

Emergency Preparedness - Level 1

Emergency management, emergency preparedness, and disaster services are common throughout the United States—we take care of each other. By whatever name, these activities encompass mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery related to any kind of disaster, whether natural, technological, or national security. *Emergency preparedness* means being prepared for all kinds of emergencies, able to respond in time of crisis to save lives and property, and to help a community—or even a nation—return to normal life after a disaster occurs.

It is a challenge to be prepared for emergencies in our world of man-made and natural phenomena. This Emergency Preparedness program is planned to inspire the desire and foster the skills to meet this challenge. This program should also equip us so that we can participate effectively in this crucial service to our families, communities, and nation.

The emergencies of today's world demand more than ever that our young people and adults be trained as individuals and as teams to meet emergency situations. The importance of this training is not new but it is being formulated within Pioneers such that we are prepared for most types of emergencies.

When an emergency occurs, it affects everyone in the immediate area, creating the responsibility to respond first, as an individual; second, as a member of a family; and third, as a member of the community. This Emergency Preparedness plan includes training for individual and family preparedness.

Individual Preparedness

The primary emphasis of the early levels in this program is to train Pioneers to be mentally and emotionally prepared to act promptly and to develop in them the ability to take care of themselves. Teaching our young men to know and be able to use practical survival skills when needed is an important part of individual preparedness. This program and Wilderness Survival work hand in hand to prepare Pioneers to handle these types of situations.

Family Preparedness

Since family groups will be involved in most emergency situations, this part of the plan includes basic instructions to help every family prepare for emergencies. Families will work together to learn basic emergency skills and how to react when faced with fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, explosions, warning signals, fallout protection, terrorism attacks, and other emergency situations.

Community Preparedness

This program builds on the Community Service program to help foster the desire to help others and teaches Pioneers how to serve their communities in age-appropriate ways.

Emergency Preparedness Kit

What you have on hand when a disaster happens could make a big difference. Plan to store enough supplies for everyone in your household for at least three days. We will go into more detail on this subject in another level of the program. The following makes up the contents of a basic Emergency Preparedness Kit:

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. Include extra batteries.

First aid kit. Include a reference guide.

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

Battery-operated Weather radio. Include extra batteries.

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 eyeglasses or contact lenses and solution; copies of important papers, including identification cards, insurance policies, birth certificates, passports, etc.; and comfort items such as toys and books.

Sanitary supplies. You'll want 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. Include a current list of family phone numbers and e-mail addresses, including someone out of the area who may be easier to reach by e-mail if local phone lines are overloaded.

Pet supplies. Include food, water, leash, litter box or plastic bags, tags, medications, and vaccination information.

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

Emergency Planning: “If you do not plan, you plan to fail.” This is true in all aspects of life. In order to be prepared for an emergency situation we need to plan for it and prepare for it. Some people may never need to execute their plan but it is always better to have one and not need it than need one and not have it. The following are the basic steps in developing an emergency plan:

1. Planning ahead is the first step to a calmer and more assured disaster response. Determine what kinds of natural and man-made disasters and emergencies could occur in your community. Develop a who, what when plan for each potential situation and designate alternates in case someone is absent.
2. Be sure everyone in the family can recognize the different sounds made by smoke, heat, and motion detectors, burglar alarms, fire alarms, and community sirens and warning signals, and know what to do when they hear them.
3. Discuss what to do if evacuation from your house is necessary. Be sure everyone in the family knows what to do in that case, they must not hesitate, but must get out as soon as possible and after they are outside someone, the designee or alternate, should call for help. Agree on an outdoor meeting place for the family, such as a particular neighbor's front porch.
4. Be sure everyone in the family knows how to call 911 (if your community has that service) or other local emergency numbers. Gather and post other emergency numbers, such as poison control, the family doctor, a neighbor and an out-of-town person who are your family's emergency contacts, a parent's work number and cell number, etc. Post all emergency numbers near every telephone in the house and make copies for everyone to carry with them.
5. Because emergency responders will need an address or directions on where to send help, be sure all family members know how to describe where they can be found. Post your address near each telephone in the house. When dealing with the stress of an emergency, even adult family members could fail to recall details correctly.
6. Plan an out-of-town evacuation route and an out-of-town meeting point, in the event all family members aren't together at the same time to evacuate. The meeting point might be the home of a family member in another city or a hotel or landmark known to all family members.
7. Practice evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on a map in case the chosen roads are impassable or grid-locked.
8. Practice earthquake, tornado, and fire drills at home, work, and school periodically.

9. Be sure all family adults and older children know that in case of emergency, it is their responsibility to keep the family together, to remain calm, and explain to younger family members what has happened and what is likely to happen next.

This gives you the basics of what will be covered in the next levels of this program. This program requires family commitment to complete this program. There is a lot of work ahead, but being prepared makes life more enjoyable. When you complete this program you will know how to safely and effectively meet the challenges mother nature or man bring our way.