



NEWS RELEASE

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American Red Cross Helps Households and Businesses Prepare for Emergencies

This National Preparedness Month Build a Kit, Make a Plan and Be Informed

Hyannis, MA, August 29, 2011— As everybody in our area is recovering from the aftermath of Hurricane Irene, we're moving into September National Preparedness Month, and the American Red Cross, Cape & Islands Chapter, is calling on families, businesses, schools and organizations to take steps now to become better prepared for the next emergency or disaster.

Disasters can strike at any time – from earthquakes to hurricanes to terrorist attacks like those that occurred on 9/11 ten years ago. National Preparedness Month provides our nation with the opportunity to both remember the victims and honor those who responded, and to make a renewed commitment to being better prepared for the future.

Emergency preparedness kits should include enough supplies for at least three days in case you have to evacuate. Water (one gallon, per person, per day), nonperishable food, a flashlight, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra batteries, a first aid kit, a 7-day supply of medications, a multi-purpose tool, sanitation and personal hygiene items and copies of important personal documents should go in every kit. The Red Cross also recommends having at least two weeks worth of supplies at home. A variety of emergency preparedness kits, first aid kits and other supplies are available at www.redcrossstore.org.

All members of the household should work together on an emergency plan. Designate a meeting place right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire. Each person should know how to reach other members of the household. The plan should also include an out-of-area emergency contact person, and a location where everyone should meet if they can't go home.

People should be informed about what types of disasters are most likely to occur where they live and how local authorities will contact you in the event of a disaster. First aid and CPR/AED training empowers individuals with the confidence and skills to respond to health emergencies in case advanced medical help is delayed. Visit www.cciredcross.org and click on get trained for details and to register.

Severe weather, power outages and water main breaks can happen anytime. Throughout the year, the Red Cross offers programs to help people be prepared. The “Do More Than Cross Your Fingers” campaign, featuring Jamie Lee Curtis, makes it easy for people to prepare for emergencies, starting with how to customize their emergency kits. The “Ready When the Time Comes” program trains employees from corporations and mobilizes them as a community-based volunteer force when disaster strikes. “Be Red Cross Ready” is a web-based interactive tutorial that teaches people how to be ready for emergencies.

In addition, because up to 40 percent of businesses fail following a manmade or natural disaster, the Red Cross developed the Ready Rating™ Program. Ready Rating (www.readyrating.org) is a free, self-paced, web-based membership program that measures how ready businesses, organizations and schools are to deal with emergencies. Members receive customized feedback on how they can improve their efforts. The program is designed for those who are in the beginning stages of planning for emergencies as well as those who have already done so and want confirmation on their preparedness level. It gives these groups ideas of what they can do to better prepare themselves for the next emergency or disaster.

No one can predict where or when the next large disaster will strike, but preparedness steps taken today can save lives and livelihoods tomorrow. People can contact their local Red Cross or visit www.redcross.org to learn what steps they should take to be ready when emergencies strike.

And, for those who are interested in volunteering, there are many wonderful volunteer opportunities in your local community. For more information, contact the American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter, 286 South Street, Hyannis, MA 02601 or go online at www.cciredcross.org and click on volunteer. You can also call (508) 775-1540.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization – not a government agency – and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission.

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