



SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

*The Scene*



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white dress, stands next to a red and white fire truck. She is holding a framed American flag. The fire truck has "Wickliffe Rural Fire Department" written on its side. The scene is set outdoors during the day.

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**WOMEN,**  
from page 1

to do, to keep us safe and the ones we are helping.”

Each year, the Kentucky Fire Commission provides departments with 21 hours of training. Local departments choose which classes to host, with instructors supplied by the commission. This year, Graves

County departments voted to donate 10 of those hours for specialized training not typically offered locally. Classes included Rope Awareness, Rope Operations, Man vs. Machine, Bobtail/Propane Prop, and Fire Blast Trailer. Approximately 85 firefighters from Graves and surrounding counties took part.

Warner shared

that even after more than 800 hours of firefighting experience, she continues to attend classes like Basic 20. “You should always want to be better than what you were the day before,” she said. “When we train together, we learn who can do what jobs on the fire scene. We are family, and we look out for each other. This is our family helping yours.”



Recently, The first Graves County Weekend Fire Training brought 80 volunteer firefighters together at three locations for hands-on drills and exercises, emphasizing safety, teamwork, and ongoing preparation to better serve the community.



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# Carlisle County

## Emergency Management:

*Honoring Firefighters and building a safer community*

**By Laurna Todd**  
KPI Writer

Carlisle County Emergency Management Director Josh Glover is reminding residents that safety is a community effort—one that depends on preparation, prevention, and appreciation for the first responders who serve around the clock.

Glover said his office is working closely with local fire departments, EMS crews, and rescue squads to address a wide range of risks. While every county faces its own set of challenges, Carlisle County is focusing on severe weather events such as tornadoes, flooding, and winter storms. Emergency officials are also preparing for public health threats, hazardous materials incidents, and the growing possibility of cyberattacks that could disrupt local infrastructure.

“Another priority is ensuring we have the resources and partnerships in place to manage large-scale emergencies, whether that’s a mass-casualty incident, a prolonged power



outage, or a supply chain disruption,” Glover said.

“Our goal is to be proactive so that if these risks occur, our county is ready to respond effectively and recover quickly.”

Part of that preparation involves educating and engaging the public. Carlisle County Emergency Management offers CPR, First Aid, AED, and Stop the Bleed training, while the National Weather Service in Paducah provides Weather Spotter courses.

Glover emphasized that there are opportunities for residents of all ages and skill levels to volunteer with local departments, noting, “There is something for everyone.”

Equally important, Glover encouraged

the community to show support for firefighters not just in times of crisis, but every day. “The most meaningful way the community can show gratitude is through genuine support and appreciation,” he said. “Practicing fire safety at home, attending prevention programs, and reducing risks that put first responders in harm’s way are the best ways to say thank you.”

He added that emergency managers, firefighters, EMS, and rescue squads are on call 24/7—often meeting people at the worst moments in their lives. “The best ‘thank you,’” Glover said, “is a safer community where everyone does their part.”



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**LEGACY,**  
from page 1

the footsteps of my Dad & my brother to become the 3rd generation volunteer firefighter in our family. Being born prematurely & having mild cerebral palsy, the chances of Trevor becoming a firefighter were quite small. Thanks to a special childhood best friend & his father who believed in Trevor, he was able to join Wickliffe Rural Fire Department & go through training that was adapted to his limitations. Trevor learned how to drive the firetrucks & run the pumps so he could be an active firefighter but out of an immediate fire danger zone. Trevor lived & breathed to be a firefighter & give back to our community.

He was known by all in the county as being first on scene & last to leave after cleaning up at the station. My son inspired me by his ability to overcome the obstacles of his life & not only chasing his firefighter dream, he

successfully made it happen.

I created a legacy in my son’s memory to make a difference & inspire others to give back to their community. I’m honored to be part of the Ballard County First Responders Banquet that’s held each year in November. This event was created in November 2021 after losing Trevor & within the banquet, we honor a first responder that goes above the call of duty with the “Trevor Doom Memorial Above & Beyond Award.”

