

COPE Preparedness Emergency Handbook



Promoting Emergency Preparedness
Through Proactive Community Outreach and Education
"Be Aware & Be Prepared"
Harbor Area, Los Angeles, CA

Prepared from: www.cope-preparedness.org/get-prepared/emergency-handbook

Community Outreach Promoting Emergency Preparedness (COPE Preparedness) is a 501 (C) 3 nonprofit volunteer emergency preparedness organization. COPE was founded in 2003 first as an ad-hoc committee of seven harbor area (Los Angeles, CA) Neighborhood Councils and then incorporated as a nonprofit in 2006.

How will you survive?

In a major disaster, it might be at least three days before vital services are restored. This handout provides basic information, ideas, and resources to help you prepare your home, workplace, and community for this critical 72-hour period.

This handout will help you:

Make a Plan, Build a Kit,

Make a Plan After a major disaster; it is unlikely that emergency response services will be able to respond immediately to everyone's needs, so it is important to be prepared to take care of yourself and your family. Plan to be on your own for at least the first 72 hours.

The following steps will help you prepare for any emergency:

Designate an out-of-state contact person. Try to select someone who lives far enough away they will not be affected by the same emergency. Provide this person with the names and contact information of the people you want to keep informed of your situation. Instruct family members to call this person and tell him/her where they are. Long distance phone service is often restored sooner than local service.

Duplicate important documents and inventory valuables, (in writing and with photographs or video) and keep copies of these items offsite, either in a safety deposit box or with someone you trust. Documents may include: passport, driver license, social security card, wills, deeds, financial statements, insurance information, marriage license and prescriptions.

Make your home safe. View each room with a “disaster eye” and identify and fix any possible hazards:

- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and change batteries every 6 months.
- Move beds away from windows.
- Move mirrors and heavy pictures away from couches or places where people sit.
- Clear hallways and exits for easy evacuation.
- Store heavy items on the lowest shelves.
- Keep an ABC type fire extinguisher on each level and know how and when to use them.
- Strap down your water heater and fit all gas appliances with a flexible gas supply line.
- Store flammable or highly reactive chemicals (such as bleach, ammonia, and paint thinners) securely and separate from each other.
- Secure pictures and wall hangings and use restraints to secure heavy items such as bookcases and file cabinets.
- Locate the gas main and other utilities and know how and when to turn them off.
- Ensure that all window safety bars have emergency releases.
- Be sure your home number is visible from the street so emergency vehicles can find you.

Make a household/family plan. Talk with your family about potential disasters and discuss why preparation is necessary. Involve each member of your family in the planning process.

- Make sure everyone knows where to find your disaster supply kit and Go-bags.
- Have a flashlight and a pair of shoes under each person’s bed in case there is an earthquake during the night. Use a plastic bag tied to the leg of the bed to keep these items from moving during an earthquake.
- Plan where to meet after a disaster if your home becomes unsafe.
- Choose two places, one just outside your home and one outside your neighborhood, in case you are told to evacuate. Be sure your gas tank is always at least half-full.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Try to identify two escape routes.
- Make sure each household member knows whom your family’s out-of-state contact is.
- Make sure all household members know when and how to turn off the utilities.
- Practice your evacuation routes, Drop, Cover & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll drills.
- Teach each member of your household how to use a fire extinguisher.
- Create emergency response cards for each of your family members.
- Take into account the special needs of children, seniors, people with disabilities, family members who do not speak English and pets.

Put together a disaster supply kit and a Go-bag for each family member in case you have to evacuate.

Experts recommend that you should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least three days. Store your household disaster kit in an easily accessible location. Put contents in a

large, watertight container (e.g. a large plastic garbage can with a lid and wheels) that you can move easily. (See Build a Kit section)

Emergency Contacts:

Local Contact _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

(work #, home #, cell #)

Out of Area Contact _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

(work #, home #, cell #)

Family Reunion Procedures:

First Meeting site (just outside of your home) _____

Alternate Meeting site (outside of your neighborhood) _____

Medical & Insurance Information:

Doctor _____

(name, telephone number, policy)

Pharmacy _____

(name, telephone number, policy)

Medical Insurance _____

(Name, telephone number, policy)

Homeowners/Renters Insurance _____

(Name, telephone number, policy)

Medication List for _____

(Name)

Name of medication _____

Dosage _____

Reason for taking _____

Prescription # _____

Allergies (to drugs, food, etc.) _____

Medication List for _____

(Name)

Name of medication _____

Dosage _____

Reason for taking _____

Prescription # _____

Allergies (to drugs, food, etc.) _____

Extra tips for seniors and people 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.
- **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 alternative 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 care providers. 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.

