Disasters both natural and man-made generally take the public by surprise, often leaving little time for gathering needed supplies before it is necessary to evacuate or to shelter-in-place without electricity. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends keeping an emergency kit at the ready and filled with food, water and supplies to keep you and your family safer, healthier and more comfortable during a crisis.

FEMA recommends an emergency supply kit that includes:

1) Water
   - Store one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days for drinking and sanitation. Following a disaster, clean drinking water may not be available. An active adult needs about ¾ gallon of fluid daily. However, children, nursing mothers and sick people may need more water, and any medical emergency might require additional water.

2) Food
   - Keep handy at least a three-day supply per person of non-perishable food.
   - Following a disaster, there may be power outages that could last for several days. Stock canned foods, dry mixes and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation. When choosing foods to stock up on, remember any special dietary needs within your household. Be sure to include a manual can opener and eating utensils.

3) First Aid Kit
   During any emergency, a family member—or you, yourself—may suffer an injury. Keep these first-aid supplies on hand:
   - Two pairs of latex or other sterile gloves
   - Sterile dressings to stop bleeding
   - Cleansing agent or soap and antibiotic towelettes
   - Antibiotic ointment and burn ointment
   - Prescription medications taken every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers
   - Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies. Also stock non-prescription drugs such as aspirin or nonaspirin pain relievers, anti-diarrheal medication, antacids and laxatives.
   - Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes
   - Petroleum jelly or other lubricant
   - Thermometer, scissors and tweezers
   - Eye wash solution

4) Tools, Communications and Supplies
   - Flashlight and extra batteries
   - Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert, plus extra batteries for both
   - Whistle to signal for help
   - Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal off a space
   - Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
   - Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
   - Local maps
   - A cellphone with chargers, inverter or solar charger
   - Cash or travelers’ checks and change
   - Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records. Keep these in a waterproof, portable container.

And once you have gathered the supplies for a basic emergency kit, you may want to consider adding the following:
   - Prescription glasses, contact lens and denture supplies
   - Infant formula, bottles, diapers, diaper rash ointment
   - Pet food and extra water for your pet
   - Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or free information from the FEMA website, ready.gov
   - Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
   - A complete change of clothing including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
   - Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper for disinfecting surfaces or purifying water
   - Fire extinguisher
   - Matches in a waterproof container
   - Toilet paper, feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
   - Paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
   - Paper and pencil, books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Keep your household’s emergency kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Check and update supplies regularly, and make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.

During or after a disaster, your emergency kit could mean the difference between a deadly situation and merely a difficult one. Learn more at the FEMA website, ready.gov.
Holiday Cooking Safety Tips

The kitchen is the heart of the home, and usually the place where everyone congregates during a gathering. Sadly, it’s also the room where two out of every five home fires start. Many home fires occur during the time of year that is supposed to be the happiest—the holidays.

Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are traditionally celebrated with special meals. Safety should always be considered in the kitchen, but during the holidays when the kitchen produces more meals and receives more visitors, extra caution is advised.

As we embark on the holiday season, Coleman County Electric Cooperative urges you to remember these simple safety tips to identify and correct potential kitchen hazards:

▸ Never leave cooking equipment unattended, and always remember to turn off burners if you leave the room.
▸ Supervise the little ones closely in the kitchen. Make sure children stay at least 3 feet away from all cooking appliances.
▸ To protect from spills and burns, use the back burners as often as possible, and turn the pot handles inward, away from reaching hands.
▸ Prevent potential fires by making sure your stovetop and oven are clean and free of grease, dust and spilled food.
▸ Remember to thoroughly clean the exhaust hood and duct over your stove on a regular basis.
▸ Keep the cooking area around the stove and oven clear of combustibles such as towels, napkins and potholders.
▸ Always wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire.
▸ Locate all appliances away from the sink.
▸ Plug countertop appliances into outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters to avoid electric shocks caused by contact with water.
▸ Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster.
▸ Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.
▸ Be sure to turn off all appliances when cooking is completed.

For more important safety tips to keep yourself and your family safe this holiday season and throughout the year, visit esfi.org.