

# **Scouters guide to Disaster Preparedness**

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To the Doctoral Candidate Review Board:

I am submitting herewith a Dissertation written by Sue Harris, entitled "Scouters Guide to Disaster Preparedness". I have examined the final copy of this report for format and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Commissioner Science.

  
Dale Montpelier

We have read this Dissertation  
And recommend its acceptance:

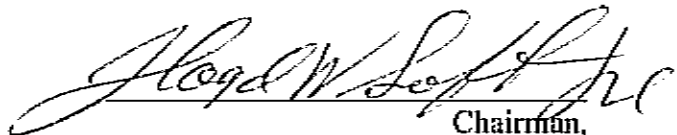
  
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Chairman,  
Doctoral Candidate Review Board  
and Daniel Boone Council

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Summary .....                    | 1  |
| Introduction .....               | 2  |
| Disaster Preparedness .....      | 3  |
| Planning in advance .....        | 7  |
| Before .....                     | 8  |
| During .....                     | 9  |
| After .....                      | 9  |
| Creating an emergency plan ..... | 11 |
| Emergency Supply Kit .....       | 11 |
| Water conservation .....         | 20 |
| Deciding what to do .....        | 26 |
| Go .....                         | 26 |
| Evacuation .....                 | 26 |
| In a moving vehicle .....        | 27 |
| In a high-rise building .....    | 27 |
| Stay .....                       | 28 |
| In a moving vehicle .....        | 28 |
| In a high-rise building .....    | 28 |
| Shelter-in-place .....           | 29 |
| Pets .....                       | 31 |
| Disasters .....                  | 32 |
| Man-made .....                   | 33 |
| Natural .....                    | 40 |
| Recovering from a disaster.....  | 59 |
| Conclusion.....                  | 78 |

## **SUMMARY**

**Topic:**

Scouters Guide to Disaster Preparedness

**Purpose:**

To inform and guide scouts into what to do, how to do, and when to, prepare for a disaster.

**Who:**

My fellow scouts and their families plus the general public.

**How:**

By giving examples and guidance of what to do, how to do, and when to prepare for a disaster.

**Objective:**

I feel very strongly that we are NOT, but, NEED TO be prepared for a disaster. In preparing my family for a disaster, I felt that I also should help my scouting family get prepared as well. So that is why I am doing my thesis on disaster preparedness. After all, "A good scout is prepared". I will be covering man-made and natural disasters while focusing on getting prepared for them.

How to plan in advance by making an emergency plan. How to and when to make an emergency kit. What to do in the event a disaster strikes. I hope that with this information I will be able to help many of my fellow scouts and their family and friends.

## INTRODUCTION

I have been kicking thesis topic ideas around for years. I have fumbled around with several ideas, bouncing them around like a basketball. But, none of them really scored. Until one day last week, I woke up from a good nights sleep and presto, like a slam dunk, I had my thesis topic. In my heart it felt like a touchdown. I had tried and tried to figure out a thesis topic that would be beneficial to a diverse group of people. A topic that would be worthy of my time, since I have so little of it, but a topic that would have a great impact on many and work into the scouting program as well. A topic that would be useful and important to scouters as well as those not connected with the scouting world. As a fellow scouter you already know that a Scout is "Prepared". With this in the back of my mind, I came up with a thesis topic of "Disaster Preparedness". Quite a logical topic after all, don't you think? Within these pages I will be covering several disaster scenarios, but mostly focusing on disaster preparedness. What to do in case of a disaster. Whether it is a man-made disaster or a natural disaster. I hope that the information given will help to inspire you to get prepared, "Disaster Prepared."

## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

This thesis was put together with information from my life experiences, 30 plus years of collecting what I call stuff, gathered paraphernalia from when I used to do conservation programs for the National Campers and Hikers Association, from trainings/classes/programs I have attended through the following organizations as well: American Legion Auxiliary, Boy Scouts of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, Local Community Awareness Programs (FEMA), local Fire & Rescue Squad, American Red Cross Chapters, local Police safety programs, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Scouts and others that I can't remember who was conducting the classes. I also did some research on the internet as well. Three of the best sites were:

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

From these sites you can explore even more sites and indulge into more detail what you can do to get yourself prepared for a disaster. I encourage you to have a look. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. What you will find hopefully will get you inspired to GET PREPARED.

## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

There are real benefits for scouts to being prepared. As you prepare your emergency disaster plan it will help squelch your fears of the unknown. Reduce your anxiety level and help prepare you for the losses that will accompany being in a disaster. It will give you the confidence to deal with the disaster to the best of your scouting ability. It will help you use your common sense in a calm manner. And when you're calm, it will help your scouts and others to be calmer too. Show your scouting leadership skills by being prepared.

You cannot expect your community or local government to immediately help you. You must first be able to help yourself, your scouts and your family. Maybe even be able to help your neighbors. You must prepare to protect your family, property and pets. By applying what you learn in this thesis you are taking the necessary steps to be a prepared scouter, ready when a disaster occurs. I commend you in your effort and I hope you will pass this information on to your fellow scouters, family and friends. Be a good citizen and pass it on to your neighbors and community members as well.

Lets look at some questions that will be answered in this thesis.

- What type of disasters are there?
- Can I prevent a disaster?
- Can I prepare for a disaster?
- What should I do before, during and after a disaster?

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you a prepared scouter? Well, get ready today. Form the foundation to your emergency plan now, don't put it off. The whole preparedness system begins with you. Be responsible and put your plan and emergency supply kit together NOW! This thesis will help with the basic information needed to create your emergency plan and disaster supply kit. The rest is up to YOU.

Lets get started.

- Obtain information from your community that will help form the foundation of your plan.  
(FEMA, AMERICAN RED CROSS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, PLANS ALREADY ESTABLISHED FROM THE PLACES YOUR FAMILY FREQUENTS THE MOST, ETC.)
- What hazards threaten your community?
- How will the population be warned?
- What evacuation routes are available?
- Make a **GO** plan.
- Make a **STAY** plan.
- Make as many evacuation route plans from your home, scout camp as you can and decide which one will be used for which disaster. Don't forget to practice these routes. Even the smallest of children will need to know these routes and why they are being used. Knowing what the community will be doing in each scenario will impact how you develop your plan.



## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

- Make a "SHELTER-IN-PLACE Plan.
- Make an ESCAPE PLAN from your home.
- Where will you all meet?
- Who will you all call to check in with?
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
- Who will shut off household utilities?
- How/Who will you get the pet(s) in/out?
- How/Who will assist those with disabilities?
- Who will acquire basic safety skills?
- Who will acquire insurance against financial loss?
- Who will seek outside shelter?
- Have a check list in your supply kit that will meet the needs of your family and scouts following a disaster whether you are at home or at another location. Your recovery will depend on how well you are prepared. Communicate with your family/scouts what should be done and when and why. Practice different scenarios to help your them be better prepared to deal with the stress of the disaster. Use your common sense when it comes to a disaster situation. Being prepared will help everyone involved to stay calmer and cope better.

## **PLANNING IN ADVANCE**

Planning what to do in advance is an important part of being prepared. Find out what natural disasters are most common in your area. Remember to check out the area you will be vacationing or camping at also.

- BE PREPARED
- MAKE A PLAN
- EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT
- USE COMMON SENSE
- STAY CALM
- PRACTICE YOUR PLAN
- COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE
- REMEMBER YOUR PET(S)
- VOLUNTEER TO HELP / GET TRAINED (CPR, etc.)
- "SHELTER-IN-PLACE"
- FIRST AID KIT

## **PLANNING IN ADVANCE**

### **BEFORE:**

Before a disaster strikes, you should start preparations:

- Get informed about hazards and emergencies that may affect you and your family.
- Know the risks and danger signs.
- Develop an emergency plan.
- Maintain and practice the plan.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit and supply list.
- Identify the community warning systems and evacuation routes.
- Include in your plan the gathered information from your community and places that your family/scouts frequent the most.
- Learn what to do for each disaster situation.
- Purchase insurance, including flood insurance if needed which is not included in your homeowner's policy.
- Get trained so you can volunteer to help others.

