

Emergency Preparedness Guide

Get a kit. Make a plan. Be informed.



American Red Cross



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Disasters happen.

Earthquakes and other disasters are a reality in Southern California. If the Big One or another major disaster takes place here, you should be ready to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of three days until outside assistance arrives. Your chances of survival are increased by being prepared — at home, in the workplace, at school and on the road. This guide will assist you in getting ready.



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MYTH

“Big earthquakes always happen in the early morning!”

It's common for people to notice the earthquakes that fit the pattern and forget the ones that don't. Earthquakes can strike at any time throughout the day.



Get a kit

There are two types of emergency supplies kits:

Personal kit: Three days of supplies for one person in a bag or backpack. Keep a kit at home, one in your car and one at work.

Family kit: Two weeks of supplies for the entire family in a sturdy container. Keep at home.

Most important supplies. Start with these items:

- **Water** – one gallon per person per day for a minimum of three days
- **Food** – items that don't need to be refrigerated or cooked
- **First aid kit** – include any prescription and over-the-counter medications

Additional supplies:

- Flashlight (battery or alternative-powered)
- Radio (battery or alternative-powered)
- Extra batteries
- Copies of important documents
- Family contact information
- Cash
- Pet supplies
- Hygiene items
- Multi-purpose tool and work gloves
- Comfort items, such as toys, games, family photos



Review your supplies every six months. Replace any items nearing expiration dates. Assemble your own kit or buy one at www.redcrossstore.org.

“By the bed” mini-kit:

Keep a sturdy pair of shoes, a flashlight and an extra pair of glasses (if you wear them) in a bag attached to the foot of your headboard. If an emergency strikes at night, you'll be able to walk across debris and see where you're going.

Water

After a major disaster you may not have access to clean water. It is important to store plenty of extra water, and know how to access alternative sources of water.

Alternative sources of water include:

- Melted ice cubes
- Liquid in canned vegetables
- Water stored in your water heater – To drain, first shut off the gas or electricity supply, and turn off the water intake valve. Next open the drain at the bottom of the tank and turn on a hot water faucet in your house, to let air into the system.
- Water stored in your pipes – To drain, first shut off the main water valve for your home. Next, open a faucet at the highest level in your home to let the air into the plumbing and then take water from the lowest faucet in the house.
- Water can be purified by boiling for three to five minutes.

FACT

In a power outage, cordless phones won't work. A corded, non-electric phone will. Keep one at home in case of emergencies.



Make a plan

After a disaster, basic services may be unavailable. Plan for power outages, limited communication, road closures, lack of clean water and a delay in help from emergency responders.

☛ Talk

- Talk with your family, friends and co-workers about how to prepare for and respond to emergencies.
- Learn each person's needs and abilities. Identify your risks and vulnerabilities.
- Identify each person's role and plan to work together as a team.

☛ Plan

- Identify two exit routes from every room in your home. In a disaster, your primary route may be blocked.
- Choose two places to meet up after a disaster.
 - One should be near your home, in case of a local emergency like a fire.
 - One should be outside your neighborhood, in case your entire area is affected by a larger disaster.
- Choose an out-of-state contact. Everyone in your family should have the contact's phone number, to check in as safe. After a disaster, local phone lines may be down or jammed. It may be easier to make a long distance call than a local one.
- After a disaster, try email or text messaging – they may work even if phones don't. Store emergency contact information in your cell phone under "ICE" for In Case of Emergency. Keep a landline with a corded phone, which doesn't need electricity.
- Consider insurance. Your residential policy may not cover damage caused by a disaster. In most cases, damage from a flood, earthquake or tsunami is not covered by your homeowners policy. A separate policy is required.



☛ Practice

- Practice earthquake and fire drills twice a year. It's easy to remember to do it when you change your clocks.
- Practice escaping your home twice a year. Use both of your exit routes. Bring your emergency kit and pets, as you would in a real disaster. Make it fun for kids by having a picnic with your emergency supplies. Be sure to replace the supplies.

FACT

For even more information, get an NOAA Weather radio. It broadcasts information from your nearest National Weather Service, as well as information for all kinds of emergencies, including earthquakes, chemical spills and Amber Alerts. You'll need a special radio receiver or scanner capable of picking up the signal.



