

# Community Preparedness

## Key Terms and Concepts

response                      recovery                      preparedness  
representative                      hazard

## Purpose

To have students—

- Discover which community agencies are responsible for response and recovery.
- Understand that the school is a safe place.
- Identify appropriate safety procedures and supplies for school emergencies.

## Objectives

Students will—

- Identify community helpers and their roles in the community.
- Practice emergency response procedures for various situations.

## Activities

- “Who Helps Us?”
- “I Know What to Do”
- “School Supplies for Emergencies”

## Home Connection

- Who Helps Us?
- Tornado WATCH/WARNING
- I Know What to Do

## Linking Across the Curriculum

- Fine Arts/Drama
- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Science



## Materials

- **Activity Sheet 16:**  
*Help Is on the Way*  
(1 page)
- Newspapers and magazines
- Markers
- Poster board

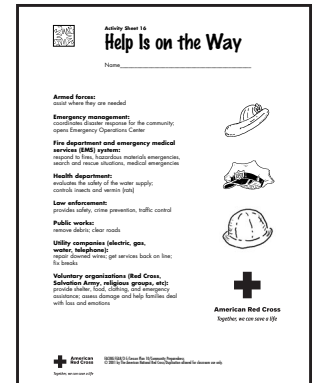


## “Who Helps Us?” Activity

(set up: 20 minutes; conduct: two 25-minute classes)

In any emergency, whether it is a natural disaster or a human-caused event, a variety of response and recovery agencies work together to assist the community.

1. Help the students list the agencies that will help your community during an emergency: law enforcement, fire and emergency services, public works, utility companies, health department, voluntary organizations.
2. Distribute Activity Sheet 16 and have the students discuss each agency's roles and responsibilities. If there are newspapers or magazines in the classroom with articles about the event being discussed, ask the students to find articles or photographs illustrating the roles of various agencies. If possible, cut out articles or photographs and post on a board or set aside until tomorrow.



## Home Connection

### Who Helps Us?

Ask students to take home Activity Sheet 16 and discuss with their family how the agencies help the community in an emergency. Ask their families to share stories about ways they have been helped by people who work in the community. Ask the students to write a brief summary of one of the stories told and bring in newspaper or magazine articles or photographs mentioning one of the listed agencies.

1. The next day, ask the students to share any stories they heard at home about how the agencies help people and to contribute the materials they have brought in for the next task.
2. Divide the students into groups and assign an agency to each. Have each group research the duties of the assigned agency.
3. Have each group create a poster for its agency, illustrating the agency's role in the emergency response and recovery, using key words or phrases to clarify the role along with clipped headlines or photographs in a collage.
4. Ask each group to report to the class—
  - The primary responsibilities of the agency.
  - The job the agency has been assigned or took on in the recent event.
  - An example of a specific job the agency did or is doing.



## Wrap-up

(20 minutes)

Hang the posters in the classroom or elsewhere in the school so that all students can enjoy them. Ask each student to write a thank-you letter to one of the agencies expressing his or her appreciation for the job that the agency has done. Mail the letters. Donate the poster to the agency when finished.



## Linking Across the Curriculum

### FINE ARTS/DRAMA

Have the students write and perform skits for another class, an assembly or a PTA meeting illustrating the roles of the community response agencies.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Have the students put together a book about the response agencies and their role in the event being discussed.



## “I Know What to Do” Activity

(set up: 5 minutes; conduct:  
20 minutes per drill)

Children may be wondering if they are safe, even if the events under discussion have taken place at a great distance. One way to help them feel safe is to go over the emergency plans in place at school. When children know what to do, they gain a sense of control over their environment.

**TEACHING NOTE: Masters of Disaster™ is a standards-based curriculum written by teachers for teachers, with lessons about general preparedness, and full units about science and safety regarding hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, lightning and earthquakes. For details, visit [www.redcross.org/disaster/masters](http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters).**

## Materials

- Chart paper

1. What movies or television shows have students watched that scared either them or other children? What happened when they got scared (for example, shouting out in surprise during the scary parts, having bad dreams, crying)? What actions could they have taken when they felt like that (for example, turning off the television, telling a parent)?
2. Talk to the students about whether they believe that school is a safe place. Ask them to help you make a list of places or situations where they feel safe and places or situations where they feel unsafe. List their suggestions on chart paper. Then ask, What do “safe” and “unsafe” feel like? Where does school appear on their list?

