



FAMILY READINESS GUIDE



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

*A Guide for
Family Preparedness
in California*

This Guide Belongs to:

Introduction to the Family Readiness Guide

California is one of the most diverse states when it comes to our people, terrain, natural resources, and weather. That also means we have some of the most diverse types of natural hazards including wildfires, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and yes, even volcanoes. These hazards can pose ongoing threats in our communities and significantly impact our lives when disaster strikes.

For many communities, 2017 through 2020, were devastating years. Disasters included drought, floods, wildfires, mudslides, an earthquake, power shutoffs, and the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. In 2017, after six years of unprecedented drought conditions, California experienced record rainfalls that resulted in the evacuation of 188,000 people due to failure of the Oroville Dam spillway. Each year wildfires continue to increase in size, severity, and acres burned. In 2018, wildfires in California killed over 120 people, destroyed more than 22,700 structures, and burned over 1.8 million acres. California's deadliest wildfire nearly leveled the entire town of Paradise, killing 86 people. In July of 2019, a 6.4 magnitude foreshock and 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck near Ridgecrest—the most powerful earthquake in California in nearly 20 years. In 2020, six of the 20 largest wildfires in California history occurred destroying over 2.6 million acres.

Disasters are a matter of when, not if. We ask that you and your family review and fill out this Guide together to better prepare you and your family for when a disaster strikes. Keep it in a common area so that it is readily available in the event a disaster occurs. Update and review this guide periodically to ensure accuracy. If you or a family member have access or mobility issues or are part of a vulnerable population (such as having sight, hearing, or mobility issues), please include them in your preparations.

In this guide we will cover:

- Important information about you, your family, your pets, and your community
- Home Preparation
- Sheltering and Evacuations
- Common Hazards
- Supplies
- Useful Resources



My Family/Household Members

Name:
Address:
Home Phone:
Cell Phone(s):
Email:
Physician Name:
Physician Phone:
Medical Condition(s):
Medical Equipment:
Allergies:
Medication(s):

Name:
Address:
Home Phone:
Cell Phone(s):
Email:
Physician Name:
Physician Phone:
Medical Condition(s):
Medical Equipment:
Allergies:
Medication(s):

Name:
Address:
Home Phone:
Cell Phone(s):
Email:
Physician Name:
Physician Phone:
Medical Condition(s):
Medical Equipment:
Allergies:
Medication(s):

Name:
Address:
Home Phone:
Cell Phone(s):
Email:
Physician Name:
Physician Phone:
Medical Condition(s):
Medical Equipment:
Allergies:
Medication(s):

Note: Families come in a variety of sizes so make as many copies of this as needed to include those that may not live with you but may need your assistance in an evacuation.

My Pets

Name:
Type and Breed of Pet:
Microchip #:
Veterinarian Info:
Medical Condition(s):
Medication(s):

Name:
Type and Breed of Pet:
Microchip #:
Veterinarian Info:
Medical Condition(s):
Medication(s):

Name:
Type and Breed of Pet:
Microchip #:
Veterinarian Info:
Medical Condition(s):
Medication(s):

Name:
Type and Breed of Pet:
Microchip #:
Veterinarian Info:
Medical Condition(s):
Medication(s):

Note: If you have more pets/animals than the spaces provided, make copies of this sheet as necessary. This may be useful in sheltering animals during a disaster, especially livestock.

My Emergency Contacts

Identify emergency contacts. These can be local family and friends or those that live outside your immediate area that you can contact during and after a disaster.

During an emergency, telephone/cellular services may be overwhelmed, so reaching out-of-area contacts may be easier. Consider texting when possible and safe to do so.

If you require assistance in evacuating or sheltering, copy this page and list family, neighbors, or friends that may need to be contacted to assist you.

Emergency Contact	
Name:	
Address:	
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
Email:	

Emergency Contact	
Name:	
Address:	
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
Email:	

Emergency Contact (Out of Area)	
Name:	
Address:	
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
Email:	

My Records

Having important documents and records readily available can save you time and headaches down the road after a disaster. It is important to collect, copy, and store your records in a safe place. Be prepared to take them with you in case of evacuation.

Photographs: Take pictures of each other, including your pets. Recent photographs of you and your family members can assist responders in locating loved ones in case you become separated. Be sure to take pictures of your property and valuables to help with insurance claims in case they are damaged or destroyed.

Personal Records: Have copies of personally identifiable information such as driver's licenses, passports, birth or immigration/naturalization records, social security information, marriage/divorce papers, titles/deeds, auto/boat registrations, and finally an inventory of your belongings.

Financial Records: Keep records like insurance policies, investment records, tax information, pay stubs or employer benefit statements, and any wills, trusts or financial/medical powers of attorney. To learn more about financial preparedness, please visit www.ready.gov/financial-preparedness.

Computer/Digital Files: If you store any financial and personal records on computer or digital files, update them regularly to ensure accuracy of information. Store photos and videos of your family and backup regularly to a cloud storage service or on separate storage devices to keep them safe.

