

BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES

Steps to Plan and Prepare for any Disaster

- Assemble emergency kits. (See basic emergency supplies.)
- Keep copies of important documents (passport, driver license, social security card, marriage license, will, deeds, financial statements, etc.) in an offsite location such as a safe deposit box. To facilitate insurance recovery, include an inventory of your valuables with photographs or video.
- Learn how and when to shut off your utilities. (See utilities.)
- Discuss all possible exit routes from each room, building and neighborhood. Ensure that your family has at least two exits from each.
- Decide where you will reunite after a disaster. Choose two places, one outside your home and another outside your neighborhood, like a park or other open area.
- Conduct emergency drills and practice “DROP, COVER and HOLD” at least once every six months.
- Always keep your car’s gas tank at least half full.

Steps to Make Your Home Safe

- Be sure your home’s street number is visible from the street, so emergency vehicles can find you.
- In your home, install at least one smoke alarm outside of each sleeping area and one additional alarm on each additional living level, including the basement. If hallways are longer than 40 feet between the sleeping and living areas, use two smoke alarms. Test every six months and replace batteries once each year.
- Keep at least one ABC type fire extinguisher on each level of your home. Learn how and when to use them. Check the pressure gauges annually to ensure they are fully charged.
- Keep hallways and exits clear for easy evacuation. Ensure that all window safety bars have emergency releases.
- Ensure that valuable electronics and tall, large or heavy furnishings in your home are equipped with earthquake straps, available at most hardware stores. Move heavy objects to lower shelves and install cabinet door latches.
- California law requires your water heater be properly braced so it won’t tip over in an earthquake.
- If your water heater isn’t equipped with a flexible supply line, contact a licensed plumber to install one.
- Store hazardous chemicals (e.g. gasoline, bleach, paint thinners) away from open flames and secure them to prevent spills.

Basic Emergency Supplies

You can buy pre-made disaster kits from a range of sources, or you can assemble one yourself using items you already own. Either way, make sure to familiarize yourself with your kit’s contents and to replace any perishable items before they expire.

- Divide your emergency supplies into a Household Disaster Kit to share at home and personal Go-bags for individual family members, in case of evacuation. Store your Household Disaster Kit in a place that will still be accessible if your home is damaged and unsafe to enter (e.g. a backyard shed). If this is not an option, put it in an easily accessible location inside your home.
- Store your household’s Go-bags in a location that is easily accessible in the event you must evacuate your home.

Household Disaster Kit Checklist:

If your home is structurally sound following a disaster, your Household Disaster Kit will allow you to remain in place, even without utilities. Put contents in a watertight container that you can move easily (e.g., a large plastic garbage can with wheels).

Include:

- Sanitation supplies (e.g., towels, washcloths, unscented bleach with eyedropper and heavy duty garbage bags)
- Flashlights and battery-operated lanterns (with extra batteries & bulbs)
- Plates, utensils and paper towels, etc.
- Cooking supplies (manual can opener, camp stove, fuel, lighter, pots, etc.)
- Items to protect you from the elements, (e.g., warm clothing, raincoats, sleeping bags, mats, blankets, sturdy shoes and a tent or heavy-duty sheet plastic)
- Work gloves, goggles, crowbar, hammer, staple gun, adjustable wrench

Go-bags:

Each household member should have his or her own Go-bag as a part of the Household Disaster Kit. Go-bags are designed for use:

- At home, so you can remain in place even without utilities;
- If you must evacuate your home; or
- If you cannot return home.

Because you may be away from home when disaster strikes, you are advised to keep a Go-bag at work and in your vehicle.

