

Emergency Preparedness BSA

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is pleased to partner with the Boy Scouts of America to increase the level of citizen preparedness across the country. DHS has asked the Boy Scouts of America to build upon the foundation of the Ready campaign and to help citizens across the country prepare for emergencies of all kinds.

Emergency management, emergency preparedness, and disaster services are common throughout the United States—we take care of each other. By whatever name, these activities encompass mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery related to any kind of disaster, whether natural, technological, or national security. *Emergency preparedness* means being prepared for all kinds of emergencies, able to respond in time of crisis to save lives and property, and to help a community—or even a nation—return to normal life after a disaster occurs.

It is a challenge to be prepared for emergencies in our world of man-made and natural phenomena. The Emergency Preparedness BSA program is planned to inspire the desire and foster the skills to meet this challenge in our youth and adult members so that they can participate effectively in this crucial service to their families, communities, and nation.

The emergencies of today's world demand more than ever that our young people and adults be trained as individuals and as units to meet emergency situations. The importance of this training is not new to the Boy Scouts of America, as Scouting has always taught youth to be prepared for all types of emergencies. Since Scouting began in the United States, Scouts have responded to the needs of their communities and nation in time of crisis.

From its beginning, the Scouting movement has taught youth to do their best, to do their duty to God and country, to help others, and to prepare themselves physically, mentally, and morally to meet these goals. The basic aims of Scouting include teaching youth to take care of themselves, to be helpful to others, and to develop courage, self-reliance, and the will to be ready to serve in an emergency.

In addition to the millions of youth and adults who are active members of the Boy Scouts of America, millions of former members were trained in Scouting skills that prepare them for meeting emergencies. They are a built-in source of help to meet the challenge of readiness for any emergency situation. As Scouting units across the country begin planning an emphasis on emergency preparedness, this foundation of former members can be a resource for support—a trained group to help assure a response that will benefit the homes and communities of our nation.

When an emergency occurs, it affects every youth and adult member of BSA in the immediate area, creating the responsibility to respond first, as an individual; second, as a member of a family; and third, as a member of a Scouting unit serving the neighborhood and community. Because of these multiple levels of responsibility, the Emergency Preparedness BSA plan includes training for individual, family, and unit preparedness. Special training in all three areas is a prerequisite for BSA members conducting any type of emergency service in their communities.

Individual Preparedness

The primary emphasis of this initial step in the program is to train members to be mentally and emotionally prepared to act promptly and to develop in them the ability to take care of themselves. Teaching young people to know and be able to use practical survival skills when needed is an important part of individual preparedness.

Family Preparedness

Since family groups will be involved in most emergency situations, this part of the plan includes basic instructions to help every Scouting family prepare for emergencies. Families will work together to learn basic emergency skills and how to react when faced with fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, explosions, warning signals, fallout protection, terrorism attacks, and other emergency situations.

Community Preparedness

The program fosters the desire to help others and teaches members how to serve their communities in age-appropriate ways. By taking the age-appropriate First Aid for Children course (Tiger Cubs) and *Basic Aid Training* (Wolf and Bear Cub Scouts), these boys help ease the burden on the family and community resources. Through all Scouting ranks and for adult members, the responsibilities and skills for community service increase with the members' maturity.