



Okay, enough already about bug-out-bags. So far we've discussed preparing for emergencies and deciding what to take with us as we either prepare to leave home, or stay home and hunker down. What about those of us who may have physical restrictions which may slow us down, or prevent us from leaving home in an emergency? If you believe you have mobility restrictions, or an injury which may hamper you in any way, I have a question for you; *Do you know where your **RED BAG** is?* You know; the red plastic bag with emergency information distributed last summer and given to new neighbors who have more recently joined us. In each bag is a placard; On one side it reads **OK** and on the reverse side, **HELP**. When placed in your window facing the street, they are large enough to be read clearly by emergency responders and volunteers who will be assisting in an emergency. Also included in the bag is a plastic whistle. In the event our telephone systems quit working, these devices will help responders get to those who need help most. It's recommended that your bag be kept near your bed for easy access. As our volunteers make their rounds, the homes displaying "**HELP**" signs will be given priority. In case you're unable to place the sign in your window, when a volunteer knocks on your door, respond with several loud blasts of your whistle or make other loud noises.

Another way to communicate, if the phones stop working, is by two-way walkie-talkie radios. Those are readily available at many department stores and are reasonably priced. If you wish to explore that option, contact the SCI Office, or any member of the Preparedness Committee for details.

Also in the **RED BAG** is one "**FILE OF LIFE**" for each person in your home. Please fill in or update the card(s). Our volunteers and First Responder personnel are trained to look on your refrigerator for those files, mounted in their magnetic pouches. (Aside from disasters, they can provide critical information to first responders in a medical emergency.) With your bug-out bag already packed (it is, isn't it?) and if you need to be evacuated, be prepared to be moved to a safe place until you can safely return home.

**Make a plan.** Talk with family and neighbors to develop a plan. If your family lives reasonably close, do you have a plan in the event of disaster? Will they be coming to check on you? Will the roads be open, or will they be physically unable to get to you because of injury? There's no way to know that now. Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. Get to know your neighbors and talk with them about checking on one another. In the event of a major disaster, SCI Board of Directors and Emergency Preparedness volunteers have plans in place to check every home in Springlake, but that will take some time as we go house-to-house, looking for **HELP** or **OK** signs. If you can take a moment to safely check on your neighbors.

**TIP:** *Buy a few extra groceries each time you or your caregiver shops for you, so you can build a supply of food and water gradually.*

Ron