Every Go-bag should include

- Food and water (as much as you can practically carry)
- Portable radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and handbook
- 5-day supply of any medications you take regularly and a copy of your prescriptions
- Whistle (to alert rescuers to your location)
- Personal hygiene supplies (including toilet paper)
- Emergency lighting (e.g. glow sticks, flashlight, headlamp) and extra batteries
- Large garbage bags and paper towels
- Change of clothing and a hat

- Sturdy shoes, in case an evacuation requires walking long distances
- Dust mask
- Pen, paper and tape
- Cash in small denominations
- Keep coins in your Go-pack. Payphones may work before other phone lines
- Copy of health insurance card and driver licenses or identification card
- Photos of family members for notification purposes
- List of emergency contact phone numbers

More tips:

- In children's Go-bags, include medical consent forms, a family photo for reunification purposes and their favorite toy, cards or book.
- Include flares and jumper cables in your vehicle's Go-bag.
- Remember to make a Go-bag for your pet (See Tips for Pet Owners.)

First-Aid Kit

In an emergency, you or a family member may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. Keep the following basic first aid supplies so you are prepared to help when someone is hurt.

- Two pairs of disposable gloves
- Sterile dressing to stop bleeding
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant
- Scissors
- Over the counter medicine such as aspirin or other pain reliever, laxative, and anti-diarrhea medication
- Prescription medications you take every day, such as insulin, heart medicine, or asthma inhaler
- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose monitoring equipment or blood pressure monitors

Prepare to Communicate Post-Disaster

- Designate an out-of-state contact person who is unlikely to be affected by the same disaster. Instruct family members inside the affected area to contact this person with their status following a disaster. This person will act as a liaison between the family members affected by the disaster and others who need to be informed of your family's status.
- Keep at least one standard fixed telephone in your home; portable and internet phones rely on electrical power and will not work during a power outage.
- Display emergency numbers beside each telephone.
- Learn how to use your mobile phone text messaging feature. Text messaging uses a different part of the cell net-

work and it might be possible to send and receive text messages when voice channels for mobile phones and land lines are jammed.

FOOD

Store enough food for everyone in your family to last for **at least 3 days**.

- Store food items that are familiar, rather than buying special "emergency" food.
- Consider any dietary restrictions you may have.
- Ideal foods do not require refrigeration or cooking (e.g. canned fruit, vegetables, peanut butter, jam, low-salt crackers, cookies, cereals, dried fruit, canned soup or meats, juices and non-fat dry-milk.)
- Mark a rotation date on any food container that does not already have a manufacturer's expiration date on the package.
- Include baby food, formula or other special diet items for infants and seniors.
- Store the food in airtight, pest-resistant containers in a cool, dark place.
- Most canned foods can safely be stored for at least 18 months. Low acid foods like meat products, fruits or vegetables will normally last at least 2 years. Use dry products, like boxed cereal, crackers, cookies, dried milk or dried fruit within six months.
- Do not consume food from cans that show any sign of deterioration (rust or bulging).
- After a power outage, refrigerated food will stay cold longer if you keep the door closed. Food should generally be consumed within 4 hours. Food in the freezer will normally remain safe for 2 days.

WATER

In a disaster, water supplies may be cut off or contaminated. Store enough water for everyone in your family to last for **at least 3 days**.

- Store one gallon of water per person per day. The amount will be adequate for general drinking purposes. Three gallons per person per day will give you enough to cook and for limited personal hygiene. Remember to plan for your pets.

If you store tap water:

- Tap water from a municipal water system can be safely stored without additional treatment.
- Store water in food grade plastic containers, such as clear 2 liter soft drink bottles. (1 gallon=approx. 4 liters.) Heavy duty reusable plastic water containers are also available at sporting goods stores.
- Empty milk bottles are not recommended because their lids do not seal well and bottles may develop leaks.
- Replace water at least once every six months.

If you buy commercially bottled “spring” or “drinking” water:

- Keep water in the original container, and don't re-store a bottle once it's been opened.
- Label bottles with their replacement date, and store in a cool, dark place.
- Replace water at least once each year if bottles are not marked with the manufacturer's expiration date.

Treating Water after Disaster:

If you run out of stored drinking water, strain and treat water from your water heater or the toilet reservoir tank (except if you use toilet tank cleaners). You cannot drink swimming pool or spa water, but you can use it for flushing toilets or washing.

Treatment Process:

Begin by straining any large particles of dirt by pouring the water through a couple of layers of paper towels or clean cloth.

