

Community Actions



COMMUNITY PROTECTION

IMPACT PREPAREDNESS: Wind, rain, snow, and other hazards can all cause extensive damage to property, limit accessibility, and create dangerous conditions for those who live and work there. These effects can restrict recovery, as well as prolong and exacerbate the effects of crisis.

Certain damage or accessibility concerns can be identified ahead of any disaster: Are large trees in the neighborhood healthy and pruned regularly? Where are the catch basins and drains where backups might occur? Are there areas with only one access road or limited egress?

It is also possible to identify in advance those who would be willing and able to assist. Community youth, those who have access to vehicles, and people with specific skills or trades are particularly useful in crisis!

RESPONSE: Community members can work together to address and prevent disaster impacts, with measures such as: sandbagging, shoveling snow, removing debris, protecting, or securing windows, or spraying down homes to protect from fire.

ADAPTATION: Consider the challenges that your community may experience during a crisis. If these can be addressed in a way that reduces the risk and increases resilience to disaster, the community as a whole could be better off. For example, if access to food could be an issue due to limited accessibility or distance to the local grocers then a local buy-in club could help build resilience before disaster strikes.



SAFE SHELTER

IMPACT PREPAREDNESS: Do you have a plan for when disaster strikes? Have a plan to shelter in place in case of emergency, but also be prepared in case you are forced to leave home.

Key questions include:

- Who are your emergency contacts (family or friends who will be concerned for your wellbeing, or could help)?
- What supplies do you need with you?
- Where would you go? How will you get there?

RESPONSE: When you, your neighbors, family, or friends are affected by disaster, sheltering in place is usually the best and most sustainable option. Work together to ensure everyone has a plan, including safe temporary shelter, water, and food. Whether this is a seat at your kitchen table, a hot meal at a community hall, or offering a friend a bed for the night, every little bit helps in reducing the impact of the disaster for everyone. Businesses and organizations also have a key role to play in support of the community.

ADAPTATION: Communities can be supported to adapt the ways they shelter and settle themselves. To reduce their exposure to the risks of climate change infrastructure can be strengthened, either in advance of an emergency or as part of an emergency response. Supporting climate resilience as a national and local priority and contributing to safer and more resilient community plans and buildings in your local area can help contribute towards this.

Community Actions



SUPPORT TO THE VULNERABLE

IMPACT PREPAREDNESS: When disaster strikes, communities are stronger when they work together. It is helpful to get to know people in your community, ideally before emergencies occur. Community members, friends and family can work together to understand the diverse skills, abilities and vulnerabilities that exist across the community.

For example: Do any community members use a wheelchair or other mobility device? Are there people with special skills such as a trades license or first aid certificate that would be willing to support the community in times of disaster?

RESPONSE: Emergencies can be chaotic and confusing, and government agencies rely on information from community members to help organize essential services, as well as locate and support those most in need. Neighbors, family, and friends can become advocates who ensure that those who cannot speak for themselves have a voice amid the crisis.

ADAPTATION: Reducing vulnerability proactively can ensure that as few people as possible require support during emergencies. Physical adaptations such as adding accessibility features to apartment buildings and neighborhoods, or community projects such as fostering support networks to connect those who struggle day-to-day with consistent help can improve wellbeing and increase disaster resilience at the same time.



EMERGENCY FOOD & SUPPLIES

IMPACT PREPAREDNESS: Gather and organize your emergency supplies now so you are ready when disaster strikes. Building your emergency kit or grab-and-go bag does not need to be expensive or take a lot of time. Put your supplies in one or two containers, such as plastic bins or duffel bags. Store them in your vehicle, or an area of your home that is easy to get to, such as a hall closet, spare room or garage.

RESPONSE: Following a disaster, you may need to stay at home with your emergency kit or leave immediately with your grab-and-go bags. Make sure they are stocked and ready! It is always best to prepare emergency supplies, but there's no way to think of everything you might need in an emergency. Coming together as a community can help ensure everyone has the basics they need during the emergency. Keep in mind that usual lines of transportation, power, and water may be interrupted. Those who are more able can organize support to those who might struggle to obtain basic and essential items such as hygiene supplies and food. Local businesses, faith-based groups and other local agencies are also key to ensure the community is prepared and ready when disaster strikes.

ADAPTATION: Identify potential challenges to accessing or obtaining critical supplies in advance, and attempt to either remove or reduce the barrier. For example, if purchasing and storing water could be an issue, look into ways to harvest rainwater or identify opportunities to increase community water security.

Community Actions



BASIC & PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

IMPACT PREPAREDNESS: Having a knowledge of basic first aid skills could save someone's life or your own life. These skills are easy to learn and recall in emergency situations. Basic skills like CPR, setting a splint, stopping bleeding in dire situations, are important life skills.

Psychological First Aid training allows individuals to build a self-care plan through understanding and identifying how loss, grief, and stress affect them and in turn how to deal with it. This training also explores how they can care for others by identifying what it looks like when their friend or loved one is experiencing distress.

RESPONSE: Government and response agencies triage needs based on areas of most severe damage or serious injury – it could be some time before they can get to everybody that is affected. Neighbors, family and friends can be there immediately to provide first aid, as well as a comforting and reassuring shoulder to lean on for emotional support. This is an essential and valuable support that can significantly reduce the impact of disasters.

ADAPTATION: Some communities provide the opportunity to train and work alongside emergency first responders in response to emergencies. Keep an eye out for volunteer programs or community connectors that allow individuals, neighborhoods, agencies or organizations to connect with broader initiatives across neighborhoods. Adapting through sharing of knowledge and strengthening of community networks can greatly increase the ability for communities to cope with and even thrive in disasters.



LOCAL RESOURCES & INFORMATION SHARING

IMPACT PREPAREDNESS: At the community level, preparedness and resilience are particularly important as emergencies and disasters are often community events—experienced locally by residents and managed locally by municipalities. Small groups of friends, family and community members can plan together, share information and resources, and help each other – before, during or after an emergency.

RESPONSE: Community groups represent existing social networks of support, and these can be leveraged to share information effectively in times of crisis. Bonds of trust bind community members and local organizations together, which can help ensure dissemination of accurate and locally-relevant knowledge while helping to combat misinformation. These connections can also help to ensure that information travels from communities or individuals most in need of support to local authorities.

ADAPTATION: Individuals and governments are not the only actors who can help overcome key informational barriers. Civil society organizations, development partners and even other private sector actors can address these obstacles. Businesses, for example, are powerful advocates for their communities and can participate in information-sharing platforms, or participate in community engagement.