

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready?

## Pruning a tree is a job best left for professionals

Bountiful, healthy trees can be beautiful to behold and important contributors to a thriving environment. According to American Forests, a nonprofit conservation organization, a tree can absorb as much as 40 pounds of carbon dioxide per year and can sequester one ton of carbon dioxide by the time the tree reaches age 40. The United States Forest Service adds that trees placed properly around a home can reduce air conditioning and heating demands considerably.

Many homeowners are content to leave healthy trees alone. However, trees eventually must be pruned or removed if they become safety risks or pose other threats. Trees with roots that are damaging home foundations or those with limbs overhanging property limits or power lines can be troublesome. Although homeowners can handle relatively minor tree maintenance, for a variety of reasons, many tree projects are best left to the professionals.

### Avoid injury

Professional tree contractors recognize and understand the hazards associated with tree and limb removal. Many oper-

ate in accordance with national or local guidelines to maintain proper clearance of power lines and structures.

Trimming trees close to electrical lines puts a person at risk of being electrocuted. Professionals know how to protect themselves and prevent power outages, which can result when limbs come into contact with power lines.

Professional tree services will use machinery appropriate for the task. Cherrypickers and cranes may lift workers to the correct height to work on trees, while do-it-yourselfers who rely on climbing trees or using ladders are at risk of injury.

### Prevent damage to the tree

Many tree services understand the proper way to prune trees to minimize stress and damage to the tree itself. Novice pruners may inadvertently do more harm than good, resulting in proliferation of tree disease or shock. Improper pruning technique also can lead to an unsightly tree.

### Liability

A professional tree service will possess the correct liability and worker's compensation

insurance. This protects homeowners against litigation should someone be injured while tree work is being done.

Homeowners who damage neighboring properties when cutting down a tree may find that they are not covered by their homeowner's insurance policies. This can be a costly mistake that's easily avoided by simply hiring a fully insured tree removal service.

### The right tools

The right tools can mean the difference between a job done correctly and one that results in disaster. Professional arborists and tree services have acquired the training, tools and techniques to perform the job safely. This includes using the right tools to tackle the job. Ropes, pulleys, cranes, stump grinders, and other heavy machinery are just a few of the tools tree services have at their disposal that the average homeowner does not.

Trimming or removing trees can be an unpredictable and potentially dangerous endeavor. Such work is best left to professionals.



## Hurricane Sandy highlights importance of storm preparedness

Hurricane Sandy, which blew through the northeastern United States in late October of 2012, left a path of destruction in its wake thanks to a record-breaking low pressure system and a tidal surge that caused many coastal areas to be submerged in water. The storm crippled transportation systems, caused epic flooding, even in areas that never had water breach storm walls before, knocked out power for millions of people and was responsible for scores of fatalities.

Although many people heeded the evacuation warnings in areas expected to be hit the hardest, others took precautions by stocking up on food, water and battery-powered items. But no one could fathom the scope of damage Sandy would bring. In the wake of Sandy's destruction, many people have resolved to go to greater lengths to prepare for future disasters. Those making plans for change in the new year may want to move disaster preparedness to the top of their to-do lists.

Record-breaking storms have increased in frequency and intensity in recent years. Hurricanes Katrina, Irene and Sandy are each glaring examples of just how devastating such storms can be, and how important it is to be prepared for such disasters. The following are a few preparation suggestions from FEMA, the

Federal Emergency Management Agency.

\* Pack an emergency "go bag." Individuals may be urged to evacuate their homes when certain storms are on the horizon. Doing so quickly and effectively means having packed items at the ready to grab at a moment's notice. Pack several changes of clothes, some cash, medications, identification, snacks and water, a first-aid kit and a list of important phone numbers.

\* Have an emergency preparedness kit. People who are not in the immediate danger zones and will be staying put can have a kit at home that includes the following items:

- \* one gallon of water for each person for three days
- \* nonperishable foods that your family has enjoyed before and will last at least three days
- \* baby wipes and garbage bags for personal sanitation
- \* plastic sheeting
- \* duct tape
- \* wrench or pliers
- \* whistle
- \* batteries and battery-operated flashlights and radios
- \* can opener
- \* cell phone with charger
- \* infant formula and diapers, if necessary
- \* matches in a waterproof container
- \* household bleach for sanitation
- \* paper and pencils

\* pet food

\* Develop a communication plan. Establish a communication plan so that family can be contacted and notified of your situation should you be separated from your home or if family members become separated from one another.

\* Don't forget entertainment. If power is lost for an extended period of time, many of the electronics that keep children and adults amused will be rendered useless. Have books, puzzles and manual toys available for entertainment.

\* Pack your prescription medications. Individuals who are on maintenance medications should be sure to refill or have doctors call in a refill to a pharmacy prior to the arrival of a storm.

\* Stock up on fuel. In the event of a power failure, fuel pumps do not work and gas shortages may occur. Fill your gas tank and have several gallons of gasoline available to run a generator if you have one.

\* Carry some cash. It is important to withdraw cash before a storm arrives. The ATM at your local bank may not operate, and the bank may be closed. Stores may not be able to accept credit or debit cards.

A disaster is something no one anticipates. But everyone can and should take measures to prepare for a disaster should one such as Hurricane Sandy occur.

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# PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.

South Lane Fire & Rescue • 233 Harrison Ave, Cottage Grove 541-942-4493 • 55 South 1st Street, Creswell 541-895-2506



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