This year will be the 5th banquet & we hope to continue this well into the future. In 2024, we awarded a special “Angels Among Us” award in Trevor’s memory as a special award for an individual for the service he’s given in so many areas of our county. In May of 2022 & 2023, Ballard Fiscal Court honored the Fallen First Responders in the county with a memorial service at the courthouse in Wickliffe on the Saturday before Memorial Day. I’m honored to have



been invited for both Trevor & my Dad to now have a memorial paver brick installed at the Ky State Fallen Firefighter Memorial wall in our state Capitol of Frankfort, KY. Their names are now forever a part of Ky firefighter history. I worked with local, state, & Federal

We’re working on additional changes in Trevor’s memory for road safety. In 2022 Lexington, Ky fire department station 21, engine 21 honored Trevor’s birthday with a memorial service & then sent us the folded American flag off the firetruck & some patches from their station. This year, we were honored to create a First Responder meet/greet event at the 2025 Smoky Mountain Jeep Invasion to thank first responders from all over. We own a jeep & it’s themed in a firefighter theme in Trevor’s memory. We had over 119 attendees from all over the US. We were honored to have members of Sevierville Police Department, Sevierville Fire Dept. Engine 12 & Pigeon Forge Engine 21 for this event.

We plan to continue this event into the future as well. The inspiration we’ve accomplished has been nothing short of mind

blowing. Others are now creating events in their local areas to honor first responders as well. Trevor’s story has had such an impact on others & while it’s hard to talk at events without the emotions overtaking me at times, I believe it helps for people to see/hear the emotions of a grieving Mom because that’s what makes the greatest impact.

My goal in starting a legacy for Trevor was for people to see that even through the grief, our story was a beautiful one! What made Trevor a firefighter people remember wasn’t the disability, it was his ability to live his life giving back & finding a positive outlook to life! It’s been a true honor to “pay it forward” to the brotherhood of first responders Trevor was proud to be part of! It’s a brotherhood like no other & I’m Blessed to now have “first responder family” members all over the 50 states.

# Volunteer Firefighters:

*The backbone of Barlow’s Fire Dept.*



Facebook photo

**By Laurna Todd**  
KPI Writer

Barlow Fire Chief LaDoy Owens believes volunteer firefighters are more than responders—they are one of the most important assets any community can have.

“Without volunteer firefighters, service to the community for various emergencies could potentially cease, leaving residents exposed,” Owens said. “They respond to fires, motor vehicle accidents, alarm activations, and assist

EMS when needed. They also give back in lighter ways—like parades—where kids and adults alike smile when they see the trucks and wave. That’s part of building community.”

see **BARLOW**,  
page 4



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Lt. Corey Howard and firefighters Paxton Boldry and Dylan Grief earned their swift-water rescue technician certificates after completing a 32-hour course recently. The training covered self-rescue, victim recovery, rope work, and boat operations, preparing personnel for emergencies such as flooded vehicles and swift-water rescues. Firefighters from multiple McCracken County departments trained together, strengthening teamwork across agencies.

BARLOW,  
from page 4

Owens stressed the importance of recruiting new members. “Without an influx of new firefighters, any department will eventually be understaffed and unable to meet its mission,” she said. Volunteers not only answer calls but also give up personal time to train, perform inspections, and keep apparatus maintained so equipment is ready when needed. Training has been a major focus in recent years. In 2024, two Barlow

firefighters attended electric vehicle emergency training, enhancing knowledge of new hazards. Four firefighters participated in flashover chamber training, learning to recognize dangerous signs in a controlled environment. Others have completed driver’s training, operated aerial ladders with Wickliffe Rural, and are preparing for firefighter rescue and survival courses in Paducah this fall. “It’s about preparing our newer members for the real-life challenges they will face,” Owens said. Even as a smaller

firehouse, Owens sees Barlow’s strength in its people and their partnerships. “Many of us roll with EMS, rescue, and other departments,” she explained. “Sometimes our members respond knowing they may be the only one available. That’s dedication.” Owens also credits city leaders for their support. “The council, commissioner, and mayor stand behind us—whether it’s fixing, buying, or planning,” she said. “That support allows us to keep moving forward and serving Barlow the right way.”

THANK YOU

A row of four icons: a flame, a red cross, a blue police badge, and a red Star of Life.

