



# FIRES, FLOODS, AND LOCKDOWNS, OH MY SAFEHOUSES AID IN DISASTER SURVIVAL

By MARY HAMNER

Utah is surrounded by mountains and land, which protect us from many natural occurrences that would damage our homes such as tornadoes, hurricanes and tsunamis. But those are not the only threats. We can also suffer from fires, electrical storms, flash floods and earthquakes.

According to the United States Fire Administration, the USFA, ([www.usfa.dhs.gov](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov)), tips that help prevent chemical household fires are "Look for flammable liquids, clean and place containers in a well-ventilated area and keep combustible liquids away from heat sources."

The tips for electrical safety: Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged, watch out for loose appliance cords, prongs and plugs, all appliances that are

emitting smoke or sparks should be repaired or replaced. And make sure so have a licensed electrician check your home for damages.

The USFA asks for citizens to remember to be careful when using candles, to install smoke alarms on every level in every home, to test the alarms every month, and replace batteries at least once a year.

Kristen Massic, drafting teacher, said, "Using steel frames for your stud walls can prevent fire."

Electromagnetic storms can be identified "by dark, towering clouds and distant thunder" according to the Think Quest ([library.thinkquest.org](http://library.thinkquest.org)). Electromagnetic storms can be very dangerous as the lighting

may igniting a house or tree that could start a series of fires in a neighborhood or possibly can fall onto a near by house.

However, fires and storms are not the only danger facing us. Flash floods are masses of water, moving fast,



that is created by a heavy rain-storm as stated on the

think quest website.

As stated on ThinkQuest.com, "This torrential downpour may transform a normally calm area into a powerful river of death in only a few short minutes."

This can lead to flooding of one's basement or house. One of the best ways to combat these new lake is with sandbags, high enough so that as little water as possible would be able to cross the strong wall of sand.

According to the United States Geography Survey (USGS) ([quake.usgs.gov](http://quake.usgs.gov)). "Earth scientists have shown that [the Wasatch fault] has repeatedly experienced strong earthquakes of magnitude 7 or higher and will continue to do so in the future."

This future earthquake will lead to a lot of devastation to Utah homes since almost 75 percent of Utah's population lives near the Wasatch Fault.

"Although no powerful earthquake has occurred on the Wasatch Fault for the past 150 years,

future events are certain. Strong bonds between residents, their church communities, and public agencies have created an effective network for disaster preparation unequalled in the United States," according to The U.S Geography Survey.

Think Quest suggests that to battle the massive destruction is to fasten shelves securely to walls, store heavier items on the bottom shelves, store flammable and fragile objects in closed cabinets, bolt and strap the water heater, repair any cracked walls or ceilings, and make sure to brace overhead light fixtures.

"An example to 'earthquake proof your hour kitchen would be to add latches on cupboards'," said Massic, "[Natural occurrences] occur and the best thing is to know how to evacuate a space. Nothing is ever 'guaranteed,'"

Utah has many dangers, but the best way to protect one's self, is to protect one's house.

## FIRES ADD HEAT TO SCHOOL DANGERS

By JENNIFER STALEY

In case of any natural disaster, or emergency, Jordan School District is prepared with detailed instructions for its administrators, teachers and students.

Administrators and teachers are given a specific set of instructions, each with plans for every kind of emergency, and how to handle it.

Should a fire befall a building, the district's plan begins with safe, accurate and calm evacuation. Students stay in class groups, with their teachers leading them to a specific area at least

200 yards away from the school.

To take extra precautions, fire drills are practiced, and students are educated on the matter. Students are encouraged not to re-enter the building, or leave their class groups.

Assistant principal George Welch said, "There is a system to making sure that the students and teachers are all safe."

Departments, Hospitals, and Police], and media. We have someone dealing with every aspect of human nature in these situations," said Welch

The Incident Management Re-

source Group developed a course for teachers to prepare them for any type of emergency. Establishing a chain of command in emergency situations is vital. In the Incident Action Plan for 'Fire', it states its goal and objectives to reaching its goal. The goal is to 'insure that all students and staff are safely evacuated from the interior of the school in the event of a fire.'

According to FEMA, each year, more than 4,000 Americans die and more than 25,000 are injured in fires, many of which could be prevented. Direct property loss due to fires is estimated at \$8.6 billion annually.

In 2002 37% of all school structure fires and 52% of middle and

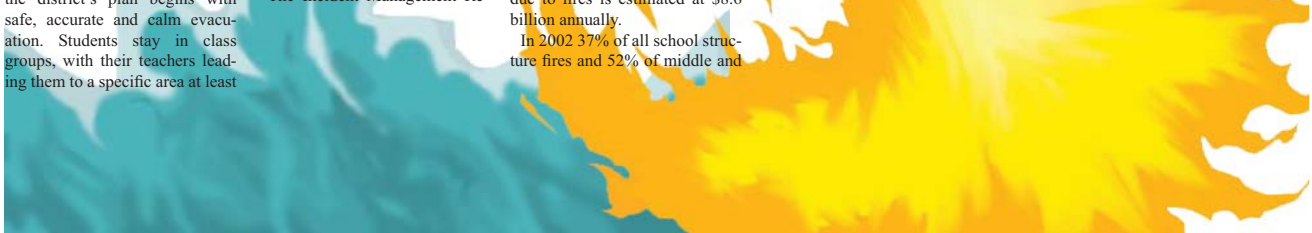
high school structure fires were incendiary or suspicious. Fatalities from school fires are rare but injuries per fire were higher in school structure fires than non-residential structure fires on average. The leading area of fire origin was the school lavatory or bathroom.