Next, purify the water one of two ways:

- **Boil**—bring to a rolling boil and maintain for 3-5 minutes. After the water cools, pour it back and forth between two clean containers to add oxygen back, this will improve its taste.
- **Disinfect**—if the water is clear, add 8 drops (1/8 teaspoon) of bleach per gallon of water. If it is cloudy, add 16 drops (1/4 teaspoon) per gallon. Make sure you are using regular bleach—5.25% sodium hydrochlorite—rather than the “ultra” or “color safe” bleaches. Shake or stir, then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal.

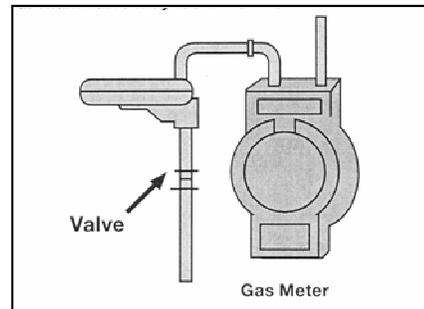
UTILITIES

Gas

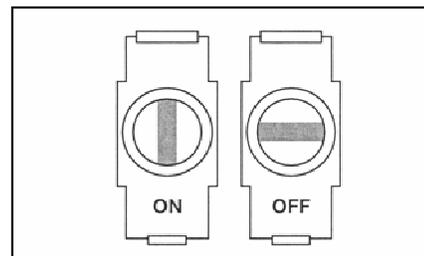
Natural gas leaks can cause fires and explosions inside a building.

- If you smell gas, hear gas escaping, see a broken gas line, or if you suspect a leak, shut off the main valve and open all windows and doors.
- If you suspect a leak, never use candles, matches or flashlights and do not turn on electrical switches or appliances.
- Identify the main shutoff valve located on the gas line coming into the main gas meter. This is usually on the exterior of your home or building or in an external closet.

Your main valve may look like this:



- To turn gas off, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction. When the lever crosses the direction of the pipe (see below) the gas is off.



- Keep a crescent wrench or gas shut-off tool nearby to turn the lever.
- Once you turn off the gas, never attempt to turn it back on yourself. Wait for your utility company to do it, but be aware that it may take several days for it to be turned back on.

Electricity

Electrocution can result from direct contact with live wires or anything that has been energized by these wires.

- Locate your home's main electrical switch, which is normally in the garage or outdoors, where the power lines enter the home. The panel box may have a flip switch or pull handle on a large circuit breaker.
- Shut off electricity when:

Arching or burning occurs in electrical devices.

There is fire or a significant water leak.

You smell burning insulation.

The area around switches or plugs is blackened and/or hot to the touch.

A complete power loss is accompanied by the smell of burning material.

Water

After a major earthquake, shut off water at the house to protect the water in your water heater, toilet tanks, and house pipes. Cracked pipes may allow contaminants into the water supply, in addition, water leaks can create property damage and electrocution hazards.

- The water shutoff is usually located in the basement, garage, or where the water line enters the home. The water shutoff is located on a riser pipe and is usually a red or yellow wheel. Turn wheel clockwise to shut off.
- If you need to access water in your water heater, look for a drain line on the bottom of the water heater.

Sewer Service

A disaster that disrupts all or part of the City's water and/or sewer lines could affect the way you deal with human waste.

- If there is no water in your toilet, but the sewer lines are intact, pour 3-5 gallons of water into the toilet bowl to flush. You may use seawater, bath, laundry or pool water.
- If you suspect damage to your home's water lines, do NOT flush the toilet. Turn off water at the house so contaminated water does not enter your water system.
- If sewer lines are broken, line the bowl with double-bagged plastic garbage bags to collect human waste. Before discarding the bag, add a small amount of bleach; then seal the bag and place in a tightly covered container, away from people.
- If the toilet is unusable, use a sturdy bucket with a tight fitting lid, and line it with a double-bagged plastic garbage bag.

