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# UNIT 1: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

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## In this unit you will learn about:

- **Disasters and Disaster Workers:** What defines a disaster, what defines an disaster, and who makes up the response workforce.
- **The Impact on the Infrastructure:** The potential effect of extreme emergencies and disasters on transportation; electrical service; telephone communication; fuel; food, water, and shelter; and emergency services.
- **Structural and Nonstructural Hazards:** Potentially hazardous conditions in various types of structures and their contents during a disaster.
- **Hazard Mitigation:** What to do to reduce the risk of damage from hazards that threaten your area.
- **Home and Workplace Preparedness:** How you can prepare in advance to reduce structural and nonstructural hazards and survive the initial period after a disaster.
- **Community Preparedness:** How a community can prepare in advance to respond.
- **Protection for Disaster Workers:** Laws that protect disaster workers from liability.

UNIT 1: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

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**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The introduction section in your Participant Manuals contains excellent information on:

- When an disaster strikes.
  - Community preparedness.
  - How CERT teams operate.
  - The CERT training program.
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**ACTIVITY: BUILDING A TOWER**

**Instructions:** Follow the steps below to complete this exercise:

1. You will work in groups of five.
2. You will spend the next 10 minutes planning and designing a free-standing tower that stands at least five feet tall from the bottom of the structure to the top. You will be told when to begin and will have 5 minutes from that point to construct the tower.

The skills and abilities that you used during this exercise are the same skills that you will use as CERT members.

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**INTRODUCTION AND UNIT OVERVIEW**

**UNIT OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the types of hazards most likely to affect your home and community.
  - Describe the functions of CERTs and their role in immediate response.
  - Identify steps to prepare for emergencies.
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**RECENT DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES**

Emergency response personnel cooperate at many levels to provide immediate response capabilities.

Emergency service capability can be greatly enhanced by well-organized, well-trained, and well-managed CERTs that are able to:

- Prepare in advance of a disaster event.
- Respond in their communities to address immediate needs brought about by the disaster.

As CERT members, your role is to prepare for a disaster by:

- Identifying potential structural and nonstructural hazards in your home and workplace.
- Reducing the hazards to the degree possible before a disaster strikes.
- Developing a disaster supply kit.

CERTs respond after a disaster by:

- Locating and turning off utilities, if safe to do so.
- Extinguishing small fires.
- Treating life-threatening injuries until professional assistance can be obtained.
- Conducting light search and rescue operations.
- Helping disaster survivors cope with their emotional stressors.

The key CERT functions include:

- Fire safety.
- Medical operations.
- Light search and rescue.
- Disaster psychology.

**RECENT DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES (CONTINUED)****CERTS IN DISASTER ROLES**

There are many instances of CERT members' participation in disaster response.

During the Northridge Earthquake, the following use of CERTs were recorded:

- Search: 203
- Rescue: 17
- Medical treatment: 57
- Patient transport: 4
- Fire suppression: 5
- Utility control: 156

In Alachua County, FL, during Hurricane Floyd in 1999 and during Tropical Storm Gordon in 2000, CERTs were called by the EOC to contact special-needs residents to ensure that they were aware of the approaching storms and to ascertain whether they would use the county's special needs shelters and transportation. The CERTs arranged transportation, as necessary.

About a dozen CERTs were used during the Hidden Lake and Lake Louise fires in 2000 to provide food for the firefighters, move supplies, and assist with preparation in the area.

The CERT concept has extended from its original purpose as a response operation following catastrophic disasters. CERTs are now activated for a wide range of emergencies. For example, in Whatcom County, WA, CERT members were used in the following situations:

- Whatcom Creek gasoline pipeline explosion (Olympic Pipeline)
- Explosion at the Georgia-Pacific Pulp & Paper Mill
- Y2K Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation
- Sandy Point wind and flood event
- Nisqually earthquake

The CERT members who responded to the Whatcom Creek incident received The American Red Cross Real Heroes award for their contributions. CERT members in the county have received Federal, State, and local recognition for their response efforts.

**RECENT DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES (CONTINUED)****CERTs IN NONDISASTER ROLES**

CERT members also are a potential volunteer pool for the community. They can help with projects such as:

- Distributing preparedness materials.
- Staffing medical booths during special events.
- Assisting with the installation of smoke alarms for seniors and special-needs households.