Insurance: Make sure your home, property and belongings are covered in case of disaster. Check with your insurance provider(s) to see what is and what is not covered or any available types of coverage that may be hazard specific in your area. Take with you copies of any health, home, or auto/boat coverages.

Safe Storage: Consider investing in portable, durable storage containers and devices designed to withstand fire and water hazards to keep your documents safe. Another option is choosing a cloud storage service for your files. Ensure there is adequate cybersecurity protections to keep your information safe.

In the next section, **My Home**, we have provided a space for you to outline your home's floor plan to designate evacuation points, locations of safety items such as first aid kits or fire extinguishers, as well as important utility shutoffs.



My Home

Create a plan to escape your home during an emergency. If you live in a multi-story house or apartment building, determine a safe way to reach the ground in advance. Consider the needs of small children and those with limited mobility. Know the location of your utility shutoffs and know how to turn them off in the event of leaks or damage. Use caution when shutting off utilities as each presents its own dangers and do so only when absolutely necessary.

Things to consider:

- Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home and test regularly to ensure proper function. Install vibrating alarms and visual smoke detectors if you or your loved ones have visual or hearing difficulty.
- Include what you will need to exit windows or doors and be sure to consider and plan for safety bars or window locks.
- Designate at least two (2) meeting places in case you or your family become separated during a disaster: One outside your home away from any immediate dangers, and the other farther away outside the evacuation area.
- Identify multiple routes to evacuate from your community. Roads may be blocked or damaged so check with local emergency managers or emergency alerts to get up-to-date road information.

Inventory your home: Note where the following items are located:

- 1) Gas Valve Shutoff: _____
- 2) Water Valve Shutoff: _____
- 3) Electric Panel(s): _____
- 4) Garage Door Manual Override: _____
- 5) Fire Extinguisher(s): _____
- 6) Emergency/First Aid Kit(s): _____

My Floor Plan

In the space provided below, use a pencil and draw a floorplan of your home/property. Be sure to include the locations of doors, windows, and barriers like fences or bushes. Include smoke detectors, utility shutoffs for water, gas and electric, any fire extinguisher(s), and emergency/first aid kits. Study your residence and become familiar with escape points/routes and what to do in case obstacles prevent a safe exit. If you live in a multi-story residence, make as many copies as needed of this page for each floor.

See the example on the next page for ideas on how to map out your floor plan.

