

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MERIT BADGE

with Mr. Ritzinger

**December 8, 2020: Requirement 2a, and discussion of Requirement 2b and 2c for homework**

**Requirement 2a:** We will be discussing the Five Aspects of Emergency Preparedness. Please try to read the information on the next few pages prior to our online meeting so you can actively participate in our discussion.

**Requirement 2b:** We will discuss how to do this using the following example format. You will complete the requirement as homework for our Dec. 15 meeting.

EMERGENCY SITUATION	PROTECT	RESPOND	RECOVER	PREVENT	MITIGATE
Fire in the home					
Tornado					
Car accident					

**Requirement 2c:** We will discuss emergency kits and emergency planning for specific situations. You will complete this requirement for a future meeting TBD.

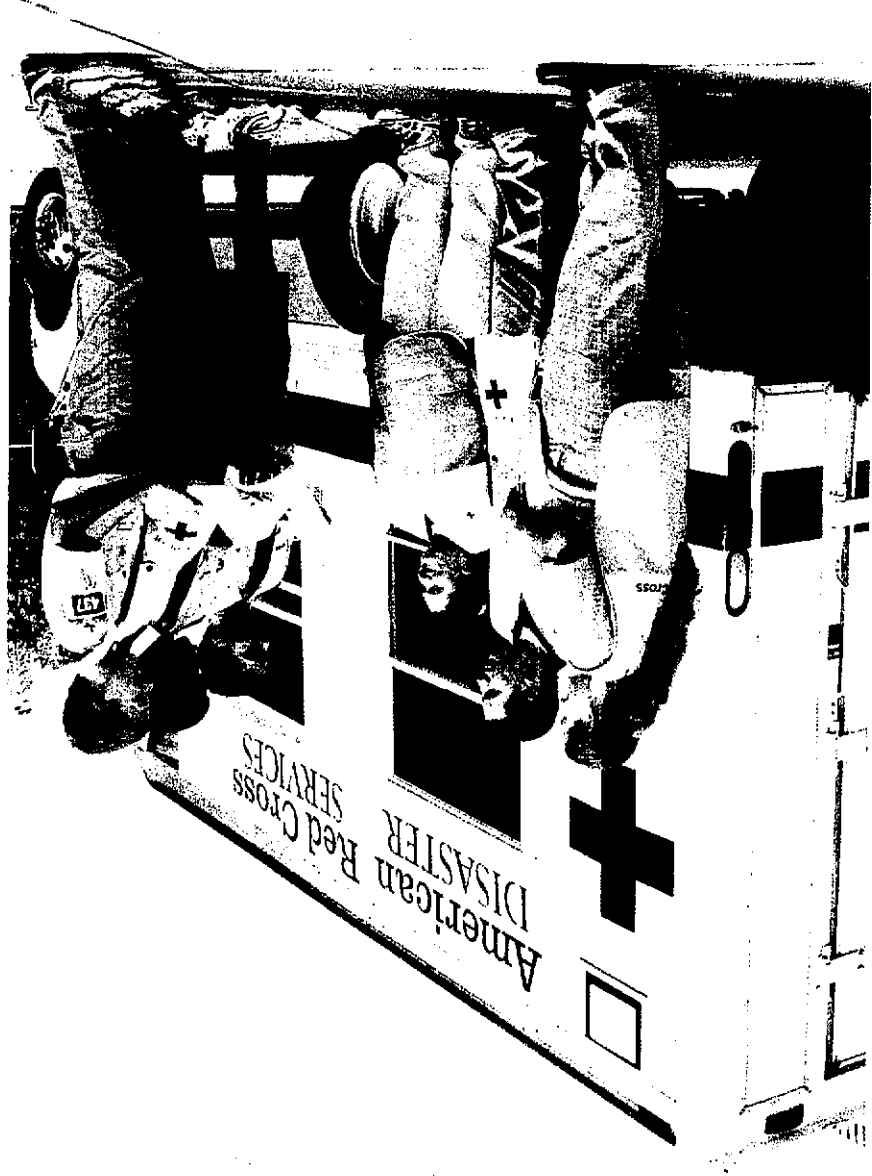
# Protect, Respond, Recover, Prevent, and Mitigate

In many ways, the world you live in today is much safer than the world in which your parents and grandparents grew up. For instance, medical advances today give us better protection from some diseases that were devastating in the past, such as smallpox. Weather forecasting technology allows for more accurate predictions and better planning for inclement weather.

Many institutions help us to be safer and deal with emergencies, too. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration helps ensure safe and healthful workplaces for employees in the United States. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has the mission of helping citizens plan for and respond to disasters and emergencies of all kinds. The American Red Cross works around the world to help people in need.

But it is not enough to rely on medicine, technology, institutions, or the actions of others to keep us prepared and safe. Look carefully at your home and your community, and educate yourself about potential dangers. As you work on requirements for the Emergency Preparedness merit badge, pay close attention to four things: protection, response, recovery, and prevention and mitigation.

Being prepared *does not* mean taking risk needlessly. In situations where a Scout lacks the necessary skill or knowledge for a task due to lack of training or experience, or if proper equipment is unavailable, the Scout has an obligation to advise the supervisor on-site of the unsafe situation and to propose alternative solutions.



## The Five Aspects of Emergency Preparedness

It is important to be prepared to offer assistance in an emergency situation. However, be aware that you may never need to use your training and skills.

Emergency personnel, such as Red Cross and FEMA workers, use many of the same terms when talking about emergency management. That is just one reason it is a good idea to become familiar with such terms: if you find yourself working with emergency personnel, you will understand what your actions are helping to accomplish.

