

Two-thirds of American households lack adequate plans and supplies for a disaster

February 10 2016, by Earth Institute, Columbia University, Astrobiology Magazine



A new survey of American households finds two-thirds lack adequate plans and supplies for a disaster, and half of them are not confident in the ability of government to meet the needs of children in a disaster. Many are also not confident that their own communities have adequate plans for dealing with a hurricane, flood or other major event.

"We are experiencing a continuous increase in the number of [extreme weather events](#), and 10 years after Hurricane Katrina and three years after Superstorm Sandy, the vast majority of Americans remain unprepared for major disasters," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, director of the

National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University, which conducted the [survey](#).

The survey also identified that while Americans are generally less prepared and less confident in the response of government, they still have high expectations for a quick response and recovery when disasters do strike.

You can download and read the full survey report [here](#). Watch a webinar on the report [here](#).

Some key findings of the survey:

- Nearly two thirds (65 percent) of American households do not have adequate plans and supplies for a disaster. This is virtually unchanged from 2011 (66 percent) and represents only a modest improvement from since 2003 (77 percent).
- 41 percent are not confident that their community has adequate plans in place for a disaster that occurs with no warning, a slight improvement from 2011.
- 51 percent are not confident in the ability of government to meet the needs of children in a disaster and 37 percent are not confident in their community's ability to meet the needs of children.
- 35 percent of households with children are not familiar with their schools' evacuation and emergency plans, and 41 percent do not know to what location their children would be evacuated.



The [national survey](#) is part of the Resilient Children/Resilient Communities Initiative, which is led by the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Earth Institute and Save the Children, and funded by a grant from the pharmaceutical and healthcare company GSK.

The [Resilient Children/Resilient Communities](#) Initiative is currently developing two pilot programs in counties in New York and Arkansas that it hopes can be replicated across the country. The initiative also is establishing a national panel of experts to link the community work with national preparedness priorities.

"The survey ... shows how under-prepared we are to protect children in disasters," said Erin Bradshaw, senior director, emergency preparedness, for Save the Children. "Unless we make child-focused preparedness a priority, in our homes, schools and communities, we are putting our youngest, most vulnerable citizens in jeopardy. There are simple things

we can do as parents and caregivers—identifying emergency contacts, making a plan and talking to children about that plan- that can ultimately help keep boys and girls safe."

The National Center for Disaster Preparedness offers [a model online](#) to help people take basic precautions before a disaster strikes. Save the Children also offers [Get Ready Get Safe](#), a website where families and communities can find help in making a disaster plan with a focus on protecting children.

Jeff Schlegelmilch, the study's principal investigator, added: "Emergency planners at all levels should take note of these findings, and see them as an opportunity to re-think how we engage families and [children](#)-serving institutions in preparedness."

The survey was administered as a random digital dial survey of 1,048 households across the United States and was conducted between Nov. 30 and Dec. 14, 2015. This national survey builds on prior surveys deployed by NCDP as part of the [American Preparedness Project](#).

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Source: Earth Institute, Columbia University

Citation: Two-thirds of American households lack adequate plans and supplies for a disaster (2016, February 10) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-02-two-thirds-american-households-lack-adequate.html>

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