A photograph showing a group of people, including a woman in the foreground, performing CPR on a mannequin. The woman is leaning over the mannequin, while others are visible in the background. The scene is set indoors with a white wall.

# Emergency Preparedness

# Emergency Management Phases

Businesses, governments and individuals have the responsibility of creating an emergency plan to ensure disasters are safely managed.

Because threats like tornadoes, flooding and earthquakes can cause massive devastation across the country, preparedness is critical. Fortunately, weather-related catastrophes are mostly predictable, so with proper planning, damage to property and lives can often be limited.

Check out the four phases of emergency management, as suggested by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## Mitigation

The mitigation phase includes actions taken to prevent or lessen the cause, impact and consequences of disasters. The first step in planning involves identifying the types of risks that are present in your environment.

For instance, one should consider if their area is prone to wildfires, tornadic activity or winter weather hazards. Once a list of emergencies is drafted, planners should begin creating a strategy to prepare their staff or family.

## Preparedness

What happens when disas-



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ter strikes? For severe weather, you should choose a safe place to wait out the storm and regularly practice a routine to familiarize everyone involved. In the refuge, make sure to stock food and water to last people for at least three days, weather radios to stay up to date and essential documents you need.

If catastrophes like wildfires or hurricanes often

require mandatory evacuations, ensure you have a safe place to stay and back-up routes if the primary roadways are compromised.

## Response

The response phase determines how one acts immediately after a catastrophe occurs. Since properties and buildings are subject to significant damage, it's possible

that life cannot resume as usual. Before entering a damaged structure, an expert must deem it safe. This means ensuring the building is free of defects involving electrical, gas or flooding hazards.

## Recovery

During recovery and restoration efforts, the main goal is to return to normalcy.

Depending on the severity of the emergency, you may need to contact an insurance provider to estimate the damage.

Those who experience a disaster should be honest with their emotions, as the experience can cause post-traumatic stress disorder. Use the event to find vulnerabilities in your planning measures to create a more efficient future strategy.

# Pandemic Planning

The United States has been subject to many officially declared pandemics throughout its history. However, in recent records, no emergency has shut down the country quite like COVID-19.

The sudden lockdowns and stay-at-home orders left many Americans scrambling to meet financial commitments as their occupations temporarily shuddered.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a pandemic as an event in which a disease spreads across several countries and affects many people. While vaccines and medical advancements have helped experts understand and defeat viruses, the country has still been affected by unexpected health emergencies. Here are a few that we were forced to overcome, as listed by the CDC.

- 2009: H1N1 Virus
- 1968: H3N2 Virus
- 1957-1958: H2N2 Virus
- 1918: H1N1 Virus

During a pandemic, Americans are expected to adjust their lifestyles, including how they earn a living. Now is the time to prepare by learning how to protect yourself from contagious illnesses and ensuring your financial situa-



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tion can withstand a sudden loss of work.

## STAY SAFE

It's vital to understand how the illness spreads to keep you and yours safe during a virus outbreak. While contagious diseases can differ in their biology, the World Health Organization offers general tips regarding remaining healthy.

- Wash your hands regularly

with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Maintain at least a 3-foot distance between you and people showing symptoms.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

In addition to practicing safety measures, it's also vital to listen to the experts about

how a particular virus spreads.

## PROTECT YOUR FINANCIAL STABILITY

Since it's difficult to estimate a pandemic's duration, Americans must ensure their finances can endure extended emergencies. An efficient strategy is to build your savings in case your regular income is suddenly halted. Experts at America's Debt Help

Organization suggest maintaining reserves to cover at least three to six months worth of expenses.

Try to stick to a strict budget until you feel comfortable with the amount in your emergency fund. If possible, set up a separate bank account where you can directly deposit a specific amount of each paycheck toward a better financial future.

# Local Government Planning

Community leaders must seriously consider the risks of emergencies and ensure citizens are prepared for disaster.

While raising public awareness about potential catastrophes can be challenging, by teaming with local businesses and social media, a warning can be sent by mass communications.

The National Weather Service encourages Americans to take the idea of severe weather seriously. By being prepared for storms and natural disasters, we can significantly reduce their impact on our lives. Here are four key factors you should address in your community awareness plan.

