

# **National Preparedness Month: Red Cross Urges Everyone To Get Ready Now For Emergencies**

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ST. LOUIS - People everywhere are feeling the impacts of climate change with more frequent and intense weather events threatening our communities. September is National Preparedness Month and the American Red Cross of Central and Northern Missouri urges everyone to get ready for these emergencies now.

Just last year, more than 40% of Americans — some 130 million people — were living in a county struck by a climate-related disaster, according to an analysis from the Washington Post. Disasters can happen anywhere, anytime. You can be ready by visiting [redcross.org/prepare](https://www.redcross.org/prepare).

“More powerful climate-driven occurrences are happening across the U.S. than ever before,” said Beth Elders, executive director, Red Cross of Greater St. Louis. “In fact, there have been more climate-related disasters in the nation over the past two decades than in any other country. It’s vital that everyone take steps to be prepared.”

**THREE EASY STEPS** Three simple steps can help to keep your family safe during disasters — 1) Get a Kit. 2) Make a Plan. 3) Be Informed.

1. Build your [emergency kit](#) with a gallon of water per person, per day, non-perishable food, a flashlight, and a battery-powered radio. Also include a first aid kit, medications, supplies for infants or pets, a multi-purpose tool, and personal hygiene items. And don’t forget to add copies of important papers, cell phone chargers, blankets, maps of the area, and emergency contact information.
2. [Plan](#) what to do in case you are separated from your family during an emergency and what to do if you have to evacuate. Make sure to coordinate your plan with your child’s school, your work, and your community’s emergency plans.
3. [Stay informed](#) by finding out what emergency situations may occur where you live, work, and go to school, how local officials will contact you during a disaster and how you will get important information, such as evacuation orders.

Include your [pets](#) in your emergency plans. Remember, if you and your family need to evacuate, so does your pet. It’s important to plan in advance to know which pet-friendly hotels are in your area, and where your pets can stay in an emergency situation.

Take any special considerations into account as part of your emergency planning. 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. Create a plan that takes into account your capabilities, any help you may need, and who can provide it, especially if you need to evacuate or if the power goes out for several days.

**HELP YOUR COMMUNITY** Red Cross [volunteers](#) play critical roles in their local communities by making sure families don’t have to face tough times alone. “Be ready to not only help your loved ones, but your neighbors too,” said Elders. “Join us as a Disaster Action Team volunteer, [learn](#) lifesaving skills by signing up for first aid or CPR classes, or make an appointment to [give blood or platelets](#).”

A strong blood supply is a key to preparedness for disasters and medical emergencies, and donors can ensure blood is on the shelves the moment it's needed. As a thank-you, all who come to give Sept. 1-18 will get a limited-edition Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last. Plus, those who race to give Sept. 1-30 will automatically be entered for a chance to win a VIP NASCAR experience, including two tickets to a 2023 race, and will also receive a coupon for a free haircut by email, all thanks to Sport Clips Haircuts.\* Donors can schedule an appointment to donate using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), or by calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).