



BEYOND BELIEF NETWORK

Beyond Belief Network Guides: National Preparedness Month

September is [National Preparedness Month](#). Disasters can affect any family and community, so it's imperative to be prepared. This month, make plans that will help both respond to any emergency, including natural disasters. If you decide to do a service event, don't forget to submit a [report](#) telling us how it went. You can also email us for help!

Tips to Get Started

- **What to do?** Knowing what to do (and not to do) before, during and after a specific emergency can help you make the right decisions. Each type of disaster requires a different response. Learn what's likely to affect your area and [become familiar](#) on how to handle yourself in each one including home fires, natural disasters, pandemics, technological and accidental hazards, and terrorist hazards.
- **Stay or Go.** Physical safety is a concern during any emergency. In some situations, it's best to stay where you are and [take shelter](#) at that location. Use common sense and available information to assess the situation. Stay in your shelter until local authorities say it is safe to leave. If you [have to evacuate](#), leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather. Be on the alert for road hazards, and follow recommended evacuation routes. Have a designated meeting place within and outside of your neighborhood to meet family.
- **Don't Forget!** If you have to evacuate your home, [take your pets with you](#). It's likely that your pet(s) will not be able to survive on their own and/or go missing. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters cannot accept pets. (Service animals may be permitted - check beforehand with shelters in your area.) When devising an evacuation plan, include a list of hotels and motels in your area that will accept pets. Don't forget to take or prepare any supplies that they'll need and keep a current photo of your pet on hand for identification purposes.
- **Make an emergency plan.** Create [an emergency plan](#) that includes information about how to [receive emergency alerts](#), what your [community's disaster plans](#) are, how to take

care of pets and family members with specific needs, shutting off utilities, and what to do [after the disaster has passed](#). Practice the plan at least twice a year and update it when necessary.

- **Make a kit.** A [disaster supplies kit](#) is a collection of basic items that a household may need in an emergency. A basic kit should include water, non-perishable food, a first aid kit, flashlight and extra batteries, local maps, and cell phone with chargers, inverter, or solar charger. Once you have your basic supplies gathered, consider adding items that your household will need for pets, children, and senior citizens. Prepare kits for home, work and vehicles. Check periodically to make sure items are in good working condition and are safe to use when needed.

Event Ideas

- **Give to the Red Cross.** Make a list of all interested volunteers willing to donate blood, plasma, etc. Then, contact your local [Red Cross](#) to set up a group appointment. On the day of the event, once all volunteers have finished donating, grab a bite to eat. Keep in mind, this event can be combined with a collection (ex. canned goods, cash, etc.) for the Red Cross or another organization. To check whether volunteers are eligible to donate blood, check out the Red Cross's [Blood Donation Eligibility Requirements](#).
- **Volunteer.** Individuals or groups can undergo proper training and education to become [civilian volunteers](#). Often, the training and education process are free. Consider volunteering with [Meals on Wheels Association of America](#) which provides meals and disaster preparedness information to over a million senior citizens in the U.S. Training in CPR and basic first aid will allow you to volunteer with your [local American Red Cross chapter](#) with their mass care and sheltering operations. There are many opportunities to volunteer, so consider which would be best with your skill set.
- **Safety first.** Organize a safety-themed event (ex. pool, hiking) and learn how to handle emergencies that may arise with that particular event. Invite any individuals with relevant training to the event. Perfect for families.

Questions or Concerns?

If you need help with planning your event or have additional questions, the best way to contact Beyond Belief Network is to use the [contact webform](#), which enables us to track the resolution of your question. You can also email us at bbn@foundationbeyondbelief.org.