- Stay informed by local weather outlets with battery-powered radios, smartphone apps or TV broadcasts.

- Create an emergency plan within homes and businesses to show people where to gather.

- Prepare yourself and your home for an emergency by looking for hazardous situations like decaying trees near a structure, a compromised roof and finding electrical, gas and water shutoffs.

- Have an emergency supply kit with bottled water, food, medications, flashlights and extra clothing and blankets.

Once you draft a strategy to


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raise community perception, here are some ways to put it into action.

## MEET WITH LOCAL RESOURCES AND CITIZENS

Outreach begins by spreading your message to a large audience. A quick way to achieve a marketing campaign

is working with local radio stations or news outlets. Ask them to periodically promote planning tips during morning or evening broadcasts, when their traffic is most robust.

It would help if you also worked with local emergency officials in sectors like law enforcement, fire rescue and medical services to discover

their concerns and adjust your strategy to fit specific needs.

## ENCOURAGE GROUP MEETINGS

Open the floor in your community by inviting concerned residents to a town hall meeting. Try to schedule it a few weeks in advance to promote the event and so people can

prepare their questions or concerns.

While you shouldn't feel rushed to implement changes to your plan, their advice can offer a new perspective that you never considered. After an initial meeting, set up follow-up events throughout the year to keep emergency awareness relevant.

# Facing a Power Outage

Significant weather events are notorious for knocking out electricity in cities throughout the country. Depending on the severity of the complications, Americans may find themselves without power for several days or weeks.

You can prepare for an outage by stocking food and water, securing a back-up power source and compiling supplies to get through the experience.

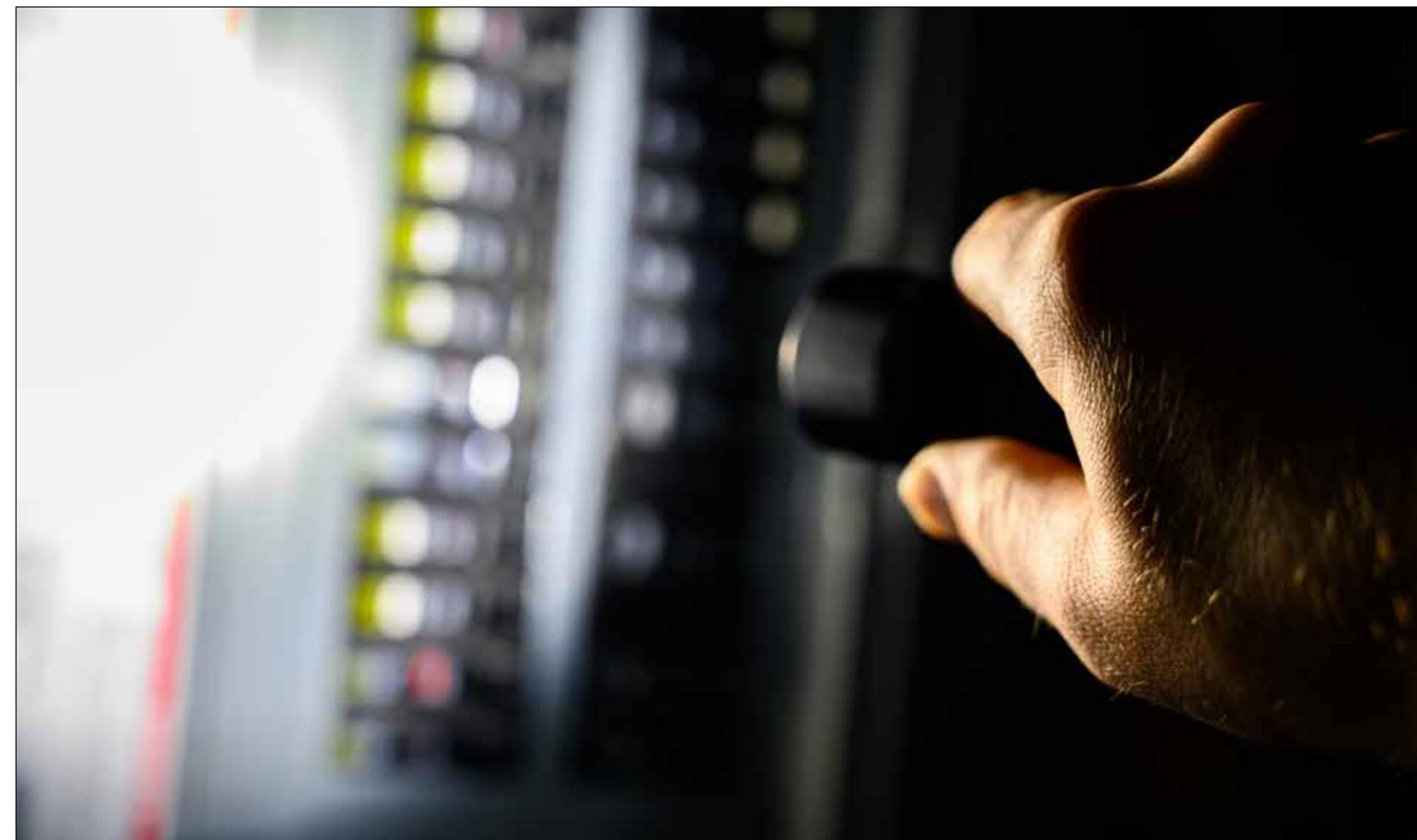
Don't expect that everyday conveniences like grocery stores or gas stations will operate normally after a disastrous storm. In some cases, downed trees can prevent primary highway access, destroy local resources or disrupt supplies to the area.

