

Disaster Preparedness. Are You Ready?

Thinking about and preparing for disasters in advance helps us to better weather the storm. Involve the entire family in disaster preparedness discussions and preparations. Talk with family members about what the risks are and what your family will do if disaster strikes. Consider the special needs of children, seniors and those with mobility issues.

The following safety tips are offered to increase family disaster preparedness:

1. The first step to disaster preparedness is identifying your risk. Learn about potential disasters or emergencies, such as earthquakes, wildfires and severe weather that can pose a risk here locally. Take necessary steps to reduce the risks to you and your family.
2. Do you have a family disaster plan? Your plan tells family members where to meet and how to get there if you have to evacuate, who you've identified as the out-of-state emergency contact person and how to obtain important information during and after a disaster. Once your plan has been developed, practice it.
3. An emergency supplies kit is something that every household should have in order to be self-sufficient at home after a disaster. Your kit should contain **at least** a 3-day supply of non-perishable food and water, a first aid kit, flash lights and batteries, etc. And, don't forget to pack a supply kit for the car and office too.
4. Eliminate hazards at home and in the workplace. Secure large furniture, electronics and decorative items that can pose hazards by falling and breaking in an earthquake. Also take the necessary steps to protect your home from fire, both inside and out.
5. Do you know how to protect yourself during an earthquake? "Drop, Cover and Hold On" is the method to use indoors. Drop to the ground, take cover under a sturdy table or desk, and hold on until the earth stops shaking. Stay away from windows, outside doors and walls, and things that that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.
6. If you're outdoors when an earthquake hits, move to a clear area away from trees, telephone poles, and buildings. Stay far away from downed power lines.
7. If you're in a moving vehicle when an earthquake occurs, stop as quickly as safety allows and remain in the vehicle. Keep clear of overpasses, trees, telephone poles, utility wires and buildings. Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

8. Learn how to protect yourself and your family during an emergency. Take Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.) training. Classes are offered locally 3-4 times per year. Topics of instruction include: Disaster preparedness, fire safety, basic first aid, light search and rescue, disaster psychology and more. For additional information about C.E.R.T. training, contact your local fire department.
9. Have you considered taking a class on First Aid or CPR? Your training could save the life of a loved one or neighbor following a disaster. Classes are offered by Bear Valley Fire Departments regularly throughout the year. Contact your local fire department for more information.
10. Store copies of important documents and identification as well as photographs and/or videos of your valuables in a remote and secure location such as a safe deposit box. This information will prove helpful in the road to disaster recovery.
11. Do you know where your water, natural gas and electrical utility shut-offs are located? Be familiar with shut-off locations and how to turn off utilities in an emergency. Turn off natural gas service at the meter **ONLY** if you hear hissing or smell natural gas.
12. Do you have a family emergency communications plan yet? If not, you are encouraged to do so. Be sure to include emergency phone numbers for fire and law enforcement, an out-of-state contact person as well as telephone numbers for family and close friends. Put this information in writing and carry it with you at all times.
13. Be sure to remember your pet while assembling your family disaster kit. Just as you would with your family, think about your pet's basic needs for survival. Gather supplies such as a pet carrier or crate, collar with ID and leash, water bowl, food and water, and medicine and medical records.

Big Bear Valley, will you be ready when disaster strikes? Disasters can hit suddenly, and without warning. : Now's the time to...**Get a kit. Make a plan. Get Informed.** Take action today!

To learn more about disaster preparedness, visit:

www.ready.gov

www.americanredcross.org