

Strays – Actual emergency steps

Fortunately, you'll probably never experience a true disaster in your lifetime, yet they do happen, and it's your hope that you'll be prepared should such an incident affect you or your family. If you *are* involved in a possible life-threatening situation, you need to act quickly, so the last thing you want is a thick book of action items to remember. Collected and compiled from FEMA, the Red Cross, CERT, and ARES, then summarized here, is a set of emergency steps you should take immediately after a disaster strikes:

1. **Use your head — stay calm** (your brain is your most important tool, and staying calm requires practice, which is what nets and drills are for)
2. **Check yourself for injuries** (adrenaline can deaden pain)
3. **Check household members for injuries** (or people nearby you at work or at the store)
4. **Call 911** (you might not get through, but you need to try)
5. **Check your place for damage** (wherever you are at the moment)
6. **Notify your Block Captain** (whaddaya mean you don't know who your Block Captain is?)
7. **Grab your go-kit and your 72-hour kit** (you DO have one, right?)
8. **Gather your family and leave your place** (if it makes sense to do so)
9. **Check your neighbors for injuries** (knock — no — POUND on their doors)
10. **Go to your assignment or shelter** (determined by your Incident Commander)
11. **Inform your out-of-state contact** (TEXT your out-of-state relative or friend, if you have cell service)
12. **Set up your radio and check in** (to your local net, ARES frequency, or ERC)
13. **Adjust these steps to suit the incident** (see number 1, and be flexible)

Notice that some of these steps require you to do a little thinking. They are not necessarily listed in the order you need, not all of them are applicable in every incident, and many useful tips have been omitted, requiring you to be *resourceful*.

Also note that your ham radio doesn't come into play until way down the list. But if that's the case, what's the difference between you and anybody else, who might not have a radio and a license? The difference is that you are familiar with how to use your radio during moments like these. And where did all this supposed familiarity and training come from? **From participating regularly in local nets and drills.** And of course you do, right?