## **PLANNING IN ADVANCE**

### **DURING:**

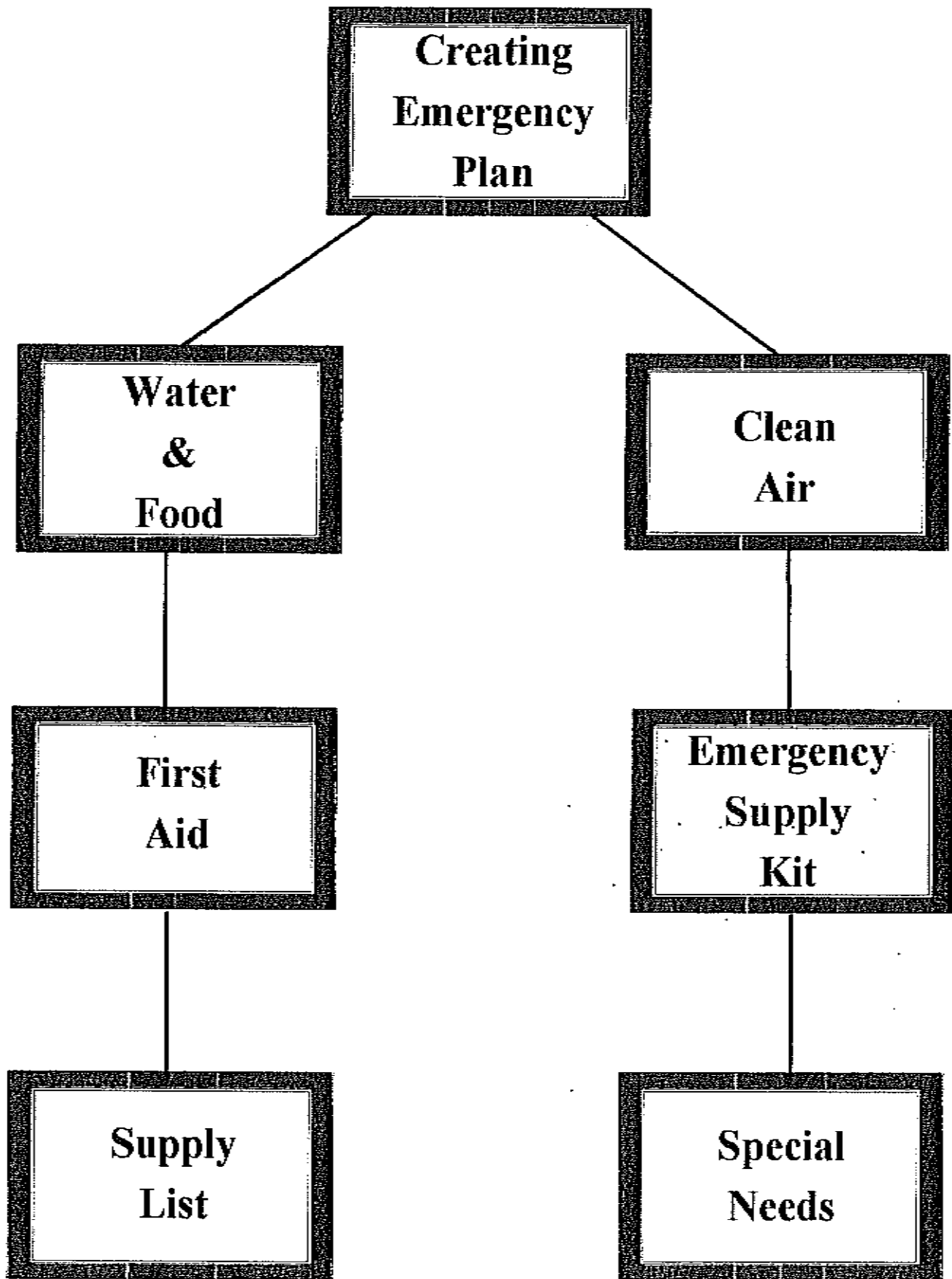
During the disaster itself, it is important to remember some basic rules:

- Assess the situation, use common sense and stay calm.
- Put your emergency plan into action.
- Follow the advice and guidance of the officials in charge.
- Help others

### **AFTER:**

The task does not end when the disaster is over. You should consider the following:

- Take steps to prevent or reduce loss.
- Repair property damage.
- Be aware of new hazards caused by the disaster.
- Follow the "Recovering from Disaster" guidelines.
- Gather your scout unit together and make a plan to help the community and each other.



## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

Creating an emergency plan will help you get organized. Practice this plan with your family/scouts so you will be ready. You will be calmer and more in control if you are prepared in advance.

### **EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT:**

Remember that **water, food and clean air** are the essential items for your survival.

The following is a recommended list of supplies for your basic kit:

- Water, one gallon per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.
- Food (non-perishable items) at least a three day supply, a two week supply for some disasters.
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First Aid Kit and First Aid Book
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter air
- Moist towelettes for sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Manual can opener for canned food.
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to "Shelter-in-place".
- Medicines and list of medication names, including dosage instructions, per person

## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

- List of any allergies per person
- Feminine supplies
- Infant formula and diapers
- Garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Ziploc bags for personal sanitation
- Toilet paper
- Household chlorine bleach (plain)do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners
- Coat
- Long pants
- Long sleeve shirt
- Sturdy shoes
- Hat
- Gloves
- Sleeping Bag or blanket for each person
- Rain gear
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Cash or traveler's checks, change

## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

- Paper towels
- Fire Extinguisher
- Tent
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Fire starting kit
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Medicine dropper
- Personal hygiene items
- Disinfectant and cleaning clothes
- Copy of important family records such as insurance policies, identification, bank accounts, medical insurance, Medicare cards, etc. and place in a water proof container.
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra glasses
- Hearing aids and extra batteries
- Extra wheelchair batteries or other special equipment.



## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

- Label equipment like wheelchairs, canes or walkers.
- A list of the style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers.
- List of doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified if you are hurt, including phone numbers and addresses.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- Invest in "Life Alert" system.
- Eye protection
- Map of area

### **Important papers to take with you:**

- Driver's license or personal identification
- Social Security Card
- Proof of residence (deed or lease)(utility bill)(land tax receipt)
- Insurance policies
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Divorce papers
- Stocks, bonds, and other negotiable certificates
- Wills, deeds, and copies of recent tax returns
- Checkbook, cash, and credit cards

## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

- Photos

These are just suggested items for you to put into your Emergency Supply Kit. Some of the items may or may not pertain to your particular home or scouting situation. You must modify this list to fit your family/scouting needs.

The following pages show an excellent checklist available from FEMA:

## CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

These lists are to help you determine what to include in your Emergency Disaster Supply Kit that will meet your family/scouting needs.