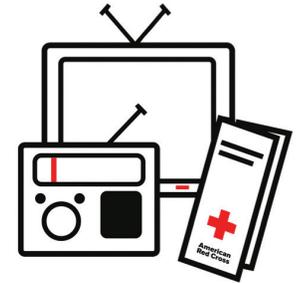
Be informed

Know your risks

We're all at risk for earthquakes and house fires. If you live near the coast, you may also be at risk for tsunamis. In many Southern California neighborhoods, you may be vulnerable to wildfires.

Know how you'll be notified

The Emergency Alert System will broadcast on KNX 1070 AM and KFI 640 AM. County officials also use a "reverse 911" system, which will call you if your area is at risk. Your landlines are already registered. To register cell phones and email, go to your county's website.



Know your nearest resources

Call 211 to find your nearest fire station, police station and hospital. Keep their non-emergency phone numbers by your telephone and stored in your cell phone.

Know your surroundings

- Install smoke detectors outside each bedroom of your home. Learn how to test them. Replace the batteries every six months. Keep extra batteries.
- Keep at least one fire extinguisher in your home. To learn how to use it, make an appointment at your local fire station.
- Know how to shut off your water, power and gas. Do not shut off the gas unless you know a gas line has ruptured or you smell gas. Your local utility will have to turn it back on.
- Do a "hazard hunt" in your home. Find items that might fall during an earthquake and secure them. Look for fire hazards, like frayed wires and overloaded outlets, and make them safe.

Know how to respond in a disaster

- **Earthquake:** Drop, cover and hold on.
- **Fire:** Stay low and feel doors for heat. Get out and stay out.

Know how to save a life

- **CPR and First Aid** – At least one person in your household should learn CPR and First Aid. Call 1-800-RED CROSS to sign up for a class.
- **Donate Blood** – Call 1-800-RED CROSS to make an appointment.
- **Volunteer** – To volunteer with the American Red Cross, go to www.redcross.org.
- **CERT** – Learn basic disaster response skills by joining your local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). To learn more, go to www.citizencorps.gov/cert.

MYTH

“During an earthquake, the doorway is the safest place to be.”

In an earthquake, don't try to get under a doorway. It's no safer than any other part of the house. In fact, it could be dangerous. Trying to move very far while the earth is shaking will probably make you fall. In the doorway, a swinging door could hit you or crush your fingers in the jamb. You're better off taking cover under a nearby table or desk.



Preparing for disasters

Earthquake

➤ Before

- Don't hang mirrors or framed art over your bed. Move your bed away from windows.
- Bolt tall furniture and electronic equipment to wall studs with straps.
- Move heavy objects to lower shelves.
- Install latches on your cabinets to prevent them from opening in a quake.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Bolt your house to its foundations.
- Secure your water heater to wall studs.
- Identify safe locations in each room to take cover.

➤ During

- **Drop, cover and hold on.** Drop wherever you are. Crawl to a sturdy piece of furniture and take cover. Cover your head and neck. Hold on to a leg of the furniture. If the furniture moves, you should move with it.
- If you're not near cover, crouch by an interior wall.
- If you're in bed, stay there and cover your head with a pillow.
- If you're driving, calmly pull over to a clear area away from bridges and overpasses, and put the car in park.
- If you're outdoors, move to an open area away from buildings, trees and wires, then drop and cover.



➤ After

- Stay alert.
- Be prepared for aftershocks. Some aftershocks may be strong. **Drop, cover and hold on** for each one.
- Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake. Be ready to extinguish small fires. Look around your home for damage.
- If you feel at all unsafe, get everyone out. Don't return home until local authorities say it's safe.
- If your home suffered damage, contact your homeowners insurance company to begin the inspection and claim process.

MYTH

“If I don’t wake up from my smoke alarm, the smell of smoke will wake me up.”

More than one in three people who die in a fire never woke up before they sustained their fatal injuries. Smoke in a typical home fire contains a deadly mix of gases that can actually drug a person into deeper sleep!



Residential fire

Most residential fires start in the kitchen. Never leave the stove unattended while you’re cooking.

