



## National Sheriffs' Association Psychological Services Board

### **SUPPORTING THE LAW ENFORCEMENT FAMILIES DURING NATURAL DISASTERS OR PANDEMIC EMERGENCIES**

**By Linda Seitz**

**Southern California Regional Spousal Peer Support Counselor**  
**Peaks & Valleys Coaching**

These are a few of the things that you don't think about until it's too late. Law Enforcement spouses are often left at home to fend for themselves during times of world or local crisis. It is helpful to devise a plan so that you feel safe if the officer is called to work and stays on duty for many days at a time without the ability to help or contact home.

#### **Emergency Information to have on hand:**

The name, number and email of your agency's contact person for family information.  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) for safe water instructions  
[www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) for homeland security issues  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for pandemic/health emergencies

#### **Develop a Family Emergency Response Plan:**

The contact name and number of the closest (in distance) police family spouse.

Names numbers of family and close friends that spouse could reside with in an emergency.

Names and numbers of people who can help with emergency childcare if necessary.

Family trust and personal will information. Home, personal and career documentation.

Bank, Insurance, Credit and Loan information including all passwords.

#### **Be Prepared:**

Keep all cars and generators filled with gas at all times.

Prepare a storage of water, food, necessities and medications.

Gain knowledge of proper use of all machinery and appliances at home.

#### **Be wise:**

Keep news channels off when young children near.

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Calm and confident adults breed calm and confident children.

Develop a communication strategy with officer, record the communication if children are asleep or away when officer is able to connect.

In health situations, create an area outside of the home for officer to strip down in order to enter the home safely.

Allow proper time for showering and disinfecting. The officer will know what is appropriate, let him dictate.

Explain to children that offer may have been in an environment or near people who have different germs than we do.

### **Connect:**

Conflict may be high because of anxiety surrounding disaster or emergency, proceed with caution. Create a mantra, "I'm really concerned about \_\_\_\_\_, can we talk about that the next time we connect?" This gives both parties time to digest the question and process an answer.

Suggest online or in person counseling services if behavior and mannerisms have drastically changed due to emergency and the anxiety that surrounds it. This includes officer, spouses and/or children.

Suggest forming a Spousal Support Group to the agency administration so that appropriate information flows from the department to the spouses via an email or possibly a private Facebook group.

(Linda Seitz, [www.PeaksandValleys.life](http://www.PeaksandValleys.life))

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