



September 2007

**McCormick Tribune Foundation
Disaster Preparedness Survey
Summary of Findings**

Introduction

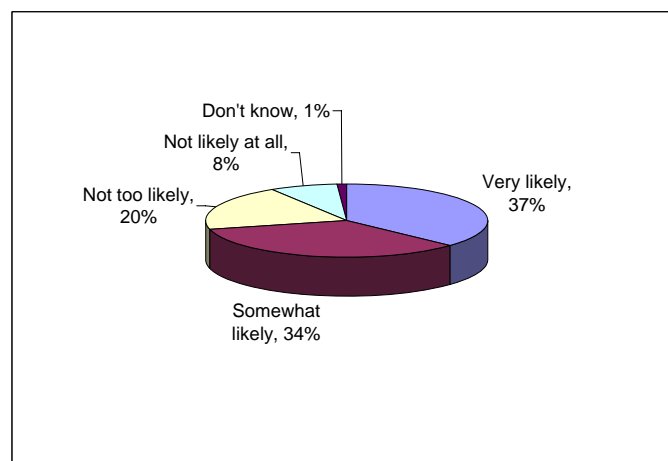
The McCormick Tribune Foundation is committed to strengthening civic health by helping citizens become more informed, responsible and engaged. The catastrophe caused by hurricane Katrina helped reveal the difficulties of coping with disaster, both for government agencies and for individual citizens who are ill-prepared.

To help raise awareness of the need for preparedness and what this involves for the average citizen, the McCormick Tribune Foundation conducted a survey of Americans on disaster and preparedness issues. Although the Foundation approached some of the questions in a light-hearted way, our intent was not to treat this very serious subject lightly, but rather to make the topic somewhat less frightening, and therefore easier for individuals to consider and take action rather than ignore.

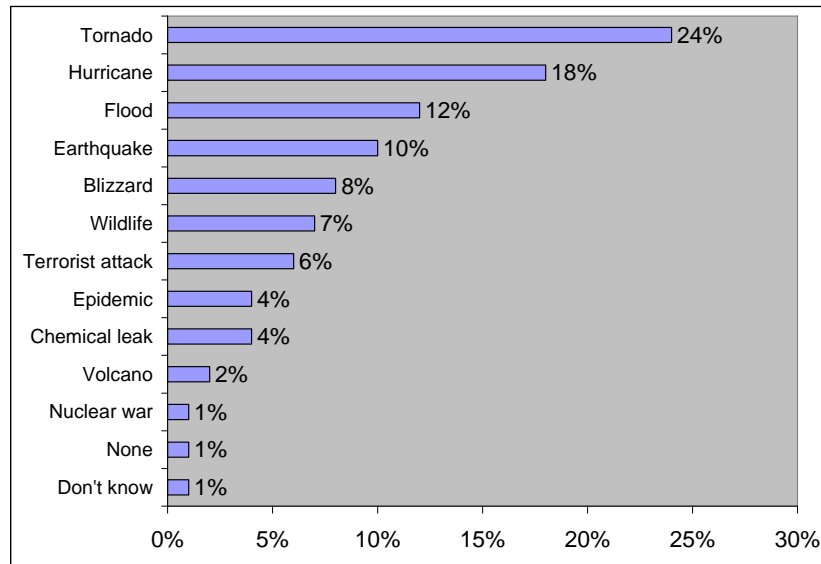
The survey, conducted by Opinion Research Corp., interviewed 1,049 randomly selected American adults by telephone Aug. 24-27, 2007. Results were weighted based on age, gender, region and race to accurately represent the total population of the U.S. The margin of error for the survey was plus or minus 3.1 percentage points with a confidence level of 95%. Note: percentages shown may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding.

Likelihood of Disaster

A large majority of Americans believe that their own community is likely to suffer from some type of disaster situation – either natural or manmade -- within the next decade. More than one-third (37%) think this is very likely, and another third say it is somewhat likely. Less than one-third think it is unlikely. People in the South (81%) were more likely than those in other regions to anticipate some type of disaster hitting their community.



