

Emergencies More Frequent, Larger Due To Climate Change; Red Cross Urges Everyone To Get Their Households Prepared

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ST. LOUIS — The impact of climate change is being felt by families across the country as we see more intense storms, heavier rain, higher temperatures, severe droughts, and record-setting hurricanes and wildfires. The American Red Cross of Missouri and Arkansas urges everyone to get ready by making preparedness a priority during September, National Preparedness Month.

We have recently seen emergencies impacting people who don't usually experience a major disaster or extreme weather, while other communities are going through the devastation of disasters multiple times a year. Here in the Missouri Arkansas Region, we have assisted over 1,700 people following local disasters such as single-family house fires since July 1, 2021.

“Disasters can happen anywhere, anytime. We urge people to prepare now and be ready if an emergency occurs in their home or in our local community,” said Chris Harmon, Regional Disaster Officer. “Helping people during disasters is at the heart of our mission and climate change is a serious threat we are all facing. Help keep your loved ones safe — get Red Cross Ready today.”

HOW TO GET PREPARED Help keep your family safe by taking three actions to: 1) Get a Kit. 2) Make a Plan. 3) Be Informed.

1. First, build your [emergency kit](#) with a gallon of water per person, per day, non-perishable food, a flashlight, battery-powered radio, first aid kit, medications, supplies for infants or pets, a multi-purpose tool, personal hygiene items, copies of important papers, cell phone chargers, blankets, maps of the area and emergency contact information.
2. Next, [plan](#) what to do in case you are separated from your family during an emergency and what to do if you have to evacuate. Coordinate your plan with your child's school, your work, and your community's emergency plans. Don't forget to include your pets. Remember, if you and your family need to evacuate, so does your pet. Know in advance which pet-friendly hotels are in your area, and where your pets can stay in an emergency situation.
3. Finally, plan to [stay informed](#) by finding out how local officials will contact you during a disaster and how you will get important information, such as evacuation orders.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS Being prepared is important for everyone. Depending on your household's needs, there might be additional considerations to take into account as part of your emergency planning.

For example, older adults or people with mobility, hearing, learning, or seeing disabilities may need to create a support network of people that can help during an emergency. The Red Cross recommends creating a plan that considers each person's capabilities, any help they may need and who can provide it. This is especially important if evacuations are called for or if the power goes out for several days.

Disasters can be scary for children. It's important to talk with your kids about preparing for common emergencies, how to stay safe and what to expect before a disaster happens. The Red Cross has free programs and tools to help, visit [redcross.org/youthprep](https://www.redcross.org/youthprep) for more information.

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY National Preparedness Month is also a good time to take steps to help your community get prepared for emergencies of all sizes. By volunteering, donating blood, or learning lifesaving skills, you can be ready to help your loved ones and neighbors when needed. Visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) to learn more.

Red Cross [volunteers](#) play several critical roles in their local communities, including providing aid after disasters and educating people about home fire safety. People can also support local military members, veterans, and their families, or volunteer as a blood donor ambassador or a blood transportation specialist to be the critical link between blood donors and recipients.

[Blood](#) can take up to three days to be tested, processed, and made available for patients, so it's the blood already on the shelves that helps to save lives in an emergency. To help prepare your community, make an appointment to donate blood or platelets and help save lives.

[Learn](#) lifesaving skills so you can help people in a crisis until medical professionals arrive. Sign up for first aid, CPR, or other classes available online or in person.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds, and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members, and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) or [CruzRojaAmericana.org](https://www.CruzRojaAmericana.org), or follow us on Twitter at @RedCross.