

Disasters – What Can Youth Do?

Elementary and early middle school students can support the Red Cross and other organizations by raising funds for local, U.S. and international disasters and can take **courses**, such as First Aid for Children Today (FACT), Basic Aid Training (BAT) or Babysitter’s Training. High school and college level students can also raise funds, but they can do even more. Through American Red Cross training programs like **Together We Prepare**, they can provide neighborhood groups, community agencies and businesses with disaster preparedness presentations, materials and workshops.

In addition to providing information on overall preparedness, young people can inform others how to prepare for specific disaster situations such as earthquakes, home fires, wildfires, floods, heat emergencies and terrorism.

“Together We Prepare” Program

Now more than ever, you need to be prepared for the unexpected . . .

Make a Plan

After a disaster, it is vital that you know your family is safe. By making a plan today, you can avoid uncertainty in the future.

During an emergency, the more you have planned ahead of time, the calmer and more assured you and your family will be. These six steps will help you through the process:

1. Talk

Talk with your family about disasters that can happen where you live. Find out what types of disasters occur in your area.

Talk with your family about why you need to prepare for these events. Calmly explain the potential dangers, and plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team. Make sure every family member knows their particular responsibilities. Designate an alternate in case a person is not there at the time.

2. Plan

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

- 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.

After determining your meeting places, you should also:

- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room. Also, determine the best two escape routes out of your neighborhood/community.
- Ask an out-of-town friend to be your “family contact.” After a disaster, it’s often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact’s phone number.
- Find out how to care for your pets. Many shelters do not allow them because of health regulations. For more information on how to care for your pets, see the following information.

Animals

The following information has been prepared by the **Humane Society of the United States** in cooperation with the American Red Cross.

Our pets enrich our lives in more ways than we can count. In turn, they depend on us for their safety and well-being. Here’s how you can be prepared to protect your pets when disaster strikes.

Be Prepared With a Pet Disaster Plan

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan must include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives.

Different disasters require different responses. But whether the disaster is a hurricane or a hazardous spill, you may have to evacuate your home.

In the event of a disaster, if you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them, too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost or worse. So prepare now for the day when you and your pets may have to leave your home.

a. Have a Safe Place to Take Your Pets

Red Cross disaster shelters **cannot accept pets** because of states' health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals who assist people with disabilities are the **only** animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead. Do not wait until disaster strikes to do your research.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations.
- Ask friends, relatives or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers.
- Ask local animal shelters if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster. Animal shelters may be overburdened caring for the animals they already have as well as those displaced by a disaster, so this should be your last resort.

b. Assemble a Portable Pet Disaster Supplies Kit

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential supplies. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy

containers that can be carried easily (duffel bags, covered trash containers, etc.). Your pet disaster supplies kit should include:

- Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter/pan and can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

c. Know What to Do AS a Disaster Approaches

- Often, warnings are issued hours, even days, in advance. At the first hint of disaster, act to protect your pet.
- Call ahead to confirm emergency shelter arrangements for you and your pets.
- Check to be sure your pet disaster supplies are ready to take at a moment's notice.
- Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.
- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area. You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.

You may not be home when the evacuation order comes. Find out if a trusted neighbor would be willing to take your pets and meet you at a prearranged location. This person should be comfortable with your pets, know where your animals are likely to be, know where your pet

disaster supplies kit is kept and have a key to your home. If you use a pet sitting service, they may be available to help, but discuss the possibility well in advance.

Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. Don't leave animals unattended anywhere they can run off. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, try to escape, or even bite or scratch. And, when you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines. Consult your veterinarian if any behavior problems persist.

Caring for Birds in an Emergency

Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier. In cold weather, wrap a blanket over the carrier and warm up the car before placing birds inside. During warm weather, carry a plant mister to mist the birds' feathers periodically. Do not put water inside the carrier during transport. Provide a few slices of fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Have a photo for identification and leg bands. If the carrier does not have a perch, line it with paper towels and change them frequently. Try to keep the carrier in a quiet area. Do not let the birds out of the cage or carrier.

About Other Pets

Reptiles – Snakes can be transported in a pillowcase, but they must be transferred to more secure housing when they reach the evacuation site. If your snakes require frequent feedings, carry food with you. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking as well as a heating pad. When transporting house lizards, you can follow the same directions as for birds.

Pocket Pets – Small mammals (hamsters, gerbils, etc.) should be transported in secure carriers suitable for maintaining the animals while sheltered. Take bedding materials, food bowls and water bottles.

