



Be Disaster Safe



Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters

Glossary

act: the process of doing or performing something

ambulance: a vehicle equipped for transportation of sick and injured persons

believe: to accept as true or real

cascading disaster: the effects of one disastrous event acting as a catalyst to cause other disastrous occurrences

cleanup: the cleaning and reordering that occurs in a community in the aftermath of a storm or disaster

comfort: (verb) to soothe in a time of distress; (noun) the state or condition of ease, of relaxation

communication: a means to exchange information, often with equipment such as telephones or radios

community: people living together in the same area

community outreach: the attempts by organizations and/or government agencies to run effective social programs by bringing those programs directly to those who would benefit from them.

community preparedness: the steps taken by a community to ready itself for the task of safeguarding its citizens before and during a disaster and the work toward a speedy recovery in the aftermath

community response: the manner in which a community reacts to an event involving some or all the members of the community, particularly regarding provision of emergency assistance and relief

consequences: the natural or logical results of an act or event

contacts: a designated list of persons with whom one wishes to communicate, particularly in the event of an expected or actual disaster

cycle: a period of time occupied by a series of events that repeat themselves regularly and in the same order

danger: the condition in which a person is vulnerable to harm or risk

debris: the remains of something broken down or destroyed; an accumulation of fragments of rock



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Department of Homeland Security (DHS): a federal government agency responsible for developing and carrying out a strategy to make the country safe from terrorism

disaster: an occurrence such as a hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water, tsunami, earthquake, drought, blizzard, pestilence, famine, fire, explosion, volcanic eruption, building collapse, transportation accident, or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance

disaster plan: a plan created before a disaster strikes to minimize loss or injury and to help ensure that family members remain in contact

disaster supplies kit: assembled supplies that will help people cope with an evacuation or home confinement caused by a disaster in the community or in the home (such as a fire). For a suggested list of essential disaster supplies, see the Background, ask your local chapter of the American Red Cross or visit the Red Cross Web site at redcross.org/images/pdfs/code/disasters_supplies_kit.pdf.

dispatcher: a person who sends and receives messages for others

drop drill: a time to practice the “Drop, Cover and Hold On” procedure: the sequence of simple steps people should take to protect themselves at the first sign of an earthquake. Drop under a sturdy desk or table, protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm and hold on. If there is no table or desk nearby, sit on the floor against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture that could fall on you.

earthquake: a sudden, rapid shaking of the earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the earth’s surface

emergency: an event that disrupts a family’s or a community’s ability to function and for which assistance will be required

emergency medical services (EMS): a community-based method of reporting and responding to a need for medical assistance through a network of medical service providers. The EMS system is activated by calling 9-1-1 or other local EMS telephone number.

evacuation: the withdrawal from a place in an organized way for protection from unsafe conditions, such as fire, the release of hazardous materials or an approaching hurricane. “Evacuation” may refer to leaving individual buildings, neighborhoods, communities or even cities.

evacuation drill: a time to practice exiting the buildings to go to a safer place away from the buildings; often called a fire drill

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): an agency of the United States government, now a division of the Department of Homeland Security, which is responsible for coordinating relief efforts after a disaster



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firefighter: a man or a woman who puts out fires and saves lives and property

first aid kit: a box or other receptacle used to store items for medical treatment in an emergency. A typical first-aid kit includes Band-Aids, bandages, gauze, an antiseptic and analgesics.

flood: an overflow of water into a normally dry area from an established watercourse— a river, stream, drainage ditch or pond. Floods develop more slowly than flash floods. Floods are the most common and widespread natural disaster, after fire. Most communities in the United States can experience some kind of flood after spring rains, heavy thunderstorms or winter snow thaws. Floods can rise slowly or rapidly, but they generally develop over a period of days.

frequency: the number of times something occurs within a given time frame, often at consistent intervals

government agency: a unit of government designed to administer policy

hazard: an object or situation that has the potential to cause injury or damage; a risk

hazardous: an act, enterprise or event that has the potential for danger or disaster

health department: a department of government that oversees all aspects related to health issues for a city, county, state or the nation. Health departments typically oversee the regulation of inoculations, inspect and license food and beverages, and gather and maintain statistics on medical conditions and infectious disease.