First Responders

A firefighter in full protective gear, including a helmet and mask, running towards the camera.

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A photograph of a helicopter on a tarmac with two people in blue uniforms standing nearby.

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A close-up photograph of two first responders in blue and tan uniforms.

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# Ballard County Fire Department:

## *Proudly honors firefighters, but challenges remain*

**By Laurna Todd**  
KPI Writer

Ballard County recognizes the dedication and selfless service of its firefighters, who often show up when people are experiencing their darkest moments. According to Emergency Manager Travis Holder, the county deeply values its volunteer fire personnel — but ongoing funding and

staffing challenges threaten the future of this critical public service.

Each year in November, Ballard County hosts a First Responders Banquet to honor all emergency personnel. The event features a full meal, guest speakers, awards, and door prizes. Among the most meaningful moments of the evening are the presentation of

the Firefighter of the Year Award — given to a standout member of each department — and the Trevor Doom Above and Beyond Award, which honors a first responder who has gone the extra mile for their community.

Holder says that while these events help show appreciation, the broader public may not fully understand the sacrifices

volunteers make. “They spend hours away from family, miss holidays and ball games, and most even pay out of pocket for gear and equipment — all to serve their neighbors for no pay,” he said.

One of the biggest issues facing Ballard County’s fire departments is funding. Rural departments still rely on a dues-based system, which only sees 45–50% collection. Holder believes a more reliable system is needed, including exploring the idea of Fire Taxing Districts. “It’s not popular, but it may be the only way forward. Emergency services aren’t for profit, but their costs go up just like any business.”

Looking ahead, staffing is another pressing concern. Holder urges community members to consider stepping

up. “VOLUNTEER. Every department in Ballard County is accepting new members,” he emphasized. “Without volunteers, we may one day find ourselves without help when a crisis strikes.”

Ballard County remains grateful for its firefighters — and committed to ensuring they’re supported, prepared, and never taken for granted.



First responders are trained to recognize and respond to emergencies, playing a vital role in public safety. Each day, these individuals act with courage and skill to help others and protect our communities.

Please join us in thanking them for their service and sacrifice, and honoring those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

# Honoring

## Our First Responders



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# Wickliffe Fire Dept. focused on growth, training, and community service

**By Laurna Todd**  
KPI Writer

The Wickliffe Rural Fire Department continues to expand its capabilities while keeping community service at the heart of its mission. Chief Timothy Greif said the department has recently added a ladder truck to its fleet, received from the City of LaCenter. Now serving as Ladder Truck 27, the addition strengthens Wickliffe’s ability to respond to large-scale emergencies across Ballard County.

“We’re a fire and rescue department, and along with LaCenter and Kevil Fire Departments, we handle auto extrication calls within the county,” Greif explained. “We also provide support on all structure and large fire calls.”


In addition to equipment upgrades, several members recently earned swiftwater and boat operations certifications—an important step in enhancing the department’s readiness for flood and water rescue emergencies. Over the past three weeks, Wickliffe firefighters have been training alongside Wickliffe City and Barlow Fire Departments, focusing on pump operations, driver training, and ladder truck operations.

Chief Greif emphasized that ongoing training directly impacts the department’s ability to respond quickly and effectively in critical situations.

“The more prepared we are, the faster we can serve our community when they need us most,” he said.

Looking ahead, the department’s top priorities over the next five to ten years include expanding its membership and continuing to build a strong training foundation. Greif noted that the Junior Firefighter Program, open to youth ages 15–17, is one way the department encourages young people to get involved.

“We’d love to see more people step up and join,” Greif said. “Volunteering is vital. The strength of our fire service depends on the community members who are willing to serve.”



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— Sandy Dahl, wife of Flight 93 pilot Jason Dahl



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# Breaking Barriers:

## *Pam Owens’ journey into firefighting*

By **Laurna Todd**  
KPI Writer

When LaDoy Owens came home from a city hall meeting in tears, it wasn’t out of disappointment, it was out of overwhelming emotion. He had just been appointed fire chief of the Barlow City Volunteer Fire Department, and he was determined to restore the department’s respect and reputation.

