

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency Readiness

Emergencies disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property. If an emergency occurs in your community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help you, but you need to be ready as well. Local responders may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere.

You should know how to respond to severe weather or any disaster that could occur in your area—hurricanes, earthquakes, extreme cold, flooding, or terrorism.

You should also be ready to be self-sufficient for at least three days. This may mean providing for your own shelter, first aid, food, water, and sanitation.

(Sources: Citizen Corps, Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross.)

Why Prepare?

Every citizen in this country is part of a national emergency management system that is all about protection—protecting people and property from all types of hazards.

Think of the national emergency management system as a pyramid with you, the citizen, forming the base of the structure. At this level, you have a responsibility to protect yourself and your family by knowing what to do before, during, and after an event. Some examples of what you can do follow:

Before:

Know the risks and danger signs.

Purchase insurance, including flood insurance, which is not part of your homeowner's policy.

Develop plans for what to do.

Assemble a disaster supplies kit.

Volunteer to help others.

During:

Put your plan into action.

Help others.

Follow the advice and guidance of officials in charge of the event.

After:

Repair damaged property.

Take steps to prevent or reduce future loss.

If an Emergency Happens

The U.S. government can use the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to provide information to the country in an emergency. The President of the United States can use this system to provide immediate information to the public when an emergency happens. State and local governments may also use the EAS to provide emergency information to the public in their area. If an emergency happens, listen to the radio or television for information about how to protect yourself and your family.

TIP: If an emergency happens, listen to what local authorities tell you to do. Listen to the radio or television for instructions. Have a television or radio in your home that works on batteries in case electricity in your area is temporarily lost.

LOCAL RADIO CHANNELS:

WOKO 98.0 FM

WIRY 1340 AM

Things You Can do Right Now to be Safer

Check and change the batteries in your smoke alarms and replace all alarms that are more than 10 years old.

Make sure you know where your local fire department, police station, and hospital are and post a list of emergency phone numbers posted near all the telephones in your home.

Organize and practice a family fire drill -- make sure your children know what your smoke detector sounds like and what to do if it goes off when they are sleeping.

Locate the utility mains for your home and be sure you know how to turn them off manually: gas, electricity, and water.

Create an emergency plan for your household, including your pets. Decide where your family will meet if a disaster does happen: 1) right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire and 2) outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home -- ask an out of town friend to be your "family contact" to relay messages.

Prepare a 3-day disaster supply kit, complete with flashlights, batteries, blankets, and an emergency supply of water and food (and pet food!).

Plan to hold a Neighborhood Watch meeting -- your local Sheriffs' office or police station can help you get started.

Check the expiration dates of all over-the-counter medications -- discard all that are expired and replace any that are routinely needed.

Make sure all cleaning products and dangerous objects are out of children's reach.

Plan to sign up for a first aid training course. Call your local American Red Cross chapter, the National Safety Council or American Safety & Health Institute to ask about courses in your area.

Visit with your neighbors and discuss how you would handle a disaster in your area. Talk to neighbors with special needs and help them become safer too!

Don't Be Afraid, Be Ready

DHS is helping Americans learn about possible dangers, so they can be ready to react during a terrorist attack or natural disaster. DHS provides information to help you make your family, your home, and your community safer from the dangers of crime, terrorism, and disasters of all kinds. Call 1-800-BE-READY for printed information or visit the DHS website at <http://www.ready.gov>.

You also can get a Citizen's Guide with tips on how to make your family, your home, and your community safer. You can get this guide from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by calling 1-800-480-2520. You also can get materials from the Citizen Corps website at http://www.citizencorps.gov/ready/cc_pubs.shtm.

Contact Us

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