

# Emergency Preparedness

Due to the sensitive nature of this patch program, pro tips are included and are aimed at the adults supporting girls during the completion of this patch, i.e. troop leaders, parents, caregivers, etc.

“Be prepared” is the Girl Scout motto, and we encourage girls to take preventative steps toward being safe. This idea is not a new goal for Girl Scouts, and as far back as the 1917 edition of *The Handbook for Girl Scouts*, girls were asked to share information about the spread of insect-borne diseases, learn how to use a fire alarm, and be knowledgeable on other topics of public health and safety.

**Pro Tip:** Though these topics are not new to Girls Scouts, please keep in mind that some of the topics and issues included in this patch program may be sensitive for some girls. Keeping in tune with the emotional and cognitive levels of each girl and maintaining flexibility in activities is key.

How to earn the Emergency Readiness patch the Girl Scout way:

## Steps:

1. **Discover**—Girl Scouts will learn to identify risk, how to take preparatory actions, and how to deal with emotional aspects of emergencies.
2. **Connect**—Girl Scouts will connect to their communities, both locally and nationally, as they identify agencies that work to protect their communities.
3. **Take Action**—Girl Scouts will learn to identify community needs and take action to support public safety and emergency preparedness in their communities.

## Materials Needed:

In order to complete this patch, you'll need a few things:

- in-person/online resources (You can either go online with an adult, ask a professional, or visit your public library.)
- sticky notes
- small amount of vegetable oil
- Jell-O powder (a few different colors)
- Ziploc bag
- water
- a tray (optional)
- 3 X 5 index cards
- writing utensils
- items for an emergency kit

## Step 1

Learn to identify risk, how to take preparatory actions, and how to deal with emotional aspects of emergencies.

### What is an Emergency?

An emergency is a situation which poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment. Most emergencies require urgent intervention to prevent the situation from getting worse. Being prepared and educated about various emergencies and disasters empowers all individuals, no matter their age, to make a huge difference in the outcome. In addition to physical effects of most emergencies, it is important to acknowledge an emotional response to the situation.



## ***STEP 1—continued***

### **ACTIVITY 1: What Is an Emergency?**

What do you consider an emergency? Write responses down on sticky notes to categorize them later in the activity.

- What kind of emergencies might arise?
  - ◆ In the home
  - ◆ Involving transportation
  - ◆ Due to weather or nature
  - ◆ Other situations (gas leak, explosion in a public place)
- Group the emergencies into these categories: personal, community, national, and global. There will be some overlap. Emergencies affect us on different scales.
- Which dangers could each type of emergency cause? Think about four types of impact: dangers to life, dangers to health, dangers to property, and dangers to environment. Some emergencies will fit into more than one category.
- Which emergencies are most likely to affect you and your community?

### **ACTIVITY 2: Preparedness Proofing**

Disasters can occur at any time, so it is important to learn what emergencies are most common in the areas we live in and what we can do to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for these emergencies.

- Take a walk around your house, school, or troop meeting place. Think about the geography and terrain of the area. As you walk, write down some of the things you see that might lead to a problem.
  - ◆ Do you have small toys or other objects laying around that a baby sibling might choke on?
  - ◆ Do you have a smoke detector and a carbon monoxide monitor? Are cleaning products stored properly?
  - ◆ Are there trees near your house or car that might fall during a big storm?
  - ◆ Do you live in or near mountains that may be prone to mud or rockslides? Has a nearby river ever flooded part of your neighborhood?
- Visit the website for the Home Safety Council and the government’s site for storm readiness to identify other hazards.
- Find a natural disaster preparedness quiz online and take it. Then, go over the answers.

### **ACTIVITY 3: J-E-L-L-O Germs...They’re ALIVE!**

Germs are bacteria or viruses easily transferred from person to person. They can lead to something as harmless as the sniffles or something more serious, such as a pandemic flu or the Coronavirus. Hand washing is always important, but it is especially important during medical emergencies. Emergency situations can come from things we cannot see.

What do germs look like? What can happen if germs get inside your body? How do germs get from one person or object to another?

