

Be Red Cross Ready

PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS HANDBOOK



**American
Red Cross**
Bay Area Chapter

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*Pacific Gas and
Electric Company*[®]

Are You Ready?

What will you do if you can't return to your home after a fire or flood? How will you reconnect with your family and friends if you become separated following a major disaster? Do you have the right items in your disaster kit? Do you know what to do to protect yourself in an earthquake?

Every single person in the Bay Area needs to ensure they are personally prepared for disasters large and small. Only in this way will all of us in the community be able to ensure the safety of our loved ones and assist our neighbors.

Take action now to get prepared.



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How Ready Are You?

Find out how you measure up with the American Red Cross “Readiness Richter Scale” by taking this short quiz to assess your level of preparedness. Give yourself one point for each step you have taken toward getting prepared.

I Have Made a Disaster Plan

- My loved ones and I have identified two meeting places after a disaster.
- My loved ones and I have identified an out-of-area phone contact.
- My loved ones and I have identified escape routes out of our home and neighborhood.

I Have Built a Disaster Supplies Kit

- I have a supply of food, water and personal items for all members of my household (a minimum of three days and up to two weeks recommended).
- I have a flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.
- I have a well-stocked first aid kit.



I Have Been Informed about Disaster Risks and Responses

- I have learned what disasters may occur in my area and how they might affect me and my loved ones.
- I have learned how to stay informed during a disaster by tuning into my battery-powered radio or, when available, watching TV, logging on to the Internet or listening for local emergency warning systems.
- I have learned how to drop, cover and hold on in case of an earthquake, to shelter-in-place if needed and to evacuate safely or signal for help if I am unable to exit in case of a fire.
- I am currently certified in first aid and CPR.

The Readiness Richter Scale

9.0-10.0 = Master of Disaster

8.0 = Ready for Almost Anything

7.0 = A Solid Foundation

1.0-6.0 = Get Ready Now. We'll Show You How.

Step 1: Make a Plan

Why Make a Plan?

Disaster can strike at any time and often without warning. While the Red Cross and your community partners are committed to lending a helping hand to those in need, we all know that assistance may be delayed in times of disaster.

What will that mean for you? It will mean that many of the services you count on every day may be unavailable, such as:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Water
- Communications
- Transportation
- Medical Services

Planning ahead saves lives, reduces anxiety and enables you to play a role in your local response and recovery efforts. Family, friends and neighbors are often the true first responders after a disaster.

Develop a Communication Plan

Since local phone lines tend to be overloaded after a disaster, having an out-of-area contact helps you more easily reconnect with your loved ones. This person will serve as a connection point for information. Rather than being directly in touch with your loved ones, you will communicate through your contact who can pass information along to others.

Choose an Out-of-Area Contact

1. Identify an individual who lives far enough away that he or she would be unaffected by the same disaster.
2. Let your out-of-area contact know that he or she has been chosen to play this role.
3. Record all contact information on a wallet card.
4. Distribute this information to all loved ones and keep a copy in your disaster kit.

Quick Communication Tips

- Cordless phones rely on electricity which may be unavailable after a disaster. Be sure to have a standard landline phone on hand.
- Sometimes pay phones, which are hard-wired into the system, are more reliable than private lines. Keep some quarters in your disaster kit in case you need to use a pay phone.
- If you are unable to get a dial tone right away, stay on the line to hold your place in the call queue.
- Try emailing or text messaging if these methods of communication are available to you.
- Update your outgoing voicemail message with your current status and location. Loved ones will hear the message when they attempt to call you.
- Label your emergency contact in your cell phone with the letters ICE, which stand for In Case of Emergency.
- Be patient and try again later if you are unable to connect to your out-of-area contact on the first try.
- Register with the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site at www.redcross.org.

Decide Where to Meet After a Disaster

Having predetermined meeting places will save time and minimize confusion should your home be affected, if the area is evacuated or if communication is unavailable. Make sure you know the emergency plans of the places where you and your loved ones spend time such as schools, workplaces and assisted living communities.

Choose Two Meeting Places

1. Right outside your home, in case of a sudden emergency such as a house fire
2. Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or your neighborhood is evacuated

Step 1: Make a Plan

Determine Escape Routes

Find two ways out of each room in your home and know your neighborhood evacuation routes.

