

Assessment of disaster preparedness among households in Corvallis, Oregon

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Disaster preparedness

ABSTRACT: Background: Household preparedness is important to mitigate the impacts of disasters. Periodically assessing the preparedness of a community is important for emergency planning. The objective of the study was to determine the level of disaster preparedness among households in Corvallis, Oregon.

Methods: A survey was developed from previous assessments and included questions assessing household characteristics, presence of preparedness items, emergency plans, and communication methods. A two-stage cluster sampling scheme was used to identify a random sample of households. Teams conducted interviews to selected houses over one day. Data were entered into Epi Info 7 and weighted frequencies with 95% confidence intervals were calculated.

Results: Overall, 64 interviews were completed (30.5% completion rate). Overall, 66.1% of households reporting having an evacuation plan, 52.2% had a communication plan, 52.7% had a 3-day supply of food, and 58.1% had a 3-day supply of water. Nearly 81% of households reported having a first aid kit, 44.0% reported a backup heat source and 67.3% had a working carbon monoxide detector.

Conclusions: Corvallis households demonstrated relatively low levels of preparedness. Public health officials and emergency managers can use this information to develop interventions to increase preparedness of households in Corvallis.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Identify methods to assess household preparedness in a community;
- Describe the preparedness levels of Corvallis, Oregon;
- Discuss barriers to household preparedness and ways to increase household preparedness.

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