Extra tips for parents

- Teach your children their basic personal information so they can identify themselves and get help if they become separated from a parent or guardian.
- Prepare an emergency card with information for each child, including his/her full name, address, phone number, parent's work number and out of state contact.
- Know the policies of the school or daycare center your children attend.
- Make plans to have someone pick them up if you are unable. Keep your child's school updated with current emergency contact information.
- Make sure each child knows your family's alternate meeting sites and out-of-state contact person.
- Teach children to dial their home telephone number and 9-1-1.
- Teach children what gas smells like and advise them to tell an adult if they smell gas.
- Warn children never to touch wires on poles or lying on the ground.
- Role-play with children to help them remain calm in emergencies and to practice basic emergency responses such as evacuation routes, Drop, Cover & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll.

Extra tips for pet owners

Most disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety regulations. Service animals for people with disabilities are an exception.

- Arrange for a neighbor to check on your pets and take care of them if a disaster occurs while you are not at home.
- Plan for a friend or relative outside the affected area to shelter your animals if necessary.
- Keep your pet's ID tags up to date. Consider having your pet microchipped.
- Make a disaster Go-bag for each of your pets, include the following:
 - Sturdy leashes and/or carriers to transport pets. Animal shelters may require owners to provide a pet carrier for each animal.

- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food and potable water, for at least one week. Bowls, cat litter and pan, plastic bags, can opener and pet toys. These items may not be immediately available in animal shelters.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, immunization records and the name and phone number of your veterinarian in case you have to board your pets.
- Do not try to hold onto your pet during the shaking of an earthquake or explosion. Animals instinctively protect themselves and hide where they are safe.
- Animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, and try to escape or even bite or scratch.
- When you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines.

Food

When a disaster occurs, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. Store enough emergency food to provide for your family for at least 3 days.

- Store food items that are familiar, rather than buying special emergency food. Consider any dietary restrictions and preferences you may have.
- Ideal foods are: Shelf-stable (no refrigeration required), low in salt, and do not require cooking (e.g. canned fruit, vegetables, peanut butter, jam, low-salt crackers, cookies, cereals, nuts, 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 an expiration date on the package.
- 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.
- 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. This 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. Do not forget to plan for your pets.
- **If you store tap water:**
- Store water in food grade plastic containers, such as clean 2-liter soft drink bottles. Heavy duty, reusable plastic water containers are also available at sporting goods stores.
- Replace water at least once every six months.
- **If you buy commercially bottled "spring" or "drinking" water:**

- Keep water in its original container, and do not re-store a bottle once it has been opened.
- Label bottles with their replacement date, and store in a cool, dark place.
- Replace water at least once each year.
- **Treating water after the 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. To improve the taste, pour it back and forth between two clean containers to add oxygen back.
- Disinfect – If the water is clear, add 8 drops of bleach per gallon of water.
- If it is cloudy, add 16. Shake or stir, then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal.

Utilities

Gas

Natural gas leaks can cause an explosive and flammable atmosphere 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.
- Never use candles or matches if you suspect a leak. Do not turn on electrical switches or appliances.
- Identify the main shutoff valve, which is 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.
- 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 restored.

Water

- Water leaks can cause property damage and create an electrocution hazard.
- Shut off the water when there is a leak inside the building.
- 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.

Electricity

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

- Locate your home's main electric 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:

- Arcing or burning occurs in electrical devices.
- There is a fire or 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.

Phone

Plan for how you will communicate with loved ones after a disaster.

- Avoid making non-urgent phone calls after a disaster – even if phone lines are undamaged, increased phone traffic can jam phone circuits.
- Do not count on your cell phone – increased traffic on cell phone networks can quickly overload wireless capacity. Record an outgoing message on your voicemail so that callers can be reassured of your safety status.
- Keep coins in your Go-bag. Payphones are more likely to work before other phone lines.
- Cordless phones or phone systems require electricity, so make sure you have a backup phone that requires no electricity.
- After an earthquake, check all your telephones to be sure they have not shaken off the hook, tying up a line.

Build a Kit After a major disaster the usual services we take for granted, such as running water, refrigeration, and telephones, may be unavailable. Experts recommend that you should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least three days. The following lists of items will help you put together your emergency kit and Go-bag. Bring these lists with you to the grocery and hardware stores to supplement any of the items that you do not already have at home.

Your basic emergency kit should include:

- Water — one gallon of drinking water per person per day (see Water section)
- Food — ready to eat or requiring minimal water (see Food section)
- Manual can opener and other cooking supplies
- Plates, utensils and other feeding supplies
- First Aid Kit and instructions
- A copy of important documents & phone numbers
- Warm clothes and rain gear for each family member.
- Heavy work gloves
- Disposable camera
- Unscented liquid household bleach and an eyedropper for water purification (see Water section)
- Personal hygiene items including toilet paper, feminine supplies, hand sanitizer and soap
- Plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows
- Tools such as a crowbar, hammer & nails, staple gun, adjustable wrench and bungee cords.
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Large heavy duty plastic bags and a plastic bucket for waste and sanitation
- Diapers and other items for babies and small children

- Special need items for family members with mobility issues such as an extra cane or manual wheelchair in case there is no power for recharging an electric wheelchair.

