

SURVIVING DISASTER:

HOW TEXANS PREPARE



DOCUMENTARY
TOOLKIT

FOR INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



TEXASPREPARES.ORG

Show This DVD to Others — You Could Save Lives.

Natural disasters happen in Texas, yet many residents haven't prepared for such an emergency. Research shows that many in Texas do not believe it would ever happen to them — but it does. From hurricanes to tornadoes to wildfires, disasters devastate Texas communities. The short videos on this DVD feature people who have been affected by a disaster. You can use their stories to help yourself and others become better prepared.

Show this DVD at a local event — a city council meeting, a church gathering, or an event you organize — to save lives and help protect your community.

Show This DVD to Others — Help Build a Prepared Community.

Please take 45 minutes to watch the DVD and think about who would benefit from viewing these videos. Commit to holding your own screening. Whether the screening is big or small, you can help to create more awareness and inspire action. A “How-To” guide and discussion questions to use after the screening are included in this booklet.

A video screening can motivate community members to:

- Evaluate whether they are properly prepared for an emergency
- Look at the community's preparedness status and needs
- Identify opportunities for improvement in emergency planning
- Create local initiatives for these opportunities

Design Your Screening: Three Key Elements

- 1. WHO:** Identify key influencers and interested members of the public.
 - Examples of key influencers and organizations:
 - Chambers of commerce, city planners, health-related coalitions, volunteer associations, business organizations and their leaders
 - Mayor, city council, legislators
 - Nonprofit organizations, foundations, hospital administrators
 - Faith-based organizations, community centers
 - News media
- 2. WHERE:** Use an existing event's venue or create your own event.
 - Existing event: Take advantage of existing gatherings, such as city council, emergency response personnel, church leadership, or neighborhood meetings. These events have a set venue and may be able to do the promotion for you. Here are the steps:
 - Identify appropriate gatherings through your community calendars.
 - Request a spot on the agenda or schedule to show the videos.
 - Once confirmed, request approximate attendance and room size.
 - Coordinate audio/visual capabilities in advance.
 - New event: Hosting a screening allows you the freedom to create an event. It can be large or intimate, and you can determine the invite list and schedule. To host a screening, you will need:

- A venue. Possible venues include:
 - Meeting room at library, church, community center, or local business
 - School auditorium, live theater space, movie theater, or sports center
 - Private home
 - Outdoors: projected onto side of building or other smooth surface at park

- Venue checklist, as follows:
 - Venue size: Large enough to hold all those invited
 - Chairs/furniture
 - Audio/visual requirements: TV, DVD player, electricity
 - Agenda with time limits
 - Optional: microphone and sound system for discussion after screening

3. HOW: Provide a call to action and facilitate discussion.

- Use the promotional tools available to encourage attendance. A promotional flyer, e-mail invitation, and emergency preparedness checklist for the audience are all available on the DVD in the “Extras” folder or available online to download at TexasPrepares.org.

- Once you’ve shown the videos, use the Discussion Guide. It includes simple questions to provoke thought and motivate people in attendance to take additional steps toward preparing for emergencies. You don’t have to ask all of the questions, just ask those that are relevant to your community.

- DVD distribution: If you received additional DVDs, distribute them to key influencers in your audience who are motivated to help their community become better prepared and to host additional screenings. Visit TexasPrepares.org to order extra DVDs.

Once you've secured a venue and consulted the venue checklist, you're ready to start. On the day of the screening, arrive early to set up the DVD and make sure audio/visual equipment is working properly. Greet attendees as they come in, and let them know that what they're doing is important. Once everyone has arrived, introduce yourself and the videos, and give attendees a sense of what they will be watching, how long it will take, and what kind of discussion you'd like to have afterward. If you've recruited special guests such as emergency management officials to introduce and become part of the Q & A, make sure you've told them the order of events and provided a place for them up front to sit or stand.

After viewing selections from the DVD, if there's time, ask attendees to introduce themselves and describe their community role. Then use any of the following questions to help guide the discussion among the group. Encourage all viewers to apply the situations portrayed in the videos to their own communities and personal lives, and use the follow-up questions below to move the discussion along. You can use phrases such as "Tell us more about that" to explore a topic more fully, or "What does everyone else think of that?" to include more people in the discussion. Politely control the discussion. Try to include as many people as possible in the discussion, and do not let one person dominate the discussion.

If your group does not have time for extended discussion, please consider presenting a quick exercise to help attendees assess the status of their important documents. In your “Extras” folder on the Surviving Disaster: How Texans Prepare DVD or at TexasPrepares.org, access the “Emergency Document Bag Exercise,” print copies for your audience, and ask them to take a few minutes to fill out the easy-to-follow worksheet. This exercise alone can quickly move many individuals and families to take serious stock of their preparedness level.