Address: _____

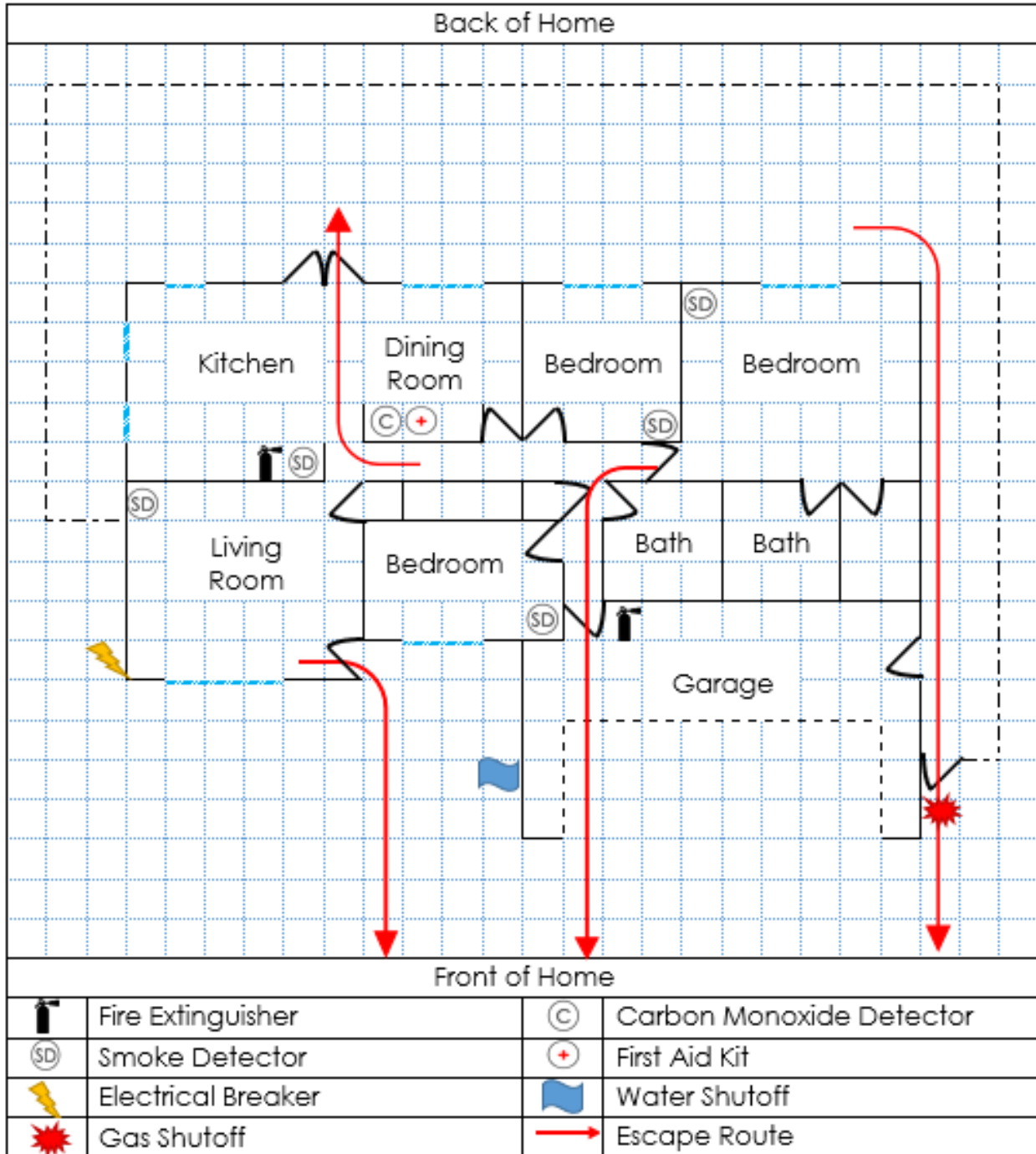
Floor: _____

Back of Home			
Front of Home			
	Fire Extinguisher		Carbon Monoxide Detector
	Smoke Detector		First Aid Kit
	Electrical Breaker		Water Shutoff
	Gas Shutoff		Escape Route

Example

Address: 123 Main Street, Anonymousville, CA 90000

Floor: 1 of 1



My Community

In the lines below, fill in the provider's name, phone number, and/or account number(s) to your local public services and policy number(s) of your insurers. Verify with your local fire and law enforcement office which station serves your area. **Remember:** If you or your family are in immediate danger dial **9-1-1**.

Local Fire Department: _____

Nonemergency Phone Number: _____

Local Law Enforcement Office: _____

Nonemergency Phone Number: _____

Children's School(s): _____

Primary Hospital: _____

Power Utility Provider: _____

Gas Utility Provider: _____

Water Utility Provider: _____

Poison Control Office: _____

Medical Insurance Provider: _____

Policy #: _____

Banking/Financial Institution: _____

Homeowners/Renters Insurance Provider: _____

Policy #: _____

Specific Insurance Coverages

Earthquake Policy #: _____

Flood Policy #: _____

Fire Policy #: _____

Auto/Car Insurance Provider: _____

Policy #: _____

My Alerts and Warnings

In any disaster, alerts and warnings can be crucial to saving lives. Across the state, government officials provide alerts and warnings in many ways to inform the community. To better understand the difference between an alert versus a warning, please see the definitions below:

- A **public alert** is a communication intended to attract public attention to an unusual situation and motivate individual awareness.
- A **public warning** is a communication intended to persuade members of the public to take one or more protective actions to reduce losses or harm.

Alerts and warnings may be communicated through various means to include Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), Emergency Alert Systems (EAS), weather service systems, road signs, social media platforms, radio, and television. Therefore, one of the best ways you can stay informed is to subscribe to your local city/county alert and warning systems.



A quick and easy way to sign up for Wireless Emergency Alerts is to visit CalAlerts.org, find your county, and subscribe. This service is offered for free and will not count towards texting limits on your wireless plan.

In addition to alert systems mentioned above, some disasters have specific alerts and warning systems that may aid you in preparing or reacting to a disaster such as an earthquake, a tsunami, or volcanic activity.

- **Earthquakes:** Download the [MyShake™](#) Early Warning App. The app will send out alerts when the shaking is damaging after a magnitude 4.5 earthquake. The Alert will be sent out to anyone will experience intensity 3 (light) shaking.
- **Tsunamis:** Sign up for Tsunami alerts via the National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) at: <https://www.tsunami.gov>.
- **Volcanos:** Sign up for volcanic activity alerts via the USGS [Volcano Notification Service](#). It is a free service that sends you notification emails about volcanic activity happening at US monitored volcanoes.

In the next section we will discuss how emergency alerts and warnings can affect you and your family.

When to Stay versus When to Leave

Depending on the disaster, you may need to **Shelter-in-Place** or **Evacuate**. That is why it is important to be informed of emergencies in your area by subscribing to your county's emergency alert and warning system. The alert and warning system(s) can aid you in your decision to **Shelter-In-Place** or **Evacuate**.

Shelter-in-Place occurs when conditions require you to seek protection in your home, place of work/business, or other locations. Reasons to seek shelter include chemical/pollutants in the air, during an earthquake, tornado or hurricane, and active shooter threats.

To effectively **Shelter-in-Place**, you must first consider the hazard and then choose a place in your residence or building that is safe for that hazard.