A wide range of types of disaster or emergency are cited by Americans as likely to hit their community. Most often mentioned was tornadoes, cited by one in four (24%), followed by hurricanes (18%). Flood and earthquake each were mentioned by about one in ten Americans, and slightly fewer mentioned blizzards or wildfires. Only 6% of Americans listed a terrorist attack as the most likely type of catastrophe to affect their own community in the next ten years. Only 4% mentioned a disease epidemic such as bird flu, or a toxic or chemical leak or explosion. Not surprisingly, only 2% said a volcano was most likely, and only 1% mentioned nuclear war.



Prized Possessions

Asked what possessions they would take with them if a disaster occurred and they had to evacuate their homes within 30 minutes, the largest response was important legal documents or some type of identification. Documents or identification were mentioned by more than one-third (35%) of Americans; these included items such as wills, deeds, financial statements, bank account information and birth certificates.

Mentioned next most often, by almost three out of ten (29%), were personal family history and memorabilia, especially family photographs or in some cases videotapes.

Slightly more than one in four (26%) mentioned that they would take children, or, in a few cases, other family members. Only 6% explicitly said they would take their husband or wife, although many probably took this for granted.

Also mentioned by more than one-fourth (26%) were pets or animals. In some cases, although people failed to mention their pets, they did mention that they would take pet food, so we assumed they would take their pet as well.

Almost one in four (24%) also mentioned that they would take clothing. Roughly one in ten specifically said they would take cash, food and water.

Unfortunately, relatively small numbers of people mentioned items such as a flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries, medicines or a first aid kit. On the other hand, even fewer (4%) mentioned that they would take a gun, while 3% would take a Bible.

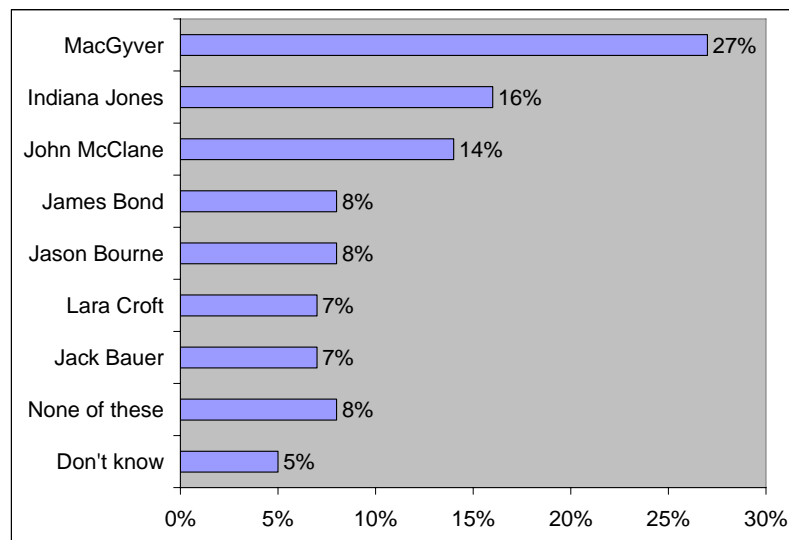
Possessions people would take with them	Percent mentioning
LEGAL DOCUMENTS	35%
PHOTOGRAPHS	29%
CHILDREN	26%
PETS	26%
CLOTHES	24%
MONEY	14%
FOOD	11%
WATER	8%
COMPUTER/LAPTOP	7%
WIFE/HUSBAND	6%
EMERGENCY KIT	6%
CELL PHONE	5%
FLASHLIGHT	4%
WEAPONS/GUN	4%
MEDICINES	4%
JEWELRY	4%
CAR	3%
WALLET/PURSE	3%
BIBLE	3%

Among the more unusual items mentioned were: “dance shoes and dance equipment,” “fine metals,” golf clubs, a spinning wheel, a microwave oven, make-up, “my mom’s Virgin Mary statue,” “PlayStation 2,” a set of coins, videogames, and “a Red Sox sweatshirt.”

