

# **3 Actions** you should take to be prepared in emergencies

**1 Get a Kit   2 Make a Plan   3 Be Informed**

It's important that you be prepared for possible disasters and other emergencies. Natural or human-caused disasters can strike suddenly, at anytime and anywhere. There are three actions everyone can take that can help make a difference...

## **Get Involved**

Join other members of your community through the American Red Cross in taking these first steps. You never know how many people your actions will affect, how many lives you might change. When we come together we become something bigger than us all.

**Be Red Cross Ready**



**American  
Red Cross**

# 1 Get a Kit

Have at least three days of supplies in an easy-to-carry evacuation kit, with additional supplies on hand. Remember to check your kit and replace the stock every six months.

An easy way to get your kit started is to contact your local Red Cross or go online to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) to order an emergency preparedness kit today. If you purchase a kit or choose to build your own, check that it includes—

**Water.** Have at least one gallon per person per day.

**Food.** Pack non-perishable, high-protein items, including energy bars, ready-to-eat soup, peanut butter, etc. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water.

**Flashlight.** Hand-crank and alternative energy options are available. Include extra batteries, if applicable

**First aid kit.** Include a first aid reference guide.

**Medications.** Don't forget prescription and non-prescription items.

**Radio.** Include extra batteries or use a hand-crank radio.

**Tools.** Gather a wrench to turn off gas if necessary, a manual can opener, screwdriver, hammer, pliers, knife, duct tape, plastic sheeting and garbage bags and ties.

**Clothing.** Provide a change of clothes for everyone, including sturdy shoes and gloves.

**Personal items.** Remember copies of important papers, including identification cards, insurance policies, birth certificates, passports, etc.; eyeglasses, contact lenses and solution, and comfort items like toys and books, if pertinent.

**Sanitary supplies.** You may need toilet paper, towelettes, feminine supplies, personal hygiene items, bleach, etc.

**Money.** Have cash. (ATMs and credit cards won't work if the power is out.)

**Contact information.** Carry a current list of family phone numbers and e-mail addresses, including someone out of the area who may be easier to reach if local phone lines are out of service or overloaded.

**Pet supplies.** For each pet, include food, water, a collar, a leash / cage / carrying case, litter box or plastic bags, tags, any medications and vaccination information.

**Map.** Consider marking an evacuation route on it from your local area.

Store your disaster supplies in sturdy yet easy-to- carry containers, in a place that is easily accessible. Keep a smaller version of the kit in your vehicle. If you become stranded or are not able to return home, having some items with you will help you be more comfortable until help arrives.

# 2 Make a Plan

Planning ahead will help you have the best possible response to disaster.

**Talk.** Discuss with your family the disasters that can happen where you live. Establish responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team. Designate alternates in case someone is absent. If a family member is in the military, also plan for how you would respond if they are deployed. Include the local military base resources that may be available.

**Plan.** Choose two places to meet after a disaster:

- Right outside your home, in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire.
- Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate your neighborhood.

**Learn.** Each adult in your household should learn how and when to turn off utilities such as electricity, water and gas. Ask your local fire department to show you how to use a fire extinguisher.

**Tell** everyone in the household where emergency information and supplies are kept. Make copies of the information for everyone to carry with them. Keep the information updated.

**Practice** evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on a map in case main roads are impassable or gridlocked.

**Include your pets.** If you must evacuate, take your animals with you. If it is not safe for you to remain, it is not safe for them.

**Support your community.** Support your community plans by volunteering in the community and by giving blood. More than one million people in the U.S. serve their communities. They come from all walks of life and backgrounds and are of all ages. Red Cross volunteers help people in emergencies. They translate for non-English speakers so that everyone can receive Red Cross services, teach first aid classes and organize blood drives. They connect members of the armed forces stationed overseas with their families during major family events. These vital community services are made possible by people like you. Contact your local Red Cross chapter and ask how you can help.

**Give blood.** Blood is needed in times of emergency, but the ongoing need is also great. Every two seconds someone in America needs a blood transfusion—cancer patients, accident victims, premature infants and the list goes on. Your blood donation means so much to the individuals who need it, and you can help make a lifesaving difference by giving blood.

During times of crisis and every day, each blood donation has the potential to help save as many as three lives.

Whole blood has a shelf life of only 42 days, so it is so important to be a regular and frequent donor. It's important to have an adequate blood supply available at all times. You can support your community blood supply by calling 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543) or visiting [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org) and making an appointment to donate blood today.

## 3 Be Informed

Know what may happen and how you can help.

**Learn what disasters or emergencies may occur where you live, work and play.** These events can vary from those affecting only you and your family, like a home fire or medical emergency, to those affecting your entire community, like an earthquake or flood.

**Identify how local authorities will notify you** during a disaster and how you will get important information, whether through local radio, TV or NOAA weather radio stations or channels.

**Learn what you can do to prepare** for disasters by contacting your local Red Cross chapter to ask about first aid, CPR and disaster training. Learning simple first aid techniques can give you the skills and confidence to help



when someone in your home, your neighborhood or workplace is injured.

When a major disaster occurs, your community can change in an instant. Loved ones can be hurt, and emergency response can be delayed. Make sure that at least one member of your household is trained in first aid and CPR and in how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED). Disaster preparedness presentations will provide more specific information on how to prepare for disasters in your community. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for details.

**Share** what you have learned with your family, household and neighbors and encourage them to be informed too.

The three steps below can help you to react well in an emergency.

- Check the scene for safety and the victim for life-threatening conditions.
- Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number and request professional assistance.
- Care for the victim if you can reach the person safely.

**Important Phone Numbers**

Police: call 9-1-1 or

Fire Dept.: call 9-1-1 or

Ambulance: call 9-1-1 or

Family Doctor:

**Emergency Contact Card**

Poison Control Center:  
1-800-222-1222

Visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)  
for more information.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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## Be Red Cross Ready Checklist

- I know what emergencies or disasters are most likely to occur in my community.
- I have a family disaster plan and have practiced it.
- I have an emergency preparedness kit.
- At least one member of my household is trained in first aid and CPR/AED.
- I have taken action to help my community be prepared.

This program represents the cooperative efforts of the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Ready Campaign to encourage the public—and the community at large—to be more prepared for a disaster or other emergency.

We encourage you to—

- Get a kit.
- Make a plan.
- Be informed.

**Household Members' Contact Information**

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