



*Above & Beyond*

## Scouting Skills Resource Guide

### *Emergency Preparedness*

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### Introduction

#### ***Emergency Preparedness Meritbadge requirement #8C states:***

"Prepare a personal emergency service pack for a mobilization call. Prepare a family kit (suitcase or waterproof box) for use by your family in case an emergency evacuation is needed. Explain the needs and uses of the contents."

#### ***What the BSA Recommends to fulfill this requirement***

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.

- **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.** Including 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.
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## The Plan

Perhaps the most critical test of your preparedness will be in time of emergency. Developing and rehearsing an emergency action plan will add precious time needed for response to a crisis. This is true on a day hike, overnight or longer troop camp, and all other activities.

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. Make a list of them, then discuss each one and what you should do as a group in each situation. For each type of emergency, establish responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team. Because some family members might not be at home at the time of an emergency, 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 that in that case, they must not hesitate, but must get out as soon as possible and after they are outside someone 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) and other local emergency numbers; and how to call on different kinds of phones, such as cell phones. 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.

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## 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.

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 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. A blank Emergency Contact List form is included in this section for your use.

## 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 preparedness includes 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. The Emergency Preparedness BSA program is planned to inspire the desire and foster the skills to meet this challenge in our youth and adult members so that they can participate effectively in this crucial service to their families, communities, and nation.

When an emergency occurs, it affects every youth and adult member of BSA 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 a Scouting unit serving the neighborhood and community. To meet these varied responsibilities, the Emergency Preparedness BSA plan includes preparedness training for individuals, families, and units.

Download an [Emergency Contact List](#) to use. (PDF)

Reference: Emergency Preparedness, No.19-304

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## Why Prepare

FEMA - [Why Prepare?](#)

### **There are real benefits to being prepared.**

There are real benefits to being prepared.

- Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of a fire and where to seek shelter during a tornado. They should be ready to evacuate their homes and take refuge in public shelters and know how to care for their basic medical needs.
- People also can reduce the impact of disasters (flood proofing, elevating a home or moving a home out of harm's way, and securing items that could shake loose in an earthquake) and sometimes avoid the danger completely.

The need to prepare is real.

- Disasters disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property.
- If a disaster occurs in your community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help you, but you need to be ready as well. Local responders may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere.
- You should know how to respond to severe weather or any disaster that could occur in your area - hurricanes, earthquakes, extreme cold, flooding, or terrorism.
- You should also be ready to be self-sufficient for at least three days. This may mean providing for your own shelter, first aid, food, water, and sanitation.

Using this guide makes preparation practical.

- This guide was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is the agency responsible for responding to national disasters and for helping state and local governments and individuals prepare for emergencies. It contains step-by-step advice on how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.
- Used in conjunction with information and instructions from local emergency management offices and the American Red Cross, *Are You Ready?* will give you what you need to be prepared.

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## Using Are You Ready? to Prepare

The main reason to use this guide is to help protect yourself and your family in the event of an emergency. Through applying what you have learned in this guide, you are taking the necessary steps to be ready when an event occurs.

### **Citizen**

Every citizen in this country is part of a national emergency management system that is all about protection—protecting people and property from all types of hazards. Think of the national emergency management system as a pyramid with you, the citizen, forming the base of the structure. At this level, you have a responsibility to protect yourself and your family by knowing what to do before, during, and after an event. Some examples of what you can do follow:

#### Before

- Know the risks and danger signs.
- Purchase insurance, including flood insurance, which is not part of your homeowner's policy.
- Develop plans for what to do.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit.
- Volunteer to help others.

#### During

- Put your plan into action.
- Help others.
- Follow the advice and guidance of officials in charge of the event.

#### After

- Repair damaged property.
- Take steps to prevent or reduce future loss.

You will learn more about these and other actions you should take as you progress through this guide.

### **Local Citizen**

It is sometimes necessary to turn to others within the local community for help. The local level is the second tier of the pyramid, and is made up of paid employees and volunteers from the private and public sectors. These individuals are engaged in preventing emergencies from happening and in being prepared to respond if something

does occur. Most emergencies are handled at the local level, which puts a tremendous responsibility on the community for taking care of its citizens. Among the responsibilities faced by local officials are:

- Identifying hazards and assessing potential risk to the community.
- Enforcing building codes, zoning ordinances, and land-use management programs.
- Coordinating emergency plans to ensure a quick and effective response.
- Fighting fires and responding to hazardous materials incidents.
- Establishing warning systems.
- Stocking emergency supplies and equipment.
- Assessing damage and identifying needs.
- Evacuating the community to safer locations.
- Taking care of the injured.
- Sheltering those who cannot remain in their homes.
- Aiding recovery efforts.

### **State - Local Citizen**

If support and resources are needed beyond what the local level can provide, the community can request assistance from the state. The state may be able to provide supplemental resources such as money, equipment, and personnel to close the gap between what is needed and what is available at the local level. The state also coordinates the plans of the various jurisdictions so that activities do not interfere or conflict with each other. To ensure personnel know what to do and efforts are in agreement, the state may offer a program that provides jurisdictions the opportunity to train and exercise together.

### **Federal Government - State - Local Citizen**

At the top of the pyramid is the federal government, which can provide resources to augment state and local efforts. These resources can be in the form of:

- Public educational materials, such as this guide, that can be used to prepare the public for protecting itself from hazards.
- Financial grants for equipment, training, exercises, personnel, and programs.
- Grants and loans to help communities respond to and recover from disasters so severe that the President of the United States has deemed them beyond state and local capabilities.
- Research findings that can help reduce losses from disaster.
- Technical assistance to help build stronger programs.

The national emergency management system is built on shared responsibilities and active participation at all levels of the pyramid. The whole system begins with you, the citizen, and your ability to follow good emergency management practices— whether at home, work, or other locations.



Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness is organized to help you through the process. Begin by reading Part 1 which is the core of the guide. This part provides basic information that is common to all hazards on how to create and maintain an emergency plan and disaster supplies kit.

### **Part 1: Basic Preparedness**

- A series of worksheets to help you obtain information from the community that will form the foundation of your plan. You will need to find out about hazards that threaten the community, how the population will be warned, evacuation routes to be used in times of disaster, and the emergency plans of the community and others that will impact your plan.
- Guidance on specific content that you and your family will need to develop and include in your plan on how to escape from your residence, communicate with one another during times of disaster, shut-off household utilities, insure against financial loss, acquire basic safety skills, address special needs such as disabilities, take care of animals, and seek shelter.
- Checklists of items to consider including in your disaster supplies kit that will meet your family's needs following a disaster whether you are at home or at other locations.

Part 1 is also the gateway to the specific hazards and recovery information contained in Parts 2, 3, 4, and 5. Information from these sections should be read carefully and integrated in your emergency plan and disaster supplies kit based on the hazards that pose a threat to you and your family.

### **Part 2: Natural Hazards**

- Floods
- Hurricanes
- Thunderstorms and lightning
- Tornadoes
- Winter storms and extreme cold
- Extreme heat
- Earthquakes
- Volcanoes
- Landslides and debris flow
- Tsunamis
- Fires
- Wildfires

### **Part 3: Technological Hazards**

- Hazardous materials incidents
- Household chemical emergencies
- Nuclear power plant emergencies

#### **Part 4: Terrorism**

- Explosions
- Biological threats
- Chemical threats
- Nuclear blasts
- Radiological dispersion device events

#### **Part 5: Recovering from Disaster**

- Health and safety guidelines
- Returning home
- Seeking disaster assistance
- Coping with disaster
- Helping others