

Bainbridge Prepares Child Safety Team FAQ



How do we talk to kids about disasters?

There is a handout in the folder you received that provides information on how to talk about disasters with children of different ages. You know your children better than anyone. Answer questions truthfully but at the level your child can understand. Younger children live in the present and talking about disasters and preparing for them may be scary. Let them know that you are preparing and will ensure that there are adults ready to take care of them. Elementary aged children are more aware of time and can understand looking to the future. Consider having them help with your planning. For middle and high school age children involving them will help alleviate fear and empower them to help find solutions.

What is the Top 10 List? Why is it important? Where do I put this list?

The Top 10 List is your emergency contact list. For those of you with children in the Bainbridge School District, you may know this as the ABC information you provide each school year. The Top 10 list is a list of 10 people who you and your children are comfortable with should you not be available to pick up your child. It is best to focus on people in your neighborhood or those close to where your child goes to school. In the event of a disaster, you will want people who can get to your children quickly and on foot, as roads may be impassable. Remember to have a conversation with each of the folks on your Top 10 list to ensure that they are prepared to care for your child. And don't forget to talk with your kids about who is on the list.

What if you are off-Island when a disaster happens?

First of all, know that if a disaster happens while you are off-Island, we have a plan to care for your children until you can return. In a large earthquake, it is likely that the Agate Pass Bridge will collapse. Based upon new data regarding the impact of a large earthquake on the Puget Sound it is also likely that a quick return by water will not be possible. Realistically, it may be days to even weeks before the water in the Puget Sound settles enough that the US Coast Guard will allow boats to begin navigating the waters between Bainbridge and Seattle. This is why the Top 10 list is so important.

How will you support children?

The Child Safety Team has been working on this reunification plan for many years. We have members from most child serving organizations and are always looking to add new members. The 72-hour plan that Anne spoke about earlier will go into effect immediately after a disaster. If it happens during the school day, please know that the faculty and staff at your child's school is prepared to care for them at their school location for up to two days. On the third day, the faculty and staff will transport the remaining children, likely by foot, to the 100 building at Bainbridge High School. During the first two days, the Child Safety Team and Child Reunification Staff will be working to clean and set up the CRC and will be prepared to accept children on that third day. Once the CRC is open after activation, it will be staffed only with folks who are credentialed by the City. The CRC will have representatives from other BIP teams to assist us at the CRC including ham radio operators, members of the Medical Reserve Corps or Emergency Response Team, Psychological and Wellness to name a few.

How long will BIP care for my kids?

We plan to keep the CRC open until all children are reunited with their parents or someone from their Top 10 list.

What resources are available developing a family reunification plan?

Included in the packet you received today, there are several items to help you develop your plan.

What events could trigger the need for the Child Reunification Center?

The CRC would be activated in the case of a large-scale emergency, like an earthquake.

How do I sign up for emergency alerts?

COBI and BIP utilize a system called Nixle to communicate; simply text 98110 to 888777 from your cell phone. You won't get spammed as the only people who can issue alerts via Nixle are Emergency Manager Anne, Fire Chief Moravec, Police Chief Clark, and the City Manager.

What does my family need to have on hand?

You may have heard the term, Two-Weeks Ready. And while that is a great place to start, the fact is we live on an Island. BIP recommends that you be prepared for 3-4 weeks. The type of disaster that would isolate Bainbridge Island will also cause damage to the cities around us. It may take some time for help to arrive. There is a list on the BIP website. Also, BIP is running a Plan in A Year Challenge that started in January. Each month participants receive new challenge. There are prizes for folks who participate. You can find more information on the BIP website.

Where should I store important documents?

You should have a grab and go binder in your emergency kit with copies of all important documents, drivers' licenses, passports, insurance policies for example. Think about what document you would need to file an insurance claim after a disaster. What documents would the Medical Reserve Corps need to treat you and your family. You can also download these documents onto a thumb drive, which may be easier to carry but harder to access if we do not have electricity.

If a disaster happens on a non-school day, will the Child Reunification Center be activated?

Yes, in a large-scale disaster the CRC will be activated.

How to help organize your neighbors?

If you and your neighbors have not already done so, consider working together to Map Your Neighborhood. This program includes a step-by-step workbook to help you and your neighborhood be better prepared. The fact is our police and fire departments may be quickly overwhelmed in a large-scale emergency and participating in the Map Your Neighborhood program will allow you and your neighbors to be the first responders. Neighborhoods are considered a grouping of 20 or so households who get to know one another before a disaster and plan together. It is easy to get started and you will find more information on the BIP website.

Who will be supporting children at the Child Reunification Center? What training or experience will caregivers at the CRC have?

All volunteers at the CRC will be vetted and credentialed by the City. CRC team members will have basic first aid and basic psychological first aid. BIP has a robust training menu and all CRC credentialed volunteers are encouraged to take these training classes. Many of the CRC team will be faculty and staff from schools, day cares, and other extracurricular activities. The CRC will have Medical Reserve Corp and Psychological First Aid Teams on site.

How will my children know where to go if separated from school?

This is where the family reunification plan comes into play. Before a disaster, have a family dinner and talk about where you would meet after a disaster. BIP has HUBS stationed across the Island and these will be activated. Find out where the closest HUB is to your home and school. HUBS will be the place to go for information after a disaster.

We prepare for earthquakes, but what other disasters are most likely in our area?

Other disasters might include a wildfire, landslide, or flooding. The good news is that being prepared for an earthquake prepares you for almost anything, including a worldwide pandemic!

How will I know where to find my kids?

If a disaster happens during the school day, we ask that you go to your child's school. But please give the school a hour or so as they prepare for the reunification process. Children will stay at or near their schools until the third day when they will be escorted to the CRC.

How will communications work to get information to and from the CRC?

BIP has several teams working on communications. We will likely rely on members of the Bainbridge Emergency Auxiliary Radio Service Team for communications immediately after a disaster. The Tech Ops Team is working on more long term communications. The CRC will have communications with the Emergency Operations Center, even if we need to send runners from the CRC to the EOC.