On Jordan School District's website ([www.jordandistrict.org](http://www.jordandistrict.org)) there are links, downloads and suggestions for government websites, safety and weather updates.

Though flooding is not common in Jordan School District, and, there is no Incident Action Plan for flooding, there are plans and guidelines set in place by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on what to do in any situation.

All floods are not alike. Some floods develop slowly, sometimes over a period of days. But flash floods can develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any visible signs of rain. Flash floods often have a dangerous wall of roaring water that carries rocks, mud, and other debris and can sweep away most things in its path. Overland flooding occurs outside a defined river or stream, such as when a levee is breached, but still can be destructive. Flooding can also occur when a dam breaks, producing effects similar to flash floods.

Through FEMA's website ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)) there are guidelines on what to do for food, water, shelter and transportation, for flooding and other natural disasters.





## Earthquakes Unpredictable, Deadly

By JORDAN JOLLEY

The earth is made up of layers. Earthquakes are caused by movement in the uppermost parts of the crust layer called faults, which cause the earth to literally move beneath our feet. According to UtahEarthquake, it is estimated that approximately 500,000 earthquakes happen in the world each year, only 100,000 can actually be felt, and around 100 of them cause damage.

The mountain ranges in Utah were primarily created by normal dip-slip faults. A large earth-

quake could cause a segment of the Wasatch fault line to drop 3 to 20 feet, according to Earthquake.org.

Earthquakes can happen anywhere in the state of Utah, not just along the Wasatch Front and about 700 earthquakes happen in Utah every year, though only about two percent is ever felt. Over the past 6,000 years, a large earthquake has occurred about every 400 years. Close to 600 years have passed since the last large quake.

According to the USGS website, earthquakes are a natural thing

that happen every day, and somewhere on the earth, and earthquake will happen today, possibly right now.

According to vice principal Curtis Hagen, a regular earthquake drill for RHS includes about a half minute of the drill sound and students getting under their desks, usually not followed by evacuation due to the fact that it could be safer for students to stay where they are.

"The most important thing is to protect students," says Hagen.

When it comes to protection in the school, the only thing we can

do is practice and be prepared, but no one really knows what will happen during a real situation.

Hagen also mentioned that the school needs to practice four drills a year, two of which are usual fire because they need to practice evacuation, and two that are shelter in place, such as a n

earthquake drill.

According to Hagen, teachers are given packets filled with all drill and safety procedures, and before school starts they take some time to practice the drills without students so that they know what to do.

Being prepared is a huge part of safety because no one here can really predict when and where it's going to happen, no matter how much information we have.

## Lockdowns Realistic School Threat

By AARON WOODS

A lockdown is potentially one of the most frightening situations a student could face while at school. Anything from a gunman, to a bomb threat could cause a school to enter a lockdown, and often times students are left in the dark.

Riverton High has only faced a lockdown once in its history.

Vice Principal Curtis Hagen recalls, "Years ago when I was a teacher here, a student called in a bomb threat. We were locked down in the gym after it had been cleared by police."

According to Hagen, four emergency drills are required per year, two evacuation drills (fire drills, and earthquake drills fall under this category), and two of the schools choice. This could range from lockdown drills, to gas leaks.

In the event of a lockdown,

RHS's emergency preparedness manual states students and teachers should lock all surrounding doors, conceal windows, stay in an area that provides maximum physical protection, perform a headcount of all students, and limit sounds such as talking and phones. When a reliable source such as a teacher, principal, police officer, or firefighter gives the "all clear," another headcount should be performed to identify students before evacuating the building. This procedure is the same for all schools falling within the Jordan School District boundaries.

Students are advised not to call parents during a lockdown, because they will not be able to leave the premise until the lockdown is over.

The United States Internet Crime Task Force's mission is to provide safe schools, inside and out of the school environment, "[We hope to] Provide every child in the US with a learning environment that is free from

outside violence through education and technology."

While the USICT realizes the impossibility of protecting every child from every danger, they hope to inform children and parents of real life dangers, like school lockdowns and that their advocacy will make a significant impact.

The USICT is focusing on creating a national standardized lockdown procedure that should help schools create lockdown guidelines that would be close to failproof.

Lockdowns could be one of the most unpredictable events to happen within a school but if students follow the manual, everything should run smoothly, and hopefully free of injury, or death.