TIPS FOR SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- **Set up a Personal Support Network:** Designate someone to check on you in an emergency and to help with evacuation or sheltering-in-place.
- **Prepare and carry with you an emergency health information card;** Carrying health information with you will help to communicate to rescuers what they need to know about you if they find you unconscious or incoherent, or if they need to quickly help evacuate you. Include information about your medications, adaptive equipment, blood type, allergies and sensitivities, insurance numbers, immunization dates, communication difficulties and preferred treatment, as well as contact information for your health providers, personal support network and emergency contacts.
- **Personal Care Assistance:** If you receive assistance from a home healthcare agency, or in-home support provider, find out how the provider will respond in an emergency. Designate backup or alternate providers that you can contact in an emergency.

- **For Persons Using a Wheelchair:** Plan for how you will evacuate in an emergency and discuss it with your Personal Support Network. If you use a motorized wheelchair, have a manual wheelchair as a backup.
- **For Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired:** Keep an extra collapsible cane by your bed. Attach a whistle to the cane, use it if you need to attract attention. Exercise caution when moving around after an earthquake; items may fall and block paths that are normally unobstructed.
- **For Persons who are Hearing Impaired:** Keep extra batteries for your hearing aids with emergency supplies. Consider storing your hearing aids in a container attached to your nightstand or bedpost, so you can locate them quickly after a disaster.
- **For Persons with Communication Disabilities:** Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if you do not have your communication devices. Store paper, writing materials, copies of a word or letter board and pre-printed key phrases specific to anticipated emergencies in all your emergency kits, your wallet, purse, etc.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Include your children in preparing for an emergency so that they know what to do and how to get help following a disaster.

- Provide your children with emergency contact numbers and teach them how to call 9-1-1.
- Warn your children never to touch wires that are hanging on poles or lying on the ground.
- Tell your children to leave the building if they smell gas.
- Practice skills by including your children in emergency drills and evacuation/reunification planning. (See "Steps to Plan and Prepare for any Disaster".)
- Make arrangements to have your children picked up from school or daycare if you are unable to do so.
- Regularly update your child's school with current information regarding emergency contacts and persons authorized to pick up your child from school.
- Learn the emergency plan and policies at your child's school or daycare facility.

TIPS FOR PET OWNERS

Plan

- Keep a collar, current license and up-to-date ID tags on your pet at all times. Consider having your pet microchipped.
- Make sure your pet is comfortable being handled and is used to being in an appropriate carrier, box or cage for transport.
- Keep an updated list of trusted neighbors who could assist your animals in case of an emergency.

- Tighten and secure latches on birdcages. Fasten down aquariums on low stands or tables.

Kit

Make a Go-bag for each pet, include:

- Sturdy leashes and/or carriers for transport. A pillowcase is a good option for transporting cats and other small animals.
- Muzzles for dogs
- Food, potable water and medicine for at least 3 one week
- Non-spill bowls, manual can opener and plastic lid
- Plastic bags, litter box and litter
- Current photos of your pet, for reunification purposes
- Names and phone numbers of your emergency contact, local emergency veterinary hospitals and animal shelters
- Immunization records and information on any medical condition and/or behavior problems
- Pet First-Aid kit and handbook
- Portable fencing or baby gates

Respond

- Remember that animals react differently under stress. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide and try to escape or even bite or scratch. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed and transport cats in carriers or pillowcases.
- If your pet is lost, contact the nearest animal shelter to report your pet missing as soon as possible. When it is safe, return to your neighborhood to search and distribute “Lost Pet” posters.

Evacuation

Do your best to locate all your animals and keep them with you. If you must evacuate to a disaster shelter, be sure aware that shelters will only allow service animals to persons with disabilities. In a large-scale disaster, animal shelters will be set up in close proximity to human shelters when possible.

- Inform animal rescue workers of your pets’ status: On your front door or in a highly visible window, use chalk, paint or marker to write the number and types of pets in your residence. Include their location in your home and the date that you evacuated.
- Leave plenty of water in a large, open container that cannot be tipped over.
- Leave plenty of food in timed feeders to prevent your pet from overeating.
- Do not tie up your pet in your home.

