



THE AMERICAN LEGION

DISASTER

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

for American Legion Posts



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INTRODUCTION

Our common bond as Legionnaires is honorable service in the U.S. military.

We trained as warriors first, then as specialists in whatever field we chose or were assigned. We learned the value of teamwork, discipline and readiness. We helped each other overcome obstacles and worked hard to make our units, companies, ships and squadrons the best they could be.

We also learned how to survive. We acquired skills in first aid, self-defense and field survival before going where we were ordered, serving proudly and returning home.

Today, we are still serving America by assisting our fellow veterans, their families and our communities through the programs of The American Legion.

In an uncertain world where a natural disaster or terrorist attack could occur at any time, Legionnaires should be eager to volunteer their military skills and knowledge to prepare their communities for possible devastation.

MISSION

As veterans, Legionnaires understand the value of readiness. In every town and city, American Legion posts should be seen as pools of leadership, expertise and resources. This guide offers the information necessary for your post to become fully involved in local disaster preparedness and response plans.

THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY & THE AMERICAN LEGION

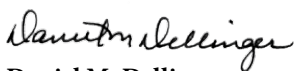


The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and The American Legion view community safety and service to our country as top priorities for the American people. In 2006, our organizations came together to sign a Statement of Affiliation, formalizing a shared commitment to raise public awareness about appropriate actions to take regarding emergency preparedness, disaster response and volunteer service. As part of our continued collaboration, we have worked together to update the Disaster Preparedness and Response for American Legion Posts Guide to help members of The American Legion work collaboratively alongside their local communities and emergency management teams.

The American Legion has played an important role in preparedness, response and recovery operations in recent years. A few examples include local American Legion posts sharing information about FEMA's wireless emergency alert system, opening their doors after a disaster to serve as shelter and recovery centers, providing emergency communications by The American Legion Amateur Radio Club, and educating the public and youth through local training and activities. FEMA is grateful for the collaborative services provided by American Legion posts around the country.

As men and women of service, you have worked tirelessly every day to ensure the safety and security of the American people. We are honored by those American Legion members whose experience and extraordinary dedication strengthen our efforts to protect our nation from threats and prepare for disasters. Every day these men and women, who already sacrificed so much for our nation, are helping achieve our shared mission to build a more resilient nation.

Although many of your members no longer wear a military uniform, you have elected to continue to serve your country by joining the team, and we thank you for bringing your skills, talents, and experiences to contribute to the success of our shared mission. We salute the many servicemembers and veterans in our partner agencies in federal, state, local and tribal organizations who share our collective goals. We are proud to continue this great partnership to make our nation more resilient.



Daniel M. Dellinger
National Commander, 2013-2014
The American Legion



W. Craig Fugate
Administrator
Federal Emergency
Management Agency
U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

WHY YOUR POST?

The four pillars of The American Legion are national security, veterans affairs and rehabilitation, Americanism, and children and youth. By leading and participating in a community disaster preparedness program, your post can fulfill needs in all these areas.

Similar to the civil defense program in which many communities participated during the Cold War, disaster preparedness for natural and man-made disasters is crucial for every town – and there are many opportunities for every post to play a leading role by partnering with the Department of Homeland Security. This guide outlines how, from simple awareness to a robust outreach program involving every member of the post's American Legion family.

Posts can also provide vital assistance to local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers by supporting their emergency operations plans.

By developing public outreach programs, your post can help train young people in various skills that are needed in an emergency.

Finally, get the media and the public to your post by promoting disaster kits and inviting emergency personnel to speak at post meetings, or linking a disaster readiness drill to an Independence Day celebration or other Americanism event.

Any and all of these efforts can greatly enhance your post's visibility and reputation. A solid post disaster preparedness and response plan – along with outreach to the public, the media, youth and civic groups – sends a message of your commitment to your community.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS A TO Z

AED – automated external defibrillator

ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Service

CERT – Community Emergency Response Team

CNCS – Corporation for National and Community Service

DHS – Department of Homeland Security

EMA – Emergency Management Agency

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

EOP – Emergency operations plan

DPR – Disaster preparedness and response

MRC – Medical Reserve Corps

MOA – memorandum of agreement

TALARC – The American Legion Amateur Radio Club

VIPS – Volunteers in Police Service

HOW TO GET STARTED

First, commit to the idea that your post can make a real difference in helping your community prepare for a natural or man-made disaster, or a terrorist attack that could be chemical, biological or nuclear. No town or city is immune.