Watching her husband’s determination, Pam Owens asked what she could do to help. She expected to be handed a task like clerical work or fundraising. Instead, LaDoy looked at her and said a single word that would change everything: “Join.”

Pam admits the answer caught her off guard. Having recently undergone

knee surgery, she wasn’t sure how much she could contribute. Still, she accepted the challenge. She threw herself into virtual training, various in person training classes and completed 115 hours of coursework, and earned her Basic Firefighter 1 certification. She is now working toward Basic 2.

Since joining, Pam has responded to calls ranging from smoke alarms to traffic accidents and fire scenes, where she has often been the one to meet and comfort victims. Even with her limitations, she remains actively involved by running rehab—bringing water and Gatorade from the service truck and making sure firefighters take necessary breaks.

The most difficult

part for her is the gear. The turnout coat, boots, SCBA, and tank together feel nearly impossible to move in. “I used to think I was strong, but firefighting takes a whole different kind of strength,” she said, noting how much she admires the women who make it look effortless.

Pam has also learned a valuable lesson about the fire service: there is a place for everyone. “An instructor once told me, ‘Even someone in a knee brace has a job,’” she recalled. “That stuck with me. Volunteering isn’t about being the strongest—it’s about meeting a need.”

And in her own way, Pam Owens is doing exactly that—filling a role, serving her community, and proving that determination can break barriers.



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- 2 Send a handwritten note expressing your gratitude to a local department or agency. Parents and teachers can help kids create handmade thank-you cards to deliver to first responders.
- 3 Have breakfast or lunch delivered to a local department or agency, enlisting neighbors or coworkers to help finance the gesture.
- 4 Consider making a donation to a local fire, EMS or police department, or to an organization that supports first responders and their families.
- 5 If you own a business, consider offering a courtesy discount for first responders!



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# Stay prepared and safe with fire safety

By Laurna Todd  
KPI Writer

If there is a fire emergency in your home be prepared to evacuate your family as safely and quickly as possible. Having a well thought out plan and practicing with everyone is key.

**Make your home fire resistant**

Ensure that all electrical cords and appliances are not damaged and in good condition. Keeping all flammable items away from heat sources. Installing smoke alarms on all levels and ensuring they work properly by conducting a monthly test and replacing the batteries at least once a year. Wickliffe City Fire Departments Chief Starnes has 4 tips for fire safety: 1 Close all the doors at bedtime, 2 do not overload electrical outlets, 3 keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen and 4 if a fire does occur, get out and stay out!

*Using a Fire*

**Extinguisher**  
Everyone should know where it is and how to use one correctly. Regularly check that your fire extinguisher is current and replace it if necessary. Check the gauge to make sure it is fully charged and inspect the nozzle for any blockages.  
When using a fire extinguisher you need to remember the PASS acronym. P – Pull the Pin: Pull the safety pin from the handle. This pin prevents accidental discharge, so removing it will allow you to use the extinguisher. A – Aim the Nozzle: Stand about 6 to 8 feet from the fire and aim the nozzle of hose at the base of the flames. Targeting the base is crucial for extinguishing the fire’s fuel source. S – Squeeze the Handle: Firmly squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent. Apply the agent evenly over the fire. S – Sweep from Side to Side: Move the nozzle from side to side, covering the entire area of the fire. Continue applying

until the fire is fully extinguished.  
While keeping a distance, watch the area to ensure a fire does not reignite. If the fire begins to spread or grows, evacuate immediately.  
**Putting out Fires**  
If there is a fire that is small and contained you need to use your fire extinguisher. If the fire is larger or begins to get out of control you need to exit the building and alert everyone else there is a fire. Contact first responders by calling 911 and letting the fire department know. If you are unable to escape due to smoke, flames or heat, use a damp towel to cover the door’s bottom and keep it shut until help arrives.  
**Planning to Evacuate**  
Create multiple escape plans and ensure everyone knows the plan. The evacuation plan needs to include a place to meet outside of the home. You should keep escape ladders in



