



CENTRAL AREA Disaster Preparedness Newsletter



PREPAREDNESS



RESPONSE



RECOVERY



Building Resilient Posts Before Disaster Strikes



SEPTEMBER 2026

Preparedness Through Partnership

Your Post Doesn't Have to Have Everything—It Needs to Know Who Does

When we think about disaster preparedness, it is easy to start making a list of everything our Post doesn't have.

Do we have a generator? Enough emergency supplies? Trained shelter personnel? Radios? Transportation? Food and water? Volunteers?

Before long, preparedness can begin to feel like an expensive and overwhelming undertaking.

But there is another way to look at it.

Your Post doesn't have to have everything. It needs to know who does.

Start With What You Have

Every Post is different. Some have large buildings and commercial kitchens. Others meet in rented spaces or have no permanent home at all. Some have members with emergency management, medical, communications, transportation, or food-service experience. Others may simply have a group of Legionnaires willing to make phone calls and check on veterans after a storm.

All of those are resources.

A good disaster plan begins by taking an honest look at what your Post can realistically provide during an emergency.

Could your Post provide volunteers? A meeting location? A kitchen? Temporary storage? Communications support? Transportation? Buddy Checks? Local knowledge and contacts?

Don't overlook the value of your people. Often, the most important resource a Post has isn't sitting in a storage room—it's sitting at the meeting.

PREPAREDNESS IS A TEAM EFFORT

STRONGER TOGETHER FOR A SAFER TOMORROW



Then Identify the Gaps

The next question is just as important:

What can't we do ourselves?

Perhaps your Post doesn't have backup power. Maybe you don't have enough people to operate a shelter, the ability to prepare meals for a large number of people, reliable emergency communications, or transportation for supplies.

Identifying those gaps isn't a sign that your Post is unprepared.

It's part of becoming prepared.

Once you know what you don't have, you can begin asking a much more useful question:

Who in our community does?

Look Outside the Post

Your community probably has more disaster capability than you realize.

County Emergency Management, fire and law enforcement agencies, amateur-radio organizations, the American Red Cross, food banks, churches, civic organizations, local businesses, transportation companies, and other American Legion Posts may all have resources or expertise that complement what your Post can provide.

The goal isn't to duplicate what those organizations already do well.

The goal is to understand where your Post fits.

That conversation also shouldn't begin with, "What can you do for us?"

A better place to start is:

"Here's what our Post may be able to provide during an emergency. How could we work together?"

That changes the relationship from asking for assistance to building a partnership.

Make the Connection Before You Need It

A name and telephone number written in a disaster plan is useful—but it isn't a partnership.

Relationships need to be built before the storm is approaching.

Introduce your Post. Learn what the organization does during a disaster. Explain what resources your Post may be able to offer. Determine who the appropriate points of contact are and how communication would work during an emergency.

In some cases, an informal working relationship may be enough. In others, a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can help document what each organization has agreed to provide.

The important part is that both organizations know each other before the emergency.

The middle of a hurricane, flood, wildfire, or other disaster is a terrible time to exchange introductions.

Preparedness Is a Community Effort

The American Legion has always been rooted in service to our communities. Disaster preparedness is another opportunity to put that principle into action.

A Post may never become a shelter. It may never own a large generator or maintain a warehouse of emergency supplies.

It doesn't have to.

A prepared Post understands its capabilities, recognizes its limitations, knows its community partners, and understands how it can contribute when help is needed.

And that starts with a conversation.

This Month's Preparedness Challenge

Identify one organization in your community that could strengthen your Post's disaster preparedness—and contact them before the end of the month.

It might be your county Emergency Management office, a local amateur-radio club, a church, food bank, civic organization, first responder agency, business, or another American Legion Post.

Introduce yourselves.

Ask what they do during a disaster.

Tell them what your Post can offer.

Then ask one simple question:

“How can we work together before the next disaster?”

One conversation won't create a complete disaster plan.

But it may create the partnership that makes that plan work when it matters most.