

Ready to go? The importance of Being Prepared for Flood disaster

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Abstract: There is a growing awareness that disasters can strike anytime and anywhere. On an average, a disaster occurs in everyday somewhere in the world. Many developing countries, have limited preparedness for disaster response. Preparedness means preparing to handle an emergency and include plans or preparations made to save lives and to help response and rescue operations. If a disaster occurs in the community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help the victim, but the victim itself needs to be ready as well. Local responders may not be able to reach the victim immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere. The victim should also be ready to be self-sufficient for at least three days. This may mean providing for own shelter, first aid, food, water, and sanitation. This review paper aimed to study the impact of disaster preparedness, importance of preparedness in flood disaster, ways of emergency preparedness for flood disaster and benefits of preparedness for flood disaster.

Keywords: preparedness, flood, disaster, emergency preparedness, disaster response.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing the incidence rate of disasters, including flood disaster around the world is one of the major threats to human health and life. Although the prevention of disaster is difficult, disaster preparedness and effective and timely response can minimize the devastating effects of disaster. Disaster preparedness is highly needed to handle these unpredictable situations effectively. To meet this aim, many personnel from various professionals need to support this plan of disaster preparedness [6].

Comprehensive pre-disaster preparedness planning can make the transition from crisis to recovery more effective, efficient and immediate. It is important to understand that disaster recovery begins before disaster strikes. The process begins with preparedness planning and moves through the response phase before entry into disaster recovery. By working out through this comprehensive preparedness planning before disaster strikes, the planning, response and recovery process can be rewarding, spirit lifting and empowering.

DISCUSSION

Disaster preparedness planning focus on understanding how a disaster might impact the community and how educational outreach and training can build capacity to respond to and recover from a disaster. This preparedness helps in developing the community's responses to immediate threats presented by the disaster, including saving lives, meeting humanitarian needs such as food, shelter, clothing,

health and safety and also participating in cleanups, assessing damage and beginning to distribute resources.

While disasters may be unpredictable, the important steps can be taken before a disaster occurs to minimize the threat of damage. Disaster preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Although it is important for the local governments and jurisdictions to implement planning and mitigation measures before a disaster or emergency occurs, many of these measures should also be implemented proactively by local communities or neighborhood organizations or by individual owners of historic properties [8].

Regarding the flood disaster, floods are the most common and widespread of all-natural disasters. Floods cause damage to houses, industries, public utilities and property resulting in huge economic losses, apart from the loss of lives. Apart from the physical damage to property, experiencing a flood can be an

extremely emotional time [1]. If there has no preparedness for the possibility of a flood, recovery can be slow, stressful and costly. It is not possible to control the flood disaster totally, however, by adopting the suitable structural and non-structural measures that can minimize the flood damages. For flood planning, there are needed the latest flood management measure, reliable, accurate and timely information.

As floods can happen anywhere and at any time of the year, preparedness includes actions taken to prepare people and property for a flooding event that may take place but is not currently forecasted. The activities included in planning for floods are creating emergency go-kits, storing food, water, and other necessities at home, and making plans for dependent members of the family [7].

Ways of emergency preparedness for Flood disaster

At an individual level, the best way to protect the victim itself and family in case of a flood are as follows: the first step is to evaluate the risk and find out the living area where the floods potentially happen or not. Then, the second step is to make a plan with the family to be ready when a flood happens. When an emergency happens, the family might not be together. That's why it is important to have a plan in place. Sit down and talk to the family about how the family can get to a safe place and find each other in the event of an emergency [5]. For instance, it is a great idea to designate two family meeting places, one in the neighborhood and one is farther away. Think about making an out-of-town family member or friend to contact because it might be easier to make a long-distance telephone call instead of a local call during an emergency. It should be planned for two situations: staying home or leaving which depends on the type of emergency. Officials may announce what is needed to do. In some cases, limited communication and information may require the victim to decide what the best is. Know where to go if there is needed to leave because sometimes it may not be safe to stay in the home. There needs to make a plan in place where the family can meet. Finally, the third step is to get an emergency preparedness kit. Pack an emergency supply kit and make sure to include at least a 3-day supply of food and water, basic emergency medicines, personal care items: Soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, safety supplies such as first aid kit, emergency blanket, multipurpose tool, whistle, flashlight, radio, cell phone with charger and extra batteries⁴.

Moreover, the local news and weather reports for any potential flood warnings in this area should be listened and monitored. When a flood warning is issued, listen to local authorities for further directions. Check on vulnerable family members, friends and neighbours (the elderly, ill, disabled people) who may require special assistance.

Flood related injuries and death are often the result of individual trapped in the flood water. The best way to stay and safe the victim and family is to evacuate areas before the flooding starts. Evacuation means a pre-emptive move to protect life and property, whereas rescue is a post-disaster phenomenon of helping people to move from areas that have been hit by disaster to a safer place. However, the situation of evacuation and rescue comes along with numerous unanswered queries in mind. Due to lack of information, living during evacuation and rescue becomes more difficult and painful to the victim. Therefore, during such the situations, following precautionary norms should be kept in mind [2, 9].

At a community level, it should be prepared for compiling a list of key emergency contacts, determine which agency or what person is responsible for what activities and make the information widely available. Adequate emergency supplies must be maintained. Then, get trained with proper method what to do in the event of a disaster; emergency responders will be prepared to assist their neighbors and help protect lives and property. Local surveys are vitally important for disaster preparedness planning. Emergency preservation and recovery plans should be prepared and assess vulnerability and determine risks. It is sometimes necessary to turn to others within the local community for help. Most emergencies are handled at the community level, which puts a tremendous responsibility on the community for taking care of its citizens [2, 9].

At a state level, if there are needed the support and resources beyond what the community level can provide, the community can request assistance from the state. The state may be able to provide supplemental resources such as money, equipment, and personnel to close the gap between what is needed and what is available at the community level. The state also coordinates the plans of the various jurisdictions, so that activities do not interfere or conflict with each other. To ensure personnel know what to do and efforts are in agreement, the state may offer a program that provides jurisdictions the opportunity to train and exercise together [2, 3].

At the federal government level, it can provide resources to augment state and community efforts. These resources can be in the form of public educational materials, such as manual books or guidance flow chart that can be used to prepare the public for protecting itself from hazards and financial grants for equipment, training, exercises, personnel, and programs [2, 3].

Benefits of preparedness in flood disaster

There are many real benefits of being prepared for flood disaster. It can save one's life or health even after the disaster has stricken. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of flooding. They should be ready to move from their homes and take refuge in public shelters and know how to get the support and care for their basic medical needs. People also can reduce the impact of disasters and sometimes avoid the danger completely. Flood Disaster preparedness also helps save to time for a quick action in case of an emergency. These helps reduce panic and chaos which would otherwise be present when the disaster happens. If these disaster kits are available, more lives and assets can be salvaged from the scene, thus save money too [10].

CONCLUSION

Disasters destroy thousands of lives in every year. Each disaster has lasting effects to both people and their properties. Among the natural disasters, all floods are not alike, some can develop slowly during an extended period of rain and others, such as flash floods, can occur quickly, even without any visible signs of rain. For this reason, be prepared for flood disaster is so important. Disaster preparedness maximizes safe circumstance, decreases vulnerability and minimizes risk to individuals when they are confronted with hazard events.

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