

# UC Monthly Safety Spotlight, December 2012/January 2013

## Careless Chris Can Never Be Too Careful

By: Kitty

"Isn't it awful?" George said as he passed Careless Chris' desk that morning. "All those poor people were totally unprepared for that storm. What a mess!"

Chris looked up and nodded. "I donated to a couple of the groups rescuing abandoned pets. The pictures make me so sad."

"And it could happen to us, you know," Lois added sententiously, passing in the hallway close enough to consider the conversation as automatically including her. She paused and added, "I was here for the last big earthquake and it was even worse. At least a storm is over quicker, we had aftershocks for days. There wasn't any power at my place for nearly two weeks. We were living on crackers and canned tuna for-" Just warming up to her reminiscent narrative, she noticed the clock over Chris' desk and remembered her original trajectory. "Oh, sorry, gotta run. Anyway, be grateful you weren't there."

George and Chris smiled and waved as she went on her way, feeling secretly grateful they had managed to avoid the temptation to roll their eyes at each other when Lois got started. It was a familiar story they had all heard multiple times, and sometimes more than once in a day when there was any kind of disaster somewhere in the world to trigger discussions related to the topic. "Tuna and crackers," George said solemnly, and Chris giggled in response before she could control her reaction.

"Well, she's not totally wrong," Chris quickly admitted, feeling a little guilty about mocking her coworker. "I've got a couple cans here in my desk in case I'm trapped on campus some time. We do get those big winter storms every other year or so, and if the bridge going east is blocked for any reason I might not get home for a couple days."

"Uh huh, and what are you going to drink?" George asked skeptically. "If the roads are that bad, the power's probably out and the drinking water is going to run out of the city system pretty fast. You gotta wash all those crackers down with something."

"Thought of that," she replied promptly. "I have a key to the storage closet where the five-gallon bottles for the water cooler are kept. As soon as the taps stop running I'm locking myself in there with my tuna and a big stick, and the rest of you can all decide how to divvy up what's left in the cooler."

"Ah, they don't have to outrun the bear, just be faster than your theory of survival. I like it." He straightened up and said, "The dining commons will feed the rest of us, at least for a couple days, but I can see I'd better go shopping for a bigger stick of my own if I really want to be prepared. See you later."

"Not if I see you first!" Chris replied cheerily, earning a parting grimace from her friend. Rather than going right back to her previous task, she decided it was time for the random semi-annual emergency preparation kit review she was careful to do at least once a year.

She'd paid enough real attention to the stories Lois told to know that it was important not just to have a stockpile of supplies, but to have the right ones and to maintain them in good condition. Running over the items in her backpack at work, she made a short shopping list of the ones that needed to be renewed, and another note to get the same things for her home kit, especially the extra week's supply of her prescription and new bottles of contact lens solution. Thinking of home, she realized they'd added Mr. Fluffernutters to the household in the last six months and added a notation to buy extra pet food to put in the stash for him. *And maybe a new toy, too - if we have to live on the kit contents, everybody's going to be pretty stressed.* That brought her around full circle to the beginning of the day seeing the sad, lost animal pictures online and she abruptly realized they hadn't gotten him micro-chipped yet either. It didn't take long to find the ready.gov brochure on preparing pets for emergencies and she added several suggestions from it to her shopping list. *Stressed, but totally prepared and able to deal with it.*

# UC Monthly Safety Spotlight, December 2012/January 2013

Feeling virtuous and productive about being on top of her planning, she glanced up at the sound of a commotion coming from the front doors. For a moment she couldn't make any sense of what she was seeing; there was an unruly crowd surging through the opening before she could even register what the signs they were carrying were about. Her desk was quickly surrounded by intimidating figures wearing masks and yelling at her, and she barely had the presence of mind to shove her preparedness update list into her purse as she grabbed her personal stuff. A confusing whirlwind of motion and noise engulfed her, and then suddenly receded like a tide leaving her high and dry on the sidewalk outside the building. Chris took a deep breath, looked around at the other bewildered staff members standing near her, and asked, "What the heck is going on?"

"We've been occupied," George answered, sidling up next to her. He nodded over at the roadway where the police cars were double parked, lights flashing. "Looks like we'd better plan on a long lunch and maybe finding a new conference room for that afternoon meeting." He raised a hand and waved at the crowd. "Hey, Lois, over here."

"But I have to get that budget projection finished today, Marion's meeting with the vice chancellor about the unit funding is tomorrow. How long are they going to be there?"

George shrugged. "Hours, days, could be weeks. Who knows?" He hefted his laptop. "I'm good anywhere they put me. Yay, Google Drive."

Lois joined them and nodded at his last declaration. "Yes, that's good as long as the connections hold. In the last earthquake, a landslide took out one of the main cables so the only way we could get any contact outside the city limits was from people with satellite service. And generators, since there wasn't any power either." From her tone, her next words could almost have been, "Those were the good old days."

Chris' confusion started to morph into panic. "I don't have a laptop, and all my stuff is still in there! How am I going to get my files?" She took a step toward the barrier tape being strung around the area. "They have to let me in! I didn't take the staffing requirements list, and I don't have the whole departmental services breakdown memorized. There's a detailed procedure for how we oversee projects that I have to use and it's on my hard drive."

"You don't carry a personal daily back-up?" Lois asked, fishing a USB memory stick on a lanyard out of her pocket and blowing the lint off it with proud possessiveness.

Careless Chris stared at her in disbelief. "No, I don't." She turned to George helplessly. "Who does that? How can I carry around all our confidential data and policy files and everything else, anyway? We're the central support group for the entire division! This is a disaster."

Fortunately for Chris and her teammates, the occupation was short and damage was relatively minor, although the budget presentation meeting had to be delayed. In the following weeks, Chris was given the assignment to coordinate setting up the unit's business continuity plan on the UC Ready site and she was as diligent in documenting and uploading the necessary resources as she had been in getting her family kit put together well. Chris may have been careless in forgetting about the operational facet of preparedness but she used her experience to help review all the risks to her group's ability to provide services in case of a major disruption. By the time she and Lois had completed the first version of their UC Ready plan, they had identified several critical needs that had never been considered before and were able to negotiate MOUs and pre-agreements with other units and off-campus suppliers to ensure that next time a sudden reversal of fortune arrived, they were ready not to just cope with it, but to sustain and succeed in spite of it.