

Community Management Insights

Fall 2011

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Tips to keep your family safe at home should a disaster ever strike

Written by Tom Kraeutler

What would you do if high winds took out your phone service? An earthquake cut your water, gas or electricity? You had to leave your home on a moment's notice?

Let's hope you never see floodwater raging toward your front door or have to race from a blazing fire. But planning ahead for natural disasters is important. If the unthinkable ever strikes, disaster planning can help keep your family safe and make recovery easier.

No matter where you live, natural disaster can strike in one form or another. Flooding, fires or destructive high winds have hit every state in the U.S., and 41 states are at earthquake risk, notes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

These disaster preparedness tips from FEMA and the American Red Cross can help you prepare for any natural disaster:

- **Know Your Hazards:** What disasters are most common where you live? What is the best way to prepare for them? Contact your local Red Cross chapter or emergency management office for info and advice before disaster strikes.
- **Develop Disaster Plans:** Find out about disaster plans where you work, at your children's school or other places your family spends time. Then hold a family meeting and create your own plan. It should include evacuation

routes from your house and two meeting places: one right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire, and the other in another town. Make sure your family knows the phone number and address. If possible, also include the number and address of a friend or family contact outside your state because it's sometimes easier to make long distance calls during an emergency. Family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Your disaster plan should also include how to care for pets, elderly relatives or other special needs.

- **Practice Disaster Emergency Drills:** Show each family member how to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches. Make sure everyone knows emergency medical and police numbers. Learn how to use the fire extinguisher. Stock emergency supplies, including at least a gallon of clean water per person, and change them every six months.
- **Make a Household Contents Inventory:** Make a visual or written record of all your household possessions, including any model and serial numbers. Store a copy of this record in a fireproof or safety deposit box.

If disaster actually strikes, stay calm, reassure your family and follow your disaster preparedness plan. If you must leave your home and have time, take the following in a bag or large container: flashlight and battery-powered radio with extra batteries, first aid kit, prescriptions, eyeglasses, at least a gallon of water and change of clothes per person, nonperishable foods, sleeping bag, area maps, checkbook, cash, credit cards, driver's license or other ID, insurance policies, wills, deeds and other important papers.

For more disaster preparedness planning info visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the American Red Cross websites www.fema.gov and www.redcross.org.

Mid-Atlantic Client Appreciation Day

On September 15, 2011, Mid-Atlantic Management Corporation held its first Client Appreciation Day. The event was held at our corporate office at a time that both working and non-working Board and Committee Members could attend. Mid-Atlantic Management Corporation's Senior Staff hosted the event and managers from all over the company volunteered to make it a huge success, despite Mother Nature's attempts to foil our day (including rain and nasty winds). There were carnival games such as Boom Blast, Darts and Basketball in which the guests could win tickets. Our clients loved the prize wheel. They were also able to win ASSOCIA CARES or Mid-Atlantic prizes. Drawings were held for themed gift baskets. Vendors donated door prizes of \$50 gift certificates. There were some lucky prize winners including: Nancy J. of Foxfield, Nicole M. of Olde Colonial Greene, Rose K. of 1219 W. Wynnewood, Steve M. of

Belmont, Charlie of Morgandale, Dotty P. of Long Meadow, Clete Q. of Twin Brooks, Gary C. of Morgandale and Tim C. of Morgandale. Lots of food was served from hot dogs and burgers to salads and desserts, including a giant cake that said, "Thank you". Tours of our corporate office were given to all that were interested. Our clients really felt connected when they were able to "see where it all takes place". They really enjoyed seeing the photos of every client we manage on the walls throughout Mid-Atlantic's corporate office! We even had volunteers on-hand to sign up Board and Committee Members for ASSOCIERGE and ASSOCIA ADVANTAGE! Scout made an appearance and we were able to highlight ASSOCIA SUPPORTS KIDS (ASK) and ASSOCIA CARES – two wonderful programs! The night ended with a beautiful rainbow in the sky – a perfect end for a perfect day.



AWARD WINNERS

During the Associa Summer Conference, several Mid-Atlantic staff members stood out as going above and beyond and were presented with awards! Please help us to thank them for their hard work and dedication!

Diane Gothard, AMS, PCAM®

Newly appointed member of the Ambassador's Circle

Dave Breder and Joanne Labriola

Newly appointed members of the Financial Forum

Theresa Byrnes, CMCA® and Molly Tait

Recipients of the A-Team Award

Cindy Simpson, AMS, CMCA®, Carol Richard, AMS, PCAM®, and Jeanne Entenman

Recipients of Individual Achievement Award



everyclient. everyday. everytime.

The *Benefits* of Breakfast

Submitted by Stephanie Ortiz, Community Manager

I know you have heard it a million times, but breakfast really is the most important meal of the day. Americans tend to have backwards notions on food, and if you think of your meals as a direct source of energy, everything will come full circle.