upper-level rooms and let everyone know the location of it and how to use it properly.  
Ronnie Rathman, Chief, Kevil City Fire Department talks about how they teach fire safety. He says “When I teach the children at the elementary school I always stress that every family should have a meeting place. More times than not people get separated in an emergency. By having a meeting place such as a tree, a neighbors house, etc. This makes it easier to account for everyone. This also prevents firefighters from searching for people. This allows them to concentrate on the fire / emergency situation. Studies also show that you should keep your bedroom doors in your house closed when you are sleeping. This closes off air flow that a fire needs to grow rapidly. I hope this helps. If I can help you out anymore feel free to reach out. “  
When an evacuation is required remember to stay alert of your surroundings. A warm door may indicate that fire is on the other side, and opening it can cause the fire to spread more rapidly to other areas of the house. If you find yourself in a smoke-filled room or hallway, remember that smoke and hot air rise. To stay safe, crawl low to the ground where the air is clearer. As you move, close doors behind you to help contain smoke and fire, which can prevent further spread and improve safety during your escape.




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# The role EMS workers play in your community

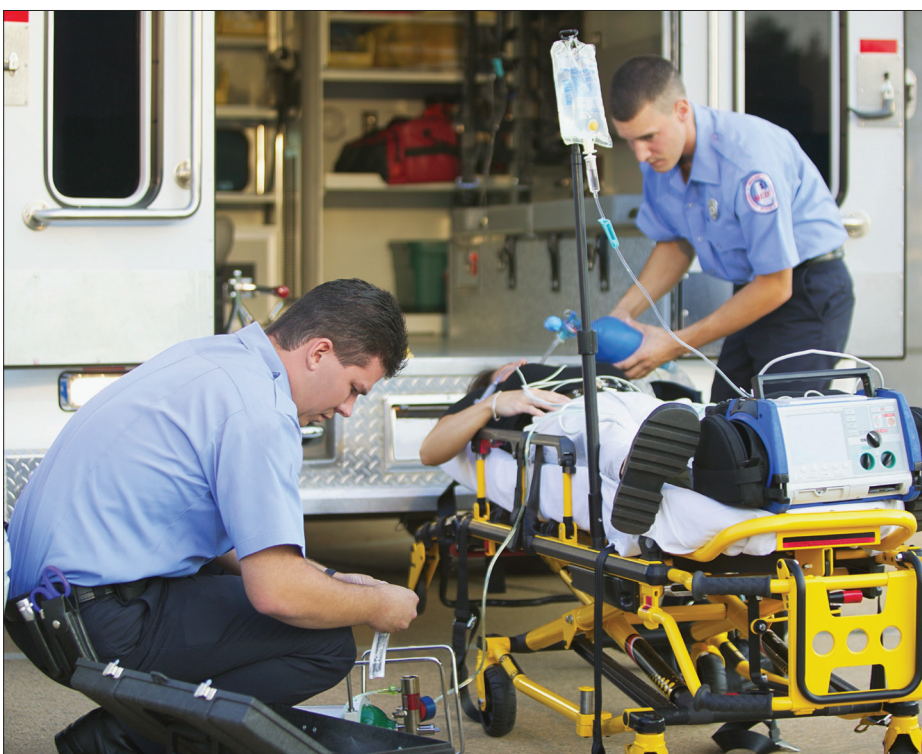
Every community has its unsung heroes. Without the contributions of selfless individuals whose efforts often go unnoticed, thriving communities would not be as safe, welcoming or successful.

EMS workers are among the most important individuals in a community. The contributions of these individuals, many of whom work as unpaid volunteers, are invaluable and worthy of recognition.

Making an effort to understand the role EMS workers play is a great first step toward showing them how much they're appreciated.

*What is EMS?*

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Office of EMS notes that Emergency Medical Services, or EMS, is a system that provides emergency medical care. The Office of EMS also notes that EMS does not exist in isolation, as it is integrated with other services and systems with the goal of maintaining and enhancing the health and safety of a community and its residents. This is why EMS services, though they vary from community to community, may be based in fire departments, hospitals, independent government agencies, or nonprofit corporations.



