

People Get Ready: Proactive Preparedness at Work

By Cecilia Matta, Workplace Preparedness Program Coordinator

Are you ready for any emergency? At home and at work? A recent Red Cross poll about American's emergency preparedness revealed that 49% own disaster kits, but only 39% have a family plan for emergency contacts, evacuation and other details. A troubling 62% of poll respondents were not confident of being prepared at work. At the same time, recent blackouts, floods and winter storms remind us that disaster can strike anyone at anytime.

The Red Cross "TogetherWe Prepare" initiative promotes the simple actions we can each take to lessen the impact of emergencies: Make a Plan. Build a Kit. Get Trained. Volunteer. Give Blood.

Savvy companies around the Puget Sound take a proactive approach to raise their employee's disaster consciousness. At Regence Blue Shield, Karen Wollgast and her Safety and Wellness Team are a great example of a company that promotes employee preparedness for emergencies. February was Emergency Preparedness Month at Regence, where they hosted the new Red Cross "Workplace Preparedness" training for staff members in a lunchtime learning module. Red Cross brought emergency kit displays, representing products available at the new Red Cross online store, www.seattleredcross.org.

Regence, Washington Mutual and other Washington financial centers have developed extensive Business Continuity Plans to manage whatever operational interruptions may occur in a disaster. They schedule several theme months and events during the year to promote employee emergency awareness and personal responsibility. For April's "Earthquake Awareness Month" at Regence, Karen Wollgast's team expects to work with their building management to run "Drop – Cover – Hold" drills and other activities.

The Seattle investment operations center of a major national bank recently enabled employees to stock their individual emergency kits at work. Sturdy shoes and gloves, energy snacks and prescription medicines were among the items folks stocked in their work station kits. Red Cross



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training includes a six-inch "Under the Desk Safety Tube", complete with water, mask, whistle and emergency light, as part of our Workplace Preparedness Essentials class.

Buy your ticket for the safety train and get on board. Fire up your staff's ability to "know what to do" in an emergency. Call on the preparedness experts – your American Red Cross. Get your company ready, with training and supplies, so you can successfully manage disaster-related business interruptions.

Are you ready? Call or email Cecilia at the Red Cross today - 206 726-3507 or cecilia.matta@seattleredcross.org - to schedule the training that will enable you to say — "yes, we're ready!"

Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference 2004

The Red Cross continues to play a leadership role in the Northwest's largest and most successful regional emergency preparedness conference. The *Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference* will take place on April 13th and 14th at the Double Tree Hotel in Bellevue. Business, government, non-profit, school and other audiences will come together for an invigorating two-day conference, aptly timed with heightened interest in homeland security and awareness. Topics include emergency planning, terrorism response and more. For more information please visit <http://capps.wsu.edu/edu/emergencyprep/>.