### First Aid Supplies

| Supplies   | Home | Vehicle | Work |
|--|------|---------|------|
| Adhesive bandages, various sizes                                 |      |         |      |
| 5 " x 9 " sterile dressing                                       |      |         |      |
| Conforming roller gauze bandage                                  |      |         |      |
| Triangular bandages  |      |         |      |
| 3 " x 3 " sterile gauze pads                                     |      |         |      |
| 4 " x 4 " sterile gauze pads                                     |      |         |      |
| Roll 3 " cohesive bandage  |      |         |      |
| Germicidal hand wipes or waterless, alcohol-based hand sanitizer |      |         |      |
| Antiseptic wipes   |      |         |      |
| Pairs large, medical grade, non-latex gloves                     |      |         |      |
| Tongue depressor blades  |      |         |      |
| Adhesive tape, 2 " width   |      |         |      |
| Antibacterial ointment   |      |         |      |
| Cold pack  |      |         |      |
| Scissors (small, personal)                                       |      |         |      |
| Tweezers   |      |         |      |
| Assorted sizes of safety pins                                    |      |         |      |
| Cotton balls   |      |         |      |
| Thermometer  |      |         |      |
| Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant                       |      |         |      |
| Sunscreen  |      |         |      |
| CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield                     |      |         |      |
| First aid manual   |      |         |      |

## CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

### Non-Prescription and Prescription Medicine Kit Supplies

| Supplies                              | Home | Vehicle | Work |
|---------------------------------------|------|---------|------|
| Aspirin and non-aspirin pain reliever |      |         |      |
| Anti-diarrhea medication              |      |         |      |
| Antacid (for stomach upset)           |      |         |      |
| Laxative                              |      |         |      |
| Vitamins                              |      |         |      |
| Prescriptions                         |      |         |      |
| Extra eyeglasses/contact lenses       |      |         |      |

### Food and Water

| Supplies   | Home | Vehicle | Work |
|--|------|---------|------|
| Water  |      |         |      |
| Ready-to-eat meats, fruits, and vegetables   |      |         |      |
| Canned or boxed juices, milk, and soup   |      |         |      |
| High-energy foods such as peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars, and trail mix |      |         |      |
| Vitamins   |      |         |      |
| Special foods for infants or persons on special diets  |      |         |      |
| Cookies, hard candy  |      |         |      |
| Instant coffee   |      |         |      |
| Cereals  |      |         |      |
| Powdered milk  |      |         |      |

### Clothes and Bedding Supplies

| Item                               | Home | Vehicle | Work |
|------------------------------------|------|---------|------|
| Complete change of clothes         |      |         |      |
| Sturdy shoes or boots              |      |         |      |
| Rain gear                          |      |         |      |
| Hat and gloves                     |      |         |      |
| Extra socks                        |      |         |      |
| Extra underwear                    |      |         |      |
| Thermal underwear                  |      |         |      |
| Sunglasses                         |      |         |      |
| Blankets/sleeping bags and pillows |      |         |      |

# CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

## Documents and Keys

Make sure you keep these items in a watertight container

| Item   | Stored |
|--|--------|
| Personal identification                                  |        |
| Cash and coins   |        |
| Credit cards   |        |
| Extra set of house keys and car keys                     |        |
| Copies of the following:                                 |        |
| Birth certificate  |        |
| Marriage certificate                                     |        |
| Driver's license   |        |
| Social Security cards                                    |        |
| Passports  |        |
| Wills  |        |
| Deeds  |        |
| Inventory of household goods                             |        |
| Insurance papers   |        |
| Immunization records                                     |        |
| Bank and credit card account numbers                     |        |
| Stocks and bonds   |        |
| Emergency contact list and phone numbers                 |        |
| Map of the area and phone numbers of places you could go |        |

## Sanitation and Hygiene Supplies

| Item                             | Item   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Washcloth and towel              | Heavy-duty plastic garbage bags and ties for personal sanitation uses and toilet paper |
| Towelettes, soap, hand sanitizer | Medium-sized plastic bucket with tight lid   |
| Tooth paste, toothbrushes        | Disinfectant and household chlorine bleach   |
| Shampoo, comb, and brush         | A small shovel for digging a latrine   |
| Deodorants, sunscreen            | Toilet paper   |
| Razor, shaving cream             | Contact lens solutions   |
| Lip balm, insect repellent       | Mirror   |
| Feminine supplies                |  |

## CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

### Equipment and Tools

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Tools   | Kitchen items  |
| Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries | Manual can opener  |
| NOAA Weather Radio, if appropriate for your area                  | Mess kits or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils                  |
| Flashlight and extra batteries                                    | All-purpose knife  |
| Signal flare  | Household liquid bleach to treat drinking water                        |
| Matches in a waterproof container (or waterproof matches)         | Sugar, salt, pepper  |
| Shut-off wrench, pliers, shovel, and other tools                  | Aluminum foil and plastic wrap   |
| Duct tape and scissors  | Resealable plastic bags  |
| Plastic sheeting  | Small cooking stove and a can of cooking fuel (if food must be cooked) |
| Whistle   |  |
| Small canister, ABC-type fire extinguisher                        | Comfort items  |
| Tube tent   | Games  |
| Compass   | Cards  |
| Work gloves   | Books  |
| Paper, pens, and pencils  | Toys for kids  |
| Needles and thread  | Foods  |
| Battery-operated travel alarm clock                               |  |

# **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

## **Indoor Water Conservation Tips**

### **General**

- Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it. Use it to water your indoor plants or garden.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2, 700 gallons of water per year!
- Check all plumbing for leaks. Have leaks repaired by a plumber.
- Retrofit all household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.
- Install an instant hot water heater on your sink.
- Insulate your water pipes to reduce heat loss and prevent them from breaking.
- Install a water-softening system only when the minerals in the water would damage your pipes. Turn the softener off while on vacation.
- Choose appliances that are more energy and water efficient.
- Get your Scouting/Outdoor Leader Training/Woodbadge and other Outdoor Life Skills Training.

## CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

### **Bathroom**

- Consider purchasing a low-volume toilet that uses less than half the water of older models. Note: In many areas, low-volume units are required by law.
- Install a toilet displacement device to cut down on the amount of water needed to flush. Place a one-gallon plastic jug of water into the tank to displace toilet flow (do not use a brick, it may dissolve and loose pieces may cause damage to the internal parts). Be sure installation does not interfere with the operating parts.
- Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version.
- Place a bucket in the shower to catch excess water for watering plants.
- Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects, and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- Avoid taking baths - take short showers - turn on water only to get wet and lather and then again to rinse off.
- Avoid letting the water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face, or shaving.
- Use your scouting outdoor waste, bathroom and sanitation rules.



## CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

### **Kitchen**

- Operate automatic dishwashers only when they are fully loaded. Use the "light wash" feature, if available, to use less water.
- Hand wash dishes by filling two containers - one with soapy water and the other with rinse water containing a small amount of chlorine bleach.
- Clean vegetables in a pan filled with water rather than running water from the tap.
- Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing of food waste or simply dispose of food in the garbage. (Kitchen sink disposals require a lot of water to operate properly).
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator. Do not let the tap run while you are waiting for water to cool.
- Avoid wasting water waiting for it to get hot. Capture it for other uses such as plant watering or heat it on the stove or in a microwave.
- Avoid rinsing dishes before placing them in the dishwasher; just remove large particles of food. (Most dishwashers can clean soiled dishes very well, so dishes do not have to be rinsed before washing).
- Avoid using running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or use the defrost setting on your microwave oven.

## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

### **Laundry**

- Operate automatic clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or set the water level for the size of your load. Use your scouting rules when washing clothes outdoors.

### **Outdoor Water Conservation Tips**

#### **General**

- Check your well pump periodically. If the automatic pump turns on and off while water is not being used, you have a leak.
- Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs, and trees. Once established, they do not need water as frequently and usually will survive a dry period without watering. Small plants require less water to become established. Group plants together based on similar water needs.
- Install irrigation devices that are the most water efficient for each use. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of efficient devices.
- Use mulch to retain moisture in the soil. Mulch also helps control weeds that compete with landscape plants for water.
- Avoid purchasing recreational water toys that require a constant stream of water.

## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

- Avoid installing ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless they use recycled water.

### **Car Washing**

- Use a shut-off nozzle that can be adjusted down to a fine spray on your hose.
- Use a commercial car wash that recycles water. If you wash your own car, park on the grass so that you will be watering it at the same time.

### **Lawn Care**

- Avoid over watering your lawn. A heavy rain eliminates the need for watering for up to two weeks. Most of the year, lawns only need one inch of water per week.
- Water in several short sessions rather than one long one, in order for your lawn to better absorb moisture.
- Position sprinklers so water lands on the lawn and shrubs and not on paved areas.
- Avoid sprinklers that spray a fine mist. Mist can evaporate before it reaches the lawn.  
Check sprinkler systems and timing devices regularly to be sure they operate properly.
- Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches or to its highest level. A higher cut encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system, and holds soil moisture.
- Plant drought-resistant lawn seed.