Ask a local group, such as a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT or NERT), neighborhood watch, or nearby community or faith-based organization to assist you with your plan if you have special needs. If you or someone in your household uses a wheelchair, identify more than one wheelchair-accessible exit. Ask a property manager to help you identify these exits if you live in an apartment. Also, make sure to plan for transportation in case you need to evacuate to a shelter.

Plan for Your Pets

Local and state health and safety regulations do not permit the Red Cross to allow pets in disaster shelters. Service animals which assist people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of an evacuation, so plan ahead. Prepare a list of family members, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians and pet-friendly hotels to shelter your pets in an emergency.

Pet Preparedness Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leash | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter box or plastic bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet First Aid Kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identification Tags | <input type="checkbox"/> Carrier |

Tricks of the Trade

Pack a flying disc in your pet disaster kit which can be used as a portable feeding dish as well as a toy.

Personalize Your Plan

Be sure to take into consideration any special needs you or a family member may have during a disaster.

Identify Special Needs

1. Make sure to arrange for a network of neighbors, friends, relatives or caregivers to check on you or your loved one in the event of an emergency.
2. If you or someone you love has special needs, such as dependence on life-saving medical equipment, ensure that those in your network are able to operate it.
3. Notify your community's emergency services and utility company of any special needs in your household, such as oxygen dependency or mobility limitations.
4. Plan how to communicate with emergency workers, such as creating a message that reads: "I use American Sign Language and need an ASL interpreter" or "I do not hear announcements from a public address system. Please write or repeat it."
5. In areas prone to earthquakes, keep the wheelchair wheels locked and the wheelchair close to your bed at night to be sure it does not move or fall over.
6. Keep a flashlight and whistle (or other noisemaker) by your bed.
7. If you use an augmentative communication device (such as an electronic communicator or artificial larynx) that allows you to communicate by voice, be sure to keep it close to you at night in a safe place.

Step 1: Make a Plan

Consider Renters Insurance

Renters insurance pays for damaged, destroyed or stolen personal property. This insurance is not very expensive, but it is important to have because your landlord's insurance will not cover damage to or loss of your possessions. It also provides liability coverage for you, and it generally covers damage to the interior surfaces of units you rent.

Review & Practice Your Plan

Check your plan and review it with your family members. Practicing helps you react more efficiently when a disaster occurs and is especially helpful for children who benefit from visualizing the steps. At least once a year, practice going to your designated meeting places, calling your out-of-area contact and using your evacuation routes. Remember, circumstances may change over time. It's important that your plan remain flexible enough to change with them.



Keep it Current and Keep it Fun

A good way to remember to replace food, water and medication in your disaster supply kit is to refresh your kit every six months when you change your clock for daylight savings time. Make it fun, especially for children, by practicing your evacuation plan followed by a preparedness picnic at your meeting place with the provisions in your kit. Don't forget to replace the provisions afterwards!

Secure Your Space

Hold a “hazard hunt” in the places where you spend a lot of time, such as your home or office. Check for anything that can shift, fall, break or cause a fire, then make a commitment to address these issues. It’s easier than you may think.

Spot a Hazard. Stop a Hazard.

- Move furniture away from exits.
- Place beds away from windows.
- Move pictures or bookshelves away from beds.
- Move heavy items from top shelves to bottom shelves and secure breakable items with earthquake putty.
- Strap down heavy furniture and water heaters.
- Store flammable items, such as pesticides and cleaning products, away from heat sources.
- Check your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors every six months and replace dead batteries.
- Train each member of your household to use a fire extinguisher and tell them where it is kept.
- If you use oxygen, place the shut-off switch near your bed so you can get to it quickly if there is a disaster.
- Place gas shut-off wrench and other tools within reach.

Talk to your utility company about emergency procedures and know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves after a disaster. Share this information with others. Turn off the utilities only if you suspect a leak or if local officials instruct you to do so. If gas is turned off for any reason, only a qualified professional can turn it back on, which may take several weeks.



Increase the Safety of Your Home

Certain types of housing are particularly vulnerable to damage in earthquakes. Retrofitting will help increase the safety of your home to withstand an earthquake. Follow these steps to a safer, more earthquake-resistant home or apartment building. If you rent, talk to your landlord about making the necessary improvements to your home.

