

GET READY! Kent County

Twelve Month Citizen Preparedness Program

Fact Sheet

AUGUST: Recovering After a Disaster

Disasters happen anytime and anywhere. When disaster strikes, it is easier to cope when you are prepared. GET READY! Kent County recommends having a basic understanding of post-disaster recovery steps.

What Should You Do Within 48 Hours After a Disaster?

- Find your family. The American Red Cross maintains a disaster-based database called the “Safe and Well List” to help find loved ones. Go to www.redcross.org/safeandwell for more information.
- Get food and water. Volunteer agencies will set up stations in and around the disaster area.
- Find a place to stay. Contact friends or relatives outside the area, as well as the Red Cross.
- Take precautions should you want to return home. Heed the warnings of local officials if the area is still too dangerous for traveling.

How Do You Find a Place To Stay?

- The American Red Cross and other volunteer agencies will set up shelters for people that cannot return home. Go to www.redcross.org/shelter or call 1-800-482-2411 for shelter information.
- Remember – pets are often not permitted in public emergency shelters for health and space reasons. Contact the Humane Society of Kent County (616-453-8900) or the Kent County Animal Shelter (616-632-7300) to find out what locations are sheltering pets.

What Type of Assistance is Available?

- For longer-term housing needs FEMA may have services to assist you. To be eligible, your primary residence must have been destroyed or become uninhabitable as a result of the disaster.
- Please note that these programs are usually in the form of low interest loans and must be repaid. It is wiser to update your homeowner’s insurance to more adequately cover potential losses.
- For detailed information contact FEMA at 1-800-621-3362, or go to www.disasterassistance.gov.

How Can You Best Cope With Disaster-Related Stress?

- Disasters affect people in different ways. It is very normal to feel anxious, or have profound sadness, grief or anger after a disaster.
- Accept help from volunteer agencies. Do not feel compelled to handle things alone if help is available. The local Red Cross can connect you with the appropriate agencies. (1-800-482-2411).
- Get as much food, water, exercise and rest as possible.
- Spend time with family and participate in memorials, religious services, and other fellowship activities.

Tips for success...

- Help others. Assist your community in their efforts toward recovery. This will benefit others and may reduce your own post-disaster anxiety.

