Life on a flash drive: Being prepared for the unexpected

The second anniversary of the Slave Lake fire is fast approaching. The fire turned, the wind came up and many people had to evacuate at a moment’s notice. Some lost everything that day.

One of the biggest challenges facing Alberta’s health services after the Slave Lake fire was getting people the medication they needed. The majority of those affected who had medical needs did not have a pill bottle or copy of their prescriptions. That could have been solved if they were carrying spare medication or had all their information in hand.

Alberta has experienced an increase in severe wildfires, storms and flooding. If you had to evacuate, or worse, could not go home, how would you access your important documents: personal, medical, financial, insurance, and so on?

Having quick access to your important documents will decrease your stress level ten-fold in an emergency event. Take the 15 minutes now to collect a paper copy of all your personal, financial, medical, passport and veterinary documents and scan them to a USB stick, commonly known as a flash drive. You might even want to scan and add non-replaceable photos or your grandchildren’s artwork stuck to the refrigerator. Keep the paper copies in your ready-to-go kit and have your flash drive in a safe, but easily accessible place. Remember, protect your personal information and prevent identity theft by encrypting your flash card and using a secure password.

We used to say “if you don’t like the weather wait 5 minutes” but even that is unpredictable. So make a difficult situation easier by having your important information at the ready should you experience an emergency event.