What To Do After A Disaster

Disasters strike in many forms. High winds, tornadoes, earthquakes, and floods are just a few. Many of the things that occur during a disaster are commonly found after most disasters. If an event occurs:

1. **Locate All Family Members and Administer First Aid** as needed to stabilize the victim(s), then seek help.

2. **Shut Off All Utilities, Including Gas, Water, and Electricity.** Damaged gas pipes, wall switches, or outlets could cause a fire or explosion. Only use a flashlight and never any device with a flame so as to not ignite gas, dust, or debris. Make mental notes of damage while carefully moving about. Only use tools that will not produce sparks when turning off gas. We recommend the On-Duty 4-in-1 Tool (ASIN: B000NYDEPQ)

3. **Be Careful to Not Come Into Contact with Hazardous Debris or Downed Or Exposed Power Lines.** Beware of exposed nails, broken glass, weakened walls and floors about to collapse, and any number of other hazards that could injure you or family members. These hazards may be inside or outside of your home so be careful.

4. **Stay Alert In the Evolving Situation.** Severe weather is often followed up by more severe weather. If the disaster was an earthquake there may yet be very strong aftershocks. Use your emergency radio for up to date information.

5. **Mitigate Damage to the Roof and Walls with Tarps As Soon As It Is Safe To Do So** to avoid issues with insurance not paying for damage to your home or other property. Insurance may not pay claims if you do not mitigate damage. Check that your neighbors are okay and help them perform the first five steps as you safely can.

6. **Move to a More Secure Location.** Community shelters, and family rally points should be determined before an emergency occurs. This allows family members who were not home to meet you without further communication. Be careful of down power lines, toppled power poles, and roads blocked by debris. In the case of earthquake road beds and bridges may become weak or damaged.

7. **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!** A disaster will likely also take down phone lines. Cell phones rely on towers with repeaters, and these may also be damaged by strong winds, tornadoes, and earthquakes. Just as cell phones use repeaters, so too are a lot of Amateur Radio communications performed through repeaters. Amateur Radios can also communicate directly to other radios. The 2 Meter Band can transmit over hills and mountains and carry for longer distances. Find or establish a set frequency with other licensed HAM radio operators in advance. Other HAMS will relay information as needed. **Local Simplex Freq:**

   A. Use whatever means is at your disposal to **contact 911** if emergency medical or other help is needed.

   B. Call your utility companies and let them know of the damage. Ask them to call you back on your cell phone when outages are repaired or the area is safe to reenter.

   
   Gas Company #_____________ Electric Company #_____________ Water #_____________

   C. Call your insurance company to report damage claims on your home owners or renters policies. Have your agent's number handy. As they may not be available, have the company’s 800 number and your policy number also available.

   Agent's Number:_____________ After Hours:_____________ Policy #:_____________

8. **Clean Up Only What You Safely Can.** Perform detailed inspections, and clean up only once safe to return. Only use local businesses with a good BBB record to clean up and rebuild to avoid the scam artists. **Confirm that contractors are licensed, bonded, and insured before signing any contract by calling:** (423) 643-5800

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