



YEAR OF PREPAREDNESS

January 17 was the 18th anniversary of the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, so it was a great opportunity to kick off our Year of Emergency Preparedness in Los Angeles.

As Chair of the Public Safety Committee, my top priority is working to protect public safety in Los Angeles. Throughout 2012, we will be working on legislation, programs and public awareness efforts to help the residents of Los Angeles be better prepared for disasters. Los Angeles, and especially the San Fernando Valley, has always been the epicenter of major emergencies, including earthquakes, seasonal wildfires, floods and wind events. Even a large-scale power outage could be a disaster if residents are not prepared. To kick off the Year of Emergency Preparedness, we introduced a public safety motion on January 17 meant to improve L.A.'s emergency preparedness and response. To see the motion visit http://dl.dropbox.com/u/18553158/MotionYearofPrep1_17_12.pdf/ [MotionYearofPrep1_17_12.pdf](#).

Weekly Emergency Preparedness Checklist— Every week during our Year of Emergency Preparedness, our newsletter will feature a new item in an Emergency Preparedness Checklist. These are simple steps that everyone in Los Angeles should take in order to be prepared for any large-scale emergency or disaster. It can be overwhelming to think about all the things you need to do be prepared. But if you follow each item on this checklist, you will be highly prepared at the end of the year!

Week 26: Keep in Contact With Your Child's School

It is important to know your emergency procedures your child's school has in place in case of an earthquake or other emergency situation so you will know where your child will be and what you should do.

Always make sure your contact information with the school is up to date and that the school staff have phone numbers where you can always be reached, including an out-of-town friend or relative in case local phone lines are down.

During most emergencies, the school is the safest place for kids to be - Police and Fire officials focus heavily on ensuring the safety of schools, and know the location, size, layout and leadership of every school in the community. LAUSD school staff (and staff at most private schools) have been trained in what to do during emergencies, and will react quickly to ensure the safety of children. To learn more about the emergency procedures at your child's school, contact the school administration or visit <http://parentemergencyinformation.lausd.net/>





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Week 25: U.S. Geological Survey Earthquake Reports

Did you feel something shaking? The fastest, most reliable way to find out if there was an earthquake, and where the epicenter was and what the magnitude was, is to visit the website of the U.S. Geological Survey. They track every earthquake in the world in real time, with maps, dates, times, location and magnitude. To see the USGS website, visit <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/dyfi/>.



The USGS website also has vast amounts of information about water, weater, climate change, ecosystems, energy, and many other things that are relevant to disaster planning, preparedness and response.

Week 24: Drop, Cover and Hold!

We live in earthquake country, and everyone needs to be prepared and ready to act because quakes will strike without any warning. Earthquake experts agree that when an earthquake occurs, you should "Drop, Cover, and Hold On."



DROP down onto your hands and knees (before the earthquakes knocks you down). This position protects you from falling but allows you to still move if necessary.

COVER your head and neck (and your entire body if possible) under a sturdy table or desk. If there is no shelter nearby, only then should you get down near an interior wall (or next to low-lying furniture that won't fall on you), and cover your head and neck with your arms and hands.

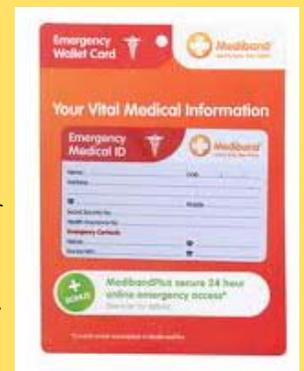
HOLD ON to your shelter (or to your head and neck) until the shaking stops. Be prepared to move with your shelter if the shaking shifts it around.

To learn more, visit <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/dropcoverholdon/>

Week 23: Emergency Contact Cards

When a person is injured and unconscious or killed in an earthquake or other disaster, it is crucial that the family members are contacted immediately. Hospital emergency rooms treat millions of patients every year, and they may have no way of notifying family members of victims. That is why it is crucial to carry an emergency contact information card on your person at all times. To download an emergency contact card go to <http://tiny.cc/qqrbgw>. Fill it in, and include any medical conditions such as diabetes, or any allergies to medication, as well as your healthcare directives and your wishes for organ donation if you have them.

Make sure that everyone in your family knows what is on the cards, and who the emergency contact people are. Be sure to include an out-of-town phone number, since during major earthquakes, phone lines often become overloaded with calls almost immediately, but it is often still possible to make calls to other areas.





