L.T. TIMES

October 2020

Disaster Planning For Older Adults

COVID-19 and wildfires are serious threats to health and safety affecting our nation right now. As 2020 has shown us, emergencies and disasters can strike quickly and without warning and can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or be confined to your home. What would you do if your basic services—water, gas, electricity or communications—were cut off? What if there is a food shortage, or a shortage of necessities; toilet paper for instance.

Older adults are among the most vulnerable when disaster strikes. That is why it is critical that aging adults and those who care for them prepare for emergencies. Even if you have physical limitations, you can still protect and prepare yourself. Retirement communities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other facilities for older adults should practice responding to an emergency and ensure that all residents know what to do in a disaster. Having a plan in place will ease anxiety and eliminate many of the hardships endured in a crisis.

Emergency planning can be overwhelming, especially if you have limited resources, so focus on disasters that are most likely to occur in our area, such as; wildfires, floods, landslides, earthquakes and a few active volcanoes. That's quite a list, but at least we don't have to worry about hurricanes here.

After a severe disaster, you might not be able to reach your doctor or pharmacy, receive home-delivered meals, or obtain usual home health services as we have seen during our ongoing Covid pandemic. In addition to a basic emergency supply kit, older adults need a personalized emergency plan listing where they can go in an emergency, what they should bring with them (such as medications, eyeglasses, hearing aids and extra batteries, oxygen, or assistive technologies), how they will get there, and who they should call for help. Those who use a communication, assistive, or mobility device should include provisions to transport this device with them if they need to evacuate. Similarly, if appropriate, the plan should include any food or supplies needed by a service animal.

Printing information on how to stay safe can be especially helpful in case the power goes out. Older adults should keep a list of their medications, doctors, and pharmacies in a waterproof bag. Experts recommend including a photocopy of doctors' prescriptions to make it easier to get refills in another location. Older adults also should keep a backup list of emergency information, including contacts, medications, medical devices (including style and serial number), and doctors, in another location such as a friend's home.

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After Storms, Watch Out for Scams

Natural disasters and severe weather can create opportunities for fraud in their wake, occurring at a time when people may be especially vulnerable, or targeting charitable intensions. Scammers use phone, text, mail, email, and even go door to door to target residents of affected areas following fires and damaging storms.

Remember that phone scams often use spoofing techniques to deliberately falsify the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity or make the call appear to be official. Officials with government disaster assistance agencies do not call or text asking for financial account information.

Disaster Relief Charity Scams

Consumers should also be aware of scammers posing as representatives of charities seeking donations for disaster relief. There are several steps you can take to protect yourself from this type of fraud:

Donate to trusted, well-known charities. Beware of scammers who create fake charities during natural disasters. Always verify a charity's legitimacy through its official website. If you have doubts, you can check with Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance https://give.org/.

Verify all phone numbers for charities. If you need to contact a charity by phone, check the charity's official website to see if the number you have is legitimate. If you're using text-to-donate, check with the charity to ensure the number is legitimate before donating.

Do not open suspicious emails. If you receive a suspicious email requesting donations or other assistance, do not click on any links or open any attachments. Scammers regularly use email for phishing attacks and to spread malware.

Verify information in social media posts. Double-check any solicitation for charitable donations before you give. Crowd-funding websites often host individual requests for help but they are not always vetted by the site or other sources.

To report suspected fraud, call the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline toll free at 1-866-720-5721.

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Joy Lasseter, PhD, Nutritionist has shared some great tips on preparing an emergency food pantry.

- Next time you get groceries, buy extra items. Buy what you already eat.
- Store foods that have a long expiration date. Don't buy storage food from stores that sell food close to the expiration date.
- Clear closets for storage space in the house, not the garage. Store food for easy access depending on your strength and mobility. Cans are heavy. Store food in small boxes or tubs light enough to move and carry.
- You'll need 2 gallons of drinking water per person per day in an approved water container. Washed fruit juice containers can be used to store water if the approved heavy, blue plastic water jugs are too expensive.

If you can't get out or can't afford needed items, ask for help from a friend or family member, or check with local agencies. Here are some helpful resources to help older adults with disaster planning:

https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/disaster_planning_tips.pdf

https://www.ready.gov/

http://www.helpingelders.org/im-an-adult-with-a-disability/ or call 888-637-6060

https://www.healthinaging.org/tools-and-tips/emergency-preparedness-older-adults

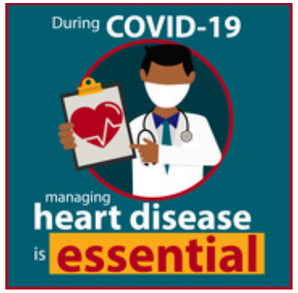
https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness___Disaster_Recovery/Disaster_Preparedness/Disaster_Preparedness_for_Srs-English.revised_7-09.pdf

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's to be prepared for, well....anything!

Flu vaccinations are essential in protecting heart health during times of COVID-19 and flu

Individuals with serious heart conditions are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and influenza. We have seen a concerning drop in emergency visits for cardiovascular events during the pandemic, and "routine" care is anything but routine. With flu season around the corner, vaccination is paramount to protecting heart health. Annual flu vaccinations can reduce the impact of flu-related illness in the population and also reduce the likelihood of cardiovascular events.

Flu vaccines are a safe, effective way for people with heart disease to stay heart healthy. Offering vaccinations during health care visits and hospitalizations from September 2020 to January 2021 or later can help millions of Americans. Please help us get the following messages out:



- Take your regular heart medications.
- Reach out to your medical team for questions and concerns.
- Seek emergency care when experiencing symptoms of a heart attack or stroke.
- Get a flu shot.

CDC.gov

Don't Pick Up for Fake Medicare Calls

We cover Medicare and SSN scams a lot, but we can't say it enough: Protect yourself and your loved ones from this unfortunately common scam by understanding what to watch out for.

How the Scam Works

All these scams start with a call that appears on your caller ID as Medicare or Social Security Administration, but they have many variationss. Regardless of the method, the scammer's goal is to steal your personal information for their personal benefit.

Medicare or Social Security benefits. They may claim there has been suspicious activity on your account and if you don't give them the information they need right away, you are in danger of losing your benefits or worse.

•Sometimes, scammers use robocalls to tell you there is a problem and ask you to call a different number to resolve it.

How to Protect Yourself

- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers. If you receive a call from a number you haven't saved to your contacts, or if your caller ID says "unknown," don't pick up the phone. Also, be aware that scammers can dupe caller ID and mask their true phone number. A legitimate caller or contact will generally leave you a voicemail and request you return their call. And if they know they are calling your cell phone most family and friends will text you.
- When in doubt, hang up. If you do answer a call from an unsolicited caller and are greeted by a robocall or even a person who claims to be with a government agency, ***just hang up***. Don't press any buttons, don't engage in conversation and don't ask to be removed from the calling list.
- Know how government agencies work. Government agencies don't call consumers unsolicited. Instead, they send letters if they need to contact you. Also, the new Medicare cards are being provided free of charge.

If you receive a particularly convincing call from someone claiming to be an SSA employee, hang up and call their toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 to verify the issue. Likewise, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE to verify Medicare issues.

BBB.org