

Are you prepared for Action



Are you prepared for action?

You just don't know when a natural disaster or crisis is about to occur, so as our motto states 'Be Prepared'. As Scouts we should be prepared for action and ready to assist our communities in times of crisis.

Certain times of the year are more prone to weather than others, but there are many other situations that can create a situation within your community...power cuts, major community events, traffic accidents, sickness, housing, fires, lost children or missing persons...the nature of life is such that incidents of all kinds can happen without warning.

'But that was only a once in a lifetime event'

Yes, it is easy to dismiss a bad weather situation, and claim that it will never happen again, but unfortunately they do. It would be very easy in any emergency to stay at home in the warmth of our houses and claim that 'we are only Scouts, what can we do'...but is that attitude not letting down the idea and notion of Scouts who are prepared, have vital survival, leadership and responsibility skills. After all we train our Scouts to deal with situations and emergencies, we tell them to 'Be Prepared' and then when emergencies occur we do NOTHING.





Let's look at one or two situations

Power Failure – leaving old people without light, heat or cooking facilities

Water shortage – mid-summer or frozen or burst pipes, leaving people without water.

Evaluation of housing estate due to gas leak

Road or rail crash – with shocked survivors needing shelter or hot drinks

Flooding – people left homeless and needing assistance to mop up their homes

Fire in someone's kitchen – families cooking facilities knocked out of action

Icy conditions – making roads and paths impassable – especially for old folk

Storm conditions – clearing up fallen trees and debris

In any of these emergencies arose in your area would your Group be prepared for action.

Would you know what to do?

We can do it

We can assist in many different ways.

We have many skills and resources at our disposal.

We have experience in organising people

We have locally based Groups with assistance nearby from other Groups in the county.

We have facilities and equipment

We can help in many different ways and we must be ready for action, we have already promised to '...to help my neighbour at all times...'

Emergency Action Plan

To be prepared for any situation, each Group and Section should have an 'Emergency Action Plan'. The essence of such a plan is that the Group or Section can respond quickly (and does respond quickly) within its own limitations to an emergency.

Personnel

Who do we have? – membership and capability
Who can do what – skills and expertise
How can we call and contact everyone at short notice
Who will be the key people to coordinate the plan within the Group

Buildings

Do we own or have the use of a scout hall/den
Do we have easy access – fast!!

Equipment

Is our equipment easily accessible
Is it in good repair and ready to use
What equipment do we own
Is our equipment suitably marked and insured
What equipment can we borrow
What basic equipment do Scouts have available – rope, first aid, shoves

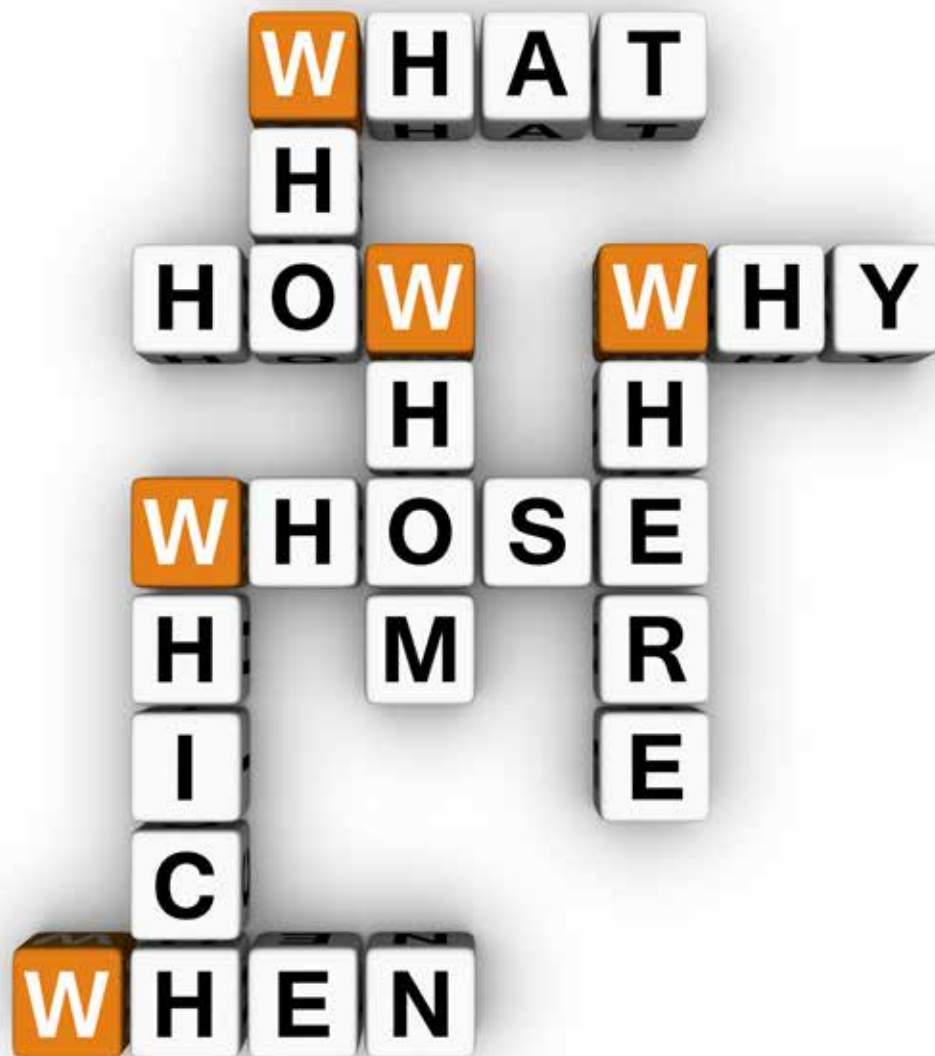
State (or existing voluntary services)