Help from Heroes

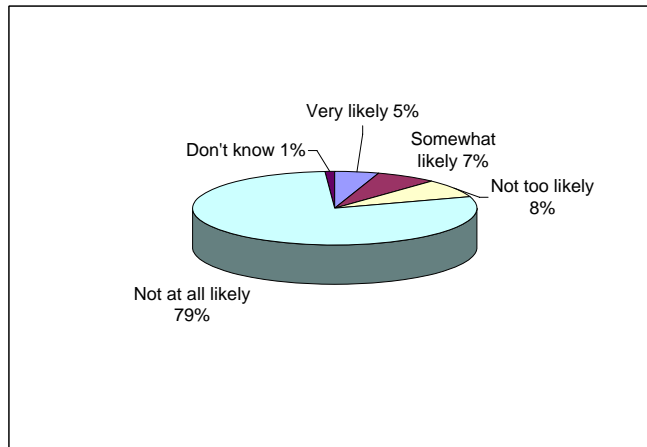
For fun, we asked Americans which of seven popular modern fictional heroes from TV movies they would prefer to have with them to help if a disaster struck their community. The list of fictional characters included: MacGyver, the character played by Richard Dean Anderson on the TV show of the same name; Indiana Jones, the movie character played by Harrison Ford; John McClane, the hero of the Die Hard movies played by Bruce Willis; Jason Bourne, the movie character played by Matt Damon; Lara Croft, the role played by Angelina Jolie in the movie Tomb Raider; Jack Bauer, the hero of the TV show 24, played by Kiefer Sutherland, and finally, James Bond.

Although a number of these characters have received a great deal of publicity recently due to the release of new movies, the clear winner of this competition is MacGyver, selected by more than one in four Americans. The MacGyver character was known for his ability to escape from tight spots relying on his own ingenuity and whatever simple materials were at hand. Perhaps notably, the MacGyver character typically avoided using violence when possible. Named second most often was Indiana Jones, the character played by Harrison Ford in three popular movies, followed by John McClane, the character played by Bruce Willis in the Die Hard series of movies.



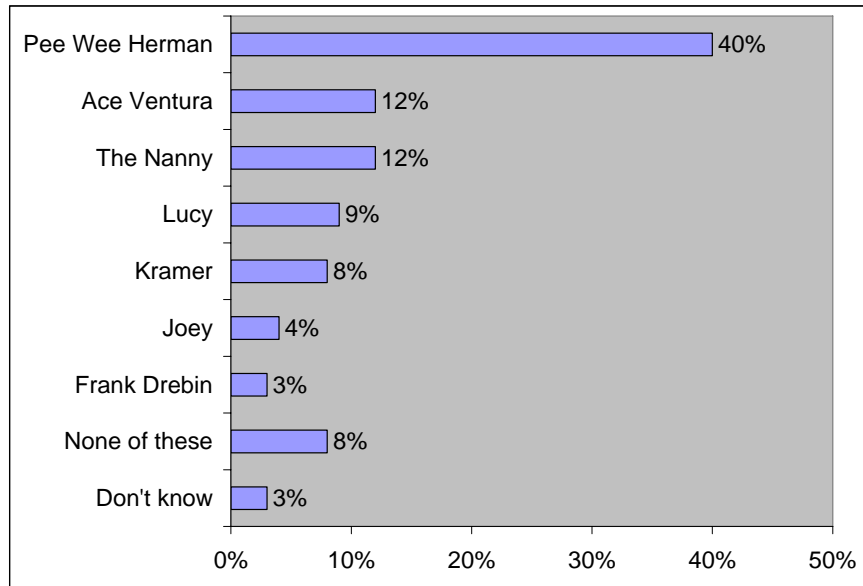
As a reality check, respondents also were asked about the likelihood that one of these fictional characters would actually be able to help them if a disaster occurred in their community. Although four out of five (79%) said that help from a fictional character was not at all likely, disturbingly, one out of five Americans did not say this; one in 20 (5%) described this as very likely, slightly more (7%) said this was somewhat likely, and slightly more (8%) said this was not too likely (but presumably possible). Although we do not know if these answers were given in the spirit of humor, it does raise questions about the grasp of reality of some Americans.

