

Be Careful About Relying on Technology

I'm a techno geek and love gadgets. The latest fad item will usually find its way into my collection of toys. In an emergency this can be a blessing and a curse. If you rely on Global Positioning Systems to tell you where you are and where you are going, what do you do if the battery fails? When was the last time you looked at a map?

My flying students used to rely on navigation equipment to the exclusion of basic map reading. I would occasionally fail systems in the simulator and see if they could react. There was usually a period of bewilderment and anger.

We all get comfortable with technology. Do we still have the skills that these new systems were designed to replace? If we only know the "new" way, we may be in for a shock. This applies to emergency planning. Do you have a back up plan?

What communication system will you rely on during an emergency? What happens to your lighting plan when your fancy tactical flashlight runs out of battery power? Do you have a candle and some matches?

This all sounds so simple. Recently the eastern part of the U.S. was blanketed with snow and many homes were without power. What would you do? There were no lights, no recharging power for cell phones and radios. Many of us do not have a backup generator. Do we have a backup plan?

This all goes back to a Family Action Plan. Play the "What If" game to figure out the possible outcomes and possible solutions. Not every solution is feasible or cost effective so you must decide what level of risk you can accept.

Remember: Technology is a good tool, but don't forget the basic skills.