Next, appoint someone to serve as post disaster preparedness and response (DPR) chairman/officer to recruit a team of volunteers. Research your post's capabilities and the needs of the community, then brief the Post Executive Committee and get a commitment to the project. Once the post decides to proceed, contact the city or country Emergency Management Agency (EMA) or Whole Community Citizen Corps Councils (www.ready.gov/citizen-corps) to get the ball rolling. If there is no EMA, ask local officials about establishing a local Citizen Corps Council. A state Citizen Corps representative can guide you through the process.

If your town has an EMA or Citizen Corps Council, meet with its members. Chances are they've already conducted a thorough potential hazard analysis to identify the types of disasters that would likely occur in your area and have an emergency operations plan (EOP) already in place. Immediately following such an event, professional first responders will be in high demand; days might pass before help arrives. An American Legion post can help local residents prepare, train and be ready to survive – and to help others survive – before a disaster even strikes.

Natural disasters

Hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, ice storms, volcanic eruptions, floods, droughts, mudslides, wildfires

Man-made disasters

Hazardous chemical spills, nuclear plant accidents, explosions, train wrecks

Terrorist attacks

Detonation of a “dirty” nuclear device, biological weapons (disease), water and food supply contamination, chemical dispersions (mustard gas)

WAYS YOUR POST CAN GET INVOLVED

- Serve on the local and/or state Citizen Corps Council.
- Provide manpower for Citizen Corps volunteer programs, including:
 - Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
 - Fire Corps
 - Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
 - Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)
 - Neighborhood Watch
- Encourage trained veterans with leadership experience to consider volunteering with Red Cross, Salvation Army, the local EMA, and other agencies and organizations concerned with disaster preparedness and response.
- Promote the creation of disaster supply kits for homes and businesses.
- Offer adult and youth DPR training programs at the post.
- Host a town hall meeting on disaster preparedness.
- Link preparedness to good citizenship at patriotic events such as Flag Day and Independence Day.
- Host a post event during National Preparedness Month in September.
community.fema.gov/connect.ti/readynpm
- Participate in local disaster preparedness exercises.
- If you have a post home, volunteer space for:
 - a designated shelter or emergency supply center
 - food service following a disaster
 - emergency inoculation facility
 - training facility for adults and youth in disaster preparedness courses, including first aid, CPR, CERT and EMA first responder
 - The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC) / Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) / Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) communications and training center
 - child care for first responders during emergencies
 - backup support for emergency operations center
 - SKYWARN (severe weather spotters for the National Weather Service)
 - mobility teams that move medical and emergency personnel with during and after severe weather events

These are just some of the contributions that an American Legion post can make to a community DPR program. Each will be tailored to the specific needs of your community.

BENEFITS TO YOUR POST

- High visibility in community
- Media coverage
- Contact with potential new members for Legion, Auxiliary and SAL
- Increased access to schools
- Training opportunities for members
- Guest speakers for post meetings on emergency planning and preparedness
- Close relationship with local government
- Satisfaction of contributing to community preparedness

A FAMILY OPPORTUNITY

While The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary are formal partners with the national Citizen Corps through DHS and FEMA by a signed memorandum of agreement (MOA), posts, units and Sons of The American Legion squadrons should cooperate in training, community outreach and participation in disaster preparedness. Assign specific areas of readiness to each group, including the American Legion Riders, who can serve as a response asset in EMA planning.

TRAINING

Ideally, every post member should be trained and certified in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). The post DPR chairman/officer and team should complete the training and offer it to other members – in a Saturday morning session, for example, or following a post activity. Eventually, your post could offer a variety of disaster training courses for adults and youth, with DPR volunteers as instructors.

As a Citizen Corps affiliate, your post has access to a wealth of training materials and opportunities, locally and via home study courses.

FEMA offers a long list of online home study courses in emergency preparedness and response, both for first responders and citizens. Most require only a few hours to complete. Upon passing a multiple question test after completing each course, participants will receive a diploma from the Emergency Management Institute via email. Additionally, course completion offers Continuing Education Units (CEUs) accepted by many higher learning institutions.

training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/crslist.asp

Your local emergency management director can point you toward specific local training opportunities, such as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), to enhance your post's participation in the community's EOP.



Legionnaire Kevin Waldroup, NG9J, mans the TALARC station at National Headquarters in Indianapolis during The American Legion Birthday Special Event.

THE AMERICAN LEGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (TALARC)

Recognizing the important role played by amateur radio operators following natural or man-made disasters, the Legion's National Executive Committee established The American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC) in May 2011.

The club promotes the art and science of radio, and encourages volunteer service by American Legion family FCC-licensed amateur radio operators in support of emergency disaster operations. This is accomplished in conjunction with local Emergency Management agencies (EMAs), the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), the ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), and other government and non-government agencies involved in disaster preparedness.

With nearly 2,000 members across the nation, TALARC members work with post leadership to make their post homes a valuable resource to local emergency managers in times of crisis, during periods of severe weather, and as community centers for training first responders and members of the public in emergency planning and response.

Posts with members who are radio amateurs and TALARC members can, and have, set up emergency communications stations able to pass emergency and "health and welfare" message traffic when needed. Some have signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with city/county EMA offices and train regularly with emergency response teams. Some post homes serve as training centers that offer instruction courses for obtaining an amateur radio license, National Weather

Service Severe Storm Spotter training, and first aid, CPR, AED and CERT classes. Some host seminars on disaster readiness, conducted by area first responders and emergency managers. Others post homes double as local emergency shelters, installing backup electrical generators and offering shelter and food for potential evacuees in their communities. Amateur radio communicators link the post to the area emergency operations center as well as local radio repeaters capable of communicating with mobile radio units over hundreds of miles.

More information about how posts can embrace amateur radio as a disaster planning asset is available in the free brochure, "Amateur Radio & The American Legion," available online at.

www.legion.org/documents/pdf/amateur-radio-brochure-web.pdf.

FCC-licensed amateur radio operators who are current members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary or SAL can join TALARC online at **www.legion.org/hamradio**.

CITIZEN CORPS



In the decade after 9/11, state and local governments have encouraged Americans to become an integral part of homeland security through preparedness, training and support for first responders.

Founded in 2002, Citizen Corps provides opportunities for people to participate in a range of measures to protect their families, their homes and their communities from the threats of crime, terrorism and disasters of all kinds.

Citizen Corps programs build on successful efforts already in place in many communities around the country. Usually started through local innovation, these are the foundation for Citizen Corps' national approach to citizen participation in community safety.

Citizen Corps is coordinated nationally by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which works closely with other federal entities, state and local governments, first responders and emergency managers, the volunteer community, and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Councils help drive local citizen preparedness and participation by:

- Assessing risks
- Identifying needs and local resources
- Developing community action plans
- Coordinating Citizen Corps programs to train and exercise volunteers

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Established Citizen Corps volunteer programs that welcome American Legion post involvement include:



The **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations and response team organization. When emergencies happen, CERT members can use their training to safely assist others in their neighborhood or workplace. CERTs can give critical support to professional responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site. CERTs also help with non-emergency community service projects that help improve public safety. Participants vary in age, physical capacity and previous experience. www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams



The **Fire Corps** enhances the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels – volunteer, combination and career – through citizen advocates who assist in fire prevention and life safety education, youth programs, administrative support and more. Fire Corps is funded through DHS and is managed through a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. www.firecorps.org

An expanded **Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP)** adds terrorism awareness education to its existing crime prevention mission while bringing residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and response training. Neighborhood Watch is funded by the Department of Justice (DoJ) and administered by the National Sheriffs Association. Posts can establish a local program by contacting their county sheriff's office or local law enforcement agency. www.usaonwatch.org



The **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** strengthens communities by providing an outlet for medical, public health and other volunteers to offer their expertise throughout the year, as well as during local emergencies and times of need. MRC volunteers work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs and also supplement existing community public health initiatives, such as outreach and prevention, immunization programs, blood drives, case management, care planning and more. The MRC program is housed in the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Members of The American Legion family who are physicians, nurses, medics, lab techs and other medical or public health professionals are encouraged to volunteer. www.medicalreservecorps.gov



Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) enhances the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. VIPS is funded by DoJ and managed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Contact your local law enforcement agency to find out how your post can help. www.policevolunteers.org

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary are part of the **Whole Community Citizen Corps Affiliate Program**, which multiplies the resources and materials available to states and local communities by partnering with organizations and programs already engaged in public education, outreach and training. The affiliate program also represents volunteers interested in helping make their communities safer, and offers opportunities to support first responders, disaster relief activities and community safety efforts.

Again, Citizen Corps is coordinated nationally by DHS, which works closely with the **Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)** to promote volunteer service activities that support homeland security and community safety. CNCS is a federal agency that operates nationwide service programs such as AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America. Participants can support Citizen Corps Council activities by helping establish training and information delivery systems neighborhoods, schools and businesses, and by helping with local and regional family preparedness and crime prevention initiatives.

As a member of the local Citizen Corps, your post can play an important role in the preparedness of your neighborhood and community.



OUTREACH

An American Legion post should have three DPR goals:

- Train a post DPR team and members for basic disaster preparedness and response (first aid, CPR, AED).
- Develop an outreach program to educate the community, offer preparedness and response training, and inform youth and the media about the importance of disaster preparedness and having disaster kits. FEMA has free resources available online at **www.fema.gov/other-resources**. Also, consider joining the National Preparedness Coalition and encouraging others to do so.
- Have a post response plan in place that lays out specifically what your post will do in the event of a local disaster.

Your post can be fully involved in disaster preparedness and response or serve simply as a backup asset to local emergency management. It all comes down to local needs, members' motivation and enthusiasm, and a desire to serve the community. Whatever your post decides, remember that emergency preparedness and survival affects every American. This need is a natural fit for veterans of all ages.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Most people put off or ignore the need to prepare for potential disasters, giving your post a great community relations opportunity. Legionnaires can get out in front on this issue, conducting awareness events, providing training, and engaging civic groups and youth on education, training and disaster survival programs. However your post decides to get involved, it will be recognized as a key player in the community. People like to belong to organizations that get things done, making this an opportunity to boost membership as well.

DISASTER RESPONSE

The second part of your DPR plan goes into action when disaster strikes. Based on the community's needs, resources and available volunteers, a post may have no response capability or full involvement.

Will your post home serve as an officially designated shelter? Will you have enough volunteers to provide food and comfort to evacuees?

Will your post members be ready to respond with their neighborhood or workplace CERT? Will the post have emergency power and communications? Do you have a shift schedule of volunteers to staff the post during emergencies?

A good plan in place, coordinated with your local EMA or Citizens Corps Council, guarantees that everyone will know exactly what to do, where to go and when to do it should disaster strike.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Appoint a DPR officer/chairman and team to study post resources and develop a plan.
- ☐ Obtain Post Executive Committee approval.
- ☐ Contact local EMA/Citizen Corps officials to pitch post participation, with the recommendations of this booklet.
- ☐ Inform members of participation opportunities through the post newsletter.
- ☐ Let the district commander know of your post's progress.
- ☐ Establish liaisons with the National Preparedness Coalition, Red Cross and other agencies to learn about training opportunities.
- ☐ Begin training for DPR outreach team.
- ☐ Encourage members to complete FEMA's online independent study courses at ***www.training.fema.gov/is***.
- ☐ Invite a local emergency management official to speak at a post meeting about how Legionnaires can lead in community disaster preparedness.
- ☐ Schedule first-aid training and other courses for membership in conjunction with meetings, dinners and other events.
- ☐ Develop a post disaster preparedness and response plan.
- ☐ Develop an outreach plan that includes media coverage of training, a schedule of post training courses for youth and adults, post meetings featuring speakers on DPR, potential sponsors for post-organized DPR events, and an operating budget if applicable (things you want to do but can't get a sponsor for or will need funds to execute). Use a three-year approach to plan ahead and provide plenty of time to growth, funding, training and recognition of volunteers.
- ☐ If you have a post home, begin acquiring disaster supplies such as blankets, cots, disaster kits, first-aid supplies, emergency lights and AED.
- ☐ Consider purchasing an emergency power generator (an uninterrupted power supply, or UPS) for use during disasters. If your post is designated an official shelter, ask what grants are available or seek local sponsors to help fund it.