Likelihood of Being Helped by a Fictional Character



In addition to fictional heroes, we also asked Americans about some other characters from movies or TV that might be less desirable to have as companions in a disaster situation. Respondents were asked which of seven characters they would least prefer to be with under these circumstances. The choices offered were: Pee Wee Herman, the character played by Paul Reubens in movies and TV; Ace Ventura, the role played by Jim Carrey in the movie Ace Ventura, Pet Detective; The Nanny, the title role played by Fran Drescher on the TV show; Lucy, the character played by Lucille Ball on I Love Lucy; Kramer, from the TV Show Seinfeld, played by Michael Richards; Joey, played by Matt LeBlanc on the TV series Friends, and Frank Drebin, the lead role in The Naked Gun movies and TV's Police Squad, played by Leslie Nielsen.

As with the heroes, there was a clear winner, or in this case, loser. Four out of ten Americans said the Pee Wee Herman character was the one they would least like to be with in a disaster situation. All others trailed well behind, with Ace Ventura, The Nanny, Lucy and Kramer all mentioned by about one in ten.

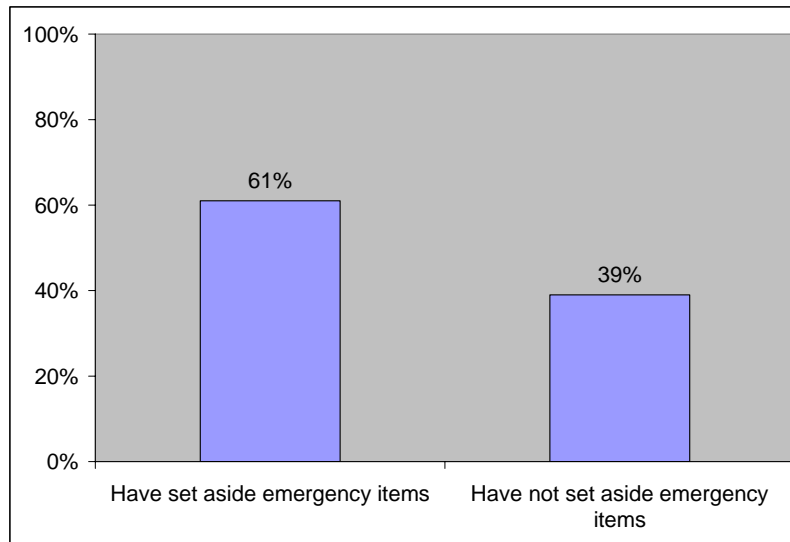


Emergency Supplies and the Cost of “Life Insurance”

Perhaps surprisingly, a solid majority of Americans said that they have set aside a number of items that could be critical in helping them survive a disaster. Six out of ten (61%) say they have set aside a flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries, a first aid kit, water and several days worth of food that will not spoil. Only four in ten (39%) admit that they have not put all of these items aside for an emergency. While these numbers are encouraging, we should note that other recent surveys of Americans on emergency preparedness have found that the number of those who have prepared such a kit of emergency supplies is considerably lower, although differences may be due to question wording.*