1. Evaluate your home. If your home, apartment or mobile home earned 13 points or more on the Association of Bay Area Government's Home Health Quiz (<http://quake.abag.ca.gov/residents/homequiz/>), it probably needs to be made stronger, unless it has been evaluated or retrofitted in the last few years.

2. Get bids and detailed proposal with plans from at least three contractors. Ask each for two professional references and two homeowner references. When you call the references, ask about the contractor's qualifications and ability to complete work in a timely manner. You can find a list of retrofit contractors and engineers at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/residents/retrofit/>.
3. Ensure that the proposed retrofit meets or exceeds minimum standards. Learn more about retrofitting requirements at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/residents>.
4. Make sure to get a building permit and have the work inspected by a city or county building inspector. The building permit is your record of completed work. As part of the permit process, the inspector will visit your house in various stages to verify work is being done according to the approved plans.

Retrofitting costs vary, but a typical home retrofit that does not require an engineer costs about \$4,500. Many homeowners tap home equity loans to help cover the costs. The California Department of Insurance and some cities also have financial assistance available to residents for retrofitting.

Step 2: Get a Kit

The likelihood of surviving an earthquake or other natural disaster is high. It is surviving in the aftermath that is important to prepare for, especially within the first 72 hours when traditional resources may be unavailable.

As you can imagine, a disaster may confine you to your home, you may be asked to evacuate on short notice or it may be days before you have access to shelter, food and water.

The American Red Cross recommends that you store some basic items in a disaster supply kit so that you are prepared to sustain yourself for up to two weeks.

What's in Your Disaster Kit?

- Water**—Store at least one gallon per person per day in thoroughly washed plastic, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers; tightly seal containers, label with a date, replace every six months and store in a cool, dark location.
- Food**—Pack non-perishable, high-protein items requiring no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water, such as energy bars, ready-to-eat soup and peanut butter
- Flashlight**—Include extra batteries.
- First Aid Kit**—Include sterile dressings, roller gauze bandages, triangular bandages, sterile gauze pads, a roll of cohesive bandage, germicidal hand wipes or hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes, latex gloves, a roll of adhesive tape, antibacterial ointment, a cold pack, scissors and tweezers.
- Medications**—Include prescription and non-prescription items; request samples of prescription items from your doctor, if available, or reorder early and stock up.
- Battery-operated or Crank Radio**—Include extra batteries.
- Tools**—Include a wrench to shut off the gas if you suspect a leak, a can opener, a screwdriver, a hammer, pliers, a knife, duct tape, plastic sheeting and garbage bags.

Step 2: Get a Kit

Safely Store Supplies

At Home

Store enough supplies for everyone in your household for up to two weeks in an easily accessible area. Place your kit in a sturdy but easy-to-carry container, such as a large covered trash container on wheels, an overnight backpack or a rolling suitcase.

At Your Workplace

Make sure to keep a smaller version of your disaster supply kit at your work site in case you are confined to your office. Also, check with your employer to learn about your workplace disaster plan.

In Your Car

If road or bridge closures delay your arrival to your meeting place or if you become stranded, a small “go” kit in your car can provide you with the supplies you need until you reach your designated meeting place or a shelter.

Personalize Your Disaster Kit for Special Needs

If You Use a Wheelchair or Scooter

- Wheelchair patch kit, can of seal-in-air product or extra supply of inner tubes to repair flat tires
- An extra pair of heavy gloves

If You Use a Motorized Wheelchair or Scooter

- An extra battery
- A lightweight manual wheelchair as a backup

If You Are Blind or Have a Visual Disability

- A talking or Braille clock or large-print timepiece with extra batteries
- One extra white cane

- Extra magnifiers and/or glasses
- Mark your disaster supplies items with fluorescent tape, large print or Braille
- Mark your gas, water and electric shutoff valves with fluorescent tape, large print or Braille

If You Are Deaf or Have a Hearing Loss

- Small portable battery-operated television set for viewing in American Sign Language (ASL) or open captioning
- Pads and pencils
- Flashlight
- Whistle (or other noisemaker)

If You Have a Speech-Related or Communication Disability

- Power converter if you use a laptop computer to communicate
- Pad and pencils
- Copies of a word or letter board with preprinted key phrases you would use in case of an emergency

If You Have a Cognitive Disability

- A copy of any instructions or information you think you will need in a way that is easy for you to understand. You may want to break down the information into a step-by-step outline. This format will help you remember what to do during the confusion of a disaster.
- Pad and pencils

Step 3: Be Informed



What hazards threaten your community and neighborhoods? Think about both natural hazards, such as flooding, tsunamis and earthquakes, and human-caused events, such as hazardous materials and transportation accidents. Think about how these hazards may affect you.