*What duties do EMS workers perform?*

Because EMS is a system, EMS workers wear a range of hats. The Office of EMS notes that

the responsibilities and services EMS workers provide may include:

- Incident recognition
- Access 911
- Dispatch

- First responder
- Basic life support
- Advanced life support
- Air/ground transport
- Emergency department services

- Specialty care
- Patient rehabilitation
- Prevention and awareness
- Public education

*When do EMS personnel interact with their communities?*

Many people only encounter EMS workers during medical emergencies when they are most in need of help. That underscores the vital role EMS workers play in public health and safety and just how integral they are in instances that could escalate into life-or-death situations.

Recognition of the roles EMS workers play is a great way to show support for these often unsung community heroes.



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# How to honor first responders

This Thursday marks the 24th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The attacks on September 11, 2001 remain the deadliest terror attacks in world history, claiming more than 2,900 lives and causing countless injuries and long-term health problems for tens of thousands of civilians and first responders.

The 24th anniversary of 9/11 will no doubt evoke responses that span the emotional spectrum. Sadness may dominate such responses, but the anniversary of 9/11 also is a great time to reflect on the efforts of first responders. First responders played a vital role on 9/11, and many lost their lives and/or suffered long-term health consequences resulting from their selfless efforts to save innocent victims of the attacks.

In the two decades since the 9/11 attacks, first responders have continued to make countless sacrifices

to ensure their communities are safe and peaceful places to call home. The 24th anniversary of 9/11 is a great time to recognize the efforts of first responders and honor them for all they do.

• **Donate to local fire departments.** According to the U.S. Fire Administration, 54 percent of active firefighting personnel are volunteers. Many of those volunteer firefighters work for underfunded departments that are in need of financial support. Donating to such departments is a great way to show first responders how much their efforts are appreciated. Donations may be used to purchase new equipment, upgrade existing facilities, provide vital training, and/or improve response times, the latter of which can increase the likelihood that firefighters make it through calls safe and sound.




• **Back legislation to support wounded first responders.** Many first responders suffer significant mental and physical injuries while on the job. Various nonprofit organizations help wounded first responders who may need to make modifications to their homes or purchase costly equipment to

get through their daily lives. But nonprofit organizations cannot go it alone in support of wounded first responders. Citizens can do their part by promoting and voting for local, state and national legislation that makes it easy for wounded first responders to get the help they need, when they need it. In addition to urging local politicians to support such legislation, private citizens can utilize social media to promote proposals and other efforts to support wounded first responders. Many 9/11 first responders are still fighting for government-backed support to treat injuries suffered 24 years ago, and a vocal

citizenry can be a strong asset in their fight and the fight of countless others in need of help.

• **Commit to supporting first responders year-round.** The 24th anniversary of 9/11 will call attention to the efforts of first responders on that day 24 years ago as well as the countless times since then that these brave men and women have served their communities. But first responders deserve vocal, year-round support. Make a concerted effort to thank policemen, firefighters, EMTs, nurses, and doctors in your community whenever you interact with them, and urge others to follow suit.


First responders play a vital role in communities across the globe. The 24th anniversary of 9/11 can serve as a catalyst for communities to express their support for first responders.



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# What to do when you’ve had a house fire

**Teresa Pearson**  
KPI Writer, reprinted

When your home has been damaged by a fire, and you are uncertain about what steps to take. There are some guidelines for recovering.

First, if you discover a fire in your home, call 911 to report the fire and attempt to extinguish it if you can safely. If you can’t then just get out of the way until firefighters can do their job. Next, contact family and let them know that you are safe. If anyone in your home has injuries, seek medical attention.

Remember, do not return to your home and search for items that may have survived the fire until it is completely safe to

do so. Fires often have lingering hot spots that may smolder for days after the visible flames have been extinguished.

Next, contact your insurance agent as soon as you can, and provide a brief description of the incident and the extent of the damage. When possible, make a list of lost items and provide photos and receipts. Also, keep new receipts for extra expenses that are due to the fire, including motel expenses or rent, cleaning supplies and repairs.

Make duplicates of all documentation submitted to your claims adjuster or insurance company. You may need to replace essential documents lost in a fire, like a driver’s

license, insurance policies, and birth, marriage and death certificates.

