

Resource helps local employees, businesses

The Siouxland District Health Department (SDHD) has developed a program to improve personal preparedness among employees. The initiative, called the “20 Weeks to Preparedness,” is designed to help individuals develop an emergency kit, a family communication plan, and a home evacuation plan.

SDHD didn’t just design the program, they tried it out in their own agency.

“The majority of our employees indicated a new and heightened awareness for preparedness planning and preparation for themselves and their family,” said SDHD Director Fran Sadden. “This program not only increases awareness among employees, it also helps your organization implement its own emergency response plan.”

To that end, SDHD is sharing all of the 20 Weeks to Preparedness materials online.

How it works

While organizations are free to implement the program any way they like, Sadden shared how it went at her agency.

It began with a short presentation during an all-agency meeting. At the gathering, all employees were given a starter emergency supply kit containing hand sanitizer, a personal medication card, a 20 Weeks to Preparedness calendar, a Protect Iowa Health Guidebook, and a whistle in a large zip lock baggie.

During the 20 weeks that followed, employees got a small yellow card in their mailboxes. The card detailed either that week’s list of items to collect for the supply kit or an action step for becoming better prepared. The following Thursday, a reminder containing the same information was sent to employees via e-mail.

Who can use it

The program has been tailored to suit not only health departments and hospitals, but also community



Sioux City resident Brian Drent conducts an inventory of items he collected using the 20 Weeks to Preparedness materials.

health centers, businesses, and other organizations. In Region 3, Sadden reports that all local public health agencies and many public health partners in Woodbury County have received a presentation and the program materials.

Shelby Petersen of Siouxland Community Health Center says that her agency recently implemented the program.

“20 Weeks to Preparedness is an outstanding tool to utilize in enhancing awareness of the importance of the impact that preparedness requires,” Peterson said. “Employees’ personal preparedness will only enhance their capabilities required to respond to the community at large.”

Other organizations, such as the Center for Siouxland and the Iowa Poison Control Center, have already implemented the program.

For more information, including all program materials, visit www.siouxlanddistricthealth.org. The 20 Weeks to Preparedness are available on the “0-9” tab of the site’s A to Z index.