If instructed by emergency officials to **Shelter-in-Place** you should:

- Bring your family and pets inside immediately.
- Tune in to emergency broadcast stations to stay informed.
- If necessary, lock doors and windows.
- If sealing is required, use duct tape and plastic to seal off doorways, air vents, outlets, windows, and fireplace dampers. Turn off air conditioning, forced-air heating systems, exhaust fans, ceilings fans, and clothes dryers. Cover the space under the door with a wet towel.
- If your children are at school, do not pick them up unless requested to do so, as they may be **Sheltering-in-Place** until emergency officials release them.

Evacuations occur when the current environment becomes so dangerous that Sheltering-in-Place is not safe. Disasters such as wildfire, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions may require escape from an area deemed unsafe.

Evacuations can generally occur one of two ways, first via an **Evacuation Warning** (voluntary/advisory) or second, via an **Evacuation Order** (mandatory). Local law enforcement agencies will issue the warning or order if the situation requires it. If you believe your safety may be compromised, evacuate early. There is no need to wait for an evacuation warning or order to leave. Evacuation Warnings or Evacuation Orders may vary in your jurisdiction so check with your local law enforcement office for more information.

- **Evacuation Warning:** This is time to prepare you, your family, and your pets to leave. It is generally a voluntary order given when emergency officials believe the disaster or its effects may expand into your area. They should be taken seriously as many factors can affect the spread of an incident. If you have any access and functional needs, such as medical or mobility issues, you should prepare to leave once an Evacuation Warning is issued.

- **Evacuation Order:** This is the official order to leave because the disaster is spreading to your area. These orders should be taken seriously as failure to follow an evacuation order unnecessarily endangers the lives of you, your family and emergency responders. Only when the evacuation order has been lifted can you return to your residence.

Evacuation warnings and orders can happen at any time. Pay attention to evacuation signs and emergency personnel such as law enforcement or fire officials as they may direct traffic out of an evacuation area.

Some jurisdictions will establish assembly points where people can gather and utilize public transportation to evacuate. Check with your local emergency management office or first responders for more information.

Lastly, if you have school-age children, be aware of the schools' emergency policies or plans, and determine who will pick up your children if you cannot during an incident.

What to do Before an Evacuation:

- Sign up for emergency alerts from local officials or your local news/radio stations. Download the [MyShake](#) Earthquake Early Warning app on the [CalAlerts](#) web page.
- Determine where you will go if you must leave and plan your routes and destinations.
 - How will you get there? Do you have sufficient transportation available or do you need evacuation assistance?
 - Will those places accommodate you and your pets too?
- Create a family/household communication and reunification plan in case of separation.
- Check with your neighbors and loved ones that may need assistance evacuating.
- Ensure your children's school(s) has your updated contact information and designate others who may pick up your children in your absence.
- Put together your "go-kit" and gather necessary supplies like food, water, medications/medical equipment if necessary, batteries, and clothes.
- Keep mobile phones and other electric equipment charged and gas tanks full.
- Tune your radios, televisions, or other devices to news sources for updates and stay informed.
- Take pictures/videos of your home and property before you leave if time permits.



During an Evacuation:

- Listen to emergency broadcast stations via radio or internet for updates. Check on-line or dial **2-1-1** if it is available in your area.
- If you go to a shelter, connect with your local first responders or emergency managers to locate available shelters.
- Check social media pages of your local emergency management office as they will post alerts and information.
- Take your emergency supplies or “go-kit.”
- Take your pets and pet supplies with you.
- If time allows, contact out of area/state relatives about your plan, where you are going, and when you plan to arrive.
- Consider leaving a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Wear durable shoes and clothing that will help protect you from the weather or hazards.
- Check with your neighbors in case they need help.
- Follow recommended routes out of the area.

After an Evacuation:

- Send messages to those on your contact list, friends, and family to let them know you have arrived at your destination safely.
- If you go to a shelter, check in with the shelter managers. They will provide a list of amenities or services provided at that location.
- Listen to authorities to find out when it is safe to return.



Going Home:

- Connect with your local law enforcement office to find out when it is safe to return home.
- If your home is damaged or destroyed, be aware of structural or non-structural hazards and use extreme caution around trees, power poles and lines, and other tall objects or structures that may have lost stability.

- Wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) when searching through debris for personal items to minimize exposure to harmful particles.
- Utility providers may put out boil water notices instructing residences that the tap water is not safe for consumption and will need to be boiled before use.
- Document and take photographs of any property damage, inventory your home/property for lost and damaged items, and contact your insurance provider for assistance.
- In case of power outages, food may have spoiled. **When in doubt, throw it out!** Throw away any frozen food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees or higher for two hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color, or texture. This includes discarding any medication that should be refrigerated unless the drug's label says otherwise. If a life depends on the refrigerated drugs, consult your doctor or pharmacist.
- If needed, contact your local emergency management office to find out about any housing or recovery assistance that may be available.