#### **Activity Supplies:**

- Small amount of vegetable oil
- Jell-O powder in a Ziploc bag (may be helpful to have different colors to represent different germs)
- Water and a tray (optional)

#### **Instructions:**

1. Get together with your troop, family, or friends. Have everyone rub vegetable oil on their hands. Each girl or person will stick their hand in a Ziploc bag of Jell-O powder. Different Jell-O powder colors can be used to represent different germs.
2. For one minute, go around shaking hands with one another.
3. Afterwards, give each girl or person a tray with about 1/2 inch of water. Put your hands flat in their tray. If any colors show in the water, there are “germs” on those hands.
  - ◆ If you don’t have the supplies to hand out water, just reflect on how sticky everyone’s hands are. If their hands are sticky with Jell-O, they have germs.
4. How many people had germs? What does this mean about spreading germs? Are you surprised at how easy it was to catch germs from others?

## *STEP 1—continued*

### **After the activity, wash your hands.**

Hand washing is an easy and practical way to greatly cut down on the spread of germs that cause colds and other illnesses. It is important to wash all the surfaces of your hands—front, back, in between the fingers, and under the nails. This makes sure you get rid of as many germs and bacteria as possible so they do not accidentally enter your body or spread to others.

### **Step 2**

## **Identify local and national agencies that work to protect your community.**

Communities want everyone to be safe during an emergency. To accomplish this, organizations work together to prepare for, assist during, and help recover after an emergency.

There are six stages of a large-scale disaster:

1. **Planning:** Creating plans of what to do before, during, and after an emergency.
2. **Prevention:** Taking steps to stop emergencies from happening.
3. **Mitigation:** Taking action in advance to reduce the impact if something does happen.
4. **Preparedness:** Taking action in advance to be able to respond effectively.
5. **Response:** Taking action during and immediately after an emergency to reduce impact.
6. **Recovery:** Actions to rebuild a community after the crisis is over.

### **ACTIVITY 1: Who You Gonna Call?**

Learn about the different government workers, government officials, and community leaders who help your community prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. Research information for each. Refer to the six stages from the list above and review what each community leader does at different stages: planning, prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Managers | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firefighters       | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Works  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police Officers    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMTs               |  |

### **ACTIVITY 2: Take a Tour!**

Visit or take a virtual tour of a local emergency management office, police station, firehouse, or public health facility.

Find out:

- What types of emergencies do they respond to?
- How do they prepare for an emergency before it takes place?
- What happens when they respond to the emergency?
- What do they do after the emergency is over?
- What can you do to help prepare before, during, and after an emergency?
- What is the history of response and disasters in your area?

## Step 3

Identify community needs and take action to support public safety and emergency preparedness in your community.

### ACTIVITY 1: Build a Kit

What you have on hand when a disaster strikes makes a big difference. Emergency kits are important in times when you may not have access to regular sources of supplies. You can find lists for a disaster supply kit online from organizations and government agencies.

- What should be in an emergency kit, and when will it be used? What is the difference between a “ready to stay” kit and a “ready to go” kit?
- Research what items you should include in a kit and be sure to learn where they should be stored and how often they should be restocked.
- Discuss what goes into a disaster supplies kit and explore why each item is important.
- Work with your family to create a family emergency kit or offer to create an emergency kit for the location where you hold troop meetings.

### ACTIVITY 2: Make a Plan

Planning is the first step to a calmer and more assured disaster response. Making a disaster plan will help you feel prepared and be safer. The entire family or troop should take an active part in making a disaster plan.

- Work with your troop or family to make a disaster plan.
- Discuss the steps needed to create a disaster plan and prepare to put these steps into action. Use a checklist to learn what is important in creating a disaster plan. You can find checklists online from organizations and government agencies, including the Red Cross.



### All done?

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You've completed all the necessary steps to earn the Emergency Readiness patch.

After completing the activities from each step, visit or call a Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania retail shop at 800-248-3355 to purchase your patch.\* A patch may be worn on the back of a vest, sash, or tunic.

\*Patch shown may be substituted with similar patch, based on availability.