Who do we contact to inform them that we are ready and prepared for action
Who will be our contact in case we are needed....local Gardai perhaps
Can our members be trained to assist in emergencies (civil defence, first aid, mountain rescue, county council)

Practice

How can we organise a practice?
Who will need our help? – likely situation that may arise
How fast can we get into action?
Do our members know what to do?





Action Plan – Personnel

Who do we have

Every Group should have an up to date list or directory of all its members. This should contain name, address, phone, email etc. the section and team (Lodge, Six, Patrol, Unit, Crew) they are a member of. Every adult, Rover, Venture and Patrol leader should be listed separately as they will be involved in the action plan. These will be your FIRST LINE people – they will be the first to be called out. The second line should be the members of the Scout Troop before we involve younger members.

Who can do what?

In your list mark those who have special skills – e.g. first aid, good cooks, tradesmen, mountaineers, good with ropes, mapping etc.

Of course in any emergency situation there will be many jobs that need to be done that do not require specialist skills – filling sandbags, helping people, calling on people to see if they are safe, cooking and preparing food, providing information etc.

How can we call out the group?

For the purpose of a call out a 'chain' system must be devised

All the 'first line' group are listed in the chain, depending on where they live. Each person in the chain contacts the next by phone, or by calling to their house. Each person has a copy of the chain list in case the next person is not contactable – to stop the chain from breaking down.

In a large Group – e.g. with more than 10 people in the 'first line', two or three chains are devised.

In the second line i.e. the Scout Troop, each Patrol should be a chain.

In creating a call out chain you cannot rely on a simple text message...it requires a person contact and commitment, a phone call person to person or direct 'call to their house' interaction.

Who can coordinate?

At least two people must be responsible for coordinating the Group Action Plan – to save time in a calling out of people.

Action plan Practice

No plan is of any use until it is tried and tested. So as part of the Section programmes this can be practiced and tested.

Operation Call out!!

At a meeting mid-week, it is announced that there will be a special activity on the forthcoming Friday night. Reference is made during the meeting to Scouting's role in emergencies.

A special meeting of key members (Sixers, Patrol Leaders, venture exec etc) is decided on a callout procedure for each team or for the Group.

Callout!

At 7.30pm the callout chain is put into action. People at the head of the chain 'first line' are given the message.

"All Scouts are needed at the Scout Den by 8.30pm at the latest. Bring neckerchief, warm and waterproof gear. A torch and a fluorescent armband, sash or jacket, sleeping bag, personal length of rope and first aid kit. Pass this message on to the next person in the chain. This is an exercise to test the emergency action plan"

Prior to this callout parents should be contacted discreetly to let them know that everything is okay and that this is only a training exercise.

Briefing

Now that everyone has arrived at the Scout den a briefing session starts. Everyone is told that:

This is only an exercise

In the case of a real emergency, the group may be needed to assist.

As Scouts we will never replace the proper emergency services, but we may be able to support them in many ways.

Tonight we are going to do the following exercise which will help the Group become more prepared for emergencies.

The exercise

The Troop/Group is shown a large map of the area and are briefed on what is expected of them. They are asked to list what kinds of emergencies could arise in the area. The group will then break up into teams(patrols).

