



165 Brick Store Landing Road  
Smyrna, DE 19977  
302-659-DEMA (3362) or 1-877-SAY DEMA  
FAX 302-659-6853

## **NEWS**

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**  
**CONTACT:** Rosanne Pack  
(302) 659-2210  
(302) 222-6573

### **MAKE SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS A HOLIDAY TRADITION**

If you're burned out from buying shirts and ties, fuzzy slippers and the Wii of the day , gift-giving can still be exciting and families can start a tradition of holiday and year 'round safety and preparedness. There are many safety-oriented gift ideas that are affordable, useful and even fun.

Emergency management elves suggest stuffing stockings and wrapping boxes loaded with supplies for emergency preparedness kits or handy tools for household and travel safety. Local hardware and department stores and catalogues offer practical, valuable and entertaining items that any family can use in an emergency. Delaware Emergency Management Agency officials suggest that families and friends use the holiday season to share the importance of being ready for winter storms, power outages, floods and other disruptive events.

Children can be part of the planning team for creating a family emergency plan and assembling an emergency supply kit while they are giving and receiving gift items that will serve a purpose should the lights fail or the roads be covered with snow.

The gift of light is always welcome and the variety of flashlights and lanterns available is nothing short of brilliant. Flashlights that don't require batteries are common and light devices can be found to clip to the brim of a cap, hang on a key chain or show up as a component of a crank- operated radio and phone charger. There are radios and portable lights that can be cranked or charged by the sun. Many of these include a cell phone adapter for charging, some even have a piercing siren for emergency use. Handy for a short charge in an emergency, shoppers can find a small, battery-operated cell phone charger that is powered by a single AA battery. Some LED lights, small enough for a key chain, are good for 100,000 hours and manufacturers claim can be seen for a mile.

There are all-purpose tools that can include a saw blade, scissors, screw driver, can opener and knife blade. Some even have a built in light. These tools are especially handy to include in a small emergency kit for your car.

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For weather event listening pleasure, NOAA Weather Radios can't be beat. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio is a service of NOAA and it provides the voice of the National Weather Service. All-purpose and weather radios that have battery back-up and a hand-crank charging capacity are available in most local electronic stores and many department stores. They come in a range of affordable prices, many starting under \$50 and can often be found on sale in discount and bargain stores. A weather radio makes a good companion to local radio and television bulletins and updates.

While families gather around the crank radio, listening for news of school closings, they can enjoy all-in-one self-heating meals that can be found in a variety of entrée types, from breakfast to meat and potatoes to vegetarian lasagna. For campers or folks who live in areas prone to power failures, those boxes can be wrapped and ribboned right along with the other gifts.

For those who might have to venture out into inhospitable weather, a zipper pull that features a digital clock and strobe light is one of many items that can be tucked into the toe of a stocking. There are also waterproof cell phone holders that can clip on a belt or basket for winter trekking or a trip to the beach.

If flashlights powered by a good shake and the siren in the weather radio aren't enough to keep the kids amused, there are small, portable versions of games such as Scrabble and checkers that can go with the family should evacuation to a shelter be necessary. And who doesn't want another roll of duct tape? If you don't need to tape up a cracked window or pipe right away, youngsters can resole sneakers or make a vest.

Although gallon jugs of water are a bit bulky to tote as gifts, collapsible plastic jugs ready for filling when storms approach can be wrapped and presented for any holiday.

Even though unwrapping a smoke alarm may be about as exciting as finding that quality manual can opener in the stocking, one can save your life and the other can give you access to soup for you and pet food for Fideaux if the electric is out.

Being prepared for emergencies is serious stuff, whether weather related or another category of disruptive event, but DEMA officials remind the public that you can have fun with a serious subject. Planning and assembling supplies for emergencies can be a positive group activity for families. A caring gift of emergency supplies can be assembled for those in need. Children can take a role and be an integral part of the team as the entire family creates a plan for safety and peace of mind.

Be imaginative, be creative, but be safe and prepared this holiday season. Remember, every household should have supplies to sustain people and pets for up to 72 hours in case of emergencies that impede travel and interrupt power.

For more information on creating a family emergency plan, the DEMA website, [www.dema.delaware.gov](http://www.dema.delaware.gov) has material on Family Emergency Preparedness and preparing for coastal storms. A cooperative program of DEMA and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is available free of charge for groups who would like a presentation on household emergency preparedness. DEMA certified volunteers conduct the presentations and demonstrate an example of an emergency supply kit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency website also has information on disaster plans, emergency preparedness checklists and other related safety and preparedness topics.

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