Additionally, in his January 29, 2002, State of the Union address, the President asked that Americans volunteer their services to improve and safeguard our country. The three areas of emphasis for these volunteer efforts are crime, natural disasters, and terrorism. The Citizen Corps Program was created to help Americans meet this call to service. One of the volunteer opportunities offered to the American public under the Citizen Corps umbrella is the CERT program.

After completing initial CERT training, many CERT members seek to expand and improve their skills—through continuing CERT modules offered locally, courses offered through The American Red Cross, or programs from other sources. Some CERT members have sought additional training opportunities in:

- Shelter management.
  - Community relations.
  - Donations management.
  - Special needs concerns.
  - Debris removal.
  - Utilities control.
  - Advanced first aid.
  - Automated External Defibrillator use.
  - CPR skills.
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### COURSE PREVIEW

This unit will provide an overview of the course by establishing a context for CERTs within the specific hazards faced by the community.

Later units will cover:

- Fire safety.
  - Disaster medical operations.
  - Light search and rescue.
  - CERT organization.
  - Disaster psychology.
  - CERTs and terrorism.
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### DISASTERS AND DISASTER WORKERS

Disasters can be:

- Natural.
- Manmade.
- Technological.

Regardless of the event, disasters have several key elements in common:

- They are relatively unexpected, with little or no warning or opportunity to prepare.
- Available personnel and emergency services may be overwhelmed initially by demands for their services.
- Lives, health, and the environment are endangered.

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, needs will be greater than professional emergency services personnel can provide. In these instances, CERTs become a vital link in the emergency service chain.

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**COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM****UNIT 1: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

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**IMPACT ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE****Possible Effects of Damage on Emergency Service Providers**

<b>Damage to . . .</b>	<b>Possible Effects</b>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Inability to assess damage accurately</li><li>▪ Ambulances prevented from reaching victims</li><li>▪ Police prevented from reaching areas of civil unrest</li><li>▪ Fire departments prevented from getting to fires</li><li>▪ Flow of needed supplies is interrupted</li></ul>
Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Damaged hospitals unable to function normally</li><li>▪ Increased risk of damage from falling debris</li></ul>
Communication Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Victims unable to call for help</li><li>▪ Coordination of services is hampered</li></ul>
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Loss of utilities</li><li>▪ Increased risk of fire or electrical shock</li><li>▪ Loss of contact between victims and service providers</li><li>▪ Inadequate water supply</li><li>▪ Increased risk to public health</li></ul>
Water Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Firefighting capabilities restricted</li><li>▪ Medical facilities hampered</li></ul>
Fuel Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Increased risk of fire or explosion from fuel line rupture</li><li>▪ Risk of asphyxiation</li></ul>

Because emergency services personnel are likely to have inadequate resources to meet the public's needs, those resources must be applied according to the highest-priority need.

- Police will address incidences of grave public safety.
- Firefighters will suppress major fires.
- EMS personnel will handle life-threatening injuries. (However, CERTs will also handle life-threatening injuries until EMS units become available.)

Lower-priority needs will have to be met in other ways.

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### **STRUCTURAL AND NONSTRUCTURAL HAZARDS**

Shutting off or raising utilities is one way to reduce—or mitigate—a hazard before a disaster occurs. Shutting off utilities is one way to mitigate a hazard immediately after a disaster.

The mitigation steps that one should take before and immediately after a disaster depend on the hazard and type of structure. This topic will deal with types of structures and the hazards related to each. Safety precautions, including hazard mitigation for structural and nonstructural hazards, will be covered next.

#### **HAZARDS RELATED TO STRUCTURE TYPE**

You might not have an opportunity to select the type of structure that you are in when a disaster occurs. It is important to know what type of damage to expect from the main types of structures in the community.

Engineered buildings, such as most high-rise buildings, have performed well in most types of disasters. During earthquakes and high-wind events (e.g., tornadoes, hurricanes), older high-rise buildings, however, are more susceptible to damage from:

- Broken glass.
- Falling panels.
- Collapsing walkways and stairways.

Age, type of construction, and type of disaster are major factors in potential damage to detached homes and garages.