➤ Before

- Install smoke detectors outside each sleeping area and change the batteries every six months.
- Don’t overload electrical outlets.
- Keep flammable items like cloth or paper away from heat sources.
- If you have bars on doors or windows, make sure they have internal quick-release devices.

➤ During

- If a fire starts in a pot or pan, don’t throw water on it. Cover the pot with a lid to cut off oxygen, then move it off heat.
- To evacuate from a fire stay low to avoid smoke and feel closed doors for heat. If the door feels hot, there’s fire on the other side. Use another escape route. Get out quickly and stay out.
- Don’t linger to call 911. Call from a neighbor’s house.
- Never go back inside for possessions, pets or even other people.
- If you’re trapped inside, move to the room furthest from the fire. Stuff a cloth under the door to block out smoke. Hang a light-colored cloth out the window to signal to firefighters for help.

Wildfire

➤ Before

- Find out if your area has experienced wildfires in the past. Build your home with fire-resistant materials like tile, stucco and brick. Landscape with native, fire-resistant plants. Keep a “safe zone” of 30 feet around your home, with no dry branches, dead plants or flammable items like propane or firewood.
- Keep your roof and gutters clean.
- Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street.

➤ During

- If there are reports of wildfires in your area, be prepared to leave quickly. Back your car into the garage or driveway so it’s facing the exit route.
- Listen to radio and television news.
- Confine pets to one room so you can gather them quickly.
- If you’re told to evacuate, do so. Don’t try to “tough it out,” and become someone who first responders need to rescue.
- Don’t return home until local authorities declare it safe.

Landslide

Landslides take place most often where they've happened in the past. They're also more common in areas recently burned by a wildfire.

- Be aware of your area's risk. Watch patterns of water runoff near your home. Landslides are more likely after heavy or sustained rain, or rapid snowmelt.
- After heavy rain, listen for unusual sounds which might indicate moving debris.
- Evacuate if you suspect a landslide.

Tsunami

A tsunami can be triggered by an offshore earthquake. If you're by the shore when a quake hits, move inland and to higher ground. The West Coast and Pacific Tsunami Warning Centers may issue an advisory, a watch or a warning.

- An advisory states that an earthquake has occurred, which may generate a tsunami.
- A watch states that a tsunami was or may have been generated but is at least two hours away.
- A warning states that a tsunami was or may have been generated that could cause damage. Area residents are advised to evacuate. Another warning sign is ocean water rapidly receding. Move to safer ground.

Flood

Floods can be caused by heavy or sustained rainfall.

- In case of flooding, move to higher ground.
- Do not walk or drive through moving water. Even a few inches can knock you off your feet.

Biological or chemical threat

In case of a biological or chemical threat, authorities may advise you to shelter in place. This is not the same as going to a bomb shelter, or a Red Cross shelter. You'll shelter at home.

- Close all doors, windows and air vents.
- Use duct tape to secure plastic sheeting around all cracks or sills where air could enter. If you don't have tape and plastic, use wet cloths.
- Stay above ground – toxic air is often heavier.
- Listen to the radio or television for updates.

Access & functional needs

Individuals who are vision impaired, hearing impaired or mobility-impaired should take additional steps to prepare for disasters.

- Complete an honest assessment of your abilities and needs. Would you be able to climb out a window if necessary? Can you hear emergency announcements?
- If you anticipate the need for special assistance from first responders after a disaster, register now with SNAP (Specific Needs Awareness Planning), Los Angeles County's voluntary disaster registry (SNAP) at www.snap.lacounty.gov.
- Write out an emergency information card, including any medications you take, allergies, sensory or mobility impairments, equipment you need and emergency contact numbers.
- If you live in an assisted living facility, find out what its emergency plans are.
- If you're mobility impaired, identify two accessible escape routes.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep a wheelchair patch kit to repair a flat. If you use a motorized chair, keep a non-powered backup chair.
- Form a support team of at least three different people to check on you after a disaster. Exchange house keys. Tell each other when you're out of town. Teach your support team how to use any home medical equipment.
- Write an information card which includes the best way to communicate with you or move you if necessary.
- If you're hearing-impaired, install smoke detectors with strobe light alarms. Also, keep a pen and paper in your emergency kit to communicate with first responders.
- If you're blind, mark your emergency supplies with Braille. Keep an extra cane by your bed.