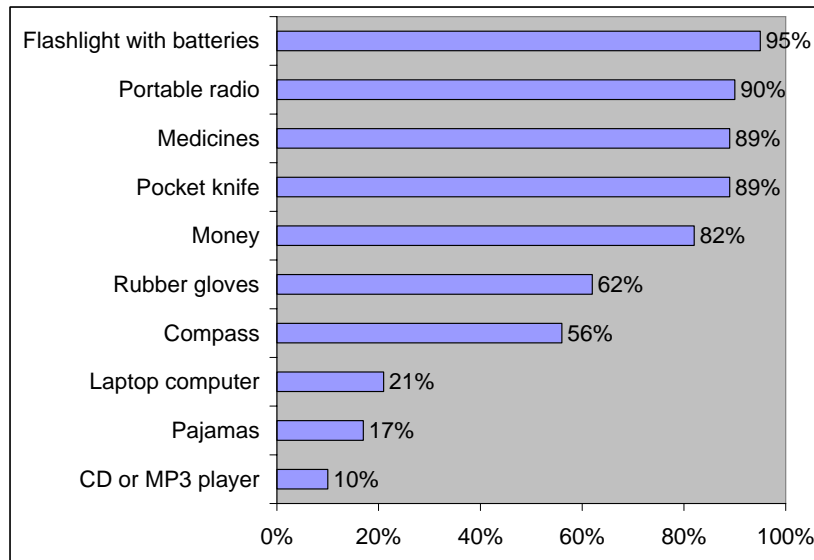
* A Harris Poll conducted online April 10-16, 2007 found that only 28% of Americans said they had “put together a disaster supplies kit with water, food, medicine and other supplies.”

Have emergency supplies in case of disaster



Most Americans seem to have a fairly good sense of what belongs in an emergency kit and what is less important. Given a list of ten items, nine out of ten people said a flashlight with batteries, portable radio, medicine and pocket knife are essential items for a disaster kit. Four out of five also identified money as an essential item. Also included on the list were rubber gloves, often included as part of a first aid kit, which six in ten identified as essential. A majority also said that a compass was an essential item. Only about one in five Americans said that a computer or laptop was essential to have in an emergency kit, and slightly fewer said that pajamas were essential. One in ten said a CD or MP3 player was an essential item in a disaster.

Essential items for an emergency kit



In connection with emergency supply kits, Americans were asked to estimate the cost of purchasing a number of items that could help them survive, that is, items that might literally provide “life insurance” in the event of a disaster. Items included a flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries, first aid kit, ten gallons of water and three days supply of non-perishable food. Most people estimated that the cost of these supplies was \$50-\$100. The average (median) estimated cost was \$75.

For purposes of comparison, we also asked Americans how much they pay **per month** for life insurance. Slightly more than half (56%) pay for life insurance on a monthly basis and also were able to estimate how much they pay for this insurance; 41% either said they pay nothing, have no life insurance or are unsure how much they pay monthly for it (11%). Of those able to offer an estimate, 28% say they pay \$25 or less for life insurance each month, and conversely, almost three-fourths spend more than \$25 every month for life insurance. Four in ten spend more than \$75 dollars every month on their life insurance policy. The average (median) monthly cost of life insurance was \$50, i.e., slightly less than the estimated one-time cost of a set of potentially life-saving supplies.

For another comparison, people were asked about the monthly cost of cable or satellite TV service. Almost four out of five (79%) Americans purchase such a service and were able to estimate the monthly cost. Only 21% of Americans said they either paid nothing for cable or satellite TV, or they don’t have this service, or they were unable to estimate the monthly costs (compared to 41% who said one of these about life insurance).

Costs for cable or satellite TV tend to fall in a more narrow range than costs for life insurance. For life insurance, 52% say they pay \$26-\$100 per month, while for TV, 84% pay in this range monthly. The average (median) monthly cost of cable or satellite service was \$60, also slightly less than the estimated one-time cost of a set of potentially life-saving supplies.