**TEACHING NOTE: See the fill-in-the-blank School Site Emergency Planning Guidelines at [www.redcross.org/disaster/masters](http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters).**

3. Discuss the need for safety in a person's life and ways to minimize fearful experiences.
4. Remind the students that they can handle many emergencies, that they know what to do to prevent fires and that they know what to do when a fire starts. Tell the students that they are going to practice all the school's emergency drills to help them all remember how to be prepared.

Use a week or one day a week for several weeks to review the school emergency procedures such as an Evacuation Drill (frequently called a Fire Drill); a Reverse Evacuation (calling the students inside the buildings quickly); and a Lockdown, Tornado, Earthquake and Bus Evacuation. If your school uses other emergency procedures, practice them as well.

**TEACHING NOTE: These drills may be practiced by one class or the whole school. If you are conducting the drills with one class, be sure to notify the principal ahead of time. Follow the procedures approved by your school or district.**

### **EVACUATION DRILL**

1. Ask the students what to do if there is a fire inside the school. (They should tell an adult immediately.) Ask the students what the fire alarm sounds like. What should they do if the fire alarm sounds? Explain that they may be asked to do the same thing even if the fire alarm doesn't sound.
2. Explain that the building may need to be evacuated for a fire or chemical spill inside the building, structural damage or any time that it is safer outside than inside.
3. Review the evacuation procedures: Teacher asks the students to line up at the door and checks to see that all students are there by counting or taking roll if time permits. Teacher checks with buddy teacher. (It might be necessary to assist or evacuate a buddy teacher's class in a real emergency.) If buddy teachers evacuate their classes together, one teacher should go first and the other last. Remind the students that they are to follow the teacher to the Emergency Assembly Area quickly and quietly. Teachers then take roll and count to be sure everyone got out safely and report the information in writing immediately.
4. After reviewing the procedures, tell the students to evacuate and go through the procedure completely.
5. When the "all clear" has been called, bring students inside.
6. Review the process with the students, praising them for their success, and answer questions if necessary.



*Together, we can save a life*

**TEACHING NOTE:** Your school's Lockdown procedures may be very similar to the Reverse Evacuation below but followed by all the doors being locked. If this is the case, combine the drills, following your school's standard procedures and terminology. Ask your local law enforcement agency for assistance, if necessary. Many schools have drills to "Shelter in Place" for a hazardous materials incident outside the school, and this also begins with a Reverse Evacuation.

### **REVERSE EVACUATION DRILL**

1. Ask the students why they might be called inside the buildings quickly (for example, sudden change in the weather, thunder, something dangerous outside such as bees, an escaped criminal, gunfire, etc.). If your school has a specific alarm signal to designate a Reverse Evacuation, ask if they know what it sounds like and clarify. Explain that they may be asked to do the same thing even if the alarm doesn't sound.
2. Explain and review the Reverse Evacuation procedures: Teacher or other school official calls all students to go inside the building quickly and report to their classrooms. Teachers take roll and count to be sure everyone returned safely and report the information in writing immediately.
3. Review the procedures, letting them know what the signal will be. Tell the students that they will practice, perhaps near the end of a recess, or by going outside for a few moments.
4. When all students have been out for a while, call them in, using the designated signal if available or by calling them or ringing a bell.
5. When everyone is in, take attendance to make sure that everyone is in and report attendance in writing.
6. Review the process with the students, praising them for their success, and answer questions if necessary.

### **TORNADO DRILL**

1. Ask the students what they would do if they heard on the radio that a tornado WARNING had been issued in their area. Review the Tornado Drill procedures. Your school has probably identified the tornado-safe places within the school.
2. Remind the students that—
  - A tornado WATCH is issued when there is a possibility that thunderstorms could produce a tornado.
  - A tornado WARNING is issued when a tornado has been spotted in the area.
3. Remind the students that if a tornado WATCH is issued, they need to know where their safe place is and they need to stay tuned to a local radio or television station



## Materials

- **Activity Sheet 17:**  
*Tornado WATCH versus  
 WARNING*  
 (2 pages)

for weather reports. If a tornado WARNING is issued, they need to act fast to get to a safe place.