The most efficient way to protect yourself and your family is by ensuring your home is well prepared for an extended power outage.

## SUPPLIES

The supplies your household requires during a power outage will depend on your lifestyle and health.

For instance, if you rely on medical equipment or refrigerated medicines, you should



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speak with a medical provider about storing prescriptions at higher temperatures and back-up measures to power machines.

The American Red Cross suggests Americans plan for an extended power outage by gathering these supplies:

- **Water:** one gallon per person, per day, with a two-week supply.
- **Food:** enough non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items to last at least 14 days.
- **First aid kit:** a one-week supply of medication, personal hygiene items and medical

supplies.

- **Tools:** flashlights, battery-powered or hand-cranked weather radio, extra batteries and cell-phone power packs.

## BUY A GENERATOR

Your best defense against a power outage is investing in a fuel-powered generator to act as a substitute for a home's electrical source. With this machine, you can connect numerous appliances and withstand the emergency with little inconvenience.

However, using this unique

device requires the utmost safety considerations. Here are a few, as recommended by the National Fire Protection Association.

- Generators should be used outdoors, at least five feet away from all doors, windows and vent openings
- Install carbon monoxide alarms inside the home before equipping a generator.
- Never refuel the machine while it is hot and only store extra fuel in a container that is intended for this purpose.

If you face a power outage without a generator's assis-

tance, make sure to visit public refuge during extreme hot or cold weather conditions.

## PRESERVE FOOD

Once a power outage occurs, you should have a plan in place to preserve the refrigerated and frozen foods in your home. Consider keeping a few extra coolers on hand and locate ice sources in your community. If you're unable to cool the items in a reasonable time after an outage, meats and cheeses may be unsafe to consume. When in doubt, throw it out.

# Emergency Planning Tips

Life is full of unexpected challenges, but planning for emergencies can provide priceless peace of mind that your family is ready for a disaster.

Preparing for realistic events gets you ahead of the curve. It may make a loss from a severe catastrophe less significant. Learn ways to strengthen your emergency prep plans by incorporating tips you may not have considered.

