



**American
Red Cross**

of Northeastern New York

Knowing Your Disasters

Tornado

- A violent storm that appears as a funnel-shaped cone with winds that reach up to 300 miles per hour. Tornado season commonly occurs during the months of March through August, but they can occur at any time. They can happen in any state but are most commonly found in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas - an area of which is commonly called "Tornado Alley".
- "Tornado" was a 14th-century sailor's word for a violent, windy thunderstorm. It may come from the Spanish word tronada, meaning "thunderstorm."
- If there are weather or news reports that say there is a tornado in your area, the most important thing to do is to take shelter immediately in a place without windows, such as a bathroom or a basement.

Earthquake

- The movement of the earth along cracks (called fault lines) in the earth's surface. Earthquakes are measured by something called a Richter scale. While earthquakes are common on the West Coast, they can occur in 45 states and territories across the United States.
- In 1280, "earthquakes" were called "eorthequakynges".
- In an earthquake, remember to DROP, COVER and HOLD ON. DROP to the floor and get under something for COVER and HOLD ON until the shaking stops.

Fire Emergencies

- Fires are unexpected events that can happen anywhere at school, at home, in a store or shopping mall, or even in the outdoors in a forest or field. It is important to always know where the emergency exits are and to remember to be calm during a fire emergency. The most important thing you can do during a fire is listen to the direction of adults around you, like your teacher or parent. Remember to use the stairs (NEVER use an elevator) to leave the building or fire area right away, then call 911.
- At Yellowstone National Park, the average time when fires are reported is 3:03 in the afternoon! This is because fires burn more vigorously during the middle of the day when the sun is very hot. These smoky fires are easily seen and often reported by park visitors!

Flooding

- This natural condition happens as a result of river overflow, heavy rains, a dam breaking, or snow melting too fast. This is the most common natural weather event and can happen in every U.S. state.
- The word "flood" comes from Old English and means "a flowing of water, river, or sea."
- Stay as far away from flood water as you can. Moving flood water can be dangerous because it can knock you off your feet. And any type of flood water can be contaminated, meaning it can contain dangerous substances.

Tsunami

- A giant wave produced by underwater movement due to a variety of natural events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and meteorites. Tsunamis generally appear in the Pacific Ocean.
- "Tsunami" is a Japanese word. Tsu means "harbor" and nami means "wave."
- If you feel an earthquake in the Pacific Coast area, turn on your battery-powered radio to learn if there is a tsunami warning. If you hear a tsunami warning, and they say to evacuate, do this immediately.

Hurricane

- A tropical storm with an "eye." Winds must be 74 miles per hour or stronger for weather to be classified as a hurricane.
- "Hurricane" comes from the Spanish word *huracan*.
- When hurricanes come onto land, their heavy rain, strong winds and heavy waves can damage buildings, trees and cars. It is important to take shelter in a hurricane and listen to the television or radio for instructions.

Terrorism

- Terrorism is the use of threat or violence to scare governments into changing their policies. A terrorist can be an individual or a member of an organization. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, are examples of acts of terrorism.
- The word "terrorism" first appeared in France (terrorisme) in 1795.
- Talk to your parents or teachers if you have questions about this type of emergency.

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