For those without a place to call home

- Connect with your local social services office to learn about programs available to help you recover.



Know Your Hazards

Earlier, we mentioned that there are a variety of hazards your family could face and should be prepared for. In this section we will cover the most common natural hazards that are likely to occur in California.

It is important to note that you should contact your local Office of Emergency Services and find out what hazards are most prevalent in your area.

Subscribing to emergency alerts and warnings will provide you the needed time to prepare your family in the event an emergency occurs.

The Cal OES [MyHazards](#) internet mapping tool is for the general public to discover hazards in your area. MyHazards allows you to type in your address, city, or zip code and find out what hazards (earthquake, flood, fire, and tsunami) are in your area. By identifying your local risk, you will increase your knowledge about natural disasters and then tailor your preparedness efforts to reduce your personal risk.

Cal OES MyHazards
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Cal OES My Location
Helping reduce your risks from natural hazards

Home Earthquake Risk Flood Risk Fire Risk Tsunami Risk All Risks

High Risk Moderate Risk

How does MyHazards work?

MyHazards is a tool for the general public to discover hazards in their area (earthquake, flood, fire, and tsunami) and learn steps to reduce personal risk. Using the MyHazards tool, users may enter an address, city, zip code, or may select a location from a map. The map targets the location, and allows users to zoom and scroll to their desired view. The screen then presents information on the risks identified within the search radius, and recommended actions. MyHazards website performs best when using Internet Explorer. Hazard Data is approximate and data layer visibility are subject to the extent of the Map.

Type in your address below to learn how to address natural hazards in your area.

California address Search Print

What Natural Hazards Impact Your Neighborhood?

Use this website to discover the hazards that exist in your area and learn how to reduce YOUR risk! Remember, the best way to recover from disasters is by reducing the risks before a disaster strikes.

Please note: This web site is for general purpose use only. Real estate disclosure information can be obtained from your local city or county government. See our disclaimer below for more information regarding the limitations of this web service..

The Purpose of MyHazards web site

We all understand that disasters will continue to occur throughout California. Hazard mitigation saves lives, preserves property, and protects the environment during times of disaster. MyHazards facilitates the identification of hazards by individuals, businesses, and local government.

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Wildfires

A wildfire is an unplanned fire, which burns in a natural area such as a forest, grassland, or prairie, and has the potential to spread to residential or commercial areas. Wildfires can:

- Destroy homes and business and cause severe injury or even death.
- Happen anywhere, anytime. Risk increases with dry conditions and high winds.
- Disrupt transportation, gas, power, and communications lines.
- Can spread quickly in areas with high concentrations of fuels such as dried leaves, branches, and grass.
- Enable hot embers to travel great distances, starting smaller fires miles away from the original burn area.



Steps you can take to be prepared for wildfires:

- Remove/discard dried or dead leaves, brush, branches, and trees from around your home/property in order to create 100 feet of defensible space.
 - This includes removing leaves and debris from gutters, eaves, porches or decks to prevent embers from igniting your home.
- Remove flammable material like firewood or propane from within 30 feet of your home or outbuildings.
- Inspect and repair roof shingles or roof tiles to prevent embers from igniting a fire on the roof.
- Evacuate when ordered to evacuate, this allows firefighters unobstructed access to the area, clears the roads, and helps keep you safe.
- Connect garden hoses and fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs or other large containers with water, as firefighters have been known to use available water to put out fires.

Go to Cal Fire's [Ready for Wildfire](#) webpage for more information regarding wildfires, preparedness, and evacuations.



Flooding

Flooding is a temporary overflow of water onto land that is normally dry. This is due mostly to rain, snow, coastal storms, storm surges, and overflows of dams and other water systems. Flooding is the second most destructive hazard in the State of California. Floods can occur in various ways to include river and stream overflows, sea level rise and coastal flooding, tsunamis, and even levee or dam failures. Since 1950, floods have accounted for the second highest combined losses and the largest number of deaths. Every county experiences some level of flooding, and every flood poses some threat to the community.

Did you know that every county in California has been declared a federal flood disaster area at least once in the last 20 years?

Floods can:

- Develop slowly or quickly and can occur with no warning, such as flash flooding.
- Cause power outages, disrupt transportation, damage buildings, and create landslides.
- Move debris, cars, and homes miles downstream.

The [National Weather Service](#) (NWS) provides alerts and warnings regarding local storms and floods in the following manner:

Flash Flood Warning is issued when a flash flood is imminent or occurring. If you are in a flood prone area move immediately to high ground. A flash flood is a sudden violent flood that can take from minutes to hours to develop. It is even possible to experience a flash flood in areas not immediately receiving rain.

Flood Warning is issued when the hazardous weather event is imminent or already happening. A Flood Warning is also issued when flooding is imminent or occurring.

Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for a specific hazardous weather event to occur. A Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for flooding. It does not mean flooding will occur, but it is possible.