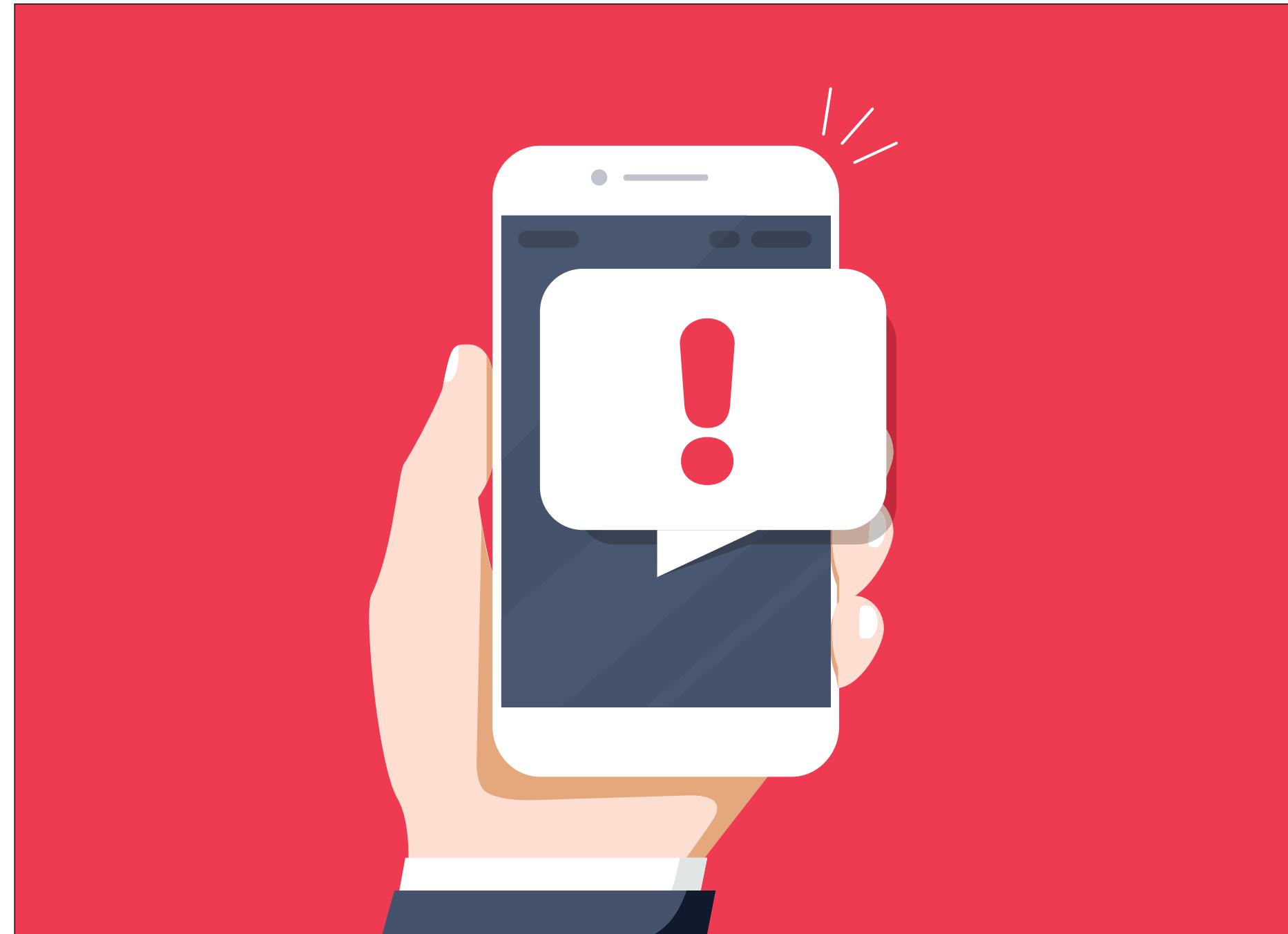
## SIGN UP FOR ALERTS

During your busy everyday life, it can be difficult to find time to watch the news about potential threats of severe weather or disasters in your area. Fortunately, officials can notify you with instant alerts when warnings are issued, if you have a smartphone.

Sign up for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's services like the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.

Wireless Emergency Alerts are a life-saving effort that local authorities use to contact residents. Since the system triggers mobile devices within the range of any cell phone towers in an affected area, you won't need to sign up.

However, you should ask your cellular service provider


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to ensure your phone is compatible with the alert system.

## ICE CARD

An ICE, or in case of emergency, card shares critical information about yourself and your health conditions. The document should display your name, sex, blood type, current prescriptions you take and whether you have any

allergies.

You should also list a few names and phone numbers to contact if you are found unconscious or unable to communicate. Make several laminated copies to carry on your person, in suitcases and the car.

## EMERGENCY BAG

While ideally, you will never

be rushed to leave your home during an evacuation, it's a great idea to keep a to-go bag on hand, just in case. Everyone in the household should have an individualized kit that meets their needs. Keep these bags in a location that is easily accessible so you can leave at a moment's notice.