AFTER DISASTER STRIKES

IN ANY DISASTER

Whatever you do, stay calm, **STOP** what you are doing, **LOOK** around you and carefully assess the situation, **LIS-TEN** for instructions by tuning to a radio news source like KNX 1070 AM.

- For your own protection, cooperate fully with public safety officials and keep the streets clear for emergency vehicles.
- Do not use your phone except in life-threatening situations.
- Visually inspect your building’s structural integrity. If there is major damage to the walls or roof, evacuate the structure.
- Using a flashlight, inspect your building for gas and water leaks, broken electrical wiring or sewage lines. If there is damage, turn the utility off at the source. (See Utilities)
- Consider changing the voicemail message on your phone to include your family’s status. If your loved ones can’t get a call through to you, they may still be able to hear your outgoing message.

When to call 9-1-1

- Call 9-1-1 to request emergency medical, police or fire help.
- During major disasters 9-1-1 may be flooded with calls. Be prepared to wait.
- Be ready to answer questions from 9-1-1 operators. Stay on the line until the operator hangs up.

EARTHQUAKE

If you are indoors when shaking starts:

- “DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON.” If you are not near a strong table or desk, drop to the floor against an interior wall and cover your head and neck with your arms.
- Avoid windows, hanging objects, mirrors, tall furniture, large appliances and cabinets filled with heavy objects.
- If you are inside, remain indoors during the earthquake.
- If you are in bed at the time of the earthquake, stay there and cover your head with a pillow.
- In high-rise buildings, be aware that the fire alarm and/or sprinklers may activate.
- If you use a wheelchair, lock the wheels and cover your head.

If you are outdoors when shaking starts:

- Move to a clear area if you can walk safely. Avoid power lines, buildings and trees.
- If you're driving, pull to the side of the road and stop. Avoid stopping under overhead hazards (e.g., bridges, overpasses, power lines or large overhead signs).
- If you are on the beach or another low-lying area close to the ocean or bay, you could be in the path of a tsunami.

Once the earthquake stops:

- Check those around you for injuries; provide first aid. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger. Keep them warm with blankets or additional clothing.
- Evacuate buildings using stairs; avoid elevators.
- Check around you for dangerous conditions, such as fires, downed power lines, gas leaks and structural damage.
- If you have fire extinguishers and are trained to use them, put out small fires immediately.
- Avoid broken glass.
- Turn off the gas only if you smell gas.
- Use extreme caution around spilled hazardous materials, such as bleach, lye, garden chemicals, paint, gasoline or other flammable liquids. When in doubt, leave the area.
- Check your phones to be sure they have not shaken off the hook and are tying up a line.

If you are trapped in debris:

- Move as little as possible so that you don't kick up dust.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort.

FIRE

If your smoke alarm goes off or you see a fire:

- Remain calm and get out.
- If you see smoke under the door, find another way out.
- Feel the door with the back of your hand before you open it. If it is hot, find another way out.
- Drop to the floor to avoid smoke and fumes. Crawl to safety.
- If your clothes catch on fire, **STOP** where you are, **DROP** to the ground and **ROLL** over and over to smother the flames.
- Call 9-1-1 from a safe location.
- If you are trapped in a burning building, stay near a window and close to the floor. If possible, signal for help.
- Do not go back inside the building unless instructed that it is safe to do so.

POWER FAILURE

If your neighborhood experiences a power outage:

- Turn off and unplug appliances and computers. Leave one light on in the house or building to indicate when power has been restored.
- Avoid using candles, as they are fire hazards.
- Do not use a gas stove for heating or operate generators indoors (including the garage). Either action could cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If a traffic signal is not working, treat it as a stop sign.

Your biggest priority will probably be water if a major quake hits. Do you have drinking water delivered to your home already? Here is what one of our ERT members did to help prepare. Pictured here are 5 gallon water containers which are delivered by a drinking water company. This is an easy way to have a large amount of water on hand