- Homes built before 1940 generally were not bolted to the foundation, making them subject to being shaken, blown, or floated off their foundations.
- Older homes constructed of unreinforced brick are less stable than newer construction.

Remember that:

- Tornado and hurricane damage to single homes can range from little damage to total destruction.
- Following an event in which a structure has been damaged, there is a threat of additional damage, such as fire from ruptured gas lines.

**STRUCTURAL AND NONSTRUCTURAL HAZARDS (CONTINUED)**

Mobile homes are most susceptible to damage because they are easily displaced. When displacement occurs, structural integrity becomes questionable, and utility connections are easily damaged, increasing the risk of fire and electric shock.

Malls, sports arenas, airports, places of worship, and other places with long roof spans also may pose hazards in some types of disasters. For example:

- Strip shopping centers pose a threat from collapse and broken glass.
- Warehouse-type structures may also collapse.

There is also risk in all types of structures from nonstructural hazards.

**NONSTRUCTURAL HAZARDS**

Everyone has hazards in their homes or workplaces. Fixtures and items within a home, garage, or workplace can pose a hazard during or after a disaster. Some of the hazards include:

- Gas line ruptures from water heaters or ranges displaced by shaking, water, or wind.
- Damage from falling books, dishes, or other cabinet contents.
- Risk of injury or electric shock from displaced appliances and office equipment.
- Fire from faulty wiring, overloaded plugs, frayed electrical cords.

There are relatively simple measures that individuals can take to alleviate many home and workplace hazards.

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**HAZARD MITIGATION**

It is important to become informed on the probable impacts of likely events, including the potential for terrorist activity. The more information you have, the better you will be able to plan adequately and respond reasonably.

Regardless of the event or the amount of warning offered, there are safety precautions that you can take to reduce or prevent injury. This section will deal with measures to ensure personal safety.

The next section will address:

- Home and worksite preparedness.
- Community preparedness.

**HAZARD MITIGATION (CONTINUED)**

**PERSONAL SAFETY**

The appropriate personal safety measures are determined by:

- The type of event.
- The amount of warning that you have.
- Whether you are inside, outside, or driving.

Protecting yourself during a disaster requires planning. There are measures you should take to prevent or minimize the damage caused by most hazards. These measures can be taken long before a disaster occurs, during the time of the disaster, and after the disaster has occurred.

**HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS**

Preparedness is the key to survival in a disaster. Individuals, families, and building managers can take steps that will help minimize structural and nonstructural hazards, facilitate escape, and promote survival during the period immediately following the event.

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**HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS**

Home and worksite preparedness includes:

- Structural and nonstructural hazard mitigation.
- Individual preparations, such as:
  - Assembling a disaster supply kit.
  - Developing a disaster plan.
  - Developing a safe room in a secure area of the home (in case authorities ask you to stay indoors).

## COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

### UNIT 1: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

#### HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)

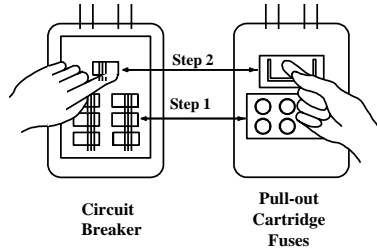
##### STRUCTURAL AND NONSTRUCTURAL MITIGATION

##### Precautions Against Structural and Nonstructural Hazards

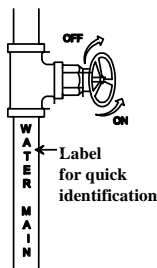
Type Of Hazard	Sample Precautions
Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Bolt older houses to the foundation.</li><li>▪ Strap propane tanks.</li><li>▪ Raise utilities (above the level of flood risk).</li><li>▪ Strap mobile homes to their concrete pads.</li><li>▪ Ask a professional to check the foundation, roof connectors, chimney, etc.</li></ul>
Nonstructural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Anchor such furniture as bookshelves, hutches, and grandfather clocks to the wall.</li><li>▪ Secure appliances and office equipment in place with industrial-strength Velcro®.</li><li>▪ Secure cabinet doors with childproof fasteners.</li><li>▪ Locate and label shutoffs for gas, electricity, and water before disasters occur. After a disaster, shut off the utilities as needed to prevent fires and other risks. Store a shutoff wrench where it will be immediately available.</li><li>▪ Secure water heaters to the wall to safeguard against a ruptured gas line or loose electrical wires.</li></ul>

HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)

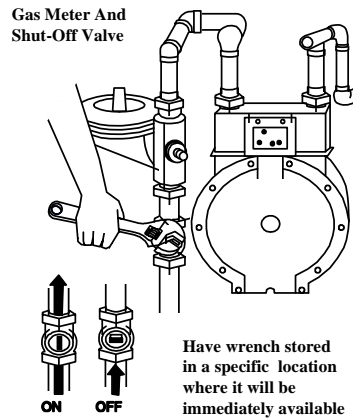
Electrical Shut-Offs



Water Shut-Off



Gas Meter And Shut-Off Valve



Utility Shutoffs

Utility Shutoffs: Electrical, Water, Gas. The electrical shutoff procedure shows both a circuit box and a fuse box and shows two steps. Step 1 is to turn off all individual breakers (or unscrew fuses). Step 2 is to shut off the main circuit (or main fuse switch). The water shut-off indicates a clockwise turn of the valve to shut off and a counter-clockwise turn to turn on. The gas meter shut-off diagram indicates the shut-off valve location on the pipe that comes out of the ground. To turn off the valve, use a wrench to turn the valve clockwise one-quarter turn.

**HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)**

Different nonstructural hazards pose different threats, depending on the disaster. Provide a few examples of preventive measures, and refer the participants to FEMA's *Talking About Disasters* website for more in-depth discussion: [www.fema.gov/rrr/talkdiz/](http://www.fema.gov/rrr/talkdiz/).

- Home Fires: Make sure that burglar bars and locks on outside window entries are easy to open.
- Landslides/Mudslides: Install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks. Flexible fittings are more resistant to breakage.
- Wildfires:
  - Avoid using wooden shakes and shingles for roofing.
  - Clear all flammable vegetation at least 30 feet from the home. Remove vines from the walls of the home.
  - Place propane tanks at least 30 feet from the home or other structures.
  - Stack firewood at least 30 feet away and uphill from the home.

**DEVELOPING A DISASTER PLAN**

A disaster plan can mean the difference between life and death. For example:

- How will you escape your home?
- Where will you meet family members?
- What route will you take out of your neighborhood if evacuation becomes necessary? Do you have an alternate route in case your route is blocked or otherwise impassable?
- What will you take with you?
- Where will you go?
- What will you need to shelter in place? Do you have those items (or enough of those items)?

You should play the "What if?" game (What will I do if this happens?) for every hazard that presents a high risk to the community. Then begin within the home and work outward to answer each of the questions above.

**HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)**

The answers to these questions may be different depending on the hazard, and you probably will not be able to plan for every event that could happen. By playing “What if?” with high-risk hazards, you will be better prepared for any hazard that might strike.

**CREATING A FAMILY DISASTER PLAN****To get started . . .**

- Contact your local emergency management office and your local chapter of The American Red Cross.
  - Find out which disasters are most likely to happen in your community.
  - Ask how you would be warned.
  - Find out how to prepare for each type of disaster.
- Meet with your family.
  - Discuss the types of disasters that could occur.
  - Explain how to prepare and respond.
  - Discuss what to do if advised to evacuate.
  - Practice what you have discussed.
- Plan how your family will stay in contact if separated by disaster.
  - Pick two meeting places:
    - ▼ A location a safe distance from your home in case of fire.
    - ▼ A place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
  - Choose an out-of-state friend as a “check-in contact” for everyone to call.
- Complete the following steps.
  - Post emergency telephone numbers by every phone.
  - Show responsible family members how and when to shut off water, gas, and electricity at main switches.
  - Install a smoke alarm on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms; test them monthly and change the batteries two times each year. (Change batteries when you change your clocks in the spring and fall.)

**HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)**

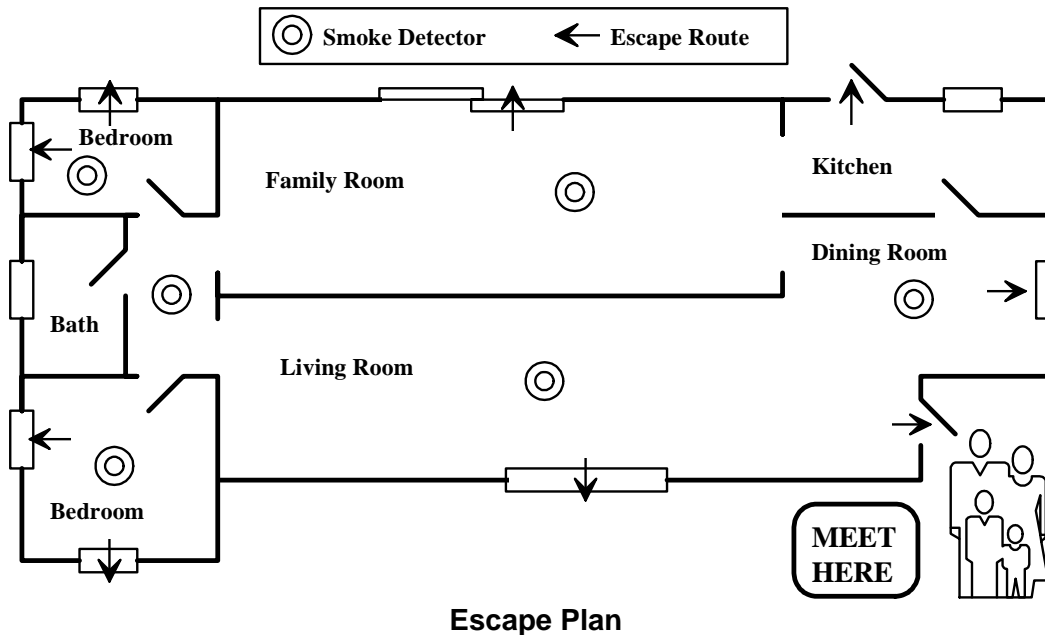
- Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire hazards.
  - Learn first aid and CPR. Contact your local chapter of The American Red Cross for information and training.
- Meet with your neighbors.
  - Plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster. Know your neighbors' skills (medical, technical).
  - Consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as elderly or disabled persons.
  - Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

**ESCAPE PLANNING**

Develop an escape plan that provides for escape from every room. As part of your escape plan:

- Consider the needs of children and physically challenged individuals.
- Inform all family members or office coworkers of the plan.
- Run practice escape drills.

An example of an escape plan is shown in the figure that follows.



**Sample family escape plan with arrows showing an escape route from every room in the home and a family meeting place outside the home.**

**HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)**

The disaster supplies included on this list is fairly complete, and you should determine the supplies that you will need for evacuation, those that you will need to shelter in place, and those that you will need for both.

- Evacuation-only supplies and supplies (e.g., prescription medications) that are required for evacuation and shelter in place should be stored where they can be accessed quickly in an evacuation situation.
- Shelter-in-place-only supplies (e.g., 3 days of water for each family member) should be stored in an accessible location within the home or workplace.

**Assembling and Storing an Disaster Supply Kit**

You can cope best by preparing for disaster before it strikes. One way to prepare is by assembling a Disaster Supply Kit. After disaster strikes, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. But if you've gathered supplies in advance, you and your family can endure an evacuation or home confinement.

**To Prepare Your Kit**

1. Review the checklist on the next few pages (from FEMA L-189, ARC 4463, Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit).
2. Gather the supplies from the list.
3. Place the supplies you're apt to need for an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. These supplies are listed with an asterisk (\*).

**Water**

Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that requirement. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.

- Store 1 gallon of water per person per day (2 quarts for drinking, 2 quarts for food preparation/sanitation.)\*
- Keep at least a 3-day supply of water for each person in your household.

If you have questions about the quality of the water, purify it before drinking. You can heat water to a rolling boil for 1 minute or use commercial purification tablets to purify the water. You can also use household liquid chlorine bleach if it is pure, unscented, 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. To purify water, use the table below as a guide:

**Ratios for Purifying Water with Bleach**

Water Quantity	Bleach Added
1 Quart	4 Drops
1 Gallon	16 Drops
5 Gallons	1 Teaspoon

**Ratios for purifying water with bleach: Water quantity and bleach added**

After adding bleach, shake or stir the water container and let it stand 30 minutes before drinking.

