

Preparing for Y2K? Checklist can help

Governments and businesses have spent billions of dollars to ensure that computer systems will make a successful transition to the next century.

Although it is unlikely the Year 2000, or Y2K, issue will create significant problems in the United States, no one can say for sure there won't be temporary disruptions in some services. Such interruptions are expected to be short-lived and not expected to cause long-term problems.

The following recommendations will help you prepare for difficulties that may occur:

Local Information: Read Y2K notices provided by local government officials, banks, power and telephone companies, health care organizations and other important service providers. Adapt the recommendations to what you learn locally and to your past experiences with local service providers.

Food, water and other suppliers: Have at least a three-day supply of food and water (one gallon per person per day). Make a personal assessment of items and services critical to your family, including special items or services required by family members with special needs, such as infants, elderly and persons with disabilities.

Have adequate clothing, tools and supplies, flashlights, batteries, a battery-powered radio and a first aid kit. For further information, visit: <http://www.fema.gov/pte/empred.htm> and <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/emered.html>, or call FEMA at 1-800-480-2520.

Follow all appropriate safety instructions for fuel storage and use of heating and cooking devices or other emergency items.

Important Records: Keep copies of important records — particularly your bank and financial statements, medical records and prescription drug information — in the few months before and after Jan. 1. When you receive a transaction receipt,

check it for accuracy and save it to compare against your statement.

Cash: If you decide to withdraw cash, hold only as much as you would for a holiday weekend. Withdrawing large amounts of cash is unnecessary and may invite theft. Financial institutions are well prepared for the date change and you have more than one payment option (e.g., checks, credit cards, debit cards, traveler's checks).

Medicine: Refill prescription medications when you have a five-to-seven day supply remaining. The pharmaceutical and health care industries are confident, based on experience, that following this standard practice is all that is needed for Y2K. If you have questions about your health care needs, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or other health care provider.

Gasoline: As you would in preparation for a winter storm, keep your automobile gas tank above half full. Service stations are re-supplied regularly — sometimes as often as every other day.

Consumer electronics: Check with manufacturers to see if the essential electronic equipment you use around your home is Y2K ready, especially personal computers, monitored security systems or programmable thermostats.

Telephones and Internet: Use telephones and the Internet only as necessary on Jan. 1. Testing the systems to see if they work or engaging in long conversations could create delays greater than those experienced during high volume usage periods such as Mother's Day.

Scams: Beware of Y2K scams. Be skeptical if someone tries to sell you a product, service or investment that is "Y2K safe" or wishes to sell you Y2K insurance. Never give out your bank account, credit card or Social Security number unless you initiated the call or contact. (*Information courtesy of President's Council on Year 2000 conversion*)

Security forces crack down on illegal parking

Illegal parking, particularly on grassy areas, remains a problem at Charleston AFB and steps are being taken to fix the situation.

The 437th Security Forces Squadron has been charged with closely monitoring and issuing parking violation tickets to individuals who park in illegal or unauthorized areas.

To assist with this task, the Parking Warden Program was created, and select individuals have been trained on how to issue citations for parking violations at or near their places of work throughout the installation.

"Let's face it, in our changing, fast-paced lifestyle everyone wants to be able to park close to their destination, but that is not always possible," says Col. Dennis Kaan, 437th Support Group commander. "The last thing we want to do is ticket individuals, but we need to maintain our beautiful base."

According to the CAFB Supplement to AFI 31-204, the following penalties will be incurred by individuals who are cited for illegal parking:

- Three parking citations in 12 months warrants a 30-day suspension of base driving privileges
- Four citations in 12 months results in a 90-day suspension of base driving privileges
- Five citations or more in 12 months results in a six-month suspension of base driving privileges

"In many places on base, parking is at a premium because limited construction money has prevented us from adding additional parking space, but there is usually available parking a short walk from the crowded lots," says Kaan.

By using all valid parking lots and avoiding parking on grassy areas and other unauthorized areas, we can all do our part to preserve the beauty of Charleston AFB, he said. (*Information submitted by the 437 SFS*)