

The New York Recovery Network: E-Bulletin

Published September 11, 2014

A special issue on preparedness

The best way to minimize the impact of a disaster is to prepare your family and yourself in advance. For National Preparedness Month, we've provided three articles to help guide you in building personal and organizational preparedness.

Headlines

Developing a family communication plan

A family communication plan takes very little time and doesn't cost anything, yet it can help alleviate one of the biggest stressors during a disaster: knowing that your family members are okay. This article discusses some of the basic principles of developing a family communication plan and lists resources to help you create one.

[Read More](#)

Pricing out a Go Bag

Including items such as a three-day water supply, radio, flashlight and first-aid kit, this graphic and article prices out items that a standard "Go Bag" should have and provides strategies to obtain these supplies and be better prepared for an emergency.

[Read More](#)

Testing your emergency plan: The basics of exercises

This article discusses the basic principles and types of exercises that can improve your organization or community's emergency plan and ensure your staff or stakeholders are confident in their ability to handle an emergency.

[Read More](#)

Recovery News

[FEMA issues new flood insurance manual](#)

National Association of Realtors, August 29, 2014

[Sandy recovery costs up 50 percent but city found ways to save](#)

WNYC, September 2, 2014

[Build it Back meets its goals and sets new goals for housing recovery](#)

City&State, September 2, 2014

[Hurricane Sandy recovery program in New York City was mired by its design](#)

The New York Times, September 4, 2014

[\\$108 million in federal funds to repair and protect Sandy-damaged public housing](#)

Office of the Mayor, September 5, 2014

[Public Housing is deteriorating according to New York City Comptroller report](#)
WNYC, September 8, 2014

[Restoring oysters to protect New York from the next Hurricane Sandy](#)
Metrofocus, September 3, 2014

Upcoming Events

September 17, 2014
[Webinar: The top 5 steps for preparedness this year](#)
Agility Recovery

September 18-19, 2014
[Webinar Border Green Infrastructure Forum Registration](#)
Border Environment Cooperation Commission

September 18, 2014
[Equitable Resiliency in New York City](#)
Center for NYC Neighborhoods

September 19 - 20, 2014
[Hurriplan: Resilient Building Design for Coastal Communities](#)
National Disaster Preparedness Training Center

September 24, 2014
[Webinar: If you do nothing else this year...](#)
Agility Recovery

Job Postings

[Junior Architect](#)

[Outreach and Resource Development Coordinator](#)

[Project Liaison](#)

[Construction Program Policy Writer](#)

[Construction Call Center Reps](#)

[Procurement Assistant](#)

Developing a family communication plan

September 2014 is National Preparedness Month. To educate and empower citizens to prepare for and respond to emergencies, *Ready.gov* established four universal building block of preparedness: Be informed, Make a Plan, Build a Kit, and Get Involved. This month's theme is "Be Disaster Aware, Take Action to Prepare."

Recently a [survey](#) found that most citizens are still unprepared to cope with a disaster. As a result, FEMA is taking a new approach by encouraging people to take at least one step to prepare.

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate says the government may have set the bar so high that people feared getting prepared would be expensive and time-consuming. This year FEMA is therefore asking families to complete just one task: writing a family communication plan. These plans describe how people can communicate with and locate family members in an emergency.

"One of the biggest stressors in an emergency is not knowing if family members are OK," Fugate said. "A family communication plan doesn't cost anything and takes very little time."

Make a Plan

It is very likely that when a disaster hits, your family may not be together and in many cases may not be easily reachable. The members of your family may be at work, in school or in transit. If there is advance warning of a disaster, as there was with Hurricane Sandy, there would be adequate time to keep in touch with family and make necessary preparations to keep your family safe. But some disasters strike without warning, making planning ahead critical.

Here are some helpful tips that can also be found in the links at the end of the article:

- A **Family Communication Plan** considers how to get to a safe place; how to stay in touch with one another; and when the emergency is passed, how to get back together.
- In the event of a disaster, first let your family know that you are ok. It is a best practice to pick the same person for each family member to contact. It is possible that local phone service is out so it would make sense to pick a person who lives out of town.
- Choose a meeting spot both close to your home and also outside your neighborhood in case you can't get home. Everyone should be familiar with both places, and know how to get there.
- Always keep all your contact and meeting information with you. Put it in your smart phone if you have one and keep a printout on hand.
- **TEXT** rather than call unless it's an emergency. It has been shown that text messaging has an easier path getting through during emergencies. Also, texting will help free up phone lines that may be needed by emergency responders.

- Throughout the event, pay attention to weather reports and possible transit and road shutdowns. Always have an alternate route if the preferred way home is closed or blocked by storm conditions.

For more information and resources contact:

[National Preparedness Month 2014 Digital Engagement Toolkit](#)

www.ready.gov/make-a-plan

<http://www.ready.gov/kids/make-a-plan>

<http://www.ready.gov/publications>

<http://www.ready.gov/prepare>

Pricing out a Go Bag

For the residents of the five boroughs, New York City’s Office of Emergency Management recommends maintaining a portable “Go Bag,” containing life sustaining items to be utilized in the event of an evacuation. For some, procuring items for your personal Go Bag can be costly.

Here are some ways to reduce the expenditures and simplify the process:

1. For just under \$50 you can have a basic kit that will do in a pinch: a 3 day supply of water, granola bars, a first aid kit and a combination radio/flashlight that can also charge a cell phone or personal device.
2. To prepare a larger, more complete Go Bag, prioritize the items and purchase one or two items per month to spread the cost out over time. Food and water is more important than a rain suit or mylar blanket.
3. If you do not have a car or do not need a spare set of keys, you will not need to spend the \$200 for that item.
4. Maintain copies of your birth certificates, deeds, rental agreements, titles or other important papers in a waterproof case year round. In the event of an evacuation add your ID, cash, credit cards, life insurance cards and any other important items to the existing waterproof case. If you always maintain a credit card and ID on your person, you may be able to avoid some costs.