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Week 22: Emergency First Aid Manual

These days, people have become very accustomed to looking up medical and first aid information on the internet. But if a major earthquake or other disaster strikes, you may be without power for a long period of time, so it's a good idea to keep a printed first aid book or manual together with your first aid kit. Even if you have had first aid training, you may need to look up specific information on how to respond to open wounds, shock, poisoning, or other medical emergencies. There are many excellent first aid manuals available. To see some examples, visit <http://tiny.cc/21myfw>.



Week 21: Emergency Tools for Your Car

It's a good idea to keep a seatbelt cutter and glass-breaking tool in your car in case of emergency. If an earthquake, flood, wildfire or other major disaster strikes, becoming trapped inside your car could be deadly.

There are many low-cost tools available that would enable you to quickly and easily cut through your seatbelt and break the car window to allow you to escape. To see examples, go to <http://tiny.cc/zfdkfw>.



Week 20: Decide if Earthquake Insurance Is Right For You

Only about 12% of Californians with home insurance have quake coverage. Whether you should purchase earthquake is a complicated question that you should consider carefully. Earthquake insurance is expensive and limited. But if your home is damaged in an earthquake and you have no earthquake insurance, the cost of repairs could be so high that you could lose your home entirely. It's important to look at what the coverage costs, covers and excludes. The California Earthquake Authority is a good resource, offering a lot of information that can help you make a decision. It is a non-profit organization whose mission is to make earthquake insurance affordable to anyone who wants and needs it. To learn more, visit California Earthquake Authority's website at <http://www.earthquakeauthority.com/>.



Week 19: Dust Mask, Gloves, Sneakers and Goggles in Your Mobile Emergency Kit

Every car and home should have a mobile emergency earthquake/disaster survival kit. (In your home, this is in addition to your regular emergency supplies.) It should be stored in backpack, so that you can grab it and go. If you are in

your car when a major earthquake hits, you may be unable to drive on roads that are damaged or blocked. You may have to walk long distances to get to shelter. If you are at home, you may need to climb through obstacles and debris to get out. Your surroundings could also be dusty, and filled with broken concrete, broken glass and other debris. That is why it's a good idea to keep a pair of walking shoes, as well as a dust mask, safety goggles, and work gloves in your emergency earthquake/disaster survival kit.





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Week 18: A Flashlight in Every Room

We all know by now that every house and workplace needs to have flashlights (preferably handcrank or other types that do not require batteries) in case power goes out following an earthquake or other disaster. It's also a great idea to have a flashlight in every room in your home. If power goes out and it is completely dark, you may have a very hard time making your way through your house to get to your flashlight. There may be broken glass and overturned furniture obstructing your way as well. If you have a flashlight in every room in your home, you always be able to reach one if the power goes out.



Week 17: Give An Earthquake/Disaster Survival Kit for Mother's Day

On Sunday, May 13, Mother's Day, why not show your mother how much you care by giving her an earthquake/disaster survival kit for a Mother's Day gift? Every person should have a kit in their car, in their home and at their workplace. Each kit should have a handcrank or solar powered radio and enough food, water and medical supplies to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.



Week 16: Crowbar

Not many people realize that a crowbar can be a crucial tool to keep in your home. If a major earthquake strikes, the shifting of the structure of your home can jam all of your doors shut. If you have to get outside because of a fire or a gas leak following an earthquake, you could be trapped inside your home.



A heavy crow bar will allow you to force a door open or get it off the hinges completely to allow you to escape. Crowbars are available at any hardware store, and can usually be purchased for under \$25. To see examples visit <http://tiny.cc/908mdw>.

Week 15: Survival "Space" Blanket

Every person should have an emergency survival kit for their car. If you are in your car away from your home, office or a shelter when disaster strikes, you could find yourself having to survive outdoors, or walking long distances to get to shelter. Every emergency kit for a car should have a "space" blanket.

Space blankets are made of Mylar and can significantly reduce heat loss in a person's body caused by thermal radiation, water evaporation and convection. Having a space blanket could save your life if you must sleep outdoors following a disaster. They are inexpensive and are widely available where survival products are sold. To see examples, visit <http://tiny.cc/5duqdw>.





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Week 14: Remember to Change Water & Batteries Every 6 Months

Once your family has assembled your earthquake/disaster survival kits, it is easy to get complacent and forget to make sure that the batteries and water that you store are always fresh.