Pack them with weather

radios, local maps, a cell phone charger, bottled water and non-perishable food. Work as a family to stock the bags and discuss the importance of emergency preparation.

This is an excellent time to review and adjust your communications plan regarding where you will meet if disaster strikes and you become separated.

# Thank an Emergency Responder

Responders who find themselves first on the scene in the face of emergencies and adversity deserve recognition for their passion.

As a citizen, you can show your appreciation by respecting their guidance during a disastrous event and thanking them for their life-saving directions. Being vocal about your gratitude can help lessen the extreme emotional stress they face during their regular workday.

Look at some of the occupations included in the emergency services sector, as compiled by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement officials are responsible for protecting residential communities, wildlife preservation and other notable jurisdictions. Sworn-in authorities are required to take an oath to support the United States constitution, their states and their dedicated agency.

Their role in emergency response is vast and includes:

- Protecting lives and property.
- Responding to calls for assistance.
- Discovering and documenting evidence.
- Ensuring drivers are following safe driving practices.



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In many cases, uniformed law enforcement officers are first on the scene to face stressful situations.

## FIRE AND RESCUE

Active firefighters must be on-call day or night and sometimes practically live at their station for periods of time.

Once an emergency call is

made, officials must quickly collect the gear and supplies needed to fight a blaze or manage a severe accident. Once on the scene, fire authorities are tasked with assessing the situation and delegating their team responsibilities. In some circumstances, they must follow rescue procedures to rescue trapped people or animals

from life-threatening events safely.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

EMS, or Emergency Medical Services, are easily identified as helicopters or ambulances responding to emergency incidents.

The workers who staff these vehicles are highly trained in

assessing medical crises and work to stabilize patients through on-site care or while transferring them to a hospital. Highly trained workers can be found operating at active emergency sites, trauma centers and specialty care facilities.

Their dedicated services directly impact the community's health and wellness and the people they promise to serve.

# Surviving a Heat Wave

While summer temperatures are notorious for inviting severe damaging storms, the season's accompanying extreme heat is actually the deadliest weather-related hazard in the United States.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 600 people die every year of heat-related causes. Unfortunately, the forecasts aren't getting cooler as high temperatures continue to break records annually since 2018.

The good news is that heat-related deaths and illnesses are preventable with proper planning. Here are some tips to consider before the summer arrives, as suggested by the CDC.

- Try to limit your outdoor activity to when it's coolest, like morning and evening hours.

- Stay in an air-conditioned building as much as possible. Ensure your systems are working correctly with routine maintenance and professional inspections.

- Drink plenty of fluids, regardless of how active you are. Don't forget your pets.

- Wear sunscreen with an


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SPF 15 or higher as it can help your body's ability to cool down.

Even while practicing conscientious measures to reduce the risk of a heat-related illness, it may still occur in yourself or a loved one. Learn about different sicknesses and how to spot an active case.

## HEATSTROKE

Heatstroke is the most severe illness associated with high temperatures. It typically occurs when the body becomes unable to control its

own temperature. Essentially, as the sweating mechanism loses its ability, body temperature can reach 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher in just 10-15 minutes. If the condition is not immediately treated, it can lead to death or permanent disability.

Some signs to look for include:

- Red, hot and dry skin without sweat.
- Rapid, strong pulse.
- Dizziness and nausea.
- Confusion or unconsciousness.

If you see someone suffer-

ing from the illness, try to get them to a shady area, cool them down, and monitor body temperatures until professional help arrives.

## HEAT EXHAUSTION

While not as deadly as a stroke, heat exhaustion can lead to a life-threatening condition. Those suffering from a precursor of heatstroke may experience fatigue, muscle cramps, low blood pressure upon standing or heavy sweating.

If a victim is unable to cool down through natural meth-

ods, medical care may be necessary.

## HEAT CRAMPS

Heat cramps are painful, involuntary muscle spasms that typically occur during heavy exercise in hot environments.

Addressing the situation immediately by taking a brief rest, drinking clear juice or a sports drink with electrolytes or massaging the affected area will usually cause the symptoms to pass. Consult a doctor if the cramps don't go away within about an hour.