Discussion Questions:

A Community Rebuilds: Recovering from Wildfires

- Gary says he was 99 percent prepared, but that last 1 percent cost him greatly. Are there things that you know you should do to get prepared, but haven’t yet done? What specific actions will you take after seeing the video?
- Tommy, the fire chief, says, “At 10 this morning we were a community; at 10 tonight, we were a family.” What can we do to prepare as individuals and families to help our community respond more helpfully or efficiently?
- Natural disasters often take down utilities. Are we personally, or is our community, prepared for a loss of utilities? Does anyone have a personal plan for power or utility loss? How can those of us who aren’t prepared get prepared, especially if we have medical needs that require electricity? What will we do if cell phone service is out?

- Four people died in the Montague County fires because they didn't evacuate. If a disaster happened quickly, do you have a plan to evacuate if ordered? What are some of the things that stop us from evacuating? What actions will we take ahead of time so those barriers don't hold us back?
- Gary lost all of his important documents in the wildfires — even the safe in his basement burned. What steps will you take to protect documents like passports, insurance policies, and prescriptions?
- Montague county residents are now taking precautions to prepare for another fire, including keeping their grass and trees trimmed and plowing around the perimeter of their properties. What kinds of precautions can we take here, both in our homes and in the broader community, to prepare for a sudden disaster?

Surviving Hurricanes: Grab It and Go

- We saw Bruce Clements say that evacuation is “the most fundamental measure people can take to save their lives,” and yet many people are not prepared or willing to do so. What would it take to motivate you, your family, and your friends to evacuate if it were necessary? Does your family have an evacuation plan? What do we need to do to convince others how important an evacuation plan is to saving their lives?
- Paul and Donna were prepared to evacuate when Hurricane Ike hit. It ultimately saved their lives when their house was destroyed. What will you do to prepare for evacuation after seeing the video? What steps can you take to reduce the potential impact of losing your home?

- The video stresses the importance of having a “grab and go kit” ready for when disaster strikes, and it showed one community’s creative way of enabling people to create those bags in a fun, educational environment at the G.R.A.C.E Community Services Preparedness Festival. Does each of us have a grab and go kit? What is in it? What creative ways can we use to encourage other community members to make them?
- The G.R.A.C.E Community Services Preparedness Festival included a children’s program to engage kids early in learning about hurricanes and making “grab and go kits” to prepare for evacuation. Why is teaching kids about preparing for disasters so important? How will we engage our children in learning how to prepare?
- The emotional and psychological trauma of a disaster can take much longer to recover from than the physical damage. The Bolivar Peninsula community used mosaic-making to help residents access their feelings about the disaster. What are some other methods we could use to help each other heal emotionally after a disaster, and what can we do to incorporate these methods into a personal or community action plan?
- What is keeping each of us from preparing fully for a disaster? What steps can we take now to overcome those barriers or challenges?
- (For inland communities) How might hurricanes affect our community, even though we are not directly on the coast? In what ways should our preparation be different from that of coastal residents?

Back to Business: Planning for Disaster

- Rick Bays describes how hurricanes can affect the whole state — after Rita, utilities were down all the way to Tyler. Even if a natural disaster didn't hit us directly, would we be prepared for a citywide electricity outage? How would that affect our day-to-day needs? What steps have you taken to prepare for that possibility?
- Munro's Dry Cleaning learned during Hurricane Rita how important it is to prepare for disasters, and it withstood Hurricane Ike much more effectively. What kinds of procedures did the business implement to prepare for future disasters? Does the business you own or work for have procedures in place to deal with a disaster? What steps can you take to protect your job and your business?
- Munro's Dry Cleaning made sure that all employees had access to information about the business operations during and after Hurricane Ike, by sharing important phone numbers and asking employees to check in every 24 hours. Can we suggest other ways that our businesses can ensure employees are well-informed in that situation?
- Munro's Dry Cleaning developed a comprehensive evacuation plan before Hurricane Ike hit. How did that plan help them recover faster? Does each of our workplaces have an evacuation plan? Can we come up with a sample plan to suggest to businesses in our community?
- Munro's Dry Cleaning was so well-prepared for Ike that it was able to provide food to many community members after the disaster. What steps can we take

to prepare the businesses we own or work for in ways that not only protect their employees, facilities, and inventory, but that also would help the entire community recover?

- The video stresses the importance of individual businesses continuing to operate after a disaster in order to keep the town running with essential services. How have you helped prepare the business that you own or work for?
- What are the barriers or challenges to preparing a business for a disaster? What actions can we take to overcome them in our businesses?