Many people don't realize that batteries and most drinking water stored in plastic bottles do have expiration dates. After sitting for too long, batteries will die out. Water stored in plastic bottles over long periods can absorb chemicals from the plastic or even through the plastic. It's a good idea to mark your calendar so that every 6 months, you swap out all of your batteries and water for fresh supplies.



Week 13: Secure Heavy Objects in Your Home

If a major earthquake strikes, heavy objects inside your home will become potentially lethal flying projectiles unless they are securely fastened. Special heavy-duty nylon straps can be used to anchor TVs, bookcases, entertainment centers, and other heavy objects to the wall or floor. Use "museum wax" or putty to anchor smaller glass or ceramic objects from falling and spreading broken glass on the floor. Broken glass on the floor can be a hazard for anyone trying to get out in the dark. To learn more about securing objects in your home, visit <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots/step1.html>



Week 12: Get CPR Training

If an earthquake or other major disaster strikes, we must be prepared for the possibility that emergency responders will not be able to reach everyone immediately. Roads can be destroyed or blocked, and emergency resources will be responding to the largest and most urgent incidents first. Getting trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid could save the lives of your family members or neighbors. Take an American Red Cross first aid and CPR training course, and find out who in your neighborhood is also trained in first aid and CPR so that if disaster strikes, you can be ready to be self-sufficient until help arrives. To find where Red Cross classes are offered near you, visit <http://www.redcross.org/takeaclass>.





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Week 11: Get CERT Trained

All individuals should be able to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours following a major earthquake. During that time, community members can do a lot to help themselves, their families and their neighbors by having basic first aid, evacuation and other emergency training.

The best way to get prepared is to get CERT trained. CERT - Community Emergency Response Team - is the Los Angeles Fire Department's nationally acclaimed free community emergency training program. The CERT program is an all-risk, all-hazard training. CERT members receive 17.5 hours of initial training, usually one day a week for seven weeks. The courses are free for any City resident over 18 years old.

To learn how you can sign up for a CERT class and see schedules and locations, visit www.cert-la.com. To arrange a class (20 person minimum) for your community-based organization, Neighborhood Council, school or house of worship, call (818) 756-9674.



Week 10: Sign Up for Emergency Alerts

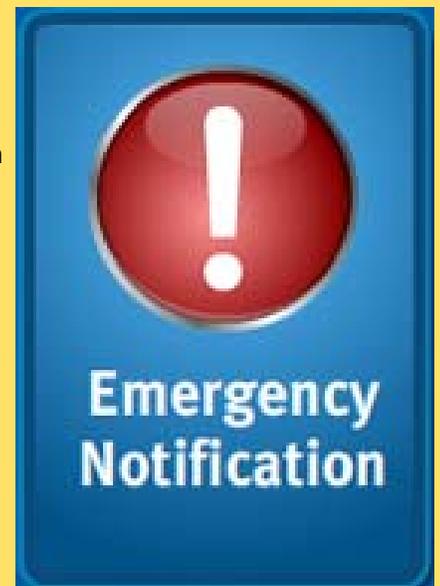
It is crucial during a large-scale disaster such as an earthquake, wildfire, flood or terrorist incident to stay informed. Everyone should have a solar or handcrank-powered AM/FM radio. But there are now more emergency information channels available. Public safety authorities will broadcast information on the radio as well as various websites and alert systems about which roads and bridges are closed, which areas to avoid, and where to go for shelter, medical aid, food and water. These valuable tools are free and open to the public.

NIXLE - LAPD's emergency alert system. Sign up to receive emergency information by email or text messages to your phone, or look at alerts and updates on their website. Sign up for one or multiple zip codes.

<http://local.nixle.com/city/ca/los-angeles>.

ReadyLA.org - City of Los Angeles' official emergency preparedness and response website and Twitter feed. <http://www.readyla.org>. <https://twitter.com/#!/ReadyLA>

AlertLA - Los Angeles County's emergency alert system. Sign up online, and you can receive "reverse 911" phone calls. <http://portal.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/alertla>.