## **CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN**

- Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. Applying fertilizer increases the need for water. Apply fertilizers that contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.
- Use a broom or blower instead of a hose to clean leaves and other debris from your driveway or sidewalk.
- Avoid leaving sprinklers or hoses unattended. A garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours.

### **Pool**

- Install a new water-saving pool filter. A single back flushing with a traditional filter uses 180 to 250 gallons of water.
- Cover pools and spas to reduce evaporation of water and to keep debris out of it.

## **DECIDING WHAT TO DO**

You will need to know if you should move your family/scouts to another place or keep them where they are. **“GO”**

**(Evacuation)** In some cases you will need to leave your home/camp either by personal choice or by local officials asking you to leave. If you have plenty of time before you need to evacuate.

Here are some things that you can do to protect your home.

- Bring things indoors/secure camp equipment.
- Look for potential hazards.
- Turn off electric and water.
- Leave natural gas on.
- Turn off propane gas service.
- (If high winds are expected) cover the outside of all your windows. Don't forget your other buildings as well.
- Move objects inside your home to a safer place.
- Make a written or visual record of all your household belongings and record all makes, model numbers, serial numbers, etc. Keep in a safe place away from your home, like a safe deposit box.
- If it's possible that your home may be significantly damaged by impending disaster, consider storing your household furnishings temporarily elsewhere.

## **DECIDING WHAT TO DO**

Do you **DRIVE IT** or do you **PARK IT**? These tips will help you decide.

### **In a moving vehicle:**

#### **Drive It:**

- If the emergency could impact the physical stability of the roadway, avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs and other hazards.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions as they become available.

### **In a high-rise building:**

- Take notice of where the closest emergency exit is.
- Be sure you know another way out in case your first choice is blocked.
- Determine if you should stay put, "shelter-in-place" or get away.
- Listen for and follow instructions.
- Take your emergency supply kit, unless there is reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- Do not use elevators.
- Stay to the right while going down stairwells to allow emergency workers to come up.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions as they become available.

## **DECIDING WHAT TO DO**

If you and your scouts decide to stay where you are then the following tips may help you.

### **STAY:**

#### **In a moving vehicle:**

#### **Park It:**

- If there is an explosion or other factor that makes it difficult to control the vehicle, pull over, stop the car and set the parking brake.
- If a power line falls on your car you are at risk of electrical shock, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions as they become available.

#### **In a high-rise building:**

- Take cover against a desk or table if things are falling.
- Move away from file cabinets, bookshelves or other things that might fall.
- Face away from windows and glass.
- Move away from exterior walls.
- Listen to the radio for information and instructions as they become available.

## **DECIDING WHAT TO DO**

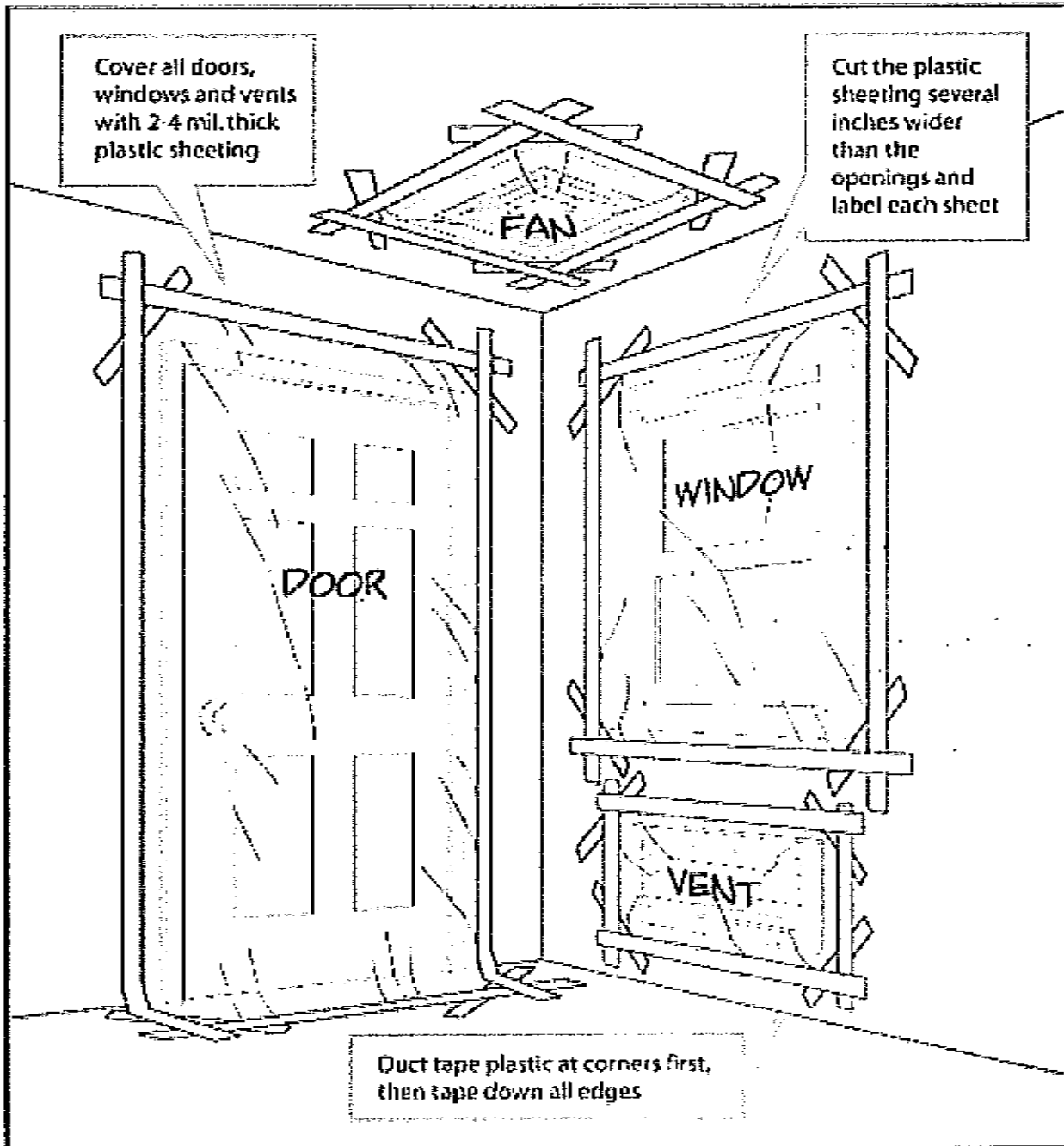
Shelter-in-Place is the process used to seal off a room to create a barrier between you and the potentially contaminated air outside. Shelter-in-Place requires some pre-planning. Train your scouts how to Shelter-In-Place. To seal a room you will need to follow these steps:

- **Bring your family and pets inside.**
- **Lock doors, close windows, fireplace dampers, air vents and dryer vent.**
- **Turn off fans, air conditioning, air purifiers and forced air heating systems.**
- **Take your emergency supply kit unless you have reason to believe that it has been contaminated.**
- **Go into an interior room with few windows, if possible.**
- **Seal all windows, doors and air vents with heavy plastic sheeting or thick garbage bags and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting plastic sheeting in advance to save valuable time.**
- **Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to seal gaps so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.**
- **Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.**



# DECIDING WHAT TO DO

## SHELTER-IN-PLACE



## **PETS**

Don't forget your pets in time of a disaster they are counting on you. Here are some tips.

### **Plan for your Pets:**

- Pets should not be left behind.
- But understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters.
- Plan how you will care for your pet(s) in an emergency.
- Store extra food, water and supplies for your pet.
- Don't forget their favorite toy, blanket or treat.
- Pack any pet medication with dosage and instruction sheet.
- Any necessary grooming supplies.