Ready for Anything: Preparing for the Next Flood

- Tropical Storm Charley caused flooding that left two-thirds of Del Rio under water. Which rivers or creeks in our area are prone to flooding? Are you as an individual, and are we as a community, prepared for such an event? What steps will you take to better prepare after viewing the video?
- Do you have elderly or disabled family members or friends who would need your help in a disaster? What steps can you take now to plan for their needs?
- Pets can also require special care in an emergency. What steps are necessary to meet their needs?
- John Villarreal lists some public health threats that a disaster of this kind can leave behind, such as contaminated water and broken gas lines. What would we do if we had no public water or natural gas? What other threats to our health might occur in a disaster?

What steps can we take to prepare for public health risks like these?

- Do you or any of your family members have medical problems that may need attention after a disaster? Do you have a plan to make sure you get treatment in such an event? Have you taken steps to ensure that you have access to medications, prescriptions, and doctors' contact information?
- The video emphasizes the need for a “grab and go” kit. Does each of us have a kit? How can we encourage others in our community to make these kits to ready themselves for evacuation?
- Calixto Seca states that individuals and families who don't have emergency plans “create a problem within a problem” for their community. What specific things can we do to ease the burden on our community before, during and after a disaster?
- What barriers or challenges are keeping us from preparing fully for a disaster? What actions can we take now to overcome them?

Winds of Destruction: A County's Lessons

- The tornado that hit Eagle Pass was the first in the history of Maverick County (where Eagle Pass is located) to produce any fatalities, so it was completely unexpected. Do you have assumptions about what kinds of disasters could or couldn't strike our area? What can help change your mindset or that of our community?

- The video focuses primarily on recovery — are there ideas in the video that would help us prepare to recover from a disaster? What steps can we take now to help ensure a quick and efficient recovery?
- Gloria recognizes that people in her community were not educated about what to do in a disaster, so now she is trying to start an informational program. Are we and other residents educated about preparing for and responding to disasters? How could we educate ourselves and others better?
- We saw Gloria and her daughter packing an emergency kit with clothes, food, a radio, and important documents. Does each of us have such a kit? What is keeping us from making them? How can we lead and encourage other community members to make them?
- Lupita Guerrero stresses the importance of taking refuge in a structurally sound place in one's house or nearby structure during a tornado. Do you know where the safest place is to take shelter when you're at home and at work? Have you shared that knowledge with others in your home and workplace?
- Do we, either individually or as a community, have an emergency shelter where we can go in the event of a disaster? Is there an existing space in our area that we could designate for residents to take shelter during or after a disaster?

- Calixto Seca points out that it is important for families and individuals not only to make a plan, but also to practice it. Has your family made an emergency plan and practiced it? What tips can we give other families to develop and practice an emergency plan?
- What are the barriers or challenges to preparing fully for a disaster? What actions can we take to overcome them?

Facing Disasters: A Plan for Work and Home

- Laura Treviño says that communities in the Valley were not as prepared as they could have been for a hurricane. A recent survey shows that many Texans don't prepare because they believe disasters will not happen to them. Did you hold that belief before viewing the video? What specific steps, in addition to sharing these videos, can we take to help change the mindset that disasters will not happen in our area?
- The video shows how Isla Grand Beach Resort was able to survive Hurricane Dolly with the help of an emergency plan. Does the business you own or work for have a disaster plan in place? What steps can you take to create an emergency plan for yourself and your place of business to protect your job and your livelihood?
- The hotel's emergency plan included strategies not only for the hotel operations but also for the families of its employees. Does your business or employer account for this in its emergency plan? If so, how? If not, how can you contribute to the business emergency plan?

- The Isla Grand Beach Resort staff reviews its plan yearly, before hurricane season begins. Why do you think they do this? What are the benefits of this process?
- Calixto Seca points out the importance of following the advice of local and state officials in times of emergency. What steps can we take that will help us and our neighbors to do this?
- The video illustrates some public health threats that a disaster can leave behind, such as contaminated water and exposed electrical wires. List things in our daily lives where we depend on water and electricity. What would we do if we had no access to public water or electricity? What other threats to our health might occur in a disaster situation? What steps can we take to plan for public health risks like these?
- Daniel Salazar and his family have a grab-and-go kit at home. Do you have a similar kit at home? If so, what does it include? If not, how can you get started? (grab-and-go kit checklists are available at [TexasPrepares.org](https://www.texasprepares.org))

To inquire about American Sign Language (ASL) versions of the videos, visit [TexasPrepares.org](https://www.texasprepares.org).