Each Patrol will take a different area of the town/parish, and answer the following questions:-

In the case of a variety of emergencies, which area or place would be worst hit?

How many old people live in the area? How would they be affected by the emergency?

How could the Group best use its resources in case of these emergencies?

When each Patrol returns all the information is plotted onto the community map and key points or locations are identified. Then the Scouts can discuss how they could respond and what they can do.

Further training and being prepared

Arising from the initial call out training session and the discussions that follow a number of actions will be identified. This will lead on to actions and additional training that can be included in the section programmes.

Being prepared is a constant situation so training and practice will become commonplace in your Group programme.



We live in a world that's unpredictable

Without warning, we may have to make quick decisions that impact the health and safety of our loved ones.

It's easy to assume that we'll be able to gather what we need when something unexpected happens. But few of us really know what will make the difference. Imagine that your neighbourhood begins to flood in the middle of the night. You may have to leave quickly or wait until local authorities tell you where and when it's safe to go. In either situation, you want to be able to take care of your family for at least 72 hours... while emergency workers help those in urgent need. Having a well-stocked, portable, and easy-to-find emergency kit will help you make sure that you have the basic supplies to keep you and your family safe, no matter where you are.

What goes into that kit.

In an emergency, basic services we use everyday may not work. For example, your water, electricity, gas and telephone service may not work and it may be impossible to access cash from a bank. When these services are not available, an emergency kit can provide the basic necessities. For example, we all need water. The rule of thumb is two litres, per person, per day – for 72 hours, or three days. It's a good idea to use small bottles that can be carried easily. Of course, we also need food. Because your kit needs to be ready at all times, use food that won't spoil, like canned goods, energy bars or dried food that can be stored longer. (And remember a manual can opener to open those cans.)

So now your kit has a good start: food and water. What else? Well, it's dark and there's no electricity. A flashlight and radio will be handy to show you where you're going and help you stay informed. These both need power, so pack extra batteries. Or even better, buy the type that can be powered manually with a crank. An emergency kit wouldn't be complete without a first-aid kit with the basics like bandages, antiseptics and pain relievers.

With these items, food and water, flashlight and radio, and a first-aid kit, we've covered the basics. But there are some items that may not be so



obvious. For example, it may be very difficult to get prescription medications in an emergency including medication in the kit will help. While you're thinking about medical needs, consider what equipment may be needed to accommodate family members with special needs. (old people, inhalers, diabetics, wheel chair users)

Lastly, keeping important documents like copies of birth certificates, wills, passports and insurance policies in your kit or secure location with easy access can make it easier to stay organized during an emergency.

We all hope that emergencies don't occur and your kit goes unused. But that's no reason not to be prepared.

Having an emergency kit is an easy way to have more peace of mind in an unpredictable world.

Make a plan

Every Scouts family and members of your community should make an emergency plan. It will help everyone to understand and know what to do in case of an emergency.

Your family may not be together when an emergency occurs. Plan how to meet or how to contact one another, and discuss what you would do in different situations.

- To fill out your home emergency plan, you will need to think about the following:
- Safe exits from home and neighbourhood
- Meeting places to reunite with family or roommates
- Designated person to pick up smaller children from school
- Contact persons close-by and out-of-town
- Special health needs
- Place for your pet to stay
- Risks in your area - flooding, factories, transport services
- Location of your fire extinguisher, water valve, electrical box, gas valve and water drains



Every household should be ready

In an emergency everybody will need some basic supplies. You may need to get by without power or tap water. Be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours. Make sure your kit is easy to carry and everyone in the household knows where it is. Keep it in a small backpack, in an easy-to-reach, accessible place.

Basic emergency kit

- Water – at least two litres of water per person per day. Include small bottles that can be carried easily in case of an evacuation order
- Food that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods.
- Manual can opener
- Wind-up or battery-powered flashlight (and extra batteries)
- Wind-up or battery-powered radio (and extra batteries)
- First aid kit
- Extra keys to your car and house
- Some cash,
- A copy of your emergency plan and contact information
- Special items such as prescription medication, equipment for people with disabilities or food.



Recommended additional items

- Two additional litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning
- Candles and matches or lighter (place candles in sturdy containers and do not burn unattended)
- Change of clothing and footwear
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket
- Toiletries Hand sanitizer
- Utensils Garbage bags Toilet paper Household chlorine bleach or water purifying tablets
- Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, work gloves, dust mask, pocket knife) Small fuel operated stove and fuel (follow manufacturer's directions and store properly)
- A whistle (in case you need to attract attention) Duct tape (to tape up windows, doors, air vents, etc.)