Flood Advisory is issued when a specific weather event that is forecast to occur may become a nuisance. A Flood Advisory is issued when flooding is not expected to be bad enough to issue a warning. However, it may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, it could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.

Here's some steps you can take to be prepared for floods:

- Consider flood insurance as most homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flood damage.
- Avoid building in flood prone areas unless you can elevate or reinforce your home.
- Keep storm drains clear. If your property is prone to flooding, have sandbags, plastic sheeting, and other flood-fighting materials on hand.
- Install check valves in sewer traps to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Do not try to escape rising floodwater by going into the attic unless you have roof access, or it is your only option.
- Seal the walls in your basement with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage.
- If driving, remember, [Turn Around Don't Drown®](#). It is possible for 12 inches of rushing water to carry away most cars.



Be sure to check the **National Weather Service** for alerts and warnings regarding local storm and flood warnings.





Earthquakes

An earthquake is what happens when two tectonic plates slip past each other. The Earth's surface is made up of many tectonic plates. California is home to many fault lines that are part of the North American and Pacific tectonic plates. These active fault lines shift on a daily basis causing earthquakes that can be felt all over California.

Currently, there is no accurate Earthquake prediction technology, however, seismic sensors are placed in areas with higher frequencies of quakes and can provide information as to relative magnitude and spread within seconds. The most important information about earthquakes is that they could occur at any time and can cause devastation quickly. Give yourself time to prepare by downloading the [MyShake™](#) Earthquake Early Warning App.



Another useful resource is The Earthquake Country Alliance, who suggests the following "Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety":

1. Secure your space by identifying hazards and securing moveable items.
2. Plan to be safe by creating a disaster plan and deciding how you will communicate in an emergency.
3. Organize disaster supplies in convenient locations.
4. Minimize financial hardship by organizing important documents, strengthening your property, and considering insurance.
5. **Drop, Cover, and Hold On** when the earth shakes.
6. Improve safety after earthquakes by evacuating if necessary, helping the injured, and preventing further injuries or damage.
7. Reconnect and restore daily life by reconnecting with others, repairing damage, and rebuilding community.

If you use a wheelchair or have other mobility impairments and cannot **Drop, Cover, and Hold On**, then **Lock, Cover, and Hold On**. Protect your head and neck with your arms and bend over to protect yourself if you are able. Consider seeking refuge in interior hallways, closets, or basements/cellars away from glass and exterior openings. Once the shaking subsides move to safer areas and/or seek assistance from first responders.

Protect Yourself During Earthquakes!

**IF
POSSIBLE**



**USING
CANE**



**USING
WALKER**



**USING
WHEELCHAIR**



EarthquakeCountry.org/step5



Tsunamis

A tsunami is a wave, or series of waves, generated by an earthquake, landslide, volcanic eruption, or even a large meteor hitting the ocean. The resulting waves move away from the center in all directions until it reaches lands. As it reaches shore, the water level rises and the wave slows down to about 30 miles per hour and grows significantly in height (amplitude).

The Japanese word *tsu* means “harbor” and *nami* means “wave.”

Tsunamis can:

- Travel at speeds of over 600 miles per hour in the open ocean.
- Grow to over 50 feet in height when they approach a shallow shoreline.
- In California, tsunami flood elevations can vary from 3 to 50 feet along the coast.
- Cause flooding and disrupt transportation, power, communications, and the water supply.
- Happen anywhere along U.S. coasts. Coasts that border the Pacific Ocean or Caribbean have the greatest risks.

Steps you can take to be prepared for tsunamis:

- Sign up for Tsunami alerts via the National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) at: <https://www.tsunami.gov>
- Know the signs of an incoming tsunami such as:
 - Strong ground shaking from an earthquake.
 - Unusual sea-level fluctuations.
 - A noticeable rapid rise or fall in coastal waters.
 - Abnormally large waves because even bigger waves could be coming.
- To escape a tsunami, go as high and as far inland as you can, ideally to a location at least 100 feet above sea level or 2 miles away from the coast.
- If you live on or near a beach evacuate: **DO NOT WAIT!** Leave as soon as you see any natural signs of a tsunami or receive an official tsunami warning.
- Know the difference between a Tsunami Warning and a Tsunami Watch.
 - A Tsunami **WARNING** means a tsunami may have been generated and could be close to your area.
 - A Tsunami **WATCH** means a tsunami has not yet been verified but could exist and may be as little as an hour away.





Volcanoes

A volcano is an opening in the earth's crust that allows molten rock, gases, and debris to escape to the surface. California is home to dozens of volcanoes with three of them listed as "Very High Threat": Mount Shasta, Lassen Volcanic Center, and Long Valley Caldera. Volcanoes listed as "High threat" include Mono-Inyo Craters, Clear Lake Volcanic Field, Medicine Lake, and the Salton Buttes. Volcanic eruptions, although rare in the state, pose a serious health risk to the public with falling ash and debris.

