

## Natural Hazards

### Issue Brief

Reports about natural catastrophies are becoming more and more frequent in daily news. Until September 2023 there were 239 reported events in comparison to 423 events in 2022. The reported events include earthquakes, floods, volcanos, famines and droughts, extreme weather, wildfires and landslides (Our World in Data 2023).

## Impact of natural catastrophies

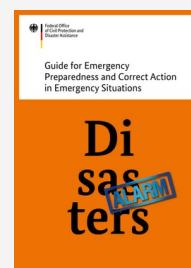
The number of fatalities from natural disasters can vary greatly from year to year; some years there are very few fatalities before a major catastrophic event claims many lives. Looking at the average over the last ten years, about 45,000 people died each year worldwide from natural disasters. This represents about 0.1% of global deaths. The definitions for catastrophes, disasters and emergencies vary slightly. A catastrophe describes an event causing great and usually sudden damage or suffering. A disaster describes a sudden accident or natural catastrophe that causes great damage or loss of life. Lastly, an emergency describes a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action. We know from historical data that earlier prediction, emergency preparedness and response systems gave significantly reduced death tolls. This issue brief summarizes important facts and guidelines to prepare for future events. The mentioned literature and more can be found in our [Natural Hazards Toolbox](#).

## Disaster Preparedness and Prevention

### Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Correct Action in Emergency Situations *Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK)*

Staying safe in spite of a disaster. What can you do for your safety in the event of a disaster? In spring 2013, after weeks of rain, whole areas of southern, eastern and northern Germany were beset by catastrophic floods. Settlements vanished in the floods up to the roofs of the houses, tens of thousands of emergency personnel and volunteers struggled against the water with sandbags. Villages and parts of towns had to be evacuated, and the citizens were only able to take the essentials with them. Disasters are part of life. Almost every day, we can read about disasters and largescale emergencies in a variety of media and see the images of destruction and suffering. These are not just major disasters which affect large areas for a long time. Local torrential rain, a severe storm, an electric power breakdown resulting from such a storm, or a house fire can trigger a very personal disaster for each individual, each family, which has to be overcome. Take the time to contemplate your personal emergency planning.

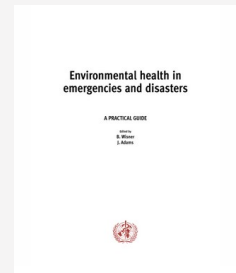
<https://medbox.org/document/guide-for-emergency-preparedness-and-correct-action-in-emergency-situations#GO>



## Environmental Health In Emergencies And Disasters: A Practical Guide Wisner, B; Adams, J

The WHO Guide to sanitation in natural disasters (Assar, 1971) summarized the essential aspects of environmental health management in disasters. These included the provision of emergency water and sanitation services; the burial or cremation of the dead; vector and pest control; food hygiene; and the assessment of the danger of epidemics following emergencies and disasters, etc. Thirty years later these aspects remain essential, though the needs, challenges and opportunities are greater.

<https://medbox.org/document/environmental-health-in-emergencies-and-disasters-a-practical-guide#GO>



## Emergency response framework, 2nd ed. World Health Organization (WHO)

The purpose of this Emergency Response Framework (ERF) is to clarify WHO's roles and responsibilities in this regard and to provide a common approach for its work in emergencies. Ultimately, the ERF requires WHO to act with urgency and predictability to best serve and be accountable to populations affected by emergencies.

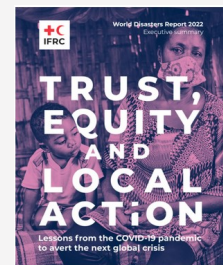


## Assessment and Response

### World Disasters Report 2022: Executive Summary International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies IFR

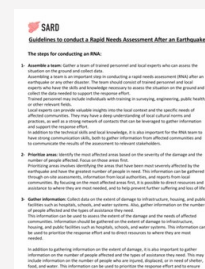
The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest disaster in living memory, on almost any measure. More than 6.5 million people are confirmed to have died in less than three years, and the pandemic's indirect impacts have touched the lives of virtually every community on the planet. Our World Disasters Report 2022 focuses on the coronavirus pandemic and preparedness: both the ways preparedness ahead of COVID-19 was inadequate, and how the world can prepare more effectively for future public health emergencies.

