



Make a Plan

Planning ahead will help you have the best possible response to disaster.

Talk. Discuss with your family the disasters that can happen where you live. Establish responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team. Designate alternates in case someone is absent. If a family member is in the military, also plan for how you would respond if they are deployed. Include the local military base resources that may be available.

Plan. Choose two places to meet after a disaster:

- Right outside your home, in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire.
- Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate your neighborhood.

Choose an out-of-area contact for all members of the family to call in case of disaster. The selected contact person should live far enough away that they would be unaffected by the same event, and they should know they are the chosen contact. Remember that during a disaster, it may be easier to make a long distance phone call than to call across town.

Having predetermined meeting places will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected or if the area is evacuated.

Learn. Each adult in your household should learn how and when to turn off utilities such as electricity, water and gas. Ask your local fire department to show you how to use a fire extinguisher.

Tell everyone in the household where emergency information and supplies are kept. Make copies of the information for everyone to carry with them. Keep the information updated.

Practice evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on a map in case main roads are impassable or gridlocked.

Include your pets. If you must evacuate, take your animals with you. If it is not safe for you to remain, it is not safe for them.

Support your community. Support your community plans by volunteering in the community and by giving blood. More than one million people in the U.S. serve their communities. They come from all walks of life and backgrounds and are of all ages. Red Cross volunteers help people in emergencies. They translate for non-English speakers so that every-one can receive Red Cross services, teach first aid classes and organize blood drives. They connect members of the armed forces stationed overseas with their families during major family events. These vital community services are made possible by people like you. Contact your local Red Cross chapter and ask how you can help.

Give blood. Blood is needed in times of emergency, but the ongoing need is also great. Every two seconds someone in America needs a blood transfusion—cancer patients, accident victims, premature infants and the list goes on. Your blood donation means so much to the individuals who need it, and you can help make a lifesaving difference by giving blood. During times of crisis and every day, each blood donation has the potential to help save as many as three lives. Whole blood has a shelf life of only 42 days, so it is so important to be a regular and frequent donor. It's important to have an adequate blood supply available at all times. You can support your community blood supply by calling **1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543)** or visiting www.givelife.org and making an appointment to donate blood today.