Learn How to Protect Yourself

Learning to stay safe when a disaster strikes helps prevent or reduce injury and allows you to remain calm.

Practice Earthquake Safety

DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON

1. Drop to the floor
 2. Take cover under a piece of heavy furniture
 3. Protect your head with one arm
 4. With the other arm hold on to the furniture
 5. Move with the furniture if necessary
- If you are not around any sturdy furniture, crouch with your back against an interior wall and cover your head and neck.
 - If you are in a wheelchair, lock the brake and cover your head and neck.
 - If you are in bed, stay in bed, pull up the sheets to protect your body from debris and cover your head and neck with your pillow.
 - If you are in your car, safely pull over, put the car in park and cover your head and neck.
 - If you are outdoors, move into the open, away from buildings, street lights, trees and utility wires, then drop, cover and hold on until the shaking stops.
 - If you are near a building, get inside quickly and drop, cover and hold on.

Practice Tsunami Safety

GO INLAND OR MOVE TO HIGHER GROUND

If you are in a coastal area and you feel a strong earthquake:

- If you are in a multi-story building on the coast, go to an upper level after the shaking stops.
- If you are on a boat, stay in the open ocean; tsunamis are barely detectable from the open ocean but can cause dangerous currents in harbors and ports.
- Listen to the radio or television for information from local officials and be prepared to evacuate quickly.
- If you need help evacuating your home, tie a bright sheet or towel to your front door as a visible signal for help.

Practice Fire Safety

GET OUT AND STAY OUT

- Get out - leave your home as quickly and safely as possible.
- Make sure to check door handles with the back of your hand before opening a door. If it is hot, look for an alternate escape route.
- If smoke, heat or flames block your exit route preventing you from getting outside safely, hang a sheet or towel outside your window to let the fire department know where you are.
- Once you are out, stay out.
- Go to your designated meeting place.
- Call the fire department from a neighbor's house or a cell phone once you're safely outside.

Practice Flood Safety

EVACUATE TO HIGHER GROUND

- Listen to local radio and TV stations for information and advice.
- When a flash flood warning is issued or if you think it has already started, evacuate immediately.
- Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks, and storm drains.
- Do not drive around barricades; they are there for your safety.
- If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.

Practice Airborne Hazard Safety

SHELTER IN PLACE

For chemical spills and airborne illnesses, shelter in place:

- Close and lock doors, windows, and heating and cooling vents.
- Place wet towels or duct tape anywhere where air may enter.
- Toxic air is often heavier. Stay at ground level or above.

Practice Pandemic Flu Safety

PREVENTION IS THE BEST MEDICINE

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; if you don't have a tissue use the crook of your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.



Step 3: Be Informed

Practice Water Supply Safety

After a disaster, the water supply may be contaminated or unavailable. Living without water for even a few days puts the human body at great risk. It is vitally important to store a minimum of three days and up to two weeks of potable water, allowing for one gallon per person per day.

Consider alternative emergency water sources such as your hot water heater. To use this supply, first shut off the gas or electricity supply to the water heater and turn off the water intake valve. Then open the drain at the bottom of the tank and turn on a hot-water faucet in your house. Do not turn the gas or electricity back on until the tank has been refilled.

Another option is to drain water from the pipes in your home after you have shut off your main water valve. To do this, open a faucet at the highest level in your home to let air into the plumbing and then take water from the lowest faucet in the building.

Clean Water Tips

- **Boiling** – Bring available water to a boil for 3-5 minutes and let cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring it back and forth between two containers.
- **Disinfection** – Use only regular household bleach that contains 5.25% sodium hypochlorite to disinfect water. Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water. Stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach scent, repeat dosage and let stand for another 15 minutes.
- **Distillation** – Fill a pot halfway with available water and tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side-up when the lid is upside-down (make sure the cup does not touch the water.) Boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled and safe for drinking.