4. Remind the students that they will do a tornado drill as though a tornado WARNING has been issued. They will move to their safe places and take the tornado-safe position by dropping to the floor and protecting their head and neck with their arms.
5. When the students are ready, tell them to start the drill. Follow your school's procedures to move to the designated safe place and drop. After about 30 seconds in the drop position, tell them that the drill is over and they should return to the classroom.
6. Take roll and count to be sure everyone returned.
7. Review the process with the students, praising them for their success, and answer questions if necessary.



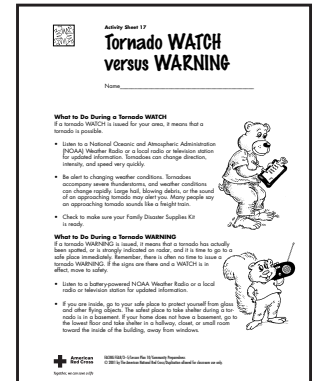
## Home Connection

### Tornado WATCH/WARNING

Distribute Activity Sheet 17 for the students to take home. Ask them to review the safety procedures with their family and identify safe places in their home.

### EARTHQUAKE DRILL

1. Ask the students if they would know what to do if an earthquake started right now. Allow them to give answers.
2. Explain and demonstrate to students the Drop, Cover and Hold On procedure. This may be new, or they may have learned it incompletely.



**TEACHING NOTE:** The point of Drop, Cover and Hold On is to take cover immediately in the closest safe place. (For example, under a desk at school, under a sturdy table at home, against an interior wall in an office building.) If you are in bed, stay there and protect your head with a pillow.

3. Explain to the students that in the event of an earthquake they should—
  - **Drop:** Get under the desk or table, positioning as much of their body as possible under cover.
  - **Cover** their eyes by leaning their face against an arm as they hold on.
  - **Hold On** to a leg of the desk or table. (Their hands and head should be about halfway between the floor and the top of the desk or table.)

4. Explain to the students that you want them to practice when you say, “Drop, Cover and Hold On.”
5. Have the students drop. Keep them quiet. Once they have mastered the position, you (the teacher) should drop.
6. After 15 to 30 seconds in place, ask them to get up carefully and check themselves and their neighbors. Ask, “Is everyone all right?” Wait for their answers and look around to visually check the students and the room. Wait for composure.

**TEACHING NOTE: The teacher should Drop, Cover and Hold On during every drop drill.**



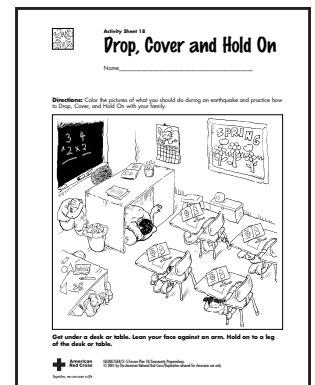
## Materials

- **Activity Sheet 18:**  
*Drop, Cover and Hold On* (2 pages)

## Home Connection

### I Know What to Do

Distribute Activity Sheet 18. Have the students take the pictures home, color them and discuss and practice the procedure with their family. The next day in class, ask them to share their experiences practicing the procedure with their family.



**TEACHING NOTE: Schools with school buses practice the Bus Emergency Evacuation Drills. This might be a good time to arrange with your bus driver or transportation department to conduct a “refresher” drill for your class.**



## Materials

- **Activity Sheet 19:**  
*What Do We Do When?*  
(1 page)

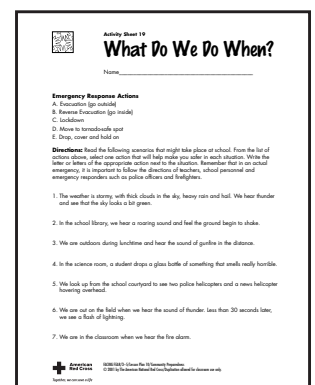
## Wrap-up

Summarize with your students the emergency procedures you have practiced. Remind them that the school is ready to handle emergencies.

Distribute Activity Sheet 19 and ask students to complete it. Then go over the answers and discuss each. Ask them if they feel more comfortable now that they have reviewed what to do. If your school or classroom has a cache of emergency supplies, permit them to see the supplies. Remind them that school is a very safe place. Talk to them about their role in keeping school safe:

- Telling a teacher about anything that makes them feel unsafe.
- Following directions.