A Final Word

If you must evacuate, do not leave your animals behind. Evacuate them to a prearranged safe location if they cannot stay with you during the evacuation period. (Remember, pets are not allowed in

Red Cross shelters.) If there is a possibility that disaster may strike while you are out of the house, there are precautions you can take to increase your pets' chances of survival, but they are not a substitute for evacuating with your pets. For more information, contact **The Humane Society** of the United States, Disaster Services, 2100 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20037.

In a statement of understanding, The American Red Cross recognizes The Humane Society of the United States as the nation's largest animal protection organization responsible for the safety and well-being of animals, including disaster relief. The American Red Cross is committed to transforming the caring and concern of the American people into immediate action.

For more information about pets, you may wish to contact:

- The Humane Society of the United States.
- The American Veterinary Medical Association.

3. Learn

Each responsible family member should learn **how and when to turn off utilities** such as electricity, water and gas. Ask someone at the fire department to show you how to use the fire extinguisher you store in your home.

- Learn about your community's disaster warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Learn where the safe spots are in your home for each type of disaster.
- Learn about the disaster plans at your business, your child's school or daycare center, or other places where you and your family spend time.

4. Check Supplies

- Review your disaster supplies and replace water and food every six months.
- See the **Build a Kit** information on the next page.
- Check batteries in smoke alarms every year and make sure one is installed on each level of your home.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage for each disaster.

Build a Kit – Disaster Supplies Kit

There are six basics you should stock for your home: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container – suggested items are marked with an asterisk (*). Possible containers include a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack or a duffel bag.

Water

- Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more.
- Store one gallon of water per person per day.
- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).*

Food

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:
 - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
 - Canned juices
 - Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
 - High-energy foods
 - Vitamins
 - Food for infants
 - Comfort/stress foods

First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Assorted sizes of safety pins

- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Triangular bandages (3)
- Non-prescription drugs
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Non-Prescription Drugs

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils*
- Emergency preparedness manual*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries*
- Flashlight and extra batteries*
- Cash or traveler's checks, change*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towelettes*
- Soap, liquid detergent*
- Feminine supplies*
- Personal hygiene items*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding

*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots*
- Rain gear*
- Blankets or sleeping bags*
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

Special Items

Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

- **For Baby***
 - Formula
 - Diapers
 - Bottles
 - Powdered milk
 - Medications
- **For Adults***
 - Heart and high blood pressure medication
 - Insulin
 - Prescription drugs
 - Denture needs
 - Contact lenses and supplies
 - Extra eye glasses

Entertainment

- Games and books

Important Family Documents

- Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:
 - Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
 - Passports, social security cards, immunization records

- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

- Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.
- Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

General Disaster Preparedness Materials for Children

- “Disaster Preparedness Coloring Book” (ARC 2200, English, or ARC 2200S, Spanish) Children & Disasters ages 3-10.
- “Adventures of the Disaster Dudes” (ARC 5024) video and presenter’s guide for use by an adult with children in grades 4-6.

Developed by the **Federal Emergency Management Agency** and the **American Red Cross**.

5. Tell

Tell everyone in the household where emergency contact information is kept. Make copies for each member of the family to carry with them. Be sure to include an out-of-town contact. It may be easier to call out of the area if local phone lines are overloaded or out of service.

Tell your children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for help. Post emergency telephone numbers by phones.

Complete the information on an **Emergency Contact Card** (*see next page*) and make copies for each member of your family to carry with them. Be sure to include an out-of-town contact on your Contact Card. You may be able to reach someone out of town when local phone lines are out of service or overloaded.

EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD

Call 9-1-1 to request help during an emergency. Please remember that unnecessary calls to 9-1-1 prevent others from getting the help they need.

After a disaster, it is often easier to call long-distance. Ask an out-of-town friend or relative to be your designated family contact. If your family is separated during a disaster, each person should call your family contact to report their location and condition. Be sure each family member carries one of these cards.

OUT-OF-TOWN FAMILY
CONTACT PERSON: _____

Phone:

() _____ day# () _____ night#

LOCAL EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS:

Spouse, Parent or Guardian Work Phone: _____

School Phone(s): _____

Day Care Phone: _____

Family Cell Phone(s): _____

It is important to establish family meeting places in case of disaster. Pick one place to meet right outside of your home and another meeting place outside of your neighborhood.

Family reunion site(s) during a disaster: _____

6. Practice

Conduct fire drills and practice evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on a map in case main roads are impassible or gridlocked. Practice earthquake and tornado drills at home, school and work. Commit a weekend to update phone numbers, disaster supplies and review your plan with everyone.

Chemical or Airborne Hazards

When there is concern about a potential exposure to a chemical or other airborne hazard, local officials will advise you to “shelter-in-place.” This is unrelated to taking shelter on the lowest level of your home in case of a natural disaster like a tornado. To shelter-in-place:

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that is above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- Using duct tape, seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Listen to your radio or television for further instructions. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

Build a Kit

Your household should have a three-day Disaster Supplies Kit to ensure the comfort and safety of your entire family for three full days.

Disasters can occur quickly and without warning. And when an emergency strikes, it can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your

home. If a destructive storm cut off your power, phone and other basic services for several days, or if a chemical spill or other hazard forced you to stay in your home, what would you do? Your family will cope best by preparing for a disaster before it strikes. Assemble a **Disaster Supplies Kit** now – once disaster hits, you won’t have time to shop or search for supplies. Be prepared – build a kit!

To Prepare Your Kit

You should keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days. Build a Disaster Supplies Kit to take with you in an evacuation.

The basics you should stock in your portable kit include: water, food, first aid supplies, a change of clothing and blanket or sleeping bag, emergency tools (like flashlights, radio, batteries) and special items for infants, elderly or disabled. Keep these items in an easy-to-carry container such as a covered trash container, a large backpack or a duffel bag.

Water

- **Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person.**
- **Store one gallon of water per person per day.** (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation)
- **Store water in plastic containers** such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and strenuous activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will also need more.

Food

- **Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.** Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:
 - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables

- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High-energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

Medications and Special Items

Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

- **For Baby**
 - Formula
 - Diapers
 - Bottles
 - Powdered milk
 - Medications
- **For Adults**
 - Heart and high blood pressure medication
 - Insulin
 - Prescription drugs
 - Denture needs
 - Contact lenses and supplies
 - Extra eye glasses
- **Non-Prescription Drugs**
 - Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
 - Anti-diarrhea medication
 - Antacid (for stomach upset)
 - Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
 - Laxative
 - Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

Tools and Supplies

*(Recommended items are marked with an asterisk *)*

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils*
- Emergency preparedness manual*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries*
- Flashlight and extra batteries*
- Cash or traveler's checks, change*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
- Fire extinguisher: small ABC type stored near where fires are likely to occur such as a kitchen or near a fireplace. It should not be kept in the disaster supplies kit.

- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

Sanitation

*(Recommended items are marked with an asterisk *)*

- Toilet paper, towelettes*
- Soap, liquid detergent*
- Feminine supplies*
- Personal hygiene items*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding

*(Recommended items are marked with an asterisk *)*

*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person. We suggest long pants and long sleeves for additional protection after a disaster.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots*
- Rain gear*
- Blankets or sleeping bags*
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

Emergency Kit for Your Car

- Battery powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Blanket
- Booster cables
- Fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type)

- First aid kit and manual
- Bottled water and non-perishable, high-energy foods, such as granola bars, raisins and peanut butter
- Maps
- Shovel
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Flares

Important Family Documents

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:

- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Triangular bandages (3)
- Non-prescription drugs
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Get Trained

Every family should have at least one person trained in First Aid and CPR/AED.

The American Red Cross offers courses to help you and your family prepare for emergencies. They are aware of the hazards that can happen in the area where you live and work, and can provide you with presentations and information that will help you learn how to keep your family and co-workers safe when disaster strikes. Contact them to find out about disaster preparedness presentations available for your community or workplace.

In the event of a disaster, emergency medical response may be delayed because of the remoteness of your home or by adverse conditions, such as roads blocked by floodwater or debris. While precious minutes slip by, your emergency training could mean the difference between life and death. Properly administered first aid or CPR can help stabilize an injured or ailing family member until help arrives. Make sure at least one family member is trained in first aid and CPR and how to use an automated external defibrillator. It could save a life.

Volunteer

Red Cross volunteers help people in emergencies, whether it's half a million disaster victims or one sick child who needs blood.

Their vital work is made possible by people who know how good it can feel to lend a helping hand. Red Cross “everyday heroes” come from all walks of life. Everyone has something special to offer . . . including you.

Last year more than one million Americans helped their communities prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies as Red Cross volunteers. And the demand for vital American Red Cross services and the committed volunteers to deliver them continues to grow. You can help your community be prepared.

Donate Blood

Donating blood on a regular basis ensures a safe and stable supply is available at all times.

America needs a safe and secure blood supply. It is critical to public health. In times of crisis, the American Red Cross can quickly ship blood from one area of the country to another wherever it is needed most. But regular donations of blood are essential to ensure that all needs are met, all of the time.

Every two seconds someone in America needs a blood transfusion from cancer patients, accident

victims, premature infants, to people with chronic diseases. Blood donation means so much to individuals struggling to survive their own personal crisis, and it's something you can do to make a difference.

Giving blood doesn't take much time, and each donation has the power to save as many as three lives. Because whole blood has a shelf life of only 42 days, it is important to be a regular and frequent donor.

The above materials were adapted from the American Red Cross "Together We Prepare" Program.