



Center for Catastrophe  
Preparedness & Response  
New York University

American Red Cross  
in Greater New York



Contacts:

Rob Polner  
New York University  
212-998-2337  
robert.polner@nyu.edu

Mike Virgintino  
American Red Cross in Greater New York  
212-875-2133  
virgintinom@arcgny.org

## NEW YORKERS SAY THEY ARE BETTER PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES, BUT MUCH MORE STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE

*Survey: Many Emergency Kits are Incomplete and Citizen Preparedness Plans Untested*

New York – May 23, 2006 – Four in ten New Yorkers are more prepared for an emergency than a year ago, but many still have yet to assemble critical safety supplies and information, according to a new report by the American Red Cross in Greater New York and New York University’s Center for Catastrophe Preparedness and Response (CCPR). Based on the key findings of this report, both the American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY) and NYU have announced expanded efforts to help New York prepare for emergencies.

“Residents of New York City say they are better prepared today than a year ago to cope with a major emergency or disaster, but we all still have so much more to accomplish,” said Theresa A. Bischoff, CEO, American Red Cross in Greater New York.

The report includes comprehensive survey data concerning New Yorkers’ perception of their own preparedness as well as the specific steps they claim to have taken to better prepare themselves and their households. These findings include:

- Half of New Yorkers polled have emergency supply kits, but many of these kits are incomplete;
- 63% of New Yorkers polled have an emergency plan, but rarely have they put their plan to a test run or practiced it;
- Many New Yorkers are taking preparedness steps in their homes, but few have all the necessary supplies.

“Through community education programs, such as Ready New York, the vast majority of New Yorkers recognize that preparing for an emergency can be the key to surviving one,” said Tim Raducha-Grace, Associate Director, New York University’s Center for Catastrophe Preparedness & Response. “However, our findings indicate that many citizens still lack critical emergency supplies, training, and well practiced plans.”

“This survey shows that preparedness messages are reaching, educating and helping New Yorkers, yet it tells us that additional activities, programs and communications are needed to reinforce the ‘be prepared’ message and to help the remaining residents understand the importance of emergency planning,” added Ms. Bischoff. “More good news is that most New Yorkers expressed a desire to receive information that explains effective emergency planning and we will continue to expand our efforts to provide them with clear, easy-to-follow preparedness instructions for individuals and families.”

The findings also include:

- A majority of New Yorkers polled are likely to follow the City’s guidance in a catastrophe: 81% are likely to follow evacuation orders from City government, while 90% would follow orders to stay in their homes during a catastrophe
- In the event of an evacuation, the majority of respondents (53%) are most likely to rely on cars or taxis to evacuate
- Fifty-eight percent of New Yorkers polled say they are prepared for an emergency that would require them to evacuate their homes and leave the immediate area for up to three days, yet 32 percent indicated that they don’t have emergency go bags ready with the necessary supplies to take with them.
- Those respondents with emergency go bags – supplies used in the case of an evacuation -- indicated that many are incomplete.

In response to this survey, the American Red Cross in Greater New York is committed to helping every household in New York City prepare for emergencies. ARC/GNY’s planned action includes:

- Expand the number of *Ready New York* and *Prepare New York* programs in all boroughs.

[*Ready New York* is a free two-hour event dedicated to preparing individuals and families for emergencies. Attendees receive a 45-minute emergency preparedness presentation followed by access to information supplied by emergency experts from the Fire Department, Police Department, and the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM). *Prepare New York* is a free 45-minute emergency preparedness presentation teaching New York City residents how to create a plan, build a supply kit, and keep loved ones safe and informed during times of disaster. A schedule of events can be found at [www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org)]

- Continue to educate the public on the importance of having readily accessible and updated home supplies for emergencies and for “Go Bags” if evacuation or temporary relocation is necessary. ARC/GNY will continue to provide guidance about the supplies needed in a “Go Bag” and will offer additional suggestions for

disaster preparedness tailored to various segments of the population such as senior citizens, children and having a bag ready for pets.

- Increase the dissemination of preparedness information to residents in all boroughs. ARC/GNY will aggressively broaden communication with citizens to help them respond to emergencies through programs offered by the Red Cross and those offered in schools and at community events. ARC/GNY will continue to be visible at public events to explain the way individuals and families can prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.
- Preparedness information will continue to be distributed on CDs and now also will be offered in DVD format and in multiple languages. Printed preparedness materials will be distributed in multiple languages.
- Increase the amount of preparedness information accessible on the ARC/GNY web site. A special Spanish language section with preparedness information will be created.

NYU has also announced that it will build on its existing research efforts to improve New York City preparedness by:

- Assessing the preparedness of small and medium sized business in New York  
In June, NYU and the ARC/GNY will release another comprehensive report on the preparedness of small and medium sized businesses in New York.
- Initiating new research on urban preparedness  
Recognizing NYU's unique characteristic of being one of the nation's premier research universities less than a mile from Ground Zero, NYU will launch a new project focusing on urban security issues.
- Expanding catastrophic preparedness research on organizations and vulnerable populations  
Building on existing research efforts on catastrophic preparedness, NYU will expand its efforts to help improve the preparedness of citizen groups and organizations.

For the more detailed information on this survey and this new report, visit [www.nyredcross.org/research](http://www.nyredcross.org/research) or [www.nyu.edu/ccpr](http://www.nyu.edu/ccpr).

The telephone survey of 1,000 adults age 18 and over living in New York City was conducted on behalf of CCPR and ARC/GNY by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between February 28 and March 15, 2006. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus four percent.

The American Red Cross in Greater New York helps nine million people in New York City and Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan Counties prevent, prepare for and

respond to emergencies. ARC/GNY provides immediate aid to more than 100,000 people affected by more than 3,000 emergencies a year – from fires and water main breaks, to building collapses and blackouts. The Red Cross also helps New Yorkers stay prepared for emergencies by offering hundreds of health and safety courses on such subjects as first aid, disaster preparedness, swim safety and adult/child CPR throughout the region. Preparedness outreach programs are conducted in partnership with the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and sponsored by the New York City Council. For more information, call 1-877 RED CROSS (1-877-733-2767), or visit [www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org).

In response to the events of September 11, 2001, the US Congress and the Department of Homeland Security provided funding to New York University to create a University-wide, cross-disciplinary efforts to improve preparedness and response capabilities to terrorist threats and catastrophic events. Drawing on each of its 14 schools, NYU created the Center for Catastrophe Preparedness and Response and initiated projects ranging from medical capacity during crises to legal issues related to security to first responder trauma response, among other projects, with the intent of generating research-based recommendations for public decision-making.

New York University, located in the heart of Greenwich Village, was established in 1831 and is one of America's leading research universities. It is one of the largest private universities, and has among the greatest number of international students, and sends more students to study abroad than any other college or university in the U.S. Through its 14 schools and colleges, NYU conducts research and provides education in the arts and sciences, law, medicine, business, dentistry, education, nursing, the cinematic and dramatic arts, music, public administration, social work, and continuing and professional studies, among other areas.