## **DISASTERS**

***Remember use common sense and stay calm.***

Disaster preparedness is no longer the sole concern of those who live in "Tornado Alley" or those earthquake prone areas. Now days we must take into consideration disasters caused by man himself, as well as the natural disasters caused by mother nature.

**Some examples off the top of my head are:**

- 9/11 terrorist attack
- The recent tsunamis
- Eruption of St. Mount Helen
- Hayden Fire

These disasters were devastating not only to the people directly involved, but to the whole nation. Some of these where caused by mother nature and others by man himself. We need to prepare ourselves for both. A Scout is prepared.

For more in-depth information on man-made and natural disasters visit the internet at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## **DISASTERS**

### **Man-made Disasters:**

- Biological
- Chemical
- Explosions
- Nuclear Blast
- Radiation

# **DISASTERS**

## **Biological Disaster**

A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or other biological substances that can make you sick. Many agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin or be eaten to make you sick.

A biological attack may or may not be immediately obvious. You will probably learn of the danger through an emergency radio, TV, or other signal used in your community. You might get a phone call or emergency workers may come to your door. Remember to always ask for proper identification from these people.

In the event of a biological disaster you should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news.

If you become sick and are considered in the group or area authorities believe to be in danger or at risk, immediately seek emergency medical attention. Create a barrier between yourself and the disaster.

## **DISASTERS**

**If you become aware of an unusual and suspicious substance nearby:**

- Quickly get away
- Protect yourself (cover your mouth and nose)
- Wash
- Contact authorities
- Watch or listen to official news broadcasts
- If you become sick seek emergency medical attention

# DISASTERS

## **Chemical Disaster**

A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment. Possible signs of a chemical disaster is many people suffering from:

- Watery eyes
- Twitching
- Choking
- Having trouble breathing
- Losing coordination.

Also cause for suspicion is many sick or dead:

- Birds
- Fish
- Small Animals.

If you suspect a chemical disaster get away and find fresh air quickly. You may need to "Shelter-in-Place" depending on where the chemical disaster is.

**If you think you may have been exposed to a chemical:**

- Strip immediately
- Wash with soap (being sure not to scrub the chemical into the skin)
- Seek emergency medical attention

# **DISASTERS**

## **Explosion Disaster**

An explosion usually happens without warning. It can be a small or large explosion. Either way you want to use common sense and stay calm.

Use the following steps:

- Take shelter under/behind a sturdy object
- Exit the building ASAP (if possible)
- Do not use elevator
- Check for fire and other hazards
- Take your Emergency Supply Kit (if time permits)
- Call 9-1-1

## **If you are trapped in Debris**

- Use flashlight to signal for help
- Tap on pipe, wall or something to attract attention to yourself
- Use a whistle to signal for help
- Avoid unnecessary movement
- Cover mouth and nose to keep from inhaling dust
- Yell or shout only as a last resort (causes you to inhale dangerous dust)



# **DISASTERS**

## **Nuclear Blast**

A nuclear blast is an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave and widespread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water and ground surfaces for miles around.

During a nuclear incident, it is important to avoid radioactive material.

### **If you have advance warning of a nuclear blast:**

- Take cover as far under ground as you possibly can. This will help protect you from the blast and the pressure wave.

### **If no advance warning is given then:**

- Assess the situation quickly
- Use common sense and stay calm
- Go (limit the amount of radioactive material you're in contact with)
- Stay ("Shelter-in-Place" as far below ground that you can get)
- Watch/listen to news broadcasts

# **DISASTERS**

## **Radiation Disaster**

A radiation disaster, commonly referred to as a “dirty bomb” or “radiological dispersion device (RDD)”, is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials over a targeted area.

As with any radiation, you want to limit exposure. It is important to avoid breathing radiological dust that may be released in the air.

- Get indoors and “Shelter-in-Place”
- Wash (If exposed to radiation)
- Watch/listen official news broadcasts
- Use common sense and stay calm

## **DISASTERS**

### **Natural Disasters:**

- Earthquakes
- Extreme Heat
- Fires / Wildfires
  - Floods
  - Hurricanes
- Landslides/Mudslides and Debris
  - Thunderstorms
  - Tornadoes
  - Tsunamis
  - Volcanoes
- Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

# **DISASTERS**

## **NATURAL**

### **Earthquakes**

An earthquake is a sudden shifting of the earth, caused by the abrupt release of strain that has accumulated over a long period of time followed by a series of vibrations or so called tremors.

**Familiarize yourself with these terms:**

- Earthquake
- Aftershock
- Fault
- Epicenter
- Seismic Waves
- Magnitude

There are protective measures you can take to protect yourself, family, scouts, and your property in the event of an earthquake.

- Repair electric wiring, leaky gas lines, and inflexible utility connections. Install flexible pipe fittings where possible.
- Bolt down to wall studs, water heater, refrigerator, furnace and gas appliances
- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves. Fasten down mirrors, shelves, large pictures to the wall frames. Anchor overhead light fixtures.

## **DISASTERS**

- Store bottles, china, glass containers in cupboards that fasten shut
- Anchor house firmly to foundation.
- Locate safe spots in each room
- Make an earthquake drill plan and practice the drill plan

**DROP**

**COVER**

**HOLD ON**

# **DISASTERS**

## **Extreme Heat ( Heat Wave )**

Under normal conditions, the body's internal thermostat produces perspiration that evaporates and cools the body. However, in extreme heat and high humidity, evaporation is slowed causing the body to work harder to cool itself. Pushing the body beyond its limits and threatening death.

### **Terms associated with extreme heat:**

- Heat Wave
- Heat Index
- Heat Cramps
- Heat Exhaustion
- Heat Stroke/Sun Stroke

### **Preparedness measures:**

- Snugly fit & insulate around window air conditioners.
- Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Install temporary window reflectors and weather-strip doors and sills.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun (drapes, awnings).
- Consider keeping storm windows up all year.
- Conserve electricity during periods of extreme heat.
- Stay indoors and drink plenty of WATER

# **DISASTERS**

## **Fires/Wildfires**

Fire spreads quickly; there is **NO** time to gather items or make a phone call.

### **If your clothes catch on fire!**

**STOP**

**DROP**

**ROLL**

Heat and smoke from fire can be more dangerous than the flames, Inhaling the super-hot air can sear your lungs. Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy. Instead of being awakened by a fire, you may fall into a deeper sleep. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths.

### **Preventive measures:**

- Install smoke alarms.
- Place smoke alarms on every level.
- Place them outside bedrooms on ceiling or high on the wall.
- Place at top of open stairways.
- Place at bottom of closed stairways.
- Place near (BUT NOT IN) kitchen.
- Test and clean smoke alarms once a month.
- Replace batteries at least once a year.
- Replace the smoke alarm itself once every 10 years.

# DISASTERS

## **Floods**

Like the song, "*How high's the water momma? It's four foot and risin'...*"

Some floods develop slowly and others can develop quickly causing flash floods. These floods can carry rocks and debris with them and can sweep away anything in its path. Be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live, but especially if you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Every state is at risk from this disaster.

### **To prepare:**

Avoid building in a floodplain, but if you do:

- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel.
- Install "check valves" in sewer traps.
- Construct barriers (levees, beams, floodwalls).
- Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage.
- Purchase flood insurance.
- Make emergency supply kit.
- Make an emergency plan and practice it (evacuation routes).
- Watch/listen to news broadcasts.
- Get to higher ground, use caution and common sense, don't drive or walk through standing water, watch for hazards.



# **DISASTERS**

## **Hurricanes**

A hurricane is a type of tropical cyclone, the generic term for a low pressure system which is accompanied by thunderstorms. Hurricanes can cause catastrophic damage to coastline and several hundred miles inland. They can spawn tornadoes and microbursts, create storm surges and cause extreme damage from heavy rainfall.

