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IEMA Highlights Holiday Safety in December

Tips offered for preparedness gifts, holiday decorating

SPRINGFIELD – With the holiday season in full swing, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies are offering tips to help people stay safe now and into the new year.

“December can be a fun but hectic time of year,” said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. “Throughout the month, we’ll be offering tips to help people stay safe, as well as provide ideas on gifts that can help friends and family stay safe during all types of emergencies.”

Joseph offered several ideas for preparedness gifts including:

- **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather alert radio** with battery backup, a tone-alert feature and Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) technology
- **Flashlight** with extra batteries.
- **First aid kit** with sterile bandages and gauze pads in assorted sizes; antiseptic; latex gloves; tweezers; scissors; soap and moistened towelettes; and thermometer.
- **Home emergency preparedness kit** stocked with a three-day supply of bottled water and non-perishable food; battery-powered radio, weather radio and flashlights with extra batteries; first aid kit; shut-off wrench (to turn off household gas and water); manual can opener; and fire extinguisher.
- **Vehicle preparedness kit** stocked with a flashlight with extra batteries; first aid kit; water and non-perishable snacks; blankets; windshield scraper and brush; booster cables; sack of sand or kitty litter; tool kit; and shovel.

Most preparedness gift items can be found in hardware and department stores.

Whether decorating for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or New Year’s Eve, candles and strings of colored lights create a festive atmosphere but it’s important to be careful when using them. Candles should never be left unattended and should be placed on stable furniture in fire-safe holders that will catch dripping wax. Holiday lights and electrical decorations should bear the name of an independent testing lab to prove they were safety tested.

IEMA will be posting holiday safety tips throughout December on the Ready Illinois Facebook (www.Facebook.com/ReadyIllinois) and Twitter (twitter.com/ReadyIllinois) pages. Additional information on emergency preparedness is available on the Ready Illinois website at www.Ready.Illinois.gov.