The website www.accessibleemergencyinfo.com has preparedness information in Braille and videos in ASL.

Seniors

Whether you live alone or depend on a caregiver, it is vital to have a plan for what to do before, during and after a disaster.

Discuss emergency plans with family, friends and neighbors. It is also important to let them know about your risks and vulnerabilities.

When creating your emergency plan, know the answers to the following questions and plan accordingly.

- Do you live alone?
- Do you drive or own a car?
- How good is your sense of smell?
- Do you have any physical, medical, thinking or learning limitations?
- Has your sense of hearing or vision decreased?
- Are you reliant upon any medical equipment?
- Are you reliant upon a caregiver?

You should also be informed about your community's disaster plans. Ask local officials about your area's response and evacuation plans in the event of an emergency. If available, take advantage of advance registration systems in your area for those who need help during community emergencies. If you receive home care, speak with your case manager to see what their plan is in times of emergency and how they can assist you.

In addition to the standard items that should be in your emergency kit, you should consider storing your supplies in a container or bag that has wheels.

- Label any equipment – such as wheelchairs, canes or walkers – that you would need with your name, address and phone numbers.
- Keep hearing aids, glasses or assistive devices near the bedside. You may want to attach the equipment with Velcro as some disasters, particularly earthquakes, may cause items to shift.

It's important to assess your household and remove any items that could be hazardous when evacuating.

- To prevent falling, secure or remove throw rugs and carpet, keep floors dry, wipe up spills immediately, and be sure to use non-wax cleaning products on floors.
- If you use a wheelchair, make sure your escape routes are wheelchair accessible.
- Keep support items like wheelchairs and walkers in a designated place so they can be found quickly.
- Know the safe places within your home in case you need to shelter during extreme weather events.

Caring for pets

Keep an emergency kit for your pets. Include food, water, a leash or carrier, medications, cat litter and a temporary box, a photo of you and your pet and owner contact information.

- Include pets in your emergency drills so they get used to it.
- Red Cross shelters can't accept animals other than service animals, so do some research now to find kennels or pet-friendly hotels.
- During and after a disaster, keep close control over your pets. They may be stressed and even aggressive.
- Keep them away from debris, spilled chemicals and potential "hot spots" including hidden piles of ash which could burn their paws.



To learn about pet first aid, visit www.redcross.org.

Additional resources

- Learn about disasters and preparedness at www.preparesocal.org.
- Take Red Cross CPR/First Aid classes. Call 1-800-RED CROSS to find a class.
- Download the free American Red Cross First Aid app for your iPhone or Android device.
- Train with your local CERT: Community Emergency Response Team. www.citizencorps.gov/cert

Other good sites include:

- The American Red Cross – www.redcross.org
- Earthquake Country Alliance – www.earthquakecountry.info
- Federal Emergency Management Agency – www.ready.gov
- California Emergency Management Agency – www.calema.ca.gov
- The Great California ShakeOut – www.shakeout.org
- California Earthquake Authority – www.earthquakeauthority.com
- Totally Unprepared – www.totallyunprepared.com

Be Red Cross Ready checklist

- I know what disasters are most likely in my area
- My family has an evacuation plan
- A member of my household is certified in CPR/First Aid
- I have filled out an emergency contact card and chosen my out-of-state contact
- My family has practiced our escape plan
- I know how to shut off my water, power and gas in an emergency
- I have found and secured potential hazards in my home
- My family has an emergency supplies kit
- I have a personal emergency supplies kit:
 - › At home
 - › At work
 - › In my car

Emergency contact cards

Get your cards online at www.redcross.org/prepare/ECCard.pdf

Emergency Contact Card

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Home Address: _____

People to Call or Text in an Emergency

Out-of-Area Contact Person:
Phone: _____

Meeting Place Outside of Neighborhood: _____

Important Phone Nos.

Police: Call 9-1-1 or _____

Fire Dept.: Call 9-1-1 or _____

Ambulance: Call 9-1-1 or _____

Poison Control Center: 800-222-1222

Health Care Provider: _____

- Write contact information for each member of your household.
- Fold the card so it fits in your wallet.
- Carry the card with you.



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