

Get Involved



THE GOAL: Make your community stronger by getting trained and getting involved.

It takes more than police, fire and EMS to respond to a disaster. It takes people who are committed to neighborhood, churches, schools and volunteer organizations. When people are willing to work together for the good of others, communities are stronger.

People who are involved are the key to a disaster resilient community. They are willing and able to look out for themselves and others. A resilient community is one that can withstand a disaster and get back to normal quickly (even if normal isn't the same as it was before).

▶▶▶ CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH TO BECOME BETTER PREPARED:

Connect with an isolated individual in your neighborhood or start a neighborhood organization.

Isolated individuals are more vulnerable during and after a disaster. They are less likely to ask for help or follow emergency instructions. The elderly or those with disabilities may have trouble getting out of the house, and may not have much contact with the outside world. Someone who doesn't speak English well may have trouble understanding emergency instructions. People may also be isolated just because they are new to the area, or because their work hours keep them from meeting their neighbors.

Who are the isolated individuals in your neighborhood? Take time to meet them. Help them make a plan for emergencies, and include checking on them in your plan.

Neighborhood watches and other groups can be a great way for you to become better connected to your neighbors. If your neighborhood doesn't have a group, consider starting one. There are resources available online at www.usaonwatch.org or by calling your local police or sheriff's department.

Promote emergency preparedness in your community.

Scout troops, service clubs, residential associations, communities of faith—almost any organization you belong to can become a partner in emergency preparedness. Organizations that promote emergency preparedness make their community more able to withstand and recover from disaster. Here are some suggestions for involving your organization:

- Include a Do 1 Thing preparedness topic in newsletters or on bulletin boards each month.
- Talk to your scout troop leader about how Do 1 Thing activities can be used toward a preparedness badge.
- Get a group together to make emergency kits for seniors or kids who stay home alone.
- Visit the www.do1thing.com website to see how other organizations are promoting preparedness in their communities.

The Red Cross, Ready.gov, and many other organizations also promote preparedness. Find the materials that will work best for your organization and become a partner in preparing your community!

Become a volunteer in your community (CERT, Red Cross, Neighborhood Watch, etc.).

There are many places to volunteer in your community. Many police and fire departments use volunteers to help with special projects, events, or program. The American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other organizations train volunteers to work in disasters.

If you are interested in helping in your community or other communities during a disaster, become a volunteer for your local Red Cross or Salvation Army chapter. But don't wait for disaster to strike—volunteer now. These organizations won't send untrained volunteers into disaster areas.

Many communities also have a volunteer center or a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). These programs can find ways for you to help in your community that will fit your schedule and abilities.

If you are already a member of a volunteer organization, consider getting your volunteer group involved in VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). VOAD is a national program that helps volunteer groups work in their community during a disaster.

Community preparedness starts at home. If you know that your family is prepared at home, you will be better able to help others in your community.