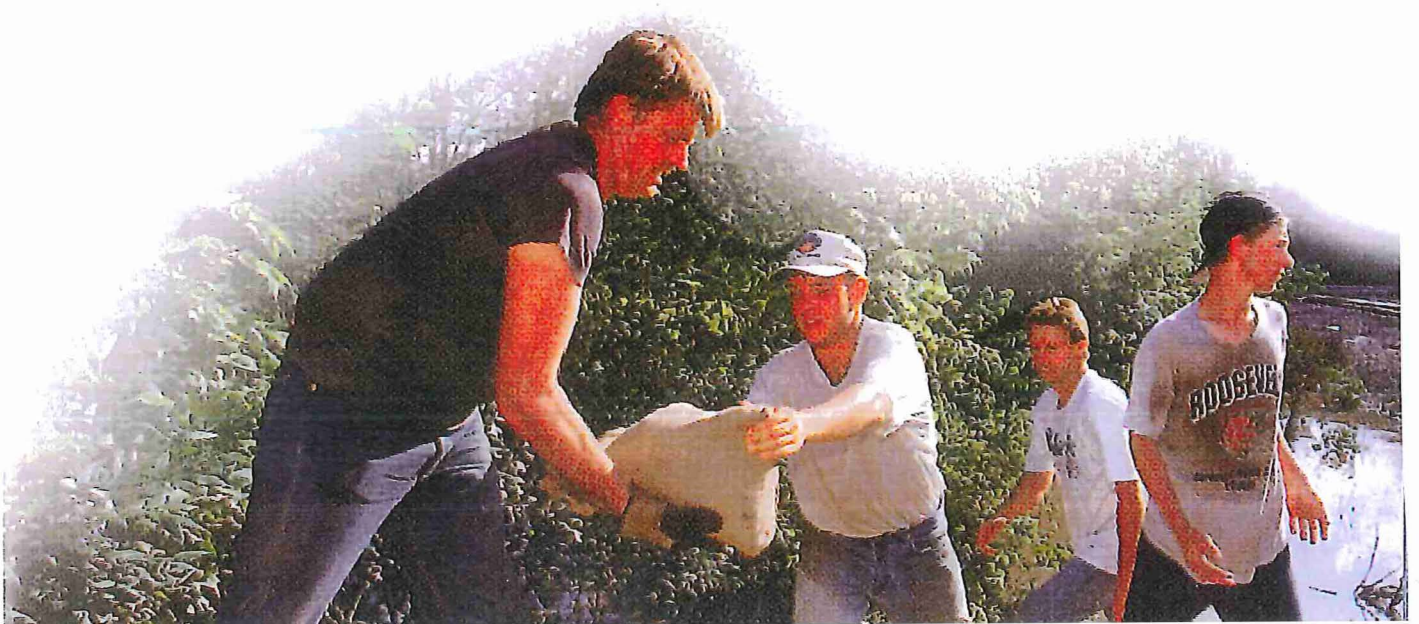


## Why Prepare for Disaster?

Disaster can strike without warning, forcing you to go for days without basic necessities or to evacuate your home. Relief workers will be on the scene following a disaster, but may not be able to reach you immediately.

You need to be prepared. Knowing the steps to take during a disaster—whether flooding, tornadoes, earthquakes or another crisis—can greatly reduce the danger and distress your family may face. This guide will help you and your family plan for a variety of emergency situations, persevere during them and recover afterward.

Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter to learn which disasters could strike your community. Use their information, along with this guide, to help you prepare for and reduce the risks you face.



## What to Do after a Disaster

Whether returning home or venturing outside for the first time, beware of new dangers that may have arisen because of the disaster. You may experience washed-out roads, downed power poles, contaminated drinking water or other hazards. Report problems promptly to local officials so that corrective measures can be taken.

### INSPECT YOUR HOME FOR DAMAGE

- Look for structural damage, loose or damaged electrical wires, and gas leaks before re-entering your home. If you doubt the safety of the structure, contact a professional before entering.
- Do not enter a fire-damaged house until authorities have inspected it.
- Check the refrigerator and discard spoiled food.
- Contact your insurance agent.

### Help Children Cope

A child can be traumatized by a disaster whether it is experienced first-hand, seen on television or learned about from adults. Monitor the nature and quantity of disaster-related programming your children are exposed to and contact your school to determine how teachers are dealing with the situation.

If your children have questions about the disaster, answer them truthfully, but don't allow the subject to dominate your conversations. Provide reassuring words and affection.



## IN CASE THE POWER GOES OUT

- Practice energy conservation to help your power company avoid rolling blackouts.
- Always keep your car's fuel tank at least half full—gas stations use electricity to operate pumps.
- Know how to manually release your electric garage door.
- Protect your computer with a surge protector.
- If the power goes out, check your fuse box or circuit breaker, or contact neighbors to see if the outage is limited to your own home.
- Turn off computers, stereos, televisions and appliances you were using when the power went off. Leave one light turned on so you know when power is restored.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer doors. Food will remain fresh for up to four hours after the power goes off. If you know power outages may happen, freeze water in plastic bottles to keep food cool longer.
- If the outage is expected to last for several days or more, consider relocating to a shelter or a friend's home.

### Using a Generator

If you plan to use a generator, operate it outside only—not in the basement or garage. Do not hook it up directly to your home's wiring. Instead, connect the equipment and appliances you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator.