

PROMOTING PREPAREDNESS - Part 3

Financial Considerations

We all know that we should have a cash reserve in case of unexpected contingencies, but have we insured that sufficient cash is immediately available to our spouse or next-of-kin in the event of our death? Here are some things to consider:

- 1. Does your spouse or N-O-K have access to the primary bank account?** Not all bank accounts, even joint accounts, are set up to provide unrestricted access to the survivor should one of the account holders die. To quote from the Florida Statute 655.79, “..... *a deposit account in the names of two or more persons shall be presumed to have been intended to provide that, upon the death of any one of them, all rightsvest in the surviving person or persons.*” Even though we **presume** our survivor has access, it would behoove us to check with our banker and be absolutely sure that we understand exactly what the rights of survivorship are in our case, especially if the account is out-of-state or was opened at an out-of-state branch.
- 2. Is sufficient cash available in our bank account to pay the bills?** Remember to include funeral expenses in your planning in addition to mortgage payments, car payments and living expenses. Also remember that the final month's retired pay and Social Security electronic bank deposits will be withdrawn electronically from your account while the amounts due are recalculated based on the date of death.
- 3. Is a readily available source of supplemental cash available?** If the answer to the previous question is NO, then be sure that funds can quickly be obtained from savings accounts, insurance policies or other sources. Read the policies or check with your insurance agent or agency.
- 4. Is your safe deposit box accessible to your spouse or N-O-K if you die?** If wills, insurance policies, powers of attorney and supplemental cash are kept in a bank safe deposit box, be absolutely sure that it can be accessed when needed. Also be sure that whomever needs the contents knows what is there and where they are located.