Get First Aid and CPR Training

Since emergency systems tend to get overloaded when a disaster strikes, it will likely take longer for them to respond to emergency calls. The American Red Cross recommends that at least one member in every household be first aid and CPR certified, which can save a life in an emergency situation. If you are interested in community classes, workplace classes, Web-based learning or becoming an authorized provider, the American Red Cross and other organizations offer specialized trainings to prepare and empower individuals with life-saving skills.

Obtain Accurate Information During a Disaster

- Radio (Bay Area residents tune into 740 AM, 810 AM or 88.5 FM)
- Television
- Internet
- Local Emergency Warning Systems
- Printed Notice
- Telephone and Text Messaging
- Word-of-Mouth

Act After a Disaster

Check for Injuries

First check yourself for injuries then assist others based on your level of first aid training. Only call emergency systems if there is a life-threatening situation.

Listen to the Radio

Follow instructions from local officials. Evacuate if told to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

Examine Your Space

Check for fires, fire hazards, gas leaks, chemical spills, and broken glass or objects with a flashlight. Shut off water and electricity only if instructed to do so. Shut off gas only if you suspect a leak or smell gas. Report loose or dangling power lines to the power company or fire department. Stay out of damaged buildings or leave if you smell gas or fumes from other chemicals. Return home only if authorities say it is safe.

Put Your Plan into Action

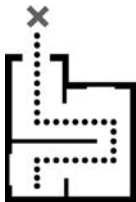
Secure your children, pets, and loved ones. Call your out-of-area contact. Then keep the phone lines clear for emergencies. Check on your neighbors and make sure to assist elderly and disabled persons.



My Preparedness Action Plan

We thank you for taking a leadership role in your community's disaster readiness efforts by completing the Be Red Cross Ready training.

We challenge you to put this knowledge into action by assigning yourself a target date for taking each of the steps below. It's easier than you may think. Making a plan is simply a dinner table conversation. You can start building your kit this weekend by gathering together the supplies you already have on hand. Take a few small steps over the next few weeks and you will be ready when the time comes.



Make a Plan
by this date: ___/___/___



Get a Kit
by this date: ___/___/___



Be Informed
by this date: ___/___/___

Medication

| Medication | Strength and Frequency | Taken For | Prescribed By |
|------------|------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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| | | | |

Allergies

| Allergies | Pharmacy/Prescription Drug Plan |
|------------------|--|
| | |
| | |
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| | |
| | |

Important Information

| My Important Numbers | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Police | |
| Fire | |
| Ambulance | |
| Doctor | |
| Veterinarian/Pet Shelter | |
| Poison Control | 1-800-222-1222 |
| Local Emergency Contact | |
| Out-of-Area Contact | |
| Meeting Place Near Home | |
| Meeting Place Out of Neighborhood | |

Community Resources

American Red Cross Bay Area Chapter

www.redcrossbayarea.org

1-888-4-HELP-BAY

United Way of the Bay Area 211

www.211.org

211 from any Bay Area phone

Department of Homeland Security

www.ready.gov

1-800-480-2520

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.fema.gov

1-800-621-FEMA

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

www.noaa.gov

(301) 713-4000

U.S. Geological Survey

www.usgs.gov

(650) 853-8300

Prepare.org

www.prepare.org



**American
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Bay Area Chapter

Get Your Community Ready

Interested in making sure your family, school, co-workers and community are prepared? The American Red Cross Bay Area Chapter is in the community every day with a variety of programs and courses to help get everyone ready before disaster hits.

- **Be Red Cross Ready Online Course:** Learn more about how to prepare your family from the comfort of your home. Take the course online at www.redcrossbayarea.org.
- **Be Red Cross Ready On-site Training:** Bring free training to your workplace or community organization. Offered in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese. Train-the-trainer program and do-it-yourself disaster preparedness courses are also available.
- **First Aid and CPR Courses:** Attend community classes or have the Red Cross provide training in lifesaving first aid and CPR at your workplace. Sign up for classes online at www.redcrossbayarea.org.