Fires present a risk to our physical well-being, homes and possessions, but they can also take a toll on our mental health. After a fire, try to maintain routines as much as possible to help with the mental anguish. Make sure that everyone is eating right and getting adequate rest. Don’t hesitate to ask for help if it’s needed and be prepared to accept assistance from others graciously. Fires create devastating loss and recovery will take time. So, lean on family and friends to help you get back on your feet and back to normal life.



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# Disaster prep essentials

Preparation can pave the way to professional success, and that utility extends beyond one’s career. Preparation also is a vital component of personal safety, particularly in relation to natural disasters. Knowledge of storms and weather-related events such as hurricanes, tornadoes and floods can be lifesaving, and various government agencies encourage adults and children alike to learn what they can do to stay safe should a storm strike. But it’s equally vital to personal safety to assemble a disaster supplies kit. Ready.gov, the official website of the United States Department of Homeland Security, recommends individuals gather and maintain the following items as part of a basic emergency supply kit.

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days). Keep in mind that the water is not only for drinking, but also for sanitation.
- Food: Each person in your household should have a several-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio with tone alert. Various retailers carry NOAA radios, which typically cost \$50 or less.
- Flashlight: A flashlight for each person in the household is ideal.
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries: Enough extra batteries to keep flashlights and radios operational during a potentially days-long power outage is recommended.
- Whistle: A power whistle that’s loud and carries for a significant distance can be used to signal for help, if necessary.
- Dust mask: Air can become contaminated during a natural disaster, so a dust mask for each person in the household can ensure everyone can safely breathe.
- Plastic sheeting, scissors and duct tape: These materials can be employed to stay safe and warm or cool when ordered to shelter in place.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties: Personal sanitation items such as these can help people stay healthy and keep an area sanitary when services such as garbage pickup and water utilities are not operating normally.
- Wrench or pliers: Tools such as a wrench and pliers can be used to turn off utilities when it’s necessary to do so, such as during a flood.
- Manual can opener: A manual can opener can open canned goods during power outages.
- Local maps: Local maps of areas around your home, place of business and children’s schools can help you get around if roads are closed. Even people who feel they know the areas where they live, work and attend school like the back of their hand are urged to keep maps of such regions readily available.
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery: Backup chargers and batteries can make it possible to maintain access to potentially lifesaving information and facilitate staying connected with loved ones and neighbors.

A well-stocked disaster preparation kit can keep people and their loved ones safe should a weather-related storm or other dangerous event strike and present potentially dangerous living situations.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of men and women protect and serve, often putting their own lives at risk.

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# What contributes to floods?

Flooding can result in extensive and expensive damage. The Pew Charitable Trusts indicate that at least one flood event has occurred on nearly 300 days per year each year since 2000 in the United States. That’s almost a flood a day. Statista reports there were 170 flood disaster events recorded worldwide in 2023. The Center for Disaster Philanthropy indicates there have been 44 floods in the U.S. between 1980 to October 2024, with each resulting in more than a billion dollars in damage.

Considering how catastrophic floods can be, people may wonder what contributes to these events and if there is anything they can do to prevent them. An understanding of flooding can help anyone respond more effectively should a flood occur.



floods because these urban areas cannot absorb the rain and water runoff effectively.

### What can I do in the event of a flood?

- People can take certain precautions if flood conditions are anticipated.
- Listen to local media for flood watches and warnings.
  - Know the evacuation zone and route, and evacuate if prompted.
  - Have a “grab bag” ready with essential items.

- Seek higher ground, which could be the highest floor of the home.
- Do not drive, walk or try to swim through floodwaters. Even shallow moving water can sweep a person away.
- Water can conduct electricity, so stay away from downed electrical wires.

- Use a stick to check the depth first if you must walk in flood water.
  - Turn off and disconnect appliances and utilities, if advised.
  - Remain away from damaged areas until officials have officially cleared them for return.
  - Consider purchasing flood insurance as homeowner’s insurance policies typically do not cover flood damage.
- Staying alert, prepared and safe during floods is vital.

Damaging floods may occur with only a few inches of water, or flooding may be so severe it can cover a house to the rooftop. The NOAA says floods are the most common and widespread of all weather-related natural disasters.