[California Volcano Observatory](#) (CalVO), a federal U.S. Geological Survey division, monitors volcanoes across the state providing daily reports, assessments, and history of activity.

Volcanoes can:

- Contaminate water supplies.
- Release toxic gases.
- Reduce visibility through ash/debris and harmful gases.
- Make it hard to breathe and irritate the skin, eyes, nose, and throat.
- Damage roadways and infrastructure with lava flows.
- Cause wildfires and structure fires.

Steps you can take to be prepared for volcanoes:

- Sign up for volcanic activity alerts via the USGS [Volcano Notification Service](#).
- Know where the active volcanoes are and how close you are to them.
- Review your homeowner's insurance policy, and if necessary, increase your level of coverage to ensure you are covered.
- Obtain proper respiratory protection such as masks or air scrubbers.
- Avoid driving in heavy ash. Driving will stir up volcanic ash that can clog engines and stall vehicles.
- Follow the instructions of emergency officials in the event of volcanic activity.





Tornadoes

Tornadoes are a violent, rotating column of air that extends from the base of thunderstorm to the ground. These weather events are capable of destroying structures and hurling objects great distances with deadly results. Although less severe in California than states in the Midwest, the occurrence of tornadoes across the state still poses a threat to people and property.

Tornadoes can:

- Last only a few minutes and travel a few miles.
- Reach wind speeds of up to 318 miles per hour (mph).
 - In California, we generally experience tornado events between 40-72 mph.
- Damage property and structures through extreme wind or impact by flying debris.



The National Weather Service (NWS) provides alerts and warnings regarding tornadoes in the following manner:

- **Tornado Watch:** Tornado is possible, be prepared.
- **Tornado Warning:** Tornado is expected, seek shelter!

Steps you can take to be prepared for and actions to take during a tornado:

- Sign up for weather alerts and listen to [NOAA Weather Radio](#) for updates.
- Create a communications plan that includes an emergency meeting place.
- Pick a safe room in your home such as a basement, storm cellar, or interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.
- Don't forget about your pets!
- If at work, school, or outside, seek sturdy shelter. Avoid sheds, storage facilities, mobile homes, cars, and tents as they are not secured to the ground and could be moved or destroyed by extreme winds.
- Get down and cover your head, stay as low as possible until the tornado threat has passed or it is safe to move.



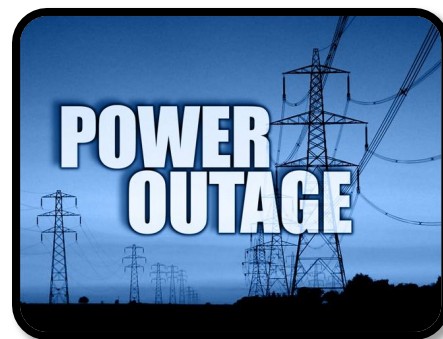
Power Disruptions

Power disruptions can occur in many forms from localized outages, to rolling blackouts, to entire counties and regions of the state without power. They can be caused by natural disasters such as fire or earthquakes, or human causes such as downed power lines due to a car accident. In California, power disruptions can occur with or without warning depending on the season or disaster.

Power outages are not always short and could last days depending on the severity of the disaster or incident. Events such as the Public Safety Power Shutoffs can last several days causing significant disruption in our daily lives.

Power disruptions can:

- Result in food spoilage and water contamination.
- Disrupt communication and 9-1-1 services.
- Disrupt transportation systems such as signal lights and railway crossings.
- Disrupt medical services, especially those that rely on power to run special medical equipment.
- Close retail businesses, grocery stores, gas stations, ATMs, banks, and other services.



Steps you can take to be prepared for power disruptions:

- Sign up for alerts from your local power utility provider.
- Keep mobile phones and other electric equipment charged and gas tanks full.
- Consider purchasing a generator to provide backup power to your household and keep the generator outside and away from windows.
- Do not use a gas stove to heat your home.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers closed.
- Locate community centers or locations that may have power if heat or cold is extreme.
- Check on neighbors and relatives that may be vulnerable to extreme temperatures during a power disruption.
- If you are receiving services from an independent living center, check in with your provider and ask about their ability to assist you with back up batteries/charging, home oxygen tank refills, or other services they may provide.

Other Hazards

Other types of hazards could be viral/infectious disease outbreaks or hazardous chemical or radiological releases. Anyone of these can severely impact public health and result in **Evacuation** or **Shelter-In-Place** orders. Each one of these pose their own public health risk and may require different responses from emergency management officials, law enforcement agencies, and fire and rescue personnel.

Viral/Infectious diseases can:

- Result in long term **Stay-At-Home** orders.
- Severely impact medical/healthcare providers.
- Degrade commercial and public/government services.
- Put the most vulnerable populations at severe health risks.

Steps you can take to be prepared for viral infectious diseases:

- Follow public health guidelines put out by your county/city public health office.
- Wash your hands and sanitize surfaces.
- Wear protective equipment to reduce risk.
- Practice social distancing and avoid large gatherings.