GO BAG SUPPLIES

<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Waterproof Container</td><td>\$8⁰⁰</td></tr> <tr><td>Cash</td><td>\$50⁰⁰</td></tr> <tr><td>Credit & ATM Card</td><td>\$15⁰⁰</td></tr> <tr><td>Insurance Card</td><td>\$15⁰⁰</td></tr> <tr><td>Photo ID</td><td>\$62²⁵</td></tr> </table>	Waterproof Container	\$8 ⁰⁰	Cash	\$50 ⁰⁰	Credit & ATM Card	\$15 ⁰⁰	Insurance Card	\$15 ⁰⁰	Photo ID	\$62 ²⁵	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>House Keys Copy</td><td>\$20⁰⁰</td></tr> <tr><td>Car Keys Copy</td><td>\$200⁰⁰</td></tr> <tr><td>Deed Copy</td><td>\$4⁰⁰</td></tr> <tr><td>Birth Certificate</td><td>\$15⁰⁰</td></tr> </table>	House Keys Copy	\$20 ⁰⁰	Car Keys Copy	\$200 ⁰⁰	Deed Copy	\$4 ⁰⁰	Birth Certificate	\$15 ⁰⁰
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COSTS ARE APPROXIMATE AND BASED ON THE AVERAGE COST TO PURCHASE ITEMS IN NEW YORK CITY

Testing your emergency plan: The basics of exercises

Whether it is a terrorist attack, a hurricane, a power outage, or a snowstorm, exercises can ensure that the plans you have in place are adequate, and that staff are better prepared to handle emergencies. A well-designed exercise program allows organizations to test capabilities, familiarize personnel with roles and responsibilities, and foster meaningful communication. Exercises also play a vital role in preparedness by helping identify both capability gaps and areas for improvement.

An effective exercise program involves applying six principles:

- **Risk Awareness.** Identifying and assessing risks and associated impacts helps organizations identify priorities, objectives and core capabilities to be evaluated through exercises.
- **Capability-based, Objective Driven.** Core capabilities and associated capability targets are identified in the [National Preparedness Goal](#). Organizations can use exercises to examine current and required core capability levels and identify gaps. Exercises focus on assessing performance against capability-based objectives.
- **Guided by Elected and Appointed Officials.** The engagement of elected or appointed officials is a key to a successful exercise program. They provide the guidance and direction for the exercise and evaluation program as well as specific intent for individual exercises.
- **Progressive Planning.** A progressive approach includes using various exercises aligned to a common set of priorities and objectives, and increasing the level of complexity over time. Progressive exercise planning does not imply a linear progression of exercise types.
- **Whole Community Integration.** Exercise planners, where appropriate, should engage the whole community throughout exercise program management, development, evaluation and improvement planning.
- **Common Methodology.** The [Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program](#) (HSEEP) provides a common approach to exercise management that is applicable to all mission areas—prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. The methodology enables organizations to have a shared understanding of exercise program management and fosters exercise-related interoperability and collaboration.

Performing exercises often improves the performance of employees and increases their confidence in handling situations. As we reach the anniversary of 9/11, think about how your organization or community could better prepare for emergencies. Below is a list of different types of exercises to get you started.

Glossary:

Discussion-based exercises:

Seminars/Workshops

Seminars can be valuable for organizations that are developing or making major changes to existing plans or procedures. They generally provide an overview of strategies, plans, policies, protocols, resources, concepts and/or ideas. Workshops are similar but have a greater level of participant interaction and are generally focused on achieving or building a product, such as a new standard operating procedure (SOPs), emergency operations plan, or mutual aid agreement. Effective workshops have clearly defined objectives or goals and focus on a specific issue.

Tabletop Exercises (TTX)

A TTX aims to create a discussion on different issues regarding a simulated emergency. TTXs can be used to increase awareness, validate plans and procedures, rehearse concepts, or identify strengths and areas for improvement. During a TTX, players are encouraged to discuss issues in depth, examine areas of concern and solve problems. All participants are encouraged to contribute to the discussion and be reminded that they are making decisions in a no-fault environment. Effective TTX facilitation is a critical component to keeping participants focused on exercise objectives and capability targets.

Games

A game is a simulation of operations that often involves two or more teams, usually in a competitive environment and explores the consequences of player decisions and actions. They are useful for validating plans and procedures or evaluating resource requirements. Identifying decision-making points is a major factor in the success of evaluating a game.

Operations-based exercises

Drills

A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity employed to validate a specific function or capability. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, validate procedures, or practice and maintain current skills. Drills can be used to assess whether training is adequate, determine if plans can be executed as designed, or to reinforce a best practice. Drills require clearly defined plans, procedures and protocols.

Functional Exercises (FEs)

An FE is conducted in a realistic, real-time environment, but the movement of personnel and equipment is usually simulated. In FEs, events are projected through an exercise scenario and updates drive activity usually at a management level. FEs are designed to evaluate capabilities of multiple functions or interdependent groups of functions. FEs are typically focused on exercising plans, policies, procedures, and staff members involved in management or command functions.

Full-Scale Exercises (FSEs)

FSEs are typically the most complex and resource-intensive exercise. They often involve multiple agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions and validate many facets of preparedness. In an FSE, events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at an operational level. FSEs are conducted in a real-time,

often stressful environment intended to mirror a real incident. Personnel and resources may be mobilized and deployed to the scene, where actions are performed as if a real incident had occurred. The FSE presents complex and realistic problems requiring rapid problem solving, and critical thinking. Throughout the duration of the exercise, many activities occur simultaneously.