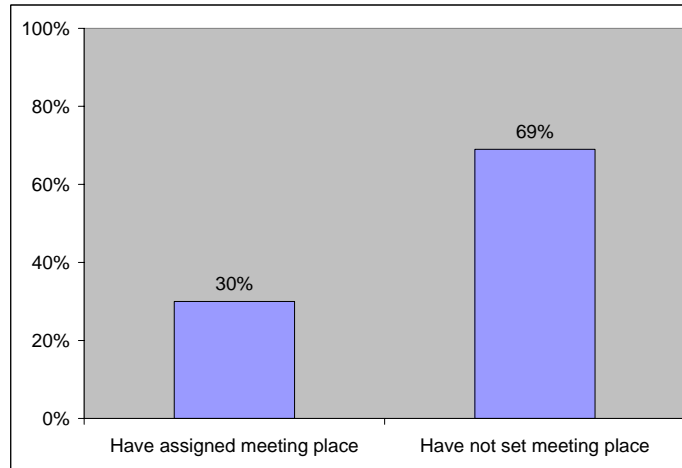
Cost range	Estimated one time cost	Estimated monthly cost	
	Emergency supplies	Life Insurance*	Cable/satellite TV**
\$1-\$25	9%	28%	7%
\$26-\$50	24%	25%	37%
\$51-\$75	22%	9%	25%
\$76-\$100	21%	16%	22%
\$101-\$150	7%	10%	7%
\$151+	16%	13%	3%
Average (median)	\$75	\$50	\$60

* Percentages calculated based on those with life insurance and able to make an estimate of monthly cost, i.e., excludes “pay nothing,” “don’t know,” and “do not have life insurance.” Base = 565

** Percentages calculated based on those with cable or satellite TV and able to make an estimate of monthly cost, i.e., excludes “pay nothing,” “don’t know,” and “have no cable/satellite TV.” Base = 787

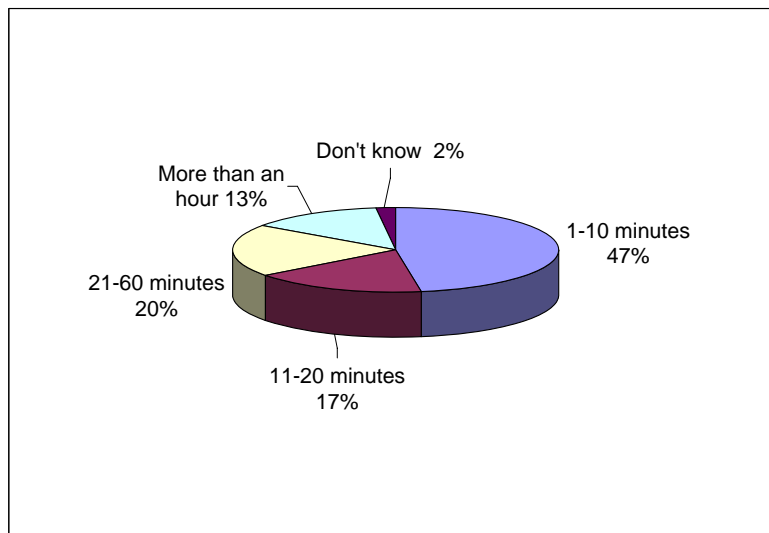
An Agreed Upon Emergency Meeting Place

An aspect of emergency planning where most people have not made the appropriate preparations is in establishing a plan with family members or others on where to meet in the event that normal communications have been disrupted, as sometimes happens in a disaster. More than two-thirds (69%) of Americans say they have not had such a discussion with loved ones or decided on a meeting location, while only three in ten (30%) have done so.



To explore this topic further, and find out whether this was a difficult decision or not, respondents were asked how much time they thought it would take them to have this conversation and decide on a meeting place to determine whether this was a major obstacle to formulating a plan. Almost half (47%) of Americans said this discussion and decision would take them no more than ten minutes, and a majority said it would take 15 minutes at most. Only about one in ten said it would take more than one hour. So, while most Americans have not done this, the time required is probably not a major obstacle.