<https://medbox.org/document/world-disasters-report-2022-executive-summary#GO>



### Guidelines to conduct a Rapid Needs Assessment After an Earthquake Syrian Association for Relief and Development SARD

This information can be used to assess the extent of the damage and the needs of affected communities. Information should be gathered on the extent of damage to infrastructure, housing, and public facilities such as hospitals, schools, and water systems. This information can be used to prioritize the response effort and to direct resources to where they are most needed. In addition to gathering information on the extent of damage, it is also important to gather information on the number of people affected and the types of assistance they need. This may include information on the number of people who are injured, displaced, or in need of

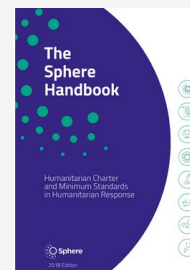


shelter, food, and water. This information can be used to prioritize the response effort and to ensure that assistance is provided in a way that meets the specific needs of affected communities.

<https://medbox.org/document/guidelines-to-conduct-a-rapid-needs-assessment-after-an-earthquake#GO>

### **The Sphere Handbook. Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. New Edition** *Sphere*

Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. The 2018 Sphere Handbook builds on the latest developments and learning in the humanitarian sector. Among the improvements of the new edition, readers will find a stronger focus on the role of local authorities and communities as actors of their own recovery. Guidance on context analysis to apply the standards has also been strengthened. New standards have also been developed, informed by recent practice and learning, such as WASH and healthcare settings in disease outbreaks, security of tenure in shelter and settlement, and palliative care in health. Different ways to deliver or enable assistance, including cash-based assistance, are also integrated into the Handbook.



### **WHO guidance for contingency planning** *World Health Organization (WHO)*

In this contingency planning guidance, a set of actions to prepare for emergencies from all hazards and to help minimize their impact, is proposed. These actions include the development, implementation, simulation, monitoring and regular update of risks-based contingency plans.

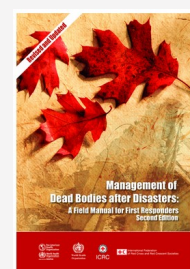
<https://medbox.org/document/who-guidance-for-contingency-planning#GO>



### **Management of Dead Bodies After Disasters: A Field Manual For First Responders. Second Edition**

*Cordner, S.; R. Coninx; J.-J. Kim; et al.*

Proper and dignified management of the dead in disasters is one of the three key pillars of humanitarian response and a fundamental factor in facilitating identification of the deceased and helping families discover the fate of their loved ones. This second and updated edition of this hugely successful manual provides practical and easy-to-follow guidelines on the recovery, documentation and storage of the remains of individuals who have died in disasters, helping first responders ensure that the dead are treated with respect and that information crucial for their subsequent identification is recorded. This revised edition incorporates experience gained in recent catastrophes, such as the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the 2014/15 Ebola epidemic in West Africa and the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

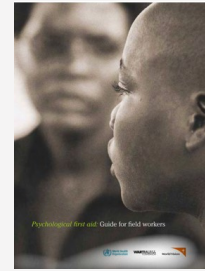


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## Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers

Snider, L.; Van Ommeren, M.; Schafer, A.

When terrible things happen in our communities, countries and the world, we want to reach out a helping hand to those who are affected. This guide covers psychological first aid which involves humane, supportive and practical help to fellow human beings suffering serious crisis events. It is written for people in a position to help others who have experienced an extremely distressing event. It gives a framework for supporting people in ways that respect their dignity, culture and abilities. Despite its name, psychological first aid covers both social and psychological support.



<https://medbox.org/document/psychological-first-aid-guide-for-field-workers#GO>

## Psychological First Aid. Stronger Together. A guide to help you and your community

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

2nd edition. The Pan American Health Organization and the Caribbean Development Bank developed this booklet as a tool to help you take care of yourself and your community during crisis situations. This is achieved through psychological first aid, also known as PFA, a humane, supportive and practical response to a fellow human being who is suffering and may need support. In this booklet, our "PFA helper" will guide you through the three basic principles of PFA: look, listen and link. This will help you to approach affected people, listen and understand their needs, and link them with practical support and information. It will also bring to your attention the needs of specific groups, including men, women, children and adolescents, and people with disabilities, among others. Enjoy the booklet. Read it again from time to time, share it with friends, family and members of your community, and spread the message: "Stronger together"



<https://medbox.org/document/psychological-first-aid-stronger-together-a-guide-to-help-you-and-your-community#GO>



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