

Are you ready?

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Disaster relief: Guidelines for giving

Disasters are defined as accidents or natural catastrophes that cause widespread damage or great loss of life. Disasters are often unpredictable and can occur anywhere around the world. When disasters happen, survivors are often in need of assistance.

Disaster relief support is charitable giving at its finest. But helping after a disaster requires both forethought and strategy so donors can rest easy knowing their donations are going to the right place.

Work with reputable organizations

If your first inclination is to provide financial support, do so by working with a reputable charitable organization that has a proven track record with disaster relief. Charities like Oxfam, the Red Cross and Direct Relief International organize relief efforts and are first on the scene when disaster strikes. These groups may be more trustworthy than groups without a track record of success regarding disaster relief. According to the Center for International Disaster Information, financial contributions allow professional

relief organizations to purchase what is most needed by disaster survivors, when it is needed. Also, cash donations allow relief supplies to be purchased near the disaster site, avoiding delays and steep transportation and logistical costs that can quickly eat up relief fund budgets.

Confirm the need before sending materials

Many people feel a desire to send material donations in addition to cash. Sometimes there are opportunities to do so, but do your homework before sending supplies, as some organizations ask that supplies not be sent.

If there is no need, unsolicited materials can cause supply delays, take up storage space and/or require additional funds to remove unnecessary items. Furthermore, the cost to ship material supplies (that may not be useful) can be expensive. Disaster relief organizations typically can secure the necessary supplies, which is why many organizations request only financial donations.

Get clearance before visiting disaster zones

Images of disaster zones can incite strong feelings that compel people to travel and help out in person. While that's a noble gesture, receive clearance before purchasing a plane ticket. The website HelpInDisaster.org can help people with specialized skills learn if there is a need for skilled workers or experts in a particular disaster zone. This ensures efforts can be sustained for as long as is necessary, and there will be no duplication of efforts. Working individually also may not be cost-effective, and you may compound the problem by causing more drain on an already jeopardized infrastructure.

Wait until media coverage has subsided

Many people rush to give in the first days following a disaster, only to have efforts trickle away as time passes and the limelight has stopped. Instead, wait out volunteering opportunities. You may find you are more effective afterward as rebuilding efforts begin anew.

Helping out after a disaster can be a fulfilling venture if timed correctly and done in the correct manner.



5 benefits of building an eco-friendly home

Environmentally friendly practices are trending everywhere — from our food to our clothing to our homes. Improved practices in the construction industry today reflect the greening of building codes across America, and can be seen in advancements in window daylighting, insulation, air infiltration, and new wall-building materials.

But if you want to reap all of the benefits of an eco-friendly home, choose methods and materials that are even more energy efficient than the minimum required by building codes. If you want to reduce your energy consumption, conserve more and increase your property value, be sure to choose a builder who has a demonstrable record in eco-responsibility.

"A huge step forward is to replace the traditional wood framing of your house with what we call ICFs — insulated concrete forms," recommends Keven Rector at Nudura, a leading name in this technology.

More than a win for the environment, an eco-conscious

home also offers the following surprising benefits to you and your family:

1. Maximum energy efficiency. With growing energy costs, building an insulated concrete form house is more energy efficient and can save you significant amounts of money on a yearly basis. Walls that reduce outdoor air infiltration greatly optimize energy performance.

2. Safety from natural disasters. "Our advanced design combines two panels of thick (EPS) foam with the structural strength and thermal mass of concrete," Rector explains. "The resulting envelope immediately gives your house hurricane wind-resistance up to 250 miles per hour." A home built with this concrete system is also fire resistant for up to four hours.

3. Less outside noise. If you have noisy neighbors or live near trains or high-traffic areas, this one's for you — ICF construction acts as an effective sound barrier, dampening sound vibrations and filtering out unwanted noise.

4. A more comfortable space. Outside cold can easily travel through a typical wood-framed wall, causing thermal bridging and creating uncomfortable cold spots inside your home. If you build the envelope of your house with concrete instead of wood, you can say goodbye to cold spots, drafts and even mold.

5. A faster building time. All new homeowners can't wait to get into their new house, but construction delays often postpone move-in dates. But ICF construction takes up less shipping space and require less manpower at the site, and the assembly is faster than wood framing. Time-strapped builders and eager homeowners benefit equally from this efficiency, taking you to that new-house smell that much sooner.

If you want your builder to use ICFs, be sure to discuss it early in the plans. Find more information online at nudura.com.



Organization leading responder in disaster areas

Mother Nature can be fickle and hard to predict. This is evidenced by the number of natural disasters that have taken place in the last several years.

People need only recall the tornado outbreak of April 2011, Superstorm Sandy of October 2012 or the Colorado Wildfires of June 2012 to see what a terrible toll natural disasters can take on an area. The American Red Cross is routinely one of the first organizations to arrive to help the injured, homeless and emotionally scarred in a time of devastation.

Each year the American Red Cross responds to roughly 70,000 natural and man-made disasters across the United States. These include, but are not limited to, transportation accidents, explosions, earthquakes, floods, and hazardous material spills.

The assistance the Red Cross

provides is varied. The organization may provide blood products to disaster victims, and volunteers may help individuals get in touch with insurance representatives or other aid workers to gain access to available resources. Not only does it provide materials such as food, clothing and toiletries to the people directly affected by a disaster, but the Red Cross also will feed emergency workers who are at disaster sites around the clock. Because of its strong commitment to the United States military, the Red Cross will also provide communication conduits to connect family members facing an emergency or disaster with their relatives in the military. Its also helps support wounded warriors and military hospitals.

According to their mission statement, the American Red Cross prevents and alleviates

human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. The organization was founded in 1881 by nurse Clara Barton and a few of her friends. Barton had heard of the global Red Cross network in Europe while traveling, and after returning home, she campaigned for an American version.

Barton remained at the helm of the Red Cross for 23 years, providing aid to both Americans as well as those affected by disasters overseas. Through the years the American Red Cross has been instrumental in helping with first aid, water safety and public health nursing programs. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the organization also assisted victims of the Mississippi River flooding and those impacted by the Great Depression. After World War

II, the American Red Cross introduced the first nationwide civilian blood program that now supplies more than 40 percent of the blood and blood products in this country.

In addition to working alone, the Red Cross teams up with FEMA and other aid organizations to go where assistance is needed.

Individuals interested in taking life-saving classes can also utilize the Red Cross for instruction. Each year more than 9 million people gain the skills they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies through American Red Cross training.

The efforts of the Red Cross are funded by donations and the volunteer work of an army of dedicated people. Learn more about the American Red Cross and how to donate by visiting www.redcross.org.



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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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