- ☐ Send a media advisory about the post's DPR affiliation, offering interviews with the post commander and DRP officer. **www.legion.org/publications** (go to **Public Relations** and click on **Disaster Preparedness and Response media tools**)
- ☐ Advise local media of post events and meetings that include emergency management speakers.
- ☐ Plan a town hall meeting at your post to discuss disaster preparedness in light of current terrorism threats; have knowledgeable guest speakers, local fire and police officials, and the local director of emergency management. Start a media campaign at least a month in advance.
- ☐ Send letters to the editor of the local newspaper about your post's program, inviting veterans to join the effort and the public to take advantage of the training.
- ☐ Alert the local VA hospital (if applicable) of your post's DPR resources and volunteer assistance.
- ☐ Ask local veterans who are police officers, fire fighters, EMTs and emergency planners to join The American Legion. Invite them to join the post DPR team as instructors, speakers and coordinators.
- ☐ Survey your members to see if any are licensed radio amateurs. If so, consider establishing a TALARC station at the post.
- ☐ Invite the local Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) coordinator to speak at a post meeting. Ask how members can work with ARES to establish emergency communication capability at your post, if no members are licensed.
- ☐ Encourage members of the post DPR team to become first aid/CPR instructors so they may conduct public training sessions at your post and for adult groups and schools.
- ☐ Plan a major disaster preparedness event in support of National Preparedness Month in September. Consider hosting fire, police and emergency management exhibits at your post with guest speakers, games, food, and public recognition of local Citizen Corps volunteers.
- ☐ Host CERT training for post members, their families, neighbors and other guests. Invite local veterans and publicize in the media. Contact your local EMA/Citizens Corps Council to schedule training and identify resources.
- ☐ Build a disaster preparedness kit to use as an example, or buy one commercially off the shelf. Work with the local chamber of commerce to host an event with merchants at which the public can assemble their own kits using available and discounted supplies.

- ❑ Ask the local chamber of commerce to publicize a disaster kit promotion in its newsletter to area businesses. Include an invitation to veterans to join your post to assist the DPR team.
- ❑ Order handouts on disaster preparedness (see the resource list on page 18).
- ❑ Nominate members for FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness Awards at **www.ready.gov/citizen-corps-awards**. Support youth by nominating them for FEMA's Youth Preparedness Council at **www.ready.gov/youth**.
- ❑ Encourage post members to attend National Weather Service training for spotting severe weather.
- ❑ Send feedback about your DPR activities to **pr@legion.org**.

DISASTER KITS

When preparing for a possible emergency situation, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and warmth.

RDHS and FEMA's Ready Campaign recommend the following supplies for a basic emergency kit:

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- A three-day (or more) supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio, with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape for shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps

Additional items to consider adding to an emergency kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person (consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate)
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents, such as copies of insurance policies and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Complete change of clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes (consider additional clothing if you live in a cold climate)
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper (In an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.)
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for household members

Disaster kits are available commercially from a variety of sources, but one can be easily assembled from household supplies or locally available materials. Every home and business should have at least one kit of sufficient size for every member of the family or employee. Publicizing the importance of having a kit ready should be an objective for every American Legion post.

www.ready.gov/build-a-kit

MEMORANDUMS OF AGREEMENT (MOA)

A memorandum of agreement (MOA), also known as a memorandum of understanding (MOU), is a formal business document outlining an agreement between two entities, groups or individuals. It indicates the two parties' common interests and objectives. While not a binding legal commitment, an MOA is a contract, so you may wish to have it reviewed by legal counsel.

An MOA would be appropriate, for example, between your post and your town's Emergency Management Agency, to identify your facility as a designated shelter for public use in the aftermath of a storm or other disaster. Correctly done, an agreement would solidify your post's commitment to be ready when needed and outline the requirements agreed to in advance between your post and the EMA. These might include bedding, food and shelter for a specific number of people for a minimum number of days.

MOAs are ideal for putting into precise words the relationship between your post and other groups or agencies in support of a disaster preparedness and response plan. Examples would be agreements with the local Red Cross chapter, law enforcement or fire-rescue squad to conduct training at your post per quarter.

An MOA is not required, but it is a way for both parties to show, in good faith, their commitment to ensuring that the community's needs will be provided for in the event of an emergency.

ENGAGE THE MEDIA

Spread the word about your post's disaster preparedness and response campaign by taking advantage of free media tools posted online at **www.legion.org**.

Materials available for download include:

- Sample letters to the mayor, director of the local Emergency Management Agency, chamber of commerce president and spiritual leaders
- Sample news releases, media advisories and a letter to the editor

Send news releases to local publications to tell the public about a training opportunity, formation of a community DPR team, a school outreach or other activity. Write the release as you might expect to see it published; newspapers often print them word for word. Usually, however, a release will be passed on to a reporter who will contact the post for quotes and additional details.

