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## EC67-766 5 Steps to Preparedness

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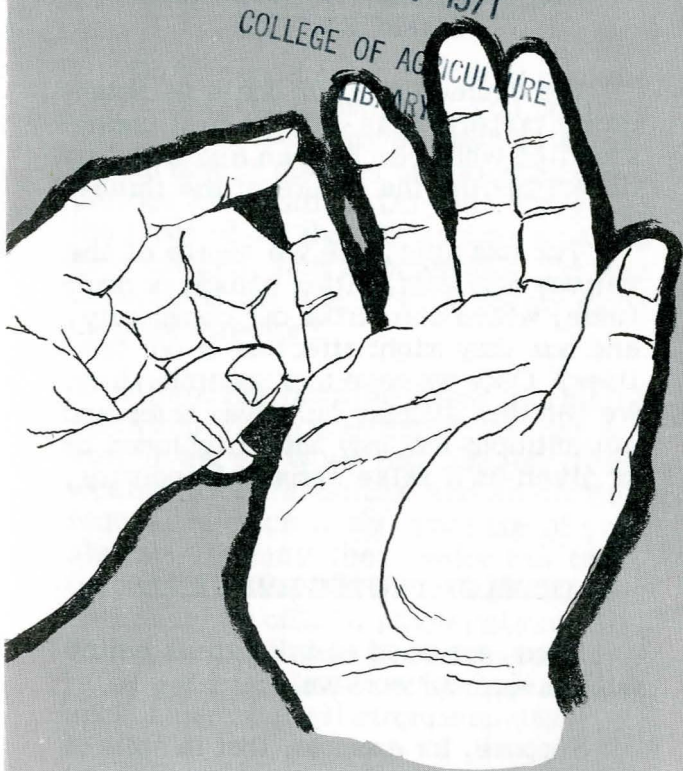
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# 5 STEPS TO PREPAREDNESS



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Following are five steps from which you can plan to cope with virtually any emergency - from a minor accident on the farm or in the home to a major disaster which might effect your entire community - or the nation as a whole. We call this type of planning Emergency Preparedness.

## UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF EMERGENCIES

We can achieve our goals in emergency preparedness only by first understanding what can happen and how, by understanding the nature of the threat.

For example, are we aware of the various disasters, either natural or man-made, which can strike our community, and how they might affect us or our families? Once we have this understanding, we can then dismiss old wives tales and superstitions that may have frightened us or given us a false sense of security.

## DEVELOP PROTECTIVE SKILLS

Next, we need to take steps which will assure our survival.

Suppose, for example, that in spite of all precautions, an emergency should occur. Could you treat someone for an injury until trained medical aid arrived?

Suppose you have to cope with injury following a nuclear attack. You might be required to live for several days in a shelter without the benefit of professional medical aid.

In the interest of family safety and national security, the President of the United States has urged that at least one member of each family enroll in one of the recognized First Aid or Medical Self-Help Courses which are available free.

Disasters frequently affect entire communities. Trained volunteers are needed to assist police and fire departments, rescue teams, evacuation teams and shelter managers, and to fill a host of other emergency functions.

Proper training and organization of volunteer aid spells the difference between survival and chaos.

### LOCATE AND DEVELOP THE SAFEST PLACE

In time of an emergency, we can not help our neighbor, or our community for that matter, until we are sure of the safety of our family.

Should an emergency threaten, we must know how to find the "safest place."

Obviously, during the threat of a hurricane or flood, the "safest place" is evacuation to higher ground, far away from the expected area of impact.

During an earthquake, the "safest place" might be on level ground outdoors, away from buildings, trees, and cliffs, river valleys or beaches.

A tornado presents a different threat. Shelter is needed. Is the southwest corner of the basement the "safest



place?" Not necessarily. Tornadoes have been known to come from other directions too. A specific location in or about the home should be selected for a shelter area and should be developed further if necessary to assure the needed protection. For minimum additional effort, this same area can be transformed into a suitable fallout shelter.

Can you and your family fend for yourselves within your shelter until rescue teams reach you or until it is safe to leave the shelter? Do you have spare food, water, blankets, clothing and other needed facilities available either in the shelter area or located so they may be moved to the shelter on a moment's notice?

### INSTRUCT AND PLAN WITH YOUR FAMILY

It is vital that your family be equally informed on accident prevention and emergency preparedness as you are yourself.

Do your children know what to do and where to go in case of fire? Do they know how to telephone for emergency aid in a darkened house when the power has failed? Do they know how to seek the "safest place" when you aren't home to guide them? Do you have important papers and other valuables located so they will be preserved in case of an emergency or so you can move them quickly should the need arise?

In order to answer yes to all of these questions, a family plan must be developed and each member trained on how to react to emergencies.

## LEARN THE ROLE OF YOUR COMMUNITY DURING AN EMERGENCY

Do you understand how your community copes with a disaster? You probably expect your local government to assist you in time of disaster or during recovery periods afterwards. Do you understand the types of aid that are available to you as a citizen, and from whom? Do you understand the role of your county civil defense director?

Agencies outside those normally operating within your community can not step in except when the disaster overwhelms local resources and an official request is made to the governor of your state. He may then make the total resources of the state available to your community by official proclamation. The exception to this rule is certain volunteer relief agencies that do offer their assistance under most all circumstances.

By understanding the role of your community, by recognizing that civil defense is local government in action during an emergency, you will be in a better position to serve your community in a task vital to their needs.

## THINK AND ACT SAFELY

Accident prevention and emergency preparedness are achieved only through understanding, planning and action. The secret to survival is advance preparation - before the emergency arises. Review these five steps again and incorporate them into your daily routine of living.

Understand emergencies.

Develop protective skills.

Locate and develop the safest place.

Instruct and plan with your family.

Learn the role of your community during an emergency.

Contact your county Civil Defense director or your cooperative Extension Agent for more information on emergency preparedness and developing protective skills.