Too often people think that they are too busy to eat breakfast or don't have a morning appetite. Ironically though, the thought of skipping dinner is hardly ever up for discussion. Breakfast sets up the frame work for your entire day. People use most of their energy throughout the day; while in the evening things are slowing down as is your metabolic rate. If you start your day with an energy rich breakfast and end it with a light dinner, you will notice that you have more energy and brain power throughout the day, and you will most likely sleep better. Additionally, eating something in the morning will jump start your metabolism, assisting with weight loss or maintaining a healthy body weight.

If you are not an early morning eater, bring your breakfast to work with you. Try starting your day with nutrient rich foods like eggs, high fiber cereals and breads, yogurt, fruits or veggies, and nuts. Breakfast for dinner was always a treat in my house, but there is nothing that says you can't have dinner for breakfast. Switch it up! Be creative! And do what works best for you! I can promise you though, you will definitely have more energy, focus, and increased productivity if you start your day with a healthy breakfast.



Getting the Most From the RFP Process

Whether you are thinking of a project for the community or for your own home, following certain guidelines will ensure you get the best results for your efforts.

First, you need to determine the scope of the work. You should decide on the materials and specify the quality, type, color and quantity. Using one set of specifications will allow for a comparative analysis of the proposals you receive. For large projects, you may require the assistance of an architect, engineer or other consultant.

You can eliminate some contractors by insisting on a certificate of insurance that lists their liability, auto and workers' compensation insurance. You don't want anyone working on your property who is not properly insured. The risk is not worth the savings they can offer because they do not carry insurance.

If it is a large job, you should include any bonds and licenses required as requirements for presenting a proposal.

All proposals should include warranties and details such as contact information and supervision of the work. You should also ask that they spell out how long the work will take and any penalties for not meeting the deadline. Also ask that the payment schedule be included. Another detail that may need to be included is where material will be stored and responsibility for security. Clean up is an item that is sometimes overlooked. The contractor should provide containers for the disposal of trash and building materials. The area should be kept clean and safe at all times.

Obtaining several proposals for the work will guarantee that you get the best price. You also have the opportunity to hear how others would suggest the job be done and can alter your original specifications if you hear a better method of completing the work. It takes preparation, but is worth the extra steps to be certain you are getting the best job for the money you are spending.

What Our CPA Does for Us

The CPA, or Certified Public Accountant, is a vital part of your association's professional team. A staff member or volunteer may take care of the bookkeeping for the association, but the CPA is needed to conduct an audit at the end of the year. In addition, our accountant:

- Conducts association financial audits
- Prepares association tax returns
- Reviews financial data, answers financial questions and provides financial advice
- Participates in reserve studies and advises on reserve funding strategies
- Assists with budget preparation and long-term financial planning
- Develops accounting policies and procedures and recommends internal controls
- Prepares monthly or quarterly financial statements
- Educates board or committee members on financial matters
- Makes presentations at meetings
- Helps us obtain financing

The association accountant is a valuable partner who works closely with the manager and the board to ensure your assessments are managed and invested wisely and legally.



FRANK'S REDHOT BUFFALO CHICKEN DIP

- 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup blue cheese or ranch salad dressing
- ½ cup any flavor Frank's Redhot Sauce
- ½ cup cheddar cheese
- 2 cans (12.5 oz. each) Swanson White Premium Chunk Chicken Breast in Water, drained and shredded with a fork

Directions: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Place cream cheese into deep baking dish. Stir until smooth.

Mix in salad dressing, Frank's Redhot Sauce and cheese. Stir in chicken.

Bake 20 minutes or until mixture is heated through. Stir. Garnish as desired. Serve with crackers or vegetables.

**You can use low-fat cream cheese, salad dressing and shredded cheese – still tastes great!*



AssociaLiving.com

AssociaLiving is a fun and insightful online magazine created specifically for our Associa communities and homeowners.

A resource of useful and inspiring information for residents and community associations across North America, AssociaLiving includes relevant stories about Entertaining, Home, Practical Living and Community, each geared toward enriching our homes and building stronger community associations.

Sign up for AssociaLiving (www.associaliving.com) to get great recipes for fall or to discover activities for the whole neighborhood. Keep reading to be inspired with holiday decorating ideas or to learn the ins-and-outs of weatherproofing your home. AssociaLiving has something for everyone in your family and community.

For those everyday clever ideas, visit AssociaLiving's *NeighborlyNotes* blog. *NeighborlyNotes* provides quick and savvy ideas to help make your home a happier, healthier and more efficient place to live. Blogger Carol, like many of our homeowners, juggles a life comprised of many

roles: spouse, parent, child and working professional, to name just a few. She has hectic days like everyone else, but no matter where they are spent, she ends them all at the same place: home. The editors of AssociaLiving hope the helpful tips and tricks about everything from organizing things around the home to entertaining with a twist will help make your days run a little smoother.

Celebrate the best of community living. Visit www.associaliving.com and sign up to get the latest ideas in Home, Community, Entertainment and Practical Living.