**Assembling and Storing an Disaster Supply Kit**

**Food**

Store at least a 3-day supply of nonperishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of Sterno<sup>®</sup>. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods in your disaster supply kit:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water)
- Staples—sugar, salt, pepper
- High-energy foods—peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- Foods for infants, elderly persons, or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods—cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

**Kitchen Items**

- Manual can opener
- Mess kits or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- All-purpose knife
- Household liquid bleach to treat drinking water
- Sugar, salt, pepper
- Aluminum foil and plastic wrap
- Re-sealing plastic bags
- If food must be cooked, small cooking stove and a can of cooking fuel

## COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

### UNIT 1: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

#### Assembling and Storing an Disaster Supply Kit

##### First Aid Kit\*

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. A first aid kit should include:

- First aid manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages (3)
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antibacterial ointment
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleaning agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Petroleum jelly
- Cotton balls
- Sunscreen
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers

##### **Nonprescription Drugs**

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Antidiarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (used to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Vitamins
- Activated charcoal (used if advised by the Poison Control Center)

##### Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils\*
- Emergency preparedness manual\*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries\*
- Flashlight and extra batteries\*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Duct tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare(s)
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Work gloves
- Medicine dropper
- Shutoff wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting

##### **Sanitation**

- Toilet paper, towelettes\*
- Soap, liquid detergent\*
- Feminine supplies\*
- Personal hygiene items\*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

**Assembling and Storing an Disaster Supply Kit**

**Clothing and Bedding**

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots\*
- Rain gear\*
- Blankets or sleeping bags\*
- Hat and gloves\*
- Thermal underwear\*
- Sunglasses\*

**Household Documents and Contact Numbers**

- Personal identification, cash (including change) or traveler's checks, and a credit card
- Copies of important documents: birth certificates, marriage certificate, driver's license, social security cards, passport, wills, deeds, inventory of household goods, insurance papers, immunizations records, bank and credit card account numbers, stocks and bonds. Be sure to store these in a watertight container.
- Emergency contact list and phone numbers
- Map of the area and phone numbers of places you could go
- An extra set of car keys and house keys

**Special Items**

Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

**For Baby\***

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

**For Adults\***

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

- Entertainment—games and books
- Important Family Documents —keep these records in a waterproof, portable container
- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods
- Important telephone numbers

\*Items marked with an asterisk are recommended for evacuation.

**HOME AND WORKPLACE PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)****EVACUATION OR SHELTER-IN-PLACE?**

Depending on the hazard and situation, the decision of whether to evacuate or shelter-in-place is not always easy. If time and location allow, you should listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) for instructions from emergency management professionals who are evaluating the situation.

Learn the evacuation and sheltering in place procedures for the hazards in your area.

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**COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS**

Citizen preparedness will be less effective if the community isn't prepared. Representatives of all agencies that have a role in response work together to organize their agencies' activities before an emergency or disaster. The product of their efforts is called an Emergency Operations Plan, or EOP.

**THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN (EOP)**

The EOP is a document that:

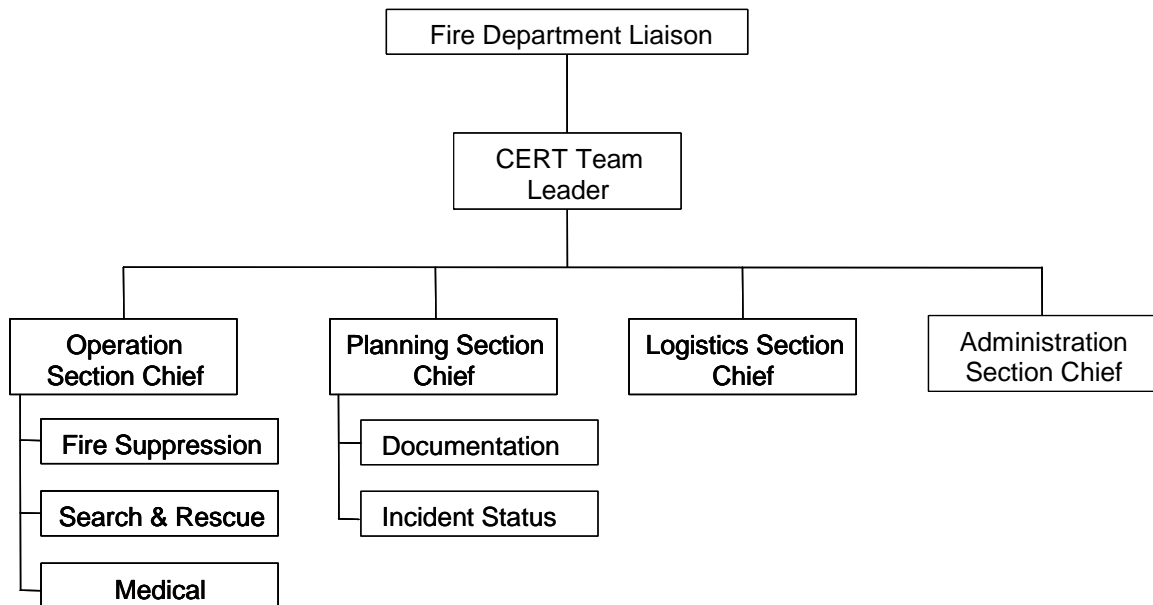
- Assigns responsibility to organizations and individuals for carrying out specific actions at projected times and places in an emergency that exceeds the capability or routine responsibility of any one agency (e.g., the fire department).
- Sets forth lines of authority and organizational relationships, and shows how all actions will be coordinated.
- Describes how people and property will be protected in emergencies and disasters.
- Identifies personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources available—within the jurisdiction or by agreement with other jurisdictions—for use during response and recovery operations.

In short, the EOP describes how the community will do business in an emergency.

**COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS (CONTINUED)****COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND CERTS**

Communities also prepare for disasters when they establish Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) to respond in their area immediately after a disaster when response resources are overwhelmed or delayed. CERTs based on their standard operating procedures develop by the sponsoring agency:

- Assist first responders.
- Assume many of the same functions as response personnel:
  - Fire safety
  - Light search and rescue
  - Medical operations

**CERT Organization**

**Showing the Fire Department Liaison at the top. Underneath is the CERT Team Leader who directs the activities of four sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Administration. Underneath the Operations Section are three response teams: Fire Suppression Search and Rescue, and Medical. Underneath the Planning Section are two sections: Documentation and Incident Status.**

No matter which function CERT members are assigned to, effective CERTs require teamwork.

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**COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM****UNIT 1: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

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**PROTECTION FOR DISASTER WORKERS**

As volunteers, CERT members functioning in emergency services are generally protected by “Good Samaritan” laws that protect people who provide emergency care in a prudent and reasonable manner.

In a disaster, CERT members are also protected by the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, a Federal law that protects volunteers from liability as long as they are acting in accordance with the training that they have received.

People who volunteer their services during a disaster are generally protected by Federal, State, and/or local laws. Most states have “Good Samaritan” laws that protect people who provide emergency care *in a prudent and reasonable manner* to ill or injured persons. Other city, county, or State laws may also apply. Your instructor will provide information about laws that apply in your area. Record the key points below for future reference.

Applicable Laws	Key Points

**UNIT SUMMARY**

CERTs are among a variety of agencies and personnel who cooperate to provide assistance in the aftermath of a disaster. The keys to CERT effectiveness are in:

- Familiarity with the types of events that are high risk for the area and the types of damage that can occur as a result.
- Adequate preparation for each event and its aftermath.
- Training in the functional areas to which CERTs are assigned.
- Practice through refreshers and simulations.

CERTs have proven themselves invaluable in the areas in which they were tested. They can be invaluable in this community as well.

CERTs have become a key component of President Bush's Citizen Corps.

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

The next unit will cover fire safety. Before the next session, you should:

1. Read and familiarize yourself with Unit 2: Fire Safety in the Participant Manual.
2. Bring a pair of leather gloves and safety goggles to use in the fire suppression unit, and to serve as a starting point for your disaster supply kits.
3. Begin food and water storage for at least 3 days for yourself and your families.
4. Establish an out-of-state contact.
5. Locate the utility shutoffs in your home.

Wear appropriate clothes to the next session (no shorts or open-toed shoes), because you will practice putting out a small fire with an extinguisher.

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