



Gary R. Stanton  
Sheriff

## SOLANO COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

530 Clay Street  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
(707) 784-1600  
FAX (707) 421-6383



Michael D. Johnson  
County Administrator

# Family Guide to Disaster Preparedness

By

The Solano County Office of Emergency Services

In a major disaster, it might be several days before vital services are restored. It's up to you to **prepare, get involved and be informed!**

Solano County is exposed to a wide variety of hazards, both natural and man-made. Earthquakes, fires, severe storms, power outages, and acts of terrorism are just some of the potential emergencies we may encounter. Imagine that you have no electricity, no gas, no water and no telephone service. Imagine that all the businesses are closed and you are without any kind of emergency services. What will you do until help arrives?

You need to prepare yourself and your family for an emergency. Learn what to do in response to a specific disaster, like an earthquake etc.

**HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY** - Talk with your family about potential disasters and why it's necessary to prepare for them. Involve each member of your family in the planning process. By showing them simple steps that can increase their safety, you can help reduce their anxiety about emergencies.

- Make sure everyone knows where to find your **disaster supply kit** and vehicle bag.
- Have a flashlight and a pair of shoes under everyone'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 member knows who your family's out-