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So, what should we prepare for? Good question. Who knows? A casual visit to the Internet reveals many reasons to prepare. Anywhere from floods, fires, earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, tsunamis, to a breakdown of society, economic or electrical grid failure, nuclear war, Zombie invasion, etc. There are some “prepper” groups which are way out in the *Twilight Zone*, but many others are closer to reality. Because of the nuclear war threats in the 1960’s, many Americans built fallout shelters. I’m not suggesting anything like that. It’s unlikely anything that bad will ever happen, **BUT**, North Korea does have the ability to hit us right now.

How often have you seen survivors interviewed on TV after a disaster wiped out their homes, who said something like; “*I never thought anything like that would ever happen here.*” **Reality check:** No matter what “**IT**” is, bad things can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. We’re vulnerable to both the forces of nature, and human folly. We live next to a rail line which at any time may have a rail car, or cars filled with *who knows what*, leaking, or derailed. We’re in a flood zone. Depending on which way the wind is blowing, we live beneath airline approaches to PDX. Also depending on the wind, there’s always Mt. St. Helens.

How will we know if we need to evacuate? Some of us are connected to *Columbia Emergency Alert Network*, also known as “Reverse 9-1-1.” Anyone can sign up for that service. (<http://www.columbia911.com/general/page/columbia-alert-network-can>) Cable Television providers, as well as local area radio and TV providers, are able to interrupt programming for emergency announcements,. Springlake residents also have the option of “**One Call Now.**” To any Springlakers not signed onto *One Call Now*, I recommend that you subscribe. It costs nothing and you can limit the kinds of calls you wish to receive to emergency calls only if you aren’t interested in the other types of notifications. Please see our Management Team for details. As a reminder, while typing this I received a test alert from my mobile phone provider.

If in the event of a major disaster requiring evacuation, seconds may count. You can save precious time by having a means to rapidly leave home with provisions suitable for a limited absence. Call it a “Go Bag,” “Bug Out Bag,” or “G.O.O.D. (Get Out Of Dodge) bag, having necessary items pre-packed and ready to go on a moment’s notice may make all the difference in the rest of your life. I’ll discuss having a bag ready to go next time. In the meantime, give it some thought. If you had to leave home, right now, what would you grab? How long will it take to decide what to pack in an emergency? If the decisions have already been made and a bag is already put together, you are prepared.

TIP: Subscribe to an online computer backup service. *In the event of an evacuation, or other event where you might lose your computer’s data, it can be recovered at a later time. Twice when we’ve suffered computer failures, one during a power black-out surge, we were able to recover everything we thought was lost. Also known as a “cloud,” enter “online backup service” in your search engine (Google, etc.) for available services. Think of it as insurance. Not for the hardware, but for data, including photographs.*

Ron