

Emergency Preparedness Tip of the Week

By: Ed Mayer, Shady Cove Emergency Manager

How ironic, as I sat down to prepare the emergency preparedness tip this week about living without electricity; the power went out in Shady Cove and remained out for approximately 14 hours. Was it inconvenient? Yes. Was it an emergency? Maybe, if you were the owner of one of the many businesses that lost nearly an entire days income, or needed the electricity to operate a lift chair or oxygen unit or needed the computer for urgent business. It takes an event like this to refresh in our minds just how much we rely on electricity. Now imagine if this was not for a few hours, rather for days or weeks.

As those living in Shady Cove were all recently reminded, we have become nearly totally reliant on electricity. Unless you have a generator; no electricity means no water if you are on a well or water system that needs pumps; often it means no communications by phone or computer or living without heat or refrigeration. Many people need electricity for life saving equipment. It is safe to say we have become “addicted” to this important utility.

So you ask, how do I prepare to be without power? It takes planning on your part. Often it is common sense, like having battery lights or candles readily available. Use stored water or a water source to pour into your toilet tank to flush for sanitation. Have at least one gallon of water per day for every person living in your home for consumption. At a minimum store enough for at least three days. Prepare to ask for help from neighbors, friends or relatives. If you need power for health related issues, arrange ahead of time for people to check on you and assist when necessary. Consider purchasing a generator. A generator system that would power the entire house is expensive, but a smaller unit could be used to keep your food or freezer going or an oxygen unit functioning. In short, when the power goes out; that is not the time to prepare and plan, do it now.