**What causes floods?**  
Many different situations can cause flooding. The main types are:

- Melting snow and ice
- Dams or levees breaking
- Storm surges, resulting in ocean waves coming on shore
- Heavy rainfall
- Geography, such as locations that are near rivers

### How does urbanization impact flooding?

As land is increasingly converted from fields and woodlands to developed areas, it loses the ability to absorb rainfall, according to officials with the city of Brownsville, Texas. Urbanization can increase runoff two to six times over what would occur on natural terrain.

Urban areas are at higher risk for floods because rooftops divert rain to the ground below, which is comprised of cement and paved surfaces that prevent the ground from absorbing rain.

### What is a flash flood?

Some flooding can be anticipated, but flash floods often happen with little to no warning, says the NOAA. They occur when there is more rain than the soil can absorb. This extra water quickly flows into rivers and creeks and can overwhelm storm drains. Flash floods can be the most dangerous kind of floods because they feature fast-moving flood waters. Flash flooding can affect an area within minutes. Densely populated areas often are at highest risk for flash

### What is a flood?

Flooding occurs when an overflowing of water finds its way onto land that is normally dry, says the National Severe Storms Laboratory of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



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# How to stay safe during a tornado

Tornadoes are powerful storms that feature rotating columns of air and violent thunderstorms that reach from sky to ground. People in the path of tornadoes must recognize that these storms can topple homes, flip cars and send debris flying into the air.

The National Weather Service indicates about 1,200 tornadoes occur in the United States each year. The United States and Canada account for the most tornadoes in the world each year, though Canada, which experiences roughly 100 tornadoes yearly, gets far fewer than the U.S. The Government of Canada’s Get Prepared website says tornadoes can last from a few minutes to several hours, and are most likely to occur between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Tornadoes can occur at any time of year, and also outside of areas that are typically associated with the storms. That means it is imperative for just about everyone to know how to act in the event of a tornado. These safety tips can help people get ready.

Watch vs. warning  
The American Red Cross says either a watch or a warning is issued for tornadoes. A tornado watch means tornadoes are possible in the area and everyone should be prepared to act

quickly. A tornado warning means a tornado is near and there is danger. Everyone should move to a safe location immediately when a warning is issued.

### Emergency kit

It is important to assemble an emergency kit that can facilitate riding out a tornado. The kit should contain:

- Water (enough for each person for several days)
- Food that won’t spoil, such as canned goods
- Manual can opener
- Wind-up or battery-powered flashlight and radio
- First aid kit
- Extra car and house keys
- Cash
- Important family documents
- Infant formula/diapers
- Extra prescription medication

### Seek safe shelter

The emergency kit should be housed in a safe shelter. A safe shelter means a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or a small interior room on the lowest level of a sturdy building, according to Ready.gov, the official website of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. As the tornado blows through, protect your head and neck with your arms and by putting



materials such as blankets on top of you.

If you are caught outside in a vehicle during a tornado, you might be able to drive out of the tornado’s path by moving at right angles to the tornado if it is far enough away; otherwise, park the car out of traffic lanes and stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows, and cover your head with a cushion, coat, or blanket, if possible. If you can get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, such as in a ditch or valley, leave the car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands.

### Practice an emergency plan

It’s vital that households establish an emergency tornado

plan and practice it often, especially for people who live in an area prone to tornadoes. Practice moving to the safe locations you’ve identified. If you live

in a mobile home, practice going to a safe place.

Tornadoes can rip apart lives in an instant with strong winds that can reach upwards of 200 miles

per hour. Rain, lightning and even hail can make tornadoes even more dangerous. Everyone should know what to do if a tornado is spotted in the area.

The residents of Salem

Salute Our First Responders

Thank you for your dedication and sacrifice to our community.

We appreciate each of you!

CITY OF SALEM

## Involve kids in emergency preparedness

It is essential to keep cool and remain calm in the face of adversity, including when facing dangerous conditions like those that present during a natural disaster. Adults may experience anxiety when facing adversity. Children who may not be mature enough to fully understand what’s going on may worry more than adults, which

can increase their chances of being harmed in dangerous situations.

Making disaster preparedness a routine component of family life can take some of the mystery out of what to do in the event of an emergency. According to the U.S. Department of

see **KIDS**,  
page 16



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