



**American
Red Cross**

Before Disaster Strikes

How Families and Individuals Can Prepare



Why prepare for disaster?

TEST YOURSELF — Are you prepared? Ask yourself the following questions:

- How will our family reunite following a major disaster?
- What should we do if the water supply is contaminated?
- How will we obtain emergency information if the electricity is out?
- If no medical professionals are available, who can give first aid to my family?
- Can we evacuate our home safely in 5 minutes? And if so, what should we take with us?

This publication answers these questions and more. It will guide you through the steps you and your family need to take to survive on your own for the first 72 hours after a major disaster. By taking these steps, you'll be able to respond safely and with confidence in a variety of emergency situations.

FIVE STEPS TO FAMILY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

1

TALK — with your family about disasters that could happen in the Pacific Northwest, such as home fires, wildfire, severe winter weather, flooding, earthquakes, and hazardous material accidents. (All these disasters are covered in detail in this guide).

2

TRAIN — all family members. Take first aid classes. Learn to use a fire extinguisher. Locate your utility shutoff valves and know when and how to turn off your gas, electricity and water. Make sure several people in the household have this knowledge or training. Pick two places to meet – (1) right outside of your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire; (2) outside of your neighborhood in case you can't return home or are asked to leave your neighborhood. Everyone must know the address and phone number of the meeting locations.

3

TAKE STOCK — of supplies you may already have on hand that would be helpful in a disaster. Involve the whole family in collecting and assembling supplies of food, water and emergency tools (lists are included in this booklet).

4

TELL — everyone in the household where emergency contact information will be kept. Post a copy on your refrigerator and keep another with your emergency supplies. Complete the "Emergency Contacts" section on page 2 of this booklet, and make copies for each member of your family. Make sure you have included an out-of-state contact. You may be able to reach them even when local phone lines are down.

5

TEST — your readiness on a regular basis. Review your family disaster plan and go through supplies at least once a year. Commit to a day or weekend to update phone numbers, hold family fire and earthquake drills and check supplies.