### **Familiarize yourself with these terms:**

- Tropical Depression
- Tropical Storm
- Hurricane
- Storm Surge
- Storm Tide
- Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watch
- Hurricane/Tropical Storm Warning
- Short Term Watches and Warnings

### **To prepare:**

- Secure your home and property, both indoor and outdoor. Install straps or clips to secure roof.
- Keep well trimmed trees and bushes roof to frame.
- Clean and clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.

## **DISASTERS**

- Determine how and where to secure your boat.
- Consider building a safe room.
- Prepare an emergency plan of action and practice the plan.
- Prepare an Emergency Supply Kit.

# **DISASTERS**

## **Landslides and debris flow (Mudslides)**

In a landslide, masses of rock, earth, or debris move down a slope. They can be slow or rapid. They are activated by storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, fires and human land modification mismanagement. Mudslides are rivers of rock, earth, and other debris saturated with water. Can develop when water rapidly accumulates in the ground changing the earth into a flowing river of mud or "slurry". They can grow in size as they pick up trees, rocks, boulders, cars and other materials in its way.

### **Protective Steps:**

- Don't build near steep slopes, mountain edges, drainage ways, erosion valleys.
- Get a ground assessment of your property.
- Get professional advice on how to take corrective steps to your land.
- Install flexible pipe fittings.

### **Recognize Landslide Warning Signs:**

- Changes in landscape, and movement, storm-water drainage, etc.
- Doors or windows sticking or jamming.
- New cracks in plaster, tile, brick, or foundation.
- Outside walls, walks, or stairs pulling away from building.
- Widening in cracks appearing on the ground, paved areas, roads, drives.

## **DISASTERS**

- Underground utility line breaks.
- Bulging ground at base of a slope.
- New locations of underground water breaks.
- Tilted or moved; fences, retaining walls, utility poles, trees.
- A faint rumbling sound that increase in volume.
- Unusual sounds, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together.
- Collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks and other indications of a slide.

**Make an Emergency Supply Kit and an Emergency Evacuation Plan.**

# **DISASTERS**

## **Thunderstorms**

All thunderstorms are dangerous and thunderstorms produce lightning. With some thunderstorms the rain never reaches the ground, but the lightning does. The ingredient that defines a storm as a thunderstorm is lightning. Lightning creates thunder, hence, thunderstorm. Lightning is from the buildup and discharge of electrical energy between positively and negatively charged areas. The unpredictability of lightning increases the risk to you and your property.

## **Weather Forecaster Terms:**

- Severe Thunderstorm Watch
- Severe Thunderstorm Warning

## **Thunderstorm Facts:**

- Thunderstorms may occur singly, in clusters, or lines.
- Single storms in one area for an extended time are usually more severe.
- Typically produce heavy rain for a brief period of time.
- Warm, humid conditions are very favorable for producing thunderstorms.
- Out of 100,000 thunderstorms, about 10% are classified as severe.
- A T-storm is classified as severe if has at least 3/4" size hail with 58mph winds or produces a tornado.

## **DISASTERS**

- Calculate how close it is - count the number of seconds between a flash of lightning and the next clap of thunder. Divide this number by 5 to determine the distance to the lightning in miles.
- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches.
- Secure outdoor property.
- Close and secure windows shutters, blinds, shades, or curtains.
- Watch/listen to news broadcasts.
- Prepare an Emergency Supply Kit
- Use common sense and stay calm.
- Respect a thunderstorm, get indoors at the first threat.

# DISASTERS

## **Tornados**

A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel shaped cloud that extends to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 mph. It is nature's most violent storm. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can uproot trees, destroy buildings and turn harmless objects into deadly missiles. They can flatten and devastate a community and neighborhood in seconds. Destroying homes, vehicles, and can cause fatalities.

### **Facts:**

- They may strike quickly with little or no warning.
- They may appear transparent until they fill with debris.
- On the average they move SW to NE.
- Average forward speed of 30 mph (stationary to 70 mph).
- Waterspouts are tornadoes that form over water.
- Frequently reported east of the Rocky Mountains during spring and summer.
- Peak season for southern states is March through May.
- Peak season for northern states is late spring and early summer.
- Most likely to occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.

# **DISASTERS**

## **TERMS TO KNOW:**

- Tornado Watch
- Tornado Warning

## **BEFORE:**

- Ask about community warning signals and the threat in your area.
- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with battery backup and tone-alert.
- Know the name of your county.
- Determine places to seek shelter and practice going there.
- Know shelter spots of the places your family/scouts frequent the most.
- Ask your local government locations of any public safe rooms or shelters.



# **DISASTER**

## **Tsunamis**

A tsunami is a series of enormous waves created by an underwater disturbance such as an earthquake, etc. A tsunami can move hundreds of miles per hour in the open ocean and smash into land with waves as high as 100 feet or more. From the area the tsunami starts, waves travel outward in all directions. Once the wave approaches the shore, it builds in height. The shape of the coastline and the ocean floor will influence the size of the wave. There may be more than one wave and the succeeding one may be larger than the one before. That is why a small tsunami at one beach can be a giant wave a few miles away. All tsunamis are potentially dangerous. Drowning is the most common cause of death. Waves and receding water are very destructive to structures. Other hazards include flooding, contamination of drinking water, and fires from gas lines and ruptured tanks.

### **TERMS TO KNOW:**

- Advisory
- Watch
- Warning

If a tsunami hits save yourself **NOT** your possessions!

# **DISASTERS**

## **Volcanoes**

A volcano is a vent through which molten rock escapes to the earth's surface. When pressure from gases within the molten rock becomes too great, an eruption occurs. Eruptions can be quiet or explosive. There may be lava flows, flattened landscapes, poisonous gases, and flying rock and ash spewing from the mouth of the volcano. A lava flow destroys everything in its path. Because of the intense heat and hot flow they are great fire hazards. The ash can be abrasive, acidic, gritty, gassy, and odorous, which can be dangerous.

### **Get prepared:**

Pack goggles and disposable breathing masks in your Emergency Supply Kit. Stay away from active volcano sites.

# **DISASTERS**

## **Winter Storms and Extreme Cold**

Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region. Even areas that normally experience mild winters can be hit with a major snowstorm or extreme cold.

### **The impacts include:**

- Flooding
- Storm Surge
- Closed Highways
- Blocked Roads
- Downed Power Lines and Trees
- Hypothermia

### **TERMS:**

- Freezing Rain
- Sleet
- Winter Storm Watch
- Winter Storm Warning
- Blizzard Warning
- Frost/Freeze Warning

## **DISASTERS**

### **PREPARE:**

- Disaster Supply Kit.
- Winterize Home.
- Prepare to be without electric, heat for several days.
- Have sufficient heating fuel.
- Sufficient nonperishable food supply and water.
- Warm clothes and blankets.
- Don't forget to bring pet(s) in.

## **DISASTERS**

**For more information on:**

- What to
- How to
- When to
- Safety Tips

**And much more on these common natural disasters visit the Internet at:**

- [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

Recovering from a disaster is a very stressful situation. I have included some pages to help you cope with the stress. Remember to use common sense and stay calm. Those around you are also stressed out and are probably trying to help everyone else too, all at one time. So please be patient and thoughtful. I wish you good luck if you ever have to go through a disaster. Being prepared, being trained and having your things in order will help things go easier and faster.

### **Health and Safety Guidelines**

Recovering from a disaster is usually a gradual process. Safety is a primary issue, as are mental and physical well-being. Remember your the scout leader in charge of young people and some times other adults. If assistance is available, knowing how to access it makes the process faster and less stressful. This section offers some general advice on steps to take after disaster strikes in order to begin getting your home, your community, and your life back to normal. Your first concern after a disaster is your family's health and safety. You need to consider possible safety issues and monitor family health and well-being.

### **Aiding the Injured**

Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury. If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back, then call for help immediately.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

- If the victim is not breathing, carefully position the victim for artificial respiration, clear the airway, and commence mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- Maintain body temperature with blankets. Be sure the victim does not become overheated.
- Never try to feed liquids to an unconscious person.
- Get Trained!