Send media advisories to a city editor or television news assignment desk editor to let them know of an event that a reporter or TV news crew can cover. These include press conferences, a post open house with local fire and police units on display, or a post meeting featuring where a guest speaker will address a “hot” topic, such as potential terrorist attack in your community.

Letters to the editor should be about a timely topic in the news, of interest to most readers, and generally not be more than 250 words. If published, they generally appear below or adjacent to a publication's editorials. Most newspapers provide an email address for the opinion page editor. Disaster preparedness affects all citizens, so a well-crafted letter on the topic stands a good chance of being selected. Have one or two others review the letter for accuracy, spelling and conciseness.

Last but not least, use social media – say, a Facebook invitation or notice – to get the word out about your post's event, activity or training opportunities. Ask others to “share” the information, and you may be surprised by how many are interested.

www.legion.org/publications

Scroll down to Media & Communications and click on “Disaster Preparedness and Response Media Tools.”

RESOURCES

Download pamphlets and other materials on disaster preparedness free online or order them in larger quantities from DHS. Specifically, the publication “Are You Ready?” is a great tool for educating people on the need to be prepared. Posts should list their contact information on the back of brochures before distributing them at post events or public venues. EMA offices also offer pamphlets on various topics relating to preparedness.

Department of Homeland Security

State and local agencies

Are You Ready?

CERT

Citizen Corps

Ready Pubs

Ready’s Be Informed page

FEMA

FEMA Independent Study Program

FEMA Youth Preparedness

SKYWARN

Storm Spotters

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

Tornado Frequently Asked Questions

American Red Cross

Amateur Radio

TALARC

www.ready.gov

www.ready.gov/today

www.fema.gov/areyouready

www.fema.gov/cert

www.ready.gov/citizencorps

www.ready.gov/publications

www.ready.gov/be-informed

www.fema.gov

training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/

www.ready.gov/youth

www.skywarn.org

spotterguides.us

www.nvoad.org

www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado

www.redcross.org

www.emergency-radio.org

www.legion.org/hamradio

NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND (NEF)



Since 1989, The American Legion's National Emergency Fund has provided more than \$8 million in direct financial assistance, preventing damaged posts from closing and helping members of the Legion family recover from natural disasters.

The Legion offers four NEF brochures covering the following:

- How to donate to the NEF
- What to do before an emergency
- What to do during an emergency
- What to do after an emergency

www.legion.org/publications

Each is posted under Media & Communications and available for download.

To learn more about the NEF or to donate, visit its website:

www.legion.org/emergency

CONCLUSION

As an activity that touches all four pillars of The American Legion, disaster preparedness and response is an integral part of what we stand for as Legionnaires. Helping ensure that our fellow citizens are prepared for the catastrophes of nature is a basic duty of being a good neighbor. Promoting the training, education and survival tools to survive an enemy terrorist attack of a nuclear, biological or chemical nature is something that we as veterans can do. Most of us went through such training when we were in uniform. As long as we are a nation at war and there are terrorists sworn to kill all Americans, every town is a potential target. Who better than those who have served in our armed forces to advocate the need to be prepared?

Whatever level of disaster preparedness and response involvement your post opts to undertake, know that the Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion who serve in this endeavor will be making a real difference in your town. It is an effort that may very well save lives.

FEEDBACK AND RECOGNITION

If your post has succeeded in enhancing disaster readiness in your community, we'd like to know about it. Perhaps you have discovered new ways to partner with local government and disaster relief agencies. Perhaps you have developed a new service that your post can provide in response to a natural or man-made disaster. Either way, we want to share your stories with other posts around the country.

Send an email about your post's DPR efforts and how they've benefited your post and community. Also, feel free to ask any questions about how to develop your post's DPR plans. Contact us by e-mail:

National Security & Foreign Relations Division: ***nsfr@legion.org***

Media & Communications Division: ***pr@legion.org***

Posts that establish a DPR team and participate in local disaster preparedness and response activities are eligible to receive the National Commander's Post Disaster Preparedness Certificate. Send an email to ***pr@legion.org*** with the following information:

- Post/unit/squadron name and number
- DPR officer/chairman
- Commander/president
- Street address, city, state and ZIP code
- Preparedness activities conducted
- Public events
- Media coverage
- Community feedback
- Future plans





THE AMERICAN LEGION

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