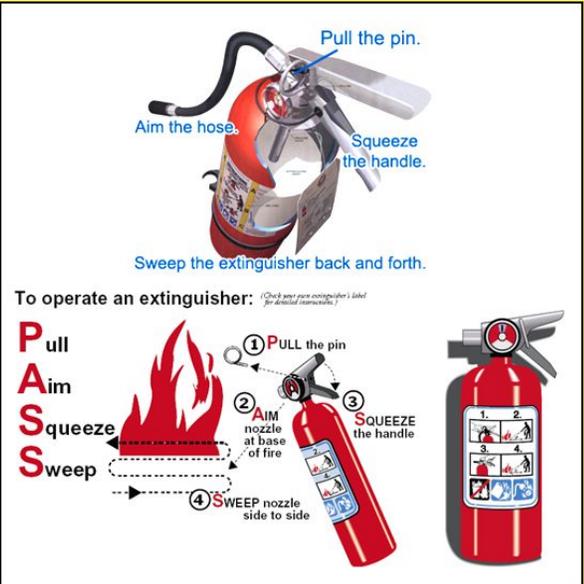
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Week 9: Fire Extinguishers

Every home should have at least one fire extinguisher, but it's just as important that you have the proper type of fire extinguisher. Fire protection experts recommend you keep one for the kitchen, one for the garage and one for the rest of the home. Fire extinguishers are divided into four categories, based on different types of fires. Each fire extinguisher also has a numerical rating that serves as a guide for the amount of fire the extinguisher can handle. The higher the number, the more fire-fighting power. They can be purchased at Target, WalMart, Home Depot, Lowes, and other hardware or household wares stores, and online.

Be sure to check the expiration date of all of your fire extinguishers and mark them on your calendar to be inspected and refilled.

It is also a good idea to get trained in using a fire extinguisher before you need it in an emergency! To see a training video on how to properly use a fire extinguisher, visit www.MySafeLA.org the City's official fire and life safety information website.



Week 8: Emergency Escape Ladder

Anyone who has a two- or three-story home needs to consider their emergency evacuation route in case their stairs are blocked in a fire, earthquake or other emergency necessitating evacuation. Jumping from a window could lead to serious injuries, especially for the elderly or for young children. A compact emergency escape ladder can be easily stored under the bed or in a closet and pulled out when needed. Make sure everyone in the house knows where it is and how to use it.

There are a wide variety of emergency escape ladders to choose from. To see some examples, visit <http://tiny.cc/o52ccw>.





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Week 7: Have Extra Supplies of Your Prescription Medications

In case of a major disaster, pharmacies may be closed or damaged for an extended time, and you may not be able to get prescriptions refilled. If you require prescription medications, you should stockpile supplies. Get extra refills and store them in your emergency supplies kit. Check the expiration dates and mark them on your calendar, and refresh them before they expire. If disaster strikes, you do not want to have expired prescription medications in your survival kit - expired medications can be ineffective or harmful.



Also make photocopies of all your prescriptions and store them with your essential documents. It can make it much faster and easier to get prescriptions filled or refilled if you are at an emergency shelter, a clinic or a hospital and do not have access to your own doctor or healthcare facility.

Week 6: Have a Plan for Your Pets

Our pets are members of our families, and we need a plan for them in the event of a disaster. Have a rescue alert sticker (available at your local pet supply store) visible in one of your home's windows that lists the number and species of animals in your home. If you take your animals when you evacuate, write "Evacuated" across the alert sticker.

Keep a back-up supply of pet food, prescription medications, kitty litter, and essentials. Also, assemble an animal evacuation kit. To learn how, visit the ASPCA's website. Keep a pet carrier in your home in case you must evacuate with your pet.

<http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/disaster-preparedness/>

Service Animals

If you must evacuate, take your animal with you. The best way to ensure their safety is to evacuate with them. Locate pet-friendly hotels, or pre-arrange to lodge with friends or relatives outside of your immediate area who can accommodate your pets.



Large Animal Evacuation

In the event of an evacuation ordered by emergency personnel, Los Angeles Animal Services will activate evacuation sites for horses and other large animals. Various locations may be used, depending on the location of the emergency and the area to be evacuated. If there is an emergency in your area and you believe an evacuation may be ordered, or if you have been ordered to evacuate, call West Valley Animal Shelter to get current information on large animal evacuation sites in your area. West Valley Animal Shelter: (818) 756-9325. To learn more, visit Los Angeles Animal Services webpage about pet evacuation.

http://www.laanimalservices.com/General_Info/Emergency_Preparedness.htm



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Week 5: Copies of Your Essential Documents

February 9 was the 41st anniversary of the Sylmar/San Fernando Earthquake. At 6.6 on the Richter Scale, it was one of the worst earthquakes in Southern California history. It's a great reminder to be ready for the next big earthquake. In an earthquake, wildfire, flood or other disaster, you may have to evacuate your home in a hurry. You could find yourself away from your home for an extended period, or your home and its contents could be destroyed.