Time Required to Choose a Meeting Place



Finally, Americans who had lived through some type of disaster were asked to describe what was most frightening, most surprising or most different from the conditions we experience in normal every day life. Roughly half said they had been through some disaster or emergency situation including large scale disasters such as flood, hurricanes, 9/11, volcanic eruption or war, or, in some cases, more contained disasters such as being on an airplane struck by lightning and personal disasters such as a house fire.

Responses to this question were many and varied. Probably the most common answer was the loss of power, electricity or lights, mentioned by about one in ten people (11%). Other frequently mentioned answers included the destruction of everything (4%), lack of drinkable water (4%), loss of life (3%), no telephone service (3%) and the difficulty of getting from one place to another (2%).

Many people said the most striking thing they observed was the way other people reacted to the disaster. In most cases, these comments concerned the willingness of people to work together and help each other, whether they knew one another or not.

“How everybody pulls together. Everyone kind of unites, even if you don't really know your neighbor. People become more compassionate.”

“How people come together to help one another.”

“People stepping up to the plate and helping.”

“There were so many people who wanted to help our community. I was so amazed.”

“Everyone in our community helped each other, and no one waited for the government's help.”

On the other hand, others noted the darker side of human behavior including selfishness, lawlessness, fear and taking advantage of others.

“I have lived through four hurricanes, and the worst (things) were the reactions of the people. Stealing. People can be so horrible.”

“The way people take advantage of the situation, stealing and con jobs.”

“Widespread panic.”

“The absence of law and order.”

Many comments referred to being forced to remain in one place, unable to go anywhere or communicate with others, and the resulting loneliness and isolation. Others were in the opposite position of having no place to go or had trouble finding any shelter or a place to sleep.

“The difficulty of finding shelter in a blizzard.”

“The feeling of being alone. Abandonment.”

“Complete isolation from people and vehicles.”

“A blizzard. Got stuck in the house.”

“The congestion. The crowds. The sheer volume of people.”

“Finding a shelter or safe place after a hurricane.”

“I was locked in my parents’ room for three days.”

Many others cited the unavailability of supplies, and breakdowns in the infrastructure that prevented regular distribution of basic supplies.

“Lack of beer.”

“No water and food in the stores.”

“How difficult it was to feed my family or get food.”

“The infrastructure that went down. The lack of water.”

“Basic sanitary needs and lack of communication.”

“No water, no food. No one would drive the buses to take the people out.”

“The tremors. The panic and chaos. Everything was closed. Nothing was available. There were no services available.”

“The state of mind, the panic of the people. The state of unpreparedness.”

“How slowly people moved – they were in shock -- before they realized what they need to do. The lack of supplies.”

Many noted the surprisingly destructive power of nature.

“The devastation from a tornado. The homeless and the amount of destruction it did.”

“The complete absence of landmarks.”

“You couldn’t see due to the smoke. There was no work, no business, no communication.”

“The noise, because the tornadoes went through the place and the noise is horrible.”

“The aftershocks from the earthquake, keeping you on edge.”

“The windows were blown out. Everything was wet. You couldn’t contact your neighbors.”

“Water coming up to the windows.”

“It was the volcano. The store running out of food. It stayed dark for about 48 hours. It created its own lightening. Just the total amount of ash that fell in our house and vehicle.”

“It was the noise of the earthquake. It sounds like a locomotive coming right at you.”

“The incredible calm. The absolute silence.”

In many cases, people noted that the uncertainty of the situation was most distressing. This included uncertainty about what would happen next during the disaster, as well as uncertainty about how long it would take for things to get back to normal.

“Uncertainty about when everything will be resolved and back to normal.”

“Not knowing what is going to happen next.”

“You don’t know where to go.”

“The disorder of what was going on.”

“The feeling of helplessness. How long it took to get help.”

Most heartbreaking were comments about loss, of people, of things, of a way of life.

“You have to evacuate and you don’t know if you will ever return to your home.”

“Staying separated from my family.”

“Not knowing where my family is.”

“Not finding loved ones.”

“Leaving everything behind.”