**1. Protection.** When you take actions to develop a strategy for emergency response, you recognize the possible threats from natural, man-made, and other disasters. Making a plan and practicing it, assembling an emergency or disaster supplies kit, and installing warning devices are all actions you can take to prepare for an emergency.

**2. Response.** In this phase of emergency management, you may be called upon to help with shelter, first aid, and other activities. On a personal level, your response to an emergency can take many forms, such as evacuating an area. Your response can help reduce the occurrence of secondary damage.

**3. Recovery.** After a disaster or other emergency, the goal is to try to get things back to "normal." In addition to rebuilding and repairing property, there is also work to be done to try to bring physical and emotional health back to a stable condition.

**4. Prevention.** By planning ahead and taking prevention seriously, you can help prevent accidents from happening.

**5. Mitigation.** You can help reduce the loss of life and property by lessening the impact of future disasters. That means taking action before the next disaster.



FEMA uses a "whole community" approach for handling emergency situations. This calls for the private and non-profit sectors, the general public, and faith-based and other organizations to be fully engaged with their local, tribal, state, territorial, and federal government partners.

Let's say you live in an area that has a high tornado risk. You can **protect** yourself and your family by recognizing that a tornado emergency could happen and making a plan in case of that emergency. You can **respond** by knowing what actions you will take ahead of time. You may have to **recover** from a tornado that damages your home. Services and resources can be obtained from the Red Cross or other providers. But all along the way, you can take actions to help **prevent** additional injuries and accidents, and **mitigate**, or lessen, the impact on your family. For instance, watching the news and being familiar with the tornado sirens that sound in your area could give you more time to respond. Taking shelter away from windows in a basement or interior room of the house could lessen your chances of being hit by flying objects. Even after a tornado, as you help with rebuilding efforts, wearing a sturdy pair of work gloves can help keep you from getting cuts and infections from handling debris.

Likewise, household fires can be prevented by careful attention to potential sources: People can clear debris from around a furnace, not overload electrical circuits, and be attentive when using candles or fireplaces. If a fire does break out, smoke alarms and a preplanned escape route will help mitigate the situation. In other words, the emergency is less severe if everyone gets out of the house alive. In public buildings such as schools, automatic sprinkler systems can mitigate a fire by keeping it from spreading throughout the building.



A careful driver who follows traffic laws and avoids distractions such as cell phone use or texting is less likely to have an accident. Such a driver is taking preventative actions. However, even the best driver may not be able to respond quickly enough to prevent a collision caused by another driver losing control of their car. In that case, prior decisions to wear safety belts and to use appropriate restraints for infants and small children will help mitigate the emergency; that is, they will reduce or lessen the chance of serious injury.

## Questions for Emergency Preparedness

Here are the kinds of questions you may ask yourself as you look around.

1. Questions that will help you **protect against** a risky situation or possibility of an emergency or accident occurring.
  - Have I prepared a *disaster supplies kit* with supplies that will last for at least three days? Is the kit packed and stored in an easy-to-access area?
  - Have I made an *emergency plan* with family members in case of a disaster? Have I planned the quickest escape routes from my home and evacuation routes from my neighborhood? Does my family have a meeting place outside our home in case of a fire and another place out-side the neighborhood in case we cannot return home? Do we have an out-of-town contact person to call with information about our safety and location in case local lines are jammed?
  - Do I know the *safe places* to go within my home in case my family and I need shelter during extreme weather events such as a tornado? Have I posted emergency numbers near our home telephone where they can easily be found?
  - Do I know how to *be informed* in case of an emergency? Do I know how local authorities might contact me in the event of a disaster, such as using warning sirens to sound an alert? Do I know which radio and television stations broadcast emergency warning information?
  - Do I know *which hazards* are most likely to happen in my community? Do I live in an area that may experience dangerous weather (heat waves, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzard conditions)? During what time of year?
2. Questions that will help you **respond** to an emergency situation in the best way you can.
  - How can I plan *before* a crisis? Do I know what actions to take for a potential emergency? Have I gathered and positioned supplies and contact numbers that might be needed? Can I help educate and train people about safety and preparedness? Do I know which neighbors may need help?



Some emergency

responders

specialize in

emotional first aid

so they are able

to treat a survivor

immediately

following a

traumatic event.

- How can I react *after* a crisis? Is there a family or community plan for reaction that I should know about? What resources might be mobilized and needed, and how can I help?

3. Questions that will help you and your family to **recover** from a dangerous situation or emergency.

- After a disaster, how can I help clean up the damage? Do I have the skills and tools to help repair and rebuild my home and my community?

- How can I help myself and my family recover emotionally from the disaster?

- Do I understand that physical recovery and emotional recovery take time?

4. Questions that will help **prevent** a dangerous situation or emergency whenever possible.

- What can I do to make my home safer from fire or explosions?

- How do I check for household hazards?

- What can I do to be proactive in preparing my family for weather-related emergencies typical for my local area (such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and snowstorms)?

5. Questions that will help you **mitigate, or reduce, loss in** an emergency situation.

- How can I help minimize, or lessen, the damage that might be caused during an emergency (during violent weather, for instance)?

- Can I help make sure that no one would be injured during an emergency?

- Can I help make sure that people are acting in a safe manner during an emergency or dangerous situation, such as when I am hiking with my troop in the wilderness?



Understand how smoke detectors work. Make sure to change their batteries regularly, such as during a springtime holiday and again during a fall holiday.