Surviving the Storm

We all watched the devastation and felt the plight of those blasted by Hurricane Sandy. The impact was more severe than a normal hurricane as Sandy was a combination of a hurricane, nor’easter, and a giant ridge of pressure, called a Greenland high, which parked over the northern U.S. and steered the storm straight towards the Jersey shore.

The storm, which tore through the Caribbean and up the eastern seaboard, killed more than 100 people in 10 states. More than 8.5 million homes and businesses lost electricity and nearly 20,000 flights were cancelled. The damage is estimated at nearly $50 billion—the second-most expensive storm after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Alberta has experienced an increase in severe storms and flooding. Lengthy power outages can and have happened. If a debilitating storm was forecast today, would you and your family be prepared for it when it hit? What if it took out the power grid in your municipality and surrounding areas? Could you sustain a prolonged power outage? How would you stay warm? Would you be able to flush your toilet more than once? Would you be able to cook the food that thaws in your freezer? How long can your family survive without outside assistance? If an emergency happens in your community, it may take emergency workers some time to reach you. You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of 72 hours.

Being prepared means:

- **Know the risks** - Knowing the risks in your community and the most appropriate way to respond to them. Contact your local municipal emergency management office for advice on identifying the risks in your area.

- **Make a plan** - Making a plan for what your family will do, who they will contact and where they will go in the event of an emergency and practicing it regularly.

- **Prepare a kit** - Pulling together a 72-hour kit with enough non-perishable food, water, medication, warm clothing and comfort items for all family members. Similarly, you should make a ready-to-go
emergency kit in case you need to evacuate your home quickly and always have a vehicle emergency kit in every vehicle used by your family. Don’t forget your family pets; they need a kit as well. For advice on what to include, visit the Alberta Emergency Management Agency website at www.aema.alberta.ca.

- **Be informed** - Keeping yourself informed before and during any emergency by knowing where to access local information about an emergency, staying tuned to media, and staying connected with their personal contacts.

Other items to include in your 72-hour kit:

- Copies of important documents (prescriptions, insurance, identification, veterinary information, etc.) either on a secure flash drive or paper copies
- Communication (crank radios)
- Water for drinking (2L per person per day); plus hygiene and toilets (fill a plastic tote)
- Food (canned, dehydrated)
- Heat (blankets, emergency foil bags, camping gear)
- Light (crank flashlights, solar, batteries, candles,)
- Any necessary medication, including powered ventilators
- First aid items
- Extra gas for cars, generators
- Cash in small bills or coins (no ATM)
- Pet food/treats/bedding