Hazardous chemical or radiological releases can:

- Cause **Evacuation** or **Shelter-In-Place** orders.
- Cause severe impacts to public health resulting in serious injury or death.
- Cause severe impacts to the environment resulting in quarantine and decontamination zones preventing residents and property owners from returning to their homes for an extended period of time.
- Disrupt critical lifelines such as power and water.

Steps you can take to be prepared for chemical or radiological releases:

- Evacuate if ordered to do so, this allows emergency responders unobstructed access to the area, clears the roads, and helps keep you safe.
- Shelter-in-Place if ordered to do so. If sealing is required, seal doors, windows, and vents, and shutoff any ventilation systems in your home or business.
- Shutoff electrical and gas utilities if required.

Supplies

Your list of emergency supplies can depend on the disaster. We have compiled a list of common things you should have whether you **Shelter-In-Place** or **Evacuate**.



Basic Supplies:

- Water – at least one gallon of water per person per day, for at least three days for drinking and sanitation
- Food – at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food and a manual can opener
 - Infant formula, diapers, soothing supplies
 - Pet food and extra water for your pet(s)
- Prescription medication and glasses, copies of prescriptions
 - Immunization and allergy records
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with Tone Alert
- Cell phone(s) with charger and a backup battery
- Flashlight(s)
- Extra Batteries
- First Aid Kits
- Personal hygiene products/Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Whistle to signal for help
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local Maps
- Important family documents such as recent photos of you and your family members in case of separation, copies of identification, financial and insurance information, copies of contact lists, and any other important records. These should be kept in a waterproof, portable container or saved on a thumb or external hard drive. You should also save these on your personal device or cellphone.
- Cash for emergency purposes as electronic payment systems may be out of service
- Sleeping bags and or blankets for each person

Useful Resources

State of California

CAL FIRE – <https://www.fire.ca.gov/>

CAL FIRE's Ready for Wildfire – <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/>

Cal OES

- MyHazards – <http://myhazards.caloes.ca.gov/>
- Preparedness Ambassadors – <http://www.caloes.ca.gov/preparednessambassadors>
- Wireless Emergency Alerts – <http://calalerts.org/signup.html>

California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Emergency Preparedness Office – <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/EPO/Pages/Program-Landing1.aspx>

California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Flood Preparedness – <https://water.ca.gov/What-We-Do/Flood-Preparedness>

California Geological Survey – <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs>

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) – www.caloes.ca.gov

California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) - Public Safety Power Shutoffs – Resource Guide – <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/blog/2019/10/25/public-safety-power-shutoffs-resource-guide/>

California Public Utilities Commission: Wildfire Safety – <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/wildfiresinfo/>

CDPH Access and functional Needs – https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/EPO/Pages/bp_access_functional_needs.aspx

MyShake™ Earthquake Early Warning App – <https://earthquake.ca.gov/mobile-application/>

Federal

California Volcano Observatory (CalVO) – <https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/observatories/calvo/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Information Sheets – <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/618>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/tsunami.html>

National Weather Service (NWS) – <https://www.weather.gov/>

Ready.gov: Plan Ahead for Disasters – <https://www.ready.gov>

- Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) - https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/ready_emergency-financial-first-aid-toolkit.pdf

United States Geological Survey (USGS) Natural Hazard Programs – <https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/natural-hazards/programs>

Other

American Red Cross – <https://www.redcross.org>

California Fire Safe Council: Fire Safety Information for Residents – <https://cafiresafecouncil.org/resources/fire-safety-information-for-residents/>

Earthquake Country Alliance – <https://www.earthquakecountry.org/>

Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills – <https://www.shakeout.org>

Listos California – <https://www.listoscalifornia.org/>

- COVID-19 Tips for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – http://www.listoscalifornia.org/wp-content/uploads/508_LIS_027_050520_IDD_tips_dAf.pdf
- COVID-19 Tips for Caregivers of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – http://www.listoscalifornia.org/wp-content/uploads/508_LIS_028_052020_IDD_tips_caregivers_dAf.pdf
- Health Profile – http://www.listoscalifornia.org/wp-content/uploads/508_LIS_026_050520_IDD_health_profile_dAf.pdf

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Wildfire-safety-tips>

Pacific ADA Center – <https://www.adapacific.org/>

Public Safety Power Shutoff – <https://prepareforpowerdown.com/>

The Tsunami Zone – <https://www.tsunamizone.org/>

Acknowledgment

This guide is a supplement to the Preparedness Ambassadors Program, a curriculum on Natural Disaster Preparedness for California's Fourth Graders. For more information on the Preparedness Ambassadors Program, visit www.caloes.ca.gov/preparednessambassadors.



Preparedness Ambassadors Program

For students participating in the Preparedness Ambassadors program, please cut or tear away this **Homework Completion Ticket** and have your parent/guardian sign below acknowledging receipt of this guide.

Student Name and Class

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date