So it's a good idea to make copies of your most essential documents (health and property insurance, medical records, bank accounts, mortgages, wills, copies of passports, driver's licenses, Social Security cards, and other information). These records can be hard to replace, and could be necessary immediately following a disaster. Make two sets of copies of these documents. Store one in a fireproof and waterproof safe, or in a safety deposit box. Put the other copies in a folder and store them in a backpack emergency kit in your home, so that if you must evacuate, you can grab it and go.

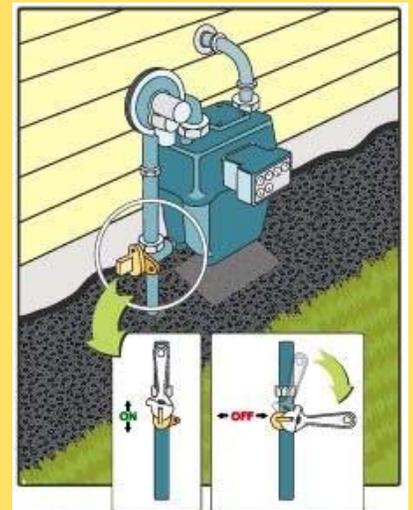
(Backpack emergency kits are kits with enough food, water and medical supplies for a few days, stored in a backpack so that the whole thing can be carried easily over long distances.) To learn more about how to safeguard your essential documents visit <http://www.ready.gov/insurance-vital-records>. To see some examples of fire proof and waterproof safes, visit <http://tiny.cc/1gskw>.

Week 4: Locate Your Gas Shut Off Valve

Natural gas leaks can occur inside or outside the home during an earthquake, landslide or other disaster. This can cause fires and explosions. It's important to know where your emergency gas shut off valve is so that you can turn it off after an earthquake.

If you hear or smell gas or find a broken gas line, or suspect a gas leak: Find your emergency gas shut off valve and turn it off using an open ended wrench. Open all doors and windows. Make sure that all electrical appliances are turned off. Do not turn on light switches.

The gas shutoff valve is located on the gas line leading into your gas meter, normally located on an outside wall in a side yard or back yard. Sometimes they are found in an outside closet. This valve, about 6 to 8 inches above the ground, runs parallel with the meter pipe, and is bright red. With a wrench, give the valve a 1/4 turn in either direction until the valve is crosswise to the pipe. Do not attempt to turn the gas back on. Call your utility company to do this. To learn more about your gas shut off valve, visit ReadyLA at <http://tiny.cc/nvw0s> the City's official emergency preparedness website.



Locate Your Gas Shut-Off Valve



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Week 3: Hand-crank Radio

Make sure that you have a good quality hand-crank radio. Large-scale power outages can last for weeks, so you should have a hand-crank and/or solar powered radio that does not depend on batteries. This is a crucial tool to make sure you receive emergency information, such as the location of shelters, medical services, or food and water supplies. There is wide range of different devices to choose from, in all different price ranges. In addition to a hand-crank and/or solar panels for power, many of the radios include a flashlight, siren and even cell phone chargers. To see some example, visit <http://tiny.cc/y7p2t>.



Week 2: Begin Assembling An Disaster/Earthquake Survival Kits

Every car, household and workplace should have a disaster preparedness kit. This requires quite a bit of work, so this week, we offer the first simple steps.

Enough food and water to be self-sufficient for up to 5 days.

Food—Food should be non-perishable, and edible with little or no preparation. Although many pre-assembled survival kits come with 5,000 calorie nutrition bars, having to live off of them would make an already difficult experience unnecessarily miserable. Look for

nutritious, good-tasting hearty soups, chili, vegetables and other foods in cans or vacuum sealed packs. If you have special dietary needs, such as nut allergies, diabetes, or gluten intolerance, be sure to find **appropriate foods, and read all nutrition labels.**



Water - You will need at least 1.5 gallons of water per person per day for drinking and washing. Water should be changed out every 6 months. You can assemble extensive survival kits yourself, or you can buy complete, ready-to-use kits in various sizes that you can store in your closet or car trunk. To learn more about assembling your survival kits, visit <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots/step3.html>.

Week 1: Family Emergency Preparedness Plan

Having a plan in place so that your family members know what to do during and after an earthquake or other major disaster is crucial. This includes such simple steps as having a third party that family members can call to let each other know their status and location. Please visit "**Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety,**" a free, comprehensive preparedness guide, for detailed instructions on how to make your complete family earthquake preparedness plan. <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots/step2.html>.

