



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Commissaries ask customers – ‘What’s in your closet?’

*By Millie Slamin,
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FORT LEE, Va. – You can plan for a summer outing, but you can’t plan for a natural or man-made disaster. This month, the Defense Commissary Agency wants to help you plan for both.

“Our focus is on delivering a premier commissary benefit to our armed services community,” said DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., “and we do that by ensuring our customers have what they need, whether it is for a backyard barbecue or an emergency.”

Beginning in June, and continuing throughout the summer months, commissaries are stepping up efforts to promote disaster preparedness through DeCA’s “What’s in Your Closet” campaign. This initiative prompts customers to check their medicine and kitchen cabinets, garages, and wherever else they may keep their “survival kits,” and purchase items that are missing.

“Our ‘What’s in Your Closet’ disaster preparedness campaign is just one of the many ways in which we enhance our customers’ quality of life,” said Sakowitz.

“It also serves to reassure our troops, whether they are at home or in the field, that we are not only providing their families with the finest service possible, we are also taking the very best care of them.”

During the campaign, commissaries will run their “Summer Water Program,” and offer “Summer Club Packs” that include disaster preparedness items like nonperishable foods, toiletry

items, flashlights and batteries.

Sakowitz noted that commissary patrons throughout the United States and overseas experience a myriad of climate changes throughout the year that sometimes cause disasters, most typically occurring at the onset of summer.

“It is now hurricane season for some of our customers, while others will experience lightning storms, floods, tornadoes or earthquakes,” he remarked. “Then, too, there are the regions where dry summers bring grass and forest fires.

“Because shifts in weather conditions can bring about a natural disaster, it’s important for us to heighten preparedness awareness and provide customers with items that will sustain them during a crisis.”

To avoid the risk of not having all items on hand, DeCA recommends that customers check their emergency preparedness status and use their commissary benefit to stock up on emergency provisions at savings of 30 percent or more.

“With the help of our suppliers, we keep our shelves fully stocked with products that can sustain customers who are coping with a disaster,” said Charlie Dowlen, promotions manager for DeCA’s sales directorate.

“We are fortunate to have suppliers who will expedite the delivery of large quantities of critically needed items that will sustain those who have gone through a crisis.”

DeCA recommends customers have the following items in their “closet”:

- Water – at least one gallon, daily, per person for three to seven days.
- Nonperishable foods – canned meats, fruits, vegetables, dried fruits, nuts, raisins, cereal, crackers, cookies, energy bars, granola, peanut butter, and foods for infants and the elderly.
- Paper goods – writing paper, paper plates, paper towels, toilet paper.
- Cooking items – pots, pans, baking sheet, cooking utensils, charcoal, a grill and a manual can opener.
- First-aid kit – including bandages, medicines and prescription drugs.
- Cleaning materials – bleach, sanitizing spray, and hand and laundry soap.
- Specialty foods – diet and low-calorie foods and drinks.
- Toiletries – personal hygiene items and moisture wipes.
- Pet care items – food, water, muzzle, leash, carrier, medications, medical records, and identification and immunization tags.
- Lighting accessories – flashlight, batteries, candles and matches.

“Our stores are stocked and ready with emergency-essential items, and motivated staffs are standing by to provide exceptional customer service,” said Sakowitz. “So don’t wait until disaster strikes. Visit your commissary today, and you will see that – it’s worth the trip!”

For more information about how to best prepare for emergencies and natural or man-made disasters, visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency Web site: www.fema.gov; the Department of Homeland Security Web site: www.dhs.gov; and the American Red Cross Web site: www.redcross.org.

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Photo caption: Commissary employees Rommel Castro (left) and Josie Sabater give Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Tyrone Matthews a check list during a “Preparedness Day” event May 1 for airmen and their families at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. The list is designed to help people prepare emergency survival kits in the event of a disaster. *(Air Force photo by Amanda Lopez)*

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost, plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*