Get Even More Involved

The Red Cross relies on the support of people in the Bay Area community to complete its mission. You can help by becoming a volunteer or partner, giving blood or donating to the Red Cross. For more information, visit us online at www.redcrossbayarea.org or call 1-888-4-HELP-BAY.

www.redcrossbayarea.org

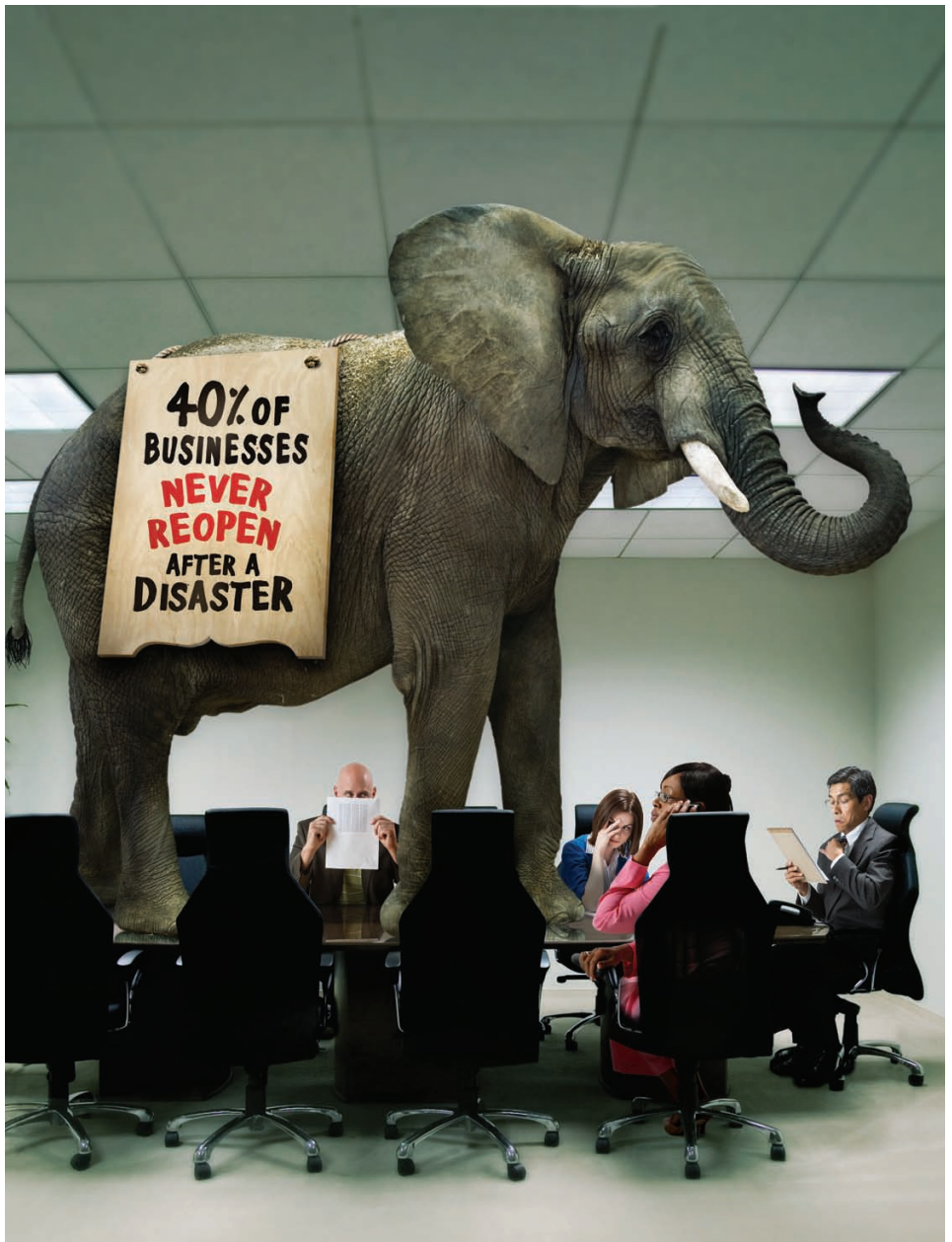
1-888-4-HELP-BAY

1-888-443-5722



**American
Red Cross**

Bay Area Chapter



In business, some issues are just too big to ignore. Like having a plan in the event of an emergency. That's why we offer the first program of its kind to help you create a plan to stay in business, or keep your nonprofit or school up and running. Join the American Red Cross Ready Rating™ Program today.

It's free. It's easy. It's necessary.

redcrossbayarea.org

Red Cross Ready Rating™ Program



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