A component of your disaster kit is your Go-bag. Put the following items together in a backpack or another easy to carry container in case you must evacuate quickly. Prepare one Go-bag for each family member and make sure each has an I.D. tag. You may not be at home when an emergency strikes so keep some additional supplies in your car and at work, considering what you would need for your immediate safety.

- Flashlight
- Radio – battery operated
- Batteries
- Whistle
- Dust mask
- Pocket knife
- Emergency cash in small denominations and quarters for phone calls
- Sturdy shoes, a change of clothes, and a warm hat
- Local map
- Some water and food
- Permanent marker, paper and tape
- Photos of family members and pets for re-identification purposes
- List of emergency point-of -contact phone numbers
- List of allergies to any drug (especially antibiotics) or food
- Copy of health insurance and identification cards
- Extra prescription eye glasses, hearing aid or other vital personal items
- Prescription medications and first aid supplies
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Extra keys to your house and vehicle
- In your child’s Go-bag include a favorite toy, game or book as well as his or her emergency card with reunification location and out-of-area contact information
- For information on how to prepare a Go-bag for your pets, see Extra tips for pet owners section

What to do if...

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.
- Do not try to run out of the structure during strong shaking. If you are in bed at the time of the earthquake, stay there and cover your head with a pillow.
- In high-rise buildings, do not use elevators. Be aware that the fire alarms 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 safely walk. Avoid power lines, buildings and trees.

- If you are 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. (See Tsunami)

Once the earthquake shaking 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.
- Check around you for dangerous conditions, such as fires, downed power lines and structure damage.
- If you have fire extinguishers and are trained to use them, put out small fires immediately.
- Avoid broken glass.
- 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.

If you are trapped in debris:

- Move as little as possible so that you do not 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 detector 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 repeatedly 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.

Tsunami

A local earthquake may generate tsunami waves that can reach shore in minutes. If you are on the beach or other low-lying area close to the ocean or bay, immediately evacuate by walking to higher ground if:

- Officials issue a tsunami warning and order evacuations;
- You hear the Outdoor Warning System;
- The earth shakes so much that you can't stand;
- Shaking lasts longer than 20 seconds and/or you notice water receding from the shoreline.

Power Outage

If your neighborhood experiences a power outage:

- Turn off and unplug appliances and computers. Leave one light on 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). Both could cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If a traffic signal is not working, treat it as a stop sign.

Terrorism

A terrorist's primary objective is to create fear. You can keep yourself and your family safe with accurate information and basic emergency preparedness.

Be Responsible:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Note the location of emergency exits, pay phones, fire alarms and fire extinguishers. Whatever your location, consider the best means of evacuation.
- Report suspicious objects, vehicles, or persons to public safety authorities.

If There Is a Terrorist Attack or Threat:

- Stay calm.
- Be vigilant. Look out for secondary hazards such as falling debris or additional attacks.
- Follow the instructions of emergency service personnel.

Contagious Disease

A contagious disease emergency could affect many people. It could cause mild illness, hospitalization, or death in rare cases. In the event of a contagious disease emergency, the Department of Public Health will provide the public with up-to-date information and instructions, using media and public outreach sources.

Evacuation

Immediate risk:

If you smell gas or smoke, see fire, or otherwise fear for your safety, evacuate household occupants immediately. From a safe location, call 9-1-1 and report the incident.

General evacuation orders:

If local officials issue evacuation orders, use the evacuation routes and methods specified. Carpool whenever possible. If time allows:

- Wear sturdy shoes, long-sleeve shirts and pants.
- Bring car keys, credit cards and road maps, cell phone, charger and important phone numbers.
- Bring your "Go-bags". (See Go-bag Section.)
- If you have a pet, make sure it is wearing a collar, bring it in a pet carrier labeled with your name and the pet's name. Bring a small amount of food, medications and water for your pet. (See Tips for Pet Owners)

- Lock your home and shut off the water and electricity, but leave gas on unless instructed otherwise.
- Tell a neighbor where you are going.
- Once you arrive at a safe location, call your out-of-area emergency contact.

Disaster Shelters

Immediately following a large disaster, suitable shelter sites will be selected from a predestinated list based on areas of need and estimated numbers of displaced persons. Each site must be inspected for safety prior to being opened to the public. Therefore, it is not possible to say with advance certainty, which sites will actually operate as disaster shelters. As soon as disaster sites have been formally designated, this list will be announced through local media to the public. If it is unsafe to shelter-in-place, and you do not have an alternative, evacuate to a designated emergency shelter.

- Tell your out of area-contact where you are going.
- Take your Go-bag with you to the shelter.
- Initially, emergency shelters may not be able to provide basic supplies and materials. Consider bringing extra items (e.g. blanket, pillow, air mattress, towel, washcloth, diapers, food and supplies for infants.)
- Plan for your pets. Only service animals are allowed in "human" shelters.
- If you cannot make other plans for your pets, Animal Care and Control staff will be available at "human" shelters to help with pet sheltering needs.