So, were you ready for what Mother Nature threw at Buffalo and surrounding areas the week of November 17th? That is, if anyone can be prepared for that magnitude of a winter storm! And now - have your restocked your emergency supplies in anticipation of the next possible storm? Were you able to keep in touch with your family members? Did you know that all were safe? How about your neighbors? Thank goodness Buffalonians are known as the City of Good Neighbors as we needed each other throughout the storm. What could you do better? What will you do differently? Don’t wait to develop your plan of action — get ‘er done now! And if buying snowshoes is on your list, be prepared to pay about $60-$150 depending on what you might purchase. We got lucky this time as we didn’t lose electrical or heating ability; next time, will we be so lucky? And living in western NY, we know there will be a next time; we just don’t know how soon!

If you happened to be stuck on the roads - did you have some supplies to help you through? Something to eat and drink; extra blankets or clothing to keep you dry and warm; a way to communicate; a full tank of gas? No one wants to spend hours stuck but it happens. And maybe it happens too often! But we need to be prepared. Does your car now have the necessary items to help insure your comfortable survival if you are stranded for a time? Does your glove compartment now have a couple of granola bars? Don’t wait for the next storm - prepare your vehicle now!

How was your medication supply? Do you normally wait with only a day or two supply left before you order more or do you try to keep at least a weeks’ supply on hand? Maybe you need to think about your ordering habits and make a better choice.

How did your house do? Were your snow shovels in the garage ready to go? Did you have more than one? Maybe adding a shovel to your Santa wish-list wouldn’t be a bad idea! Looking at photos from the storm, the magnitude of it - not sure a shovel would have been enough, but it’s a start.

Remember - we need to be able to take care of ourselves and our family and our neighbors; if we can do that, we’ll all be in much better position as help might not be coming in a timely manner. Get prepared and do it today!
What to do if trapped in a car in a snowstorm

The massive snowfall that's buried parts of the Great Lakes region this week, seemingly out of nowhere, is more than just an inconvenience -- it's already proven deadly. One of the fatalities was a man near Buffalo, New York, who was found dead inside his car after the area got hit with more than 4 feet of snow. Getting trapped in a blizzard is a potentially life-threatening nightmare for anyone who lives in a part of the country where a brutal winter is simply a fact of life. It goes without saying that if the snow is coming down hard and you hear blizzard warnings on the news, then it's probably best to stay indoors, ideally in a home that's well stocked with emergency provisions such as food, water, flashlights and a battery-powered crank radio. (Take a look at the lists from the Ready.gov for suggestions.)

But if you do find yourself on the road, there are some ways to avoid becoming a statistic.

• **Gas up.** Always drive with a nearly full gas tank in case travel slows to a crawl or you get stranded.

• **Have an emergency kit.** Keep these essentials in your car throughout the winter season: Blankets, pillows, extra warm clothing, non-perishable food and snacks, water, flashlight with spare batteries, a few doses of any essential prescription medications, a first aid kit, whistle, hand-warmer s, snow shovel, ice scraper and jumper cables. (Yes, this list may be long but if you find yourself in the lurch you'll be glad you went to the trouble.)

• **Charge your phone.** Keep your cellphone charged in case you need it to call for help. Keep phone use to a minimum to conserve batteries.

• **Be visible.** If you're stuck in the snow, tie something brightly colored onto your antenna. This is a common way to signal that you need help. You can also blow that whistle from your emergency kit.

• **Stay in the car.** It may be cold and claustrophobic, but ultimately it's safer than being outside exposed to the elements in a winter storm.

• **Check the tailpipe.** This is a simple way avoid a deadly buildup of carbon monoxide in the car if you're sitting with the engine running. You should also crack open the back window slightly, which will keep fresh air circulating and prevent poisoning.

• **Run the engine intermittently.** Run your engine for 10 to 15 minutes every hour to keep the car sufficiently warm and also melt some of the ice and snow.

• **Leave the dome light on.** This will allow you to see inside the car, and also help people find you if search and rescue teams are out looking for folks who need help.

• **Keep moving.** It's important to avoid frostbite so try to keep up your circulation by moving your fingers and toes and changing your seated position frequently.

• **Share body heat.** If you're in the car with other passengers, huddle together to keep warm.

Stay in your car until the snow stops and weather conditions improve. It may feel like an eternity, but if you plan ahead with emergency supplies and prepare for the worst, you'll have the best chance of getting through it.
Only a few short days before the most recent storm that buried half of our region in tremendous snowfall, I spent my day at South Park High School in South Buffalo. There I spoke to over 300 students and faculty about preparing for disaster – including winter storms. Literature was given to them to share with their parents and guardians, with a stress on what each home should have in their preparedness kit. Not one student, I am sure, fathomed that the information provided would prove critical in the very short term.

My own home was impacted by about 6 feet of snow and my family was housebound for 4 full days by order of a travel ban, and self imposed for longer as we understood the need for roads to be free of unnecessary travel. And although we are a well prepared house – yes, I practice what I preach – there was one thing that I did NOT have in my “kit”. A roof rake! I had to borrow one from a neighbor to remove snow off of an elderly neighbor’s house and my own. We’ll be making that purchase as soon as they are back in stock at my local hardware store. No matter how well prepared, there is always more to learn.

Unfortunately, it usually takes a disaster to spur people to action. Whether it be preparing your home with MORE than 3 days of food and water, flashlights and important documents, or roof rakes, take this opportunity to make sure your household is prepared and to encourage others to do the same. Remember, a community working together makes sense so encourage preparedness education to everyone you know. As always, feel free to contact me for presentations in the City of Buffalo or to link you with other resources in your own neighborhoods.

## SMART Training/Meeting Calendar - December 2014

The following information has been provided by Pati Aine Guzinski and if you are interested in attending any of these upcoming sessions, please contact Pati Aine as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>6:00 pm - 7:30 pm</td>
<td>SMART GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>6:00 pm - 8:30 pm</td>
<td>Public Health Response to Terrorist Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>9:00 am - 11:30 am</td>
<td>Public Health Response to Terrorist Events</td>
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Dates may change due to participation in community events / drills/ exercises.

All classes will be held at the
Erie County Fire Training Academy
3359 Broadway, Cheektowaga, NY 14227
Pre-registration is **required** for all sessions.

Pati Aine Guzinski
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