



# DISASTER RESPONSE

*Preparing For, and Responding To, Emergencies*

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A Lesson in Emergency Management



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# Why Disaster Response Matters

*The minutes and days after a disaster strikes often determine how many lives and how much property can be saved.*



### Saves Lives

Fast, organized response gets help to people before injuries or conditions become fatal.



### Reduces Damage

Quick action can prevent a bad situation from getting worse for homes and infrastructure.



### Speeds Recovery

Coordinated response lays the groundwork for communities to rebuild faster.

### 3 What Is Disaster Response?

*“Disaster response is the set of actions taken immediately before, during, and after a disaster to protect life, property, and the environment.”*

— A working definition used by emergency management professionals

- It involves governments, first responders, and everyday community members.
- Good response depends on planning that happens long before a disaster hits.
- The goal is to reduce harm and help people return to normal life as quickly as possible.



#### Preparedness Is Protection

The better prepared a community is before a disaster, the faster and safer its response can be.

## 4 Types of Disasters



### Earthquakes

Sudden ground shaking caused by shifting tectonic plates.



### Floods

Water overflowing onto normally dry land, often from heavy rain or storms.



### Hurricanes & Tornadoes

Powerful rotating windstorms that can flatten structures and trees.



### Wildfires

Uncontrolled fires that spread quickly through dry vegetation.



### Disease Outbreaks

Rapid spread of illness through a population, straining health systems.



### Hazardous Material Spills

Accidental release of chemicals or toxic substances into the environment.

# 5 The Disaster Management Cycle

*Emergency management professionals think in an ongoing cycle, not a single event.*



*The cycle repeats: mitigation efforts feed back into preparedness for the next event.*

## 6 Examples by Disaster Type



### Earthquake Example

A city built near a fault line feels sudden, strong shaking that damages older buildings and cracks roads.



### Flood Example

Days of heavy rain cause a river to overflow its banks, forcing nearby neighborhoods to evacuate.



### Wildfire Example

A dry, windy summer allows a small spark to grow into a fast-moving fire that threatens homes.



### Disease Outbreak Example

A contagious illness spreads quickly through a community, overwhelming local hospitals and clinics.

# 7 What to Do Before a Disaster



## **Build an Emergency Kit**

Pack water, food, medications, and supplies you can grab quickly.

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## **Make a Family Plan**

Agree in advance on a meeting point and how everyone will stay in touch.

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## **Know Your Risks**

Learn which disasters are most likely in your area and how they're announced.



PART TWO

# Response & Recovery

*What to do while a disaster is unfolding, and once it has passed.*



# 9 What to Do During a Disaster



## **Follow Official Instructions**

Local authorities know current conditions best — follow their guidance closely.

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## **Move to Safety**

Get to higher ground, shelter, or a safe room as instructed for the disaster type.

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## **Stay Informed**

Keep a battery-powered radio or phone nearby for ongoing updates.

# 10 What to Do After a Disaster



## Check for Injuries First

Provide basic first aid and call for medical help if it's needed.

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## Contact Loved Ones

Let family and friends know you're safe as soon as it's possible.

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## Assess Damage Safely

Watch for hazards like gas leaks or unstable structures before going back inside.

# 11 Who Responds?



## First Responders

- Firefighters, paramedics, and police provide immediate life-saving help.
- Emergency management agencies coordinate the overall response effort.
- Trained professionals handle search and rescue in dangerous conditions.



## Community & Volunteers

- Neighbors often help each other before official responders can arrive.
- Local organizations set up shelters, food, and supply distribution.
- Volunteers support cleanup and rebuilding long after the disaster passes.

## 12 Global Disaster Facts

**~60,000**

lives lost to natural disasters worldwide  
in an average year

**Flooding**

is the most common type of natural  
disaster worldwide

**1.1 Billion**

people displaced by disasters over the  
past 25 years

**72 Hours**

of self-sufficient supplies is a common  
preparedness recommendation

*Figures are drawn from long-term disaster tracking data. Preparedness and early warning systems have measurably reduced disaster death tolls over time.*

## 13 What Can You Do?



### **Build a Kit Today**

Don't wait for a warning — put together basic supplies now.

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### **Learn Your Community's Plan**

Know local evacuation routes and emergency alert systems.

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### **Practice Drills**

Regularly practicing a plan makes it easier to follow under real stress.



# Preparedness Saves Lives

*The steps we take before a disaster shape how well  
we come through it.*

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Thank You