Humane Society, The: an organization that rescues, ministers to and protects animals, offering shelter and, sometimes, homes to abused and abandoned pets

hurricane: the name for a tropical cyclone with sustained winds of 74 miles (119 kilometers) per hour or greater in the North Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and in the eastern North Pacific Ocean. This same tropical cyclone is known as a typhoon in the western Pacific and a cyclone in the Indian Ocean.

hygiene: activities for cleansing and caring for the body and its functions

infrastructure: the basic systems and facilities on which communities depend, such as transportation and communication systems, roads and schools.

interpret: to clarify or explain the meaning of something



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law enforcement: government agents charged with enforcing the law, such as police officers, marshals and prison guards; the process of maintaining law and order

lightning: any visible electrical discharge produced by positively charged and negatively charged areas in a thunderstorm

magnitude: the relative size or significance based on a fixed scale

mitigate: to lessen or reduce the effect of an event. “Mitigation” refers to the measures that prevent the occurrence of a disaster or reduce the severity of its effects.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Weather Radio: a radio information service provided by all National Weather Service offices, free of charge, 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. Routine programming includes the latest weather conditions, weather summaries for the vicinity and surrounding areas, short-term forecasts of significant weather expected within the next one to three hours, and forecasts of temperatures and precipitation for the next five days.

needs: items and conditions essential to human survival

neighborhood: an area that has distinct characteristics; a community; people living near one another

9-1-1: the telephone number to call in an emergency. (Note: For most communities in the United States, 9-1-1 is the local emergency services number, but some communities use a different number. Everyone should know the correct number to dial in an emergency, wherever they are.)

perishable: something that can spoil or decay, particularly food

plan: steps of action to take in an emergency

police officer: a person trained in methods of law enforcement and crime prevention and detection and authorized to maintain the peace, safety and order of the community

practice: to do something repeatedly in order to become more skilled

prepare: to make ready ahead of time, usually for a particular event or objective

primary: a thing, a person, an event or an activity that is ranked most important

public works: construction projects funded and carried out by government agencies for the good of the general public, such as highways, hospitals, bridges and dams.

ready: the state of being prepared



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receive: to accept something bestowed or offered

recover: to restore to a previous state or condition

residential fire: a fire affecting a home or housing complex, resulting in partial or total destruction of the structure, bodily injury, smoke inhalation or death

resilient: able to recover quickly or return to an original form or shape

respond: to answer, reply or react

responsible: answerable or accountable

responsibility: a duty or an obligation

reverse evacuation drill: a time to practice entering the school buildings in the event of a threatening situation outside the buildings

safe: a state or condition without threat of danger; without harm or risk

safe place: a building or other place or area deemed safe from a tornado

seal-a-room: a measure taken to keep contamination outside a building from seeping inside, usually by using plastic sheeting and duct tape

secondary: a thing, a person, an event or an activity that is ranked second in importance

shelter: a place that provides protection from the weather and from danger

shelter-in-place: the action taken to remain inside your home or the school buildings because of a threatening situation outside

Steps for Preparedness: the actions to take in preparation for a disaster. The Steps for Preparedness are Assess risk; Reduce hazards; Make a plan; Build a kit; Train, practice and update; and Volunteer.

supplies: materials, water and foodstuffs that are stored and used when needed during an emergency

survival: continued existence

tertiary: a thing, a person, an event or an activity that is ranked third in importance

tornado: a violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground and extending from the base of a thunderstorm

tornado drill: a time to practice moving to a tornado-safe place



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tsunami: a huge sea wave or a series of such waves caused by earthquakes or other large-scale disturbance of the ocean floor. (Referred to incorrectly by many as a “tidal wave,” although these waves have nothing to do with tides.) The word *tsunami* is Japanese, meaning “harbor wave.”

unexpected: something that occurs without warning

unsafe: a state or condition that is dangerous or that is threatening harm or risk

utility companies: companies that provide essential services to the public, such as electricity, water, gas and telephone service

verify: to prove, ascertain or substantiate claims or allegations in an effort to establish the truth

volunteer organization: a community organization that provides a service to others without compensation

WARNING: a message issued by the National Weather Service to alert people to severe weather that is occurring or is imminent

WATCH: a message issued by the National Weather Service to alert people that conditions are right for severe weather to occur

wildland fire: a fire that occurs in wildlands, including forest fire

winter storm: any of the types of storms occurring during the winter months, including heavy snow, blizzards, lake effect snow, heavy sleet and severe icing



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