

"In times like this, one of the things that Americans do is we pull together and we help out one another. And so, there may be elderly populations in your area. Check on your neighbor, check on your friend. Make sure that they are prepared. If we do, then we're going to get through this storm just fine."

President Barack Obama, [Remarks on Hurricane Sandy](#)¹

Get the Facts

- Between 1900 and 2014, the United States experienced 38 earthquakes, 568 storms, and 166 floods.²
- In 2012, the United States was struck by 936 tornadoes, causing about \$1.6 billion in damages.³
- In 2013, there were more than 440 weather-related fatalities and nearly 2,800 injuries.⁴

The Cost of Being Unprepared

- In 2013, deadly weather caused more than \$8 billion in property damage.⁵
- According to the Insurance Information Institute, an estimated 25 percent of all businesses affected by a major disaster never reopen.⁶
- Failing to prepare for extreme weather events has cost the United States \$1.15 trillion in economic losses from 1980 to 2010, and could cost another trillion in coming years.⁷
- Investments in weather preparation cost local governments significantly less than recovery. Preparedness strategies include flood proofing, flood evacuation plans, elevating buildings, purchasing insurance, and improving drainage codes, and floodplain standards.⁸

Real Solutions

Where do you stand when it comes to preparedness? Research shows that people are more prepared for a disaster if they:

- Are aware of community alerts and warning systems;
- Talk about their preparedness plan with family and others;
- Attend trainings and meetings; and
- Participate in a drill or exercise.

Increase Your Family's Protection

Based on the 2012 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Survey, 54 percent of the U.S. population do not believe their community will experience a natural disaster.⁹ Only 39 percent have a plan they have discussed with their family members, and almost 50 percent do not have supplies set aside in their home for use in a disaster. Unfortunately, a disaster will likely impact you at some point in your life, and when it does, you may only have seconds to respond. Your family, friends, and community are depending on you if a disaster happens. Are you ready to act?

You can be! As with any skill, practice makes perfect. Practicing preparedness actions is no exception. By learning the right actions and taking time to practice them, you, your family, and your community can be ready to respond.

Awareness to Action

The goal of America's PrepareAthon!SM is to enhance national preparedness by increasing the number of individuals who understand which disasters could happen in their community, know what to do to be safe and mitigate damage, take action to increase their preparedness, and participate in community resilience planning. Join millions of Americans in practicing the steps necessary to stay safe before, during, and after a disaster!

America's PrepareAthon! builds on the *Ready Campaign* and awareness campaigns by providing action-oriented guidance and tools that will help whole communities to increase preparedness for local hazards.

Plan to Participate

- Learn how to protect yourself from the types of disasters most likely to affect your community.
- Work with others in your community and plan a community day of action.
- Spread the word about America's PrepareAthon! within your community.
- Get information about your local disaster risks.
- Hold preparedness conversations with your community, family, friends, and colleagues.

Get Involved

To learn more about America's PrepareAthon!, visit us at www.ready.gov/prepare.

Twitter handle: @PrepareAthon

Email: PrepareAthon@fema.dhs.gov

¹ Washington Wire. (2012, October 28). Remarks by the president on Hurricane Sandy. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2012/10/28/comments-by-president-obama-on-hurricane-sandy-preparations>.

² Number of national disasters in the United States from 1900 to 2014 by type. (2014). Statista. Retrieved from www.statista.com/statistics/236504/number-of-natural-disasters-in-the-us-by-type.

³ Number of national disasters in the United States from 1900 to 2014 by type. (2014). Statista. Retrieved from www.statista.com/statistics/236504/number-of-natural-disasters-in-the-us-by-type.

⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2014, July 22). *Summary of natural hazard statistics for 2013 in the United States*. Retrieved from <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/hazstats/sum13.pdf>.

⁵ National Weather Service. (2014, July 22). *Summary of natural hazard statistics for 2013 in the United States*. Retrieved from <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/hazstats/sum13.pdf>.

⁶ Insurance Information Institute. (2013, October 3). *Insurance lessons learned from Sandy: Steps to keep your business running following a disaster*. Retrieved from www.iii.org/press_releases/insurance-lessons-learned-from-sandy-steps-to-keep-your-business-running-following-a-disaster.html

⁷ U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2014, February 12). Extreme weather events: The costs of not being prepared. Testimony before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Senate, 113th Cong.

⁸ Breitman, K. (2014, February 12). Failure to prepare for extreme weather costs billions. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/02/12/costs-unpreparedness-critical-weather-events/5417257/>.

⁹ Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2013). *Personal preparedness in America: Findings from the 2012 FEMA National Survey*. Retrieved from www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/83190.