

FACT SHEET

Why should families care about disaster preparedness?

- Every region of our country is vulnerable to disasters of some type like flooding, severe storms, high winds, power outages, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, or wildfires. In fact, just last year the American Red Cross responded to almost 75,000 disasters.
- Having children is an important reason to plan for an emergency. In situations where care may be delayed, families will want to make sure they have the necessary supplies and a plan that the entire family knows about and has practiced.
- Only seven percent of Americans are considered “Red Cross Ready” for a disaster, meaning they have a disaster supplies kit, a communication plan and are prepared to respond to disasters and everyday emergencies.
- 64% of Americans have no evacuation plan, even though 27% have had to leave home for at least one night because of a disaster or other emergency.
- 69% of Americans living in hurricane-prone states don’t have a disaster supplies kit, and sixty percent don’t have an evacuation plan.
- 60% of American households have a pet, yet only 37% have a plan to care for their pets in case of a disaster.
- 90% of Americans who have a disaster kit feel prepared, but only 28% have one.

How can families prepare for a disaster?

- The American Red Cross is committed to not only responding to help meet the needs of people affected by disaster, but also teaching people the skills they need to help keep their families safer in an emergency.
- Disaster preparedness shouldn’t be overwhelming or scary, nor is it expensive or time consuming. Families can prepare for a disaster by taking three simple actions: get a kit, make a plan, and be informed.
- To learn more about disaster preparedness visit a free online tutorial at www.redcross.org/BeRedCrossReady. Visitors will be learn more about each of the three preparedness steps (get a kit, make a plan, and be informed) and the site includes lots of helpful resources including downloadable tools.

What’s involved in “getting a kit”?

- The American Red Cross recommends that your kit should contain enough supplies for each family member for at least three days. Remember to check your kit every six months and replace expired items.

- Basic items that you should stock in an easy to grab container or bag include: bottled water; nonperishable food; first aid supplies including medication; flashlight with extra batteries; hand-crank or battery-operated radio with extra batteries; cash and copies of important documents; and items for anyone with special needs or with medical conditions.
- Be Red Cross Ready products, like American Red Cross Emergency Preparedness kits and the American Red Cross Emergency Radio by Eton are convenient ways for families to get prepared for a potential disaster. Both products are available at the RedCross.org online store or at retailers near you. Emergency Preparedness Kits can be found at Target and Drugstore.com, and the American Red Cross radio is available at Amazon.com, Bed Bath & Beyond, Radio Shack and Hammacher Schlemmer.
- For more information on building a disaster kit, including a downloadable checklist, visit www.redcross.org/BeRedCrossReady.

What's involved in "making a plan"?

- As part of making a plan, the American Red Cross recommends developing and practicing a communications plan and an evacuation plan. Each person should know how to reach family members and where to meet if you can't go home.
- Families should also choose an out-of-state relative or friend as an emergency contact. After a disaster, local phone lines are often busy and it may be easier to call long distance.
- If you own a pet, part of your family plan should be to make arrangements for your pet in case you need to evacuate. Some hotels will allow pets, so it's a good idea to have a list of such resources in your disaster kit.
- For more information, including downloadable tools, visit www.redcross.org/BeRedCrossReady.

What do you mean by "be informed"?

- The Red Cross suggests that families learn about what types of disasters or emergencies are most likely to occur where you live, work and play.
- First aid and CPR courses are also a vital component of disaster preparedness. To learn more visit www.redcross.org/BeRedCrossReady, or contact your local Red Cross chapter to register for a class.

How does the Red Cross help disaster victims?

- Just last year the American Red Cross responded to more than 75,000 disasters.
- Local Red Cross chapters use donations to provide shelter, food and other emergency assistance, like clothing and prescription medication, to families affected by a disaster.