**Answers to Activity Sheet 19**  
1. D, 2. E, 3. B, 4. A, 5. B, 6. B, 7. A





## Materials

- Gallon-sized bags with a zip closure (one per student)
- Classroom Emergency Kit supplies as listed on page 49.

## Linking Across the Curriculum

### LANGUAGE ARTS

Have the students create journal entries after each drill to describe their reactions. Do they feel safer knowing what to do?

### “School Supplies for Emergencies” Activity

(set up: 30 minutes; conduct: 50 minutes)

This activity leads students through bringing in “Comfort Kits” for individual students and creating an emergency kit for the classroom. In low-income areas, the PTA or other organizations might be able to purchase the supplies in bulk to be assembled by students in the classroom.

#### Comfort Kit

1. Talk to the students about what they might want to have at school in the event of an emergency. What items might make them feel better?
2. Brainstorm a list, and then go through it to make sure that everything on it will fit into a one-gallon heavy-duty plastic storage bag with a zip closure. Also, every item must be able to be stored for the school year without deteriorating (no tuna sandwiches!).
3. Once the students have settled on appropriate items (with teacher guidance to keep items small and affordable), ask them to copy the list to take home to their family.
4. The standard items many schools keep for their students as “Comfort Kits” are—
  - Space blanket or large plastic trash bag for warmth and protection from wind and rain
  - Snack food such as granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, hard candy
  - One or two boxes or small plastic bottles of juice or water
  - Family photograph
  - Light stick
  - Small stuffed toy
5. After agreeing on a list, ask the students to write a letter home asking for help assembling the supplies and bringing them to school in the plastic bag, labeled with the student’s name.
6. As the kits are returned, mark off each student’s name. (It may be necessary to assist some students if the family is unable to provide these items. The PTA might help.)
7. Store the individual kits in a storage box. Discuss with the students where to store the box (away from heat, light and insects and in a secure but accessible place). Some schools keep all classrooms’ kits in one location.
8. Remind the students that there is a good chance that the supplies will not be needed but that these are items that will be helpful in almost any emergency.



9. With the students, decide what you will do with the kits at the end of the year if they have not been used. Will you return each one to the students? Will you remove the photographs and donate them to a homeless shelter or other institution? Mark a date on the calendar (during the last few days of school) to dispose of the kits in the agreed-upon manner.

### **Classroom Emergency Kit**

10. To assemble a Classroom Emergency Kit, include the following:
  - One pair of leather work gloves
  - Three pairs of nonlatex gloves
  - One pair of safety goggles
  - First aid supplies: one box of assorted bandages, six assorted sizes of gauze pads, three rolls of flexible gauze
  - Student accounting forms
  - Student disaster or emergency cards (with family phone number, etc.)
  - Classroom list
  - Buddy classroom list
  - Tarp or ground cover
  - One box of tissues
  - Whistle
  - Crowbar
  - Blanket (or three space blankets)
  - Flashlight and extra batteries
  - Activities for the student
  - Push broom (to take care of any mobility impairments in classroom)
  - Suitable container for supplies (for example, a recycled five-gallon barrel that can be used as an emergency toilet, using large plastic bags to line it.)
  - Large plastic trash bags
  - Toilet paper
  - Waterless hand cleaner
  - Bottled water (For drinking purposes only, the recommended amount is one half-gallon (2 liters) per person per day.)

**TEACHING NOTE:** In schools with extremely limited budgets and/or the possibility that the supplies might be vandalized, an inexpensive minimal kit can be assembled, storing only the first eight items in a plastic grocery bag, with two or three gallons (8 to 13 liters) of water.

11. Ask the students to help pack the supplies in a container, talking about what each item might be used for. Store the water apart from the other supplies because bottled water occasionally leaks.
12. Plan to check the supplies every six months. Mark the date on the calendar. Replace commercially bottled water and other perishable supplies by the marked expiration dates.
13. Remind the students that these supplies will probably not be needed but that it is a good idea to be prepared for anything that might happen.



## **Linking Across the Curriculum**

### **SCIENCE**

Tell the students to research the expiration dates on items such as food. What do the dates mean? Who makes the rules?