### **Health**

- Be aware of exhaustion. Don't try to do too much at once. Set priorities and pace yourself. Get enough rest.
- Drink plenty of clean water. Eat well. Wear sturdy work boots and gloves.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water often when working in debris.

### **Safety Issues**

- Be aware of new safety issues created by the disaster. Watch for washed out roads, contaminated buildings, contaminated water, gas leaks, broken glass, damaged electrical wiring, and slippery floors.
- Inform local authorities about health and safety issues, including chemical spills, downed power lines, washed out roads, smoldering insulation, and dead animals.

# **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

## **Returning Home**

Returning home can be both physically and mentally challenging. Above all, use caution.

### **General tips:**

- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- Use a battery-powered flash light to inspect a damaged home.

Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.

- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Stay off the streets. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks.
- Use your camp safety rules.

### **Before You Enter Your Home:**

Walk carefully around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage. If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.



## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

### **Do not enter if:**

- You smell gas.
- Floodwaters remain around the building.
- Your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.

### **Going Inside Your Home:**

When you go inside your home, there are certain things you should and should not do. Enter the home carefully and check for damage. Be aware of loose boards and slippery floors.

### **The following items are other things to check inside your home:**

- Natural gas. If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside, if you can. Call the gas company from a neighbor's residence. If you shut off the gas supply at the main valve, you will need a professional to turn it back on. Do not smoke or use oil, gas lanterns, candles, or torches for lighting inside a damaged home until you are sure there is no leaking gas or other flammable materials present.
- Sparks, broken or frayed wires. Check the electrical system unless you are wet, standing in water, or unsure of your safety. If possible, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If the situation is unsafe, leave the building and call for help. Do not turn on the lights until you are sure they're safe to use.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

- Roof, foundation, and chimney cracks. If it looks like the building may collapse, leave immediately.
- Appliances. If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Then, unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have appliances checked by a professional before using them again. Also, have the electrical system checked by an electrician before turning the power back on.
- Water and sewage systems. If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with local authorities before using any water; the water could be contaminated. Pump out wells and have the water tested by authorities before drinking. Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are intact.
- Food and other supplies. Throw out all food and other supplies that you suspect may have become contaminated or come in to contact with floodwater.
- Your basement. If your basement has flooded, pump it out gradually (about one third of the water per day) to avoid damage. The walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged.
- Open cabinets. Be alert for objects that may fall.
- Clean up household chemical spills. Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria, or chemicals. Also clean salvageable items.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

- Call your insurance agent. Take pictures of damages. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs.

### **Being Wary of Wildlife and Other Animals:**

Disaster and life threatening situations will exacerbate the unpredictable nature of wild animals. To protect yourself, family and scouts, learn how to deal with wildlife.

### **Guidelines:**

- Do not approach or attempt to help an injured or stranded animal. Call your local animal control office or wildlife resource office.
- Do not corner wild animals or try to rescue them. Wild animals will likely feel threatened and may endanger themselves by dashing off into floodwaters, fire, and so forth.
- Do not approach wild animals that have taken refuge in your home. Wild animals such as snakes, opossums, and raccoons often seek refuge from floodwaters on upper levels of homes and have been known to remain after water recedes. If you encounter animals in this situation, open a window or provide another escape route and the animal will likely leave on its own. Do not attempt to capture or handle the animal. Should the animal stay, call your local animal control office or wildlife resource office.
- Do not attempt to move a dead animal. Animal carcasses can present serious health risks. Contact your local emergency management office or health department for help.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

- If bitten by an animal, seek immediate medical attention.

### **Seeking Disaster Assistance:**

Throughout the recovery period, it is important to monitor local radio or television reports and other media sources for information about where to get emergency housing, food, first aid, clothing, and financial assistance. The following section provides general information about the kinds of assistance that may be available.

### **Direct Assistance:**

Direct assistance to individuals and families may come from any number of organizations, including:

- American Red Cross.
- Salvation Army.
- Other volunteer organization.

These organizations provide food, shelter, supplies and assist in clean-up efforts.

### **The Federal Role:**

In the most severe disasters, the federal government is also called in to help individuals and families with temporary housing, counseling (for post-disaster trauma), low-interest loans and grants, and other assistance. The federal government also has programs that help small businesses and farmers.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

Most federal assistance becomes available when the President of the United States declares a "Major Disaster" for the affected area at the request of a state governor. FEMA will provide information through the media and community outreach about federal assistance and how to apply.

### **Coping with Disaster:**

The emotional toll that disaster brings can sometimes be even more devastating than the financial strains of damage and loss of home, business, or personal property.

### **Understand Disaster Events:**

- Everyone who sees or experiences a disaster is affected by it in some way.
- It is normal to feel anxious about your own safety and that of your family, scouts and close friends.
- Profound sadness, grief, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event.
- Acknowledging your feelings helps you recover.
- Focusing on your strengths and abilities helps you heal.
- Accepting help from community programs and resources is healthy.
- Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping.
- It is common to want to strike back at people who have caused great pain.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

Children (scouts) and older adults are of special concern in the aftermath of disasters. Even individuals who experience a disaster “second hand” through exposure to extensive media coverage can be affected.

Contact local faith-based organizations, voluntary agencies, or professional counselors for counseling. Additionally, FEMA and state and local governments of the affected area may provide crisis counseling assistance.

### **Recognize Signs of Disaster Related Stress**

When adult scouters have the following signs, they might need crisis counseling or stress management assistance:

- Difficulty communicating thoughts.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Difficulty maintaining balance in their lives.
- Low threshold of frustration.
- Increased use of drugs/alcohol.
- Limited attention span.
- Poor work performance.
- Headaches/stomach problems.
- Tunnel vision/muffled hearing.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

- Colds or flu-like symptoms.
- Disorientation or confusion.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Reluctance to leave home.
- Depression, sadness.
- Feelings of hopelessness.
- Mood-swings and easy bouts of crying.
- Overwhelming guilt and self-doubt.
- Fear of crowds, strangers, or being alone.

### **Easing Disaster-Related Stress:**

The following are ways scouts can ease disaster-related stress:

- Talk with someone about your feelings - anger, sorrow, and other emotions - even though it may be difficult.
- Seek help from professional counselors who deal with post-disaster stress.
- Do not hold yourself responsible for the disastrous event or be frustrated because you feel you cannot help directly in the rescue work.
- Take steps to promote your own physical and emotional healing by healthy eating, rest, exercise, relaxation, and meditation.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

- Maintain a normal family, scout and daily routine, limiting demanding responsibilities on yourself, scouts/scouters and your family.
- Spend time with family, scouts/scouters and friends.
- Participate in memorials.
- Use existing support groups of family, scouting, friends, and religious institutions.
- Ensure you are ready for future events by restocking your disaster supplies kits and updating your family/scouting disaster plan. Doing these positive actions can be comforting.

### **Helping Children and Scouts Cope with Disaster:**

Disasters can leave children/scouts feeling frightened, confused, and insecure. Whether a child/scout has personally experienced trauma, has merely seen the event on television, or has heard it discussed by adults, it is important for parents, scout leaders and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur. Children/scouts may respond to disaster by demonstrating fears, sadness, or behavioral problems. Younger children/scouts may return to earlier behavior patterns, such as bedwetting, sleep problems, and separation anxiety. Older children/scouts may also display anger, aggression, school problems, or withdrawal. Some children/scouts who have only indirect contact with the disaster but witness it on television may develop distress.



## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

### **Who is at Risk?**

For many children/scouts, reactions to disasters are brief and represent normal reactions to “abnormal events.” A smaller number of children/scouts can be at risk for more enduring psychological distress as a function of three major risk factors:

- Direct exposure to the disaster, such as being evacuated, observing injuries or death of others, or experiencing injury along with fearing one’s life is in danger.
- Loss/grief: This relates to the death or serious injury of family or friends.
- On-going stress from the secondary effects of disaster, such as temporarily living elsewhere, loss of friends and social networks, loss of personal property, parental .

### **What Creates Vulnerabilities in Children/Scouts?**

In most cases, depending on the risk factors above, distressing responses are temporary. In the absence of severe threat to life, injury, loss of loved ones, or secondary problems such as loss of home, moves, scout home, etc., symptoms usually diminish over time. For those that were directly exposed to the disaster, reminders of the disaster such as high winds, smoke, cloudy skies, sirens, or other reminders of the disaster may cause upsetting feelings to return. Having a prior history of some type of traumatic event or severe stress may contribute to these feelings. Children’s/Scout’s coping with disaster or emergencies is often tied to the way parents/scout leaders cope.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

They can detect adults' fears and sadness. Parents and adult leaders can make disasters less traumatic for children/scouts by taking steps to manage their own feelings and make plans for coping. Parents are almost always the best source of support for children/scouts in disasters. One way to establish a sense of control and to build confidence in children/scouts before a disaster is to engage and involve them in preparing a family/scouting disaster plan. After a disaster, children/scouts can contribute to a family/scout recovery plan.

### **A Child's Reaction to Disaster by Age**

Below are common reactions in children after a disaster or traumatic event.

**Birth through 2 years.** When children are pre-verbal and experience a trauma, they do not have the words to describe the event or their feelings. However, they can retain memories of particular sights, sounds, or smells. Infants may react to trauma by being irritable, crying more than usual, or wanting to be held and cuddled. The biggest influence on children of this age is how their parents cope. As children get older, their play may involve acting out elements of the traumatic event that occurred several years in the past and was seemingly forgotten.

**Preschool - 3 through 6 years.** Preschool children often feel helpless and powerless in the face of an overwhelming event. Because of their age and small size, they lack the ability to protect themselves or others. As a result, they feel intense fear and insecurity about being separated from caregivers. Preschoolers cannot grasp the concept of permanent loss.

## RECOVERING FROM DISASTER

They can see consequences as being reversible or permanent. In the weeks following a traumatic event, preschoolers' play activities may reenact the incident or the disaster over and over again.

School age - 7 through 10 years. The school-age child has the ability to understand the permanence of loss. Some children become intensely preoccupied with the details of a traumatic event and want to talk about it continually. This preoccupation can interfere with the child's concentration at school and academic performance may decline. At school, children may hear inaccurate information from peers. They may display a wide range of reactions—sadness, generalized fear, or specific fears of the disaster happening again, guilt over action or inaction during the disaster, anger that the event was not prevented, or fantasies of playing rescuer.

Pre-adolescence to adolescence - 11 through 18 years. As children grow older, they develop a more sophisticated understanding of the disaster event. Their responses are more similar to adults. Teenagers may become involved in dangerous, risk-taking behaviors, such as reckless driving, or alcohol or drug use. Others can become fearful of leaving home and avoid previous levels of activities. Much of adolescence is focused on moving out into the world. After a trauma, the view of the world can seem more dangerous and unsafe. A teenager may feel overwhelmed by intense emotions and yet feel unable to discuss them with others.

# **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

## **Meeting the Child's/Scout's Emotional Needs**

Children's/scout's reactions are influenced by the behavior, thoughts, and feelings of adults. Adults should encourage children/scouts and adolescents to share their thoughts and feelings about the incident. Clarify misunderstandings about risk and danger by listening to children's/scout's concerns and answering questions. Maintain a sense of calm by validating children's/scout's concerns and perceptions and with discussion of concrete plans for safety. Listen to what the child/scout is saying. If a young child/scout is asking questions about the event, answer them simply without the elaboration needed for an older child/scout or adult. Some children/scouts are comforted by knowing more or less information than others; decide what level of information your particular child/scout needs. If a child/scout has difficulty expressing feelings, allow the child/scout to draw a picture or tell a story of what happened. Try to understand what is causing anxieties and fears. Be aware that following a disaster, children/scouts are most afraid that:

- The event will happen again.
- Someone close to them will be killed or injured.
- They will be left alone or separated from the family or scout group.

# **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

## **Reassuring Children/Scouts After a Disaster**

**Suggestions to help reassure children/scouts include the following:**

- Personal contact is reassuring. Hug and touch your children. (remember BSA policy)
- Calmly provide factual information about the recent disaster and current plans for insuring their safety along with recovery plans.
- Encourage your children/scouts to talk about their feelings.
- Spend extra time with your children/scouts such as at bedtime.
- Re-establish your daily routine for work, scouting, school, play, meals, and rest.
- Involve your children/scouts by giving them specific chores to help them feel they are helping to restore family, scouting and community life.
- Praise and recognize responsible behavior.
- Understand that your children/scout will have a range of reactions to disasters.
- Encourage your children/scout to help update your a family/scouting disaster plan.

If you have tried to create a reassuring environment by following the steps above, but your child/scout continues to exhibit stress, if the reactions worsen over time, or if they cause interference with daily behavior at school, scouting, at home, or with other relationships, it may be appropriate to talk to a professional. You can get professional help from the child's/scout's primary care physician, a mental health provider specializing in children's needs, or the clergy.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

### **Monitor and Limit Your Family's/Scout's Exposure to the Media**

News coverage related to a disaster may elicit fear and confusion and arouse anxiety in children/scouts. This is particularly true for large-scale disasters or a terrorist event where significant property damage and loss of life has occurred. Particularly for younger children/scouts, repeated images of an event may cause them to believe the event is recurring over and over.

If parents/leaders allow children/scouts to watch television or use the Internet where images or news about the disaster are shown, parents/leaders should be with them to encourage communication and provide explanations. This may also include parent's/leader's monitoring and appropriately limiting their own exposure to anxiety-provoking information.

### **Use Support Networks**

Parents/leaders help their children/scouts when they take steps to understand and manage their own feelings and ways of coping. They can do this by building and using social support systems of family/fellow scouters, friends, community organizations and agencies, faith-based institutions, or other resources that work for that family/leader. Parents/leaders can build their own unique social support systems so that in an emergency situation or when a disaster strikes, they can be supported and helped to manage their reactions. As a result, parents/leaders will be more available to their children/scouts and better able to support them.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

Parents are almost always the best source of support for children in difficult times. But to support their children/scouts, parents need to attend to their own needs and have a plan for their own support. Preparing for disaster helps everyone in the family/scouting accept the fact that disasters do happen, and provides an opportunity to identify and collect the resources needed to meet basic needs after disaster. Preparation helps; when people feel prepared, they cope better and so do children/scouts..

### **Helping Others**

The compassion and generosity of the American people is never more evident than after a disaster. People want to help. Here are some general guidelines on helping others after a disaster:

- Volunteer! Check with local organizations or listen to local news reports for information about where volunteers are needed. Note: Until volunteers are specifically requested, stay away from disaster areas.
- Bring your own food, water, and emergency supplies to a disaster area if you are needed there. This is especially important in cases where a large area has been affected and emergency items are in short supply.
- Give a check or money order to a recognized disaster relief organization. These groups are organized to process checks, purchase what is needed, and get it to the people who need it most.

## **RECOVERING FROM DISASTER**

- Do not drop off food, clothing, or any other item to a government agency or disaster relief organization unless a particular item has been requested. Normally, these organizations do not have the resources to sort through the donated items.
- Donate a quantity of a given item or class of items (such as nonperishable food) rather than a mix of different items. Determine where your donation is going, how it's going to get there, who is going to unload it, and how it is going to be distributed. Without sufficient planning, much needed supplies will be left unused.



## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion I hope that this thesis will help guide and inspire many to get disaster prepared. With the information and other resource contacts provided within this thesis, I hope you will take action and custom design a disaster preparedness program for your family and your scouting family. Get involved with your community and its agencies to help bring a greater awareness to others and encourage them to get disaster prepared. Remember that your scouts look up to you for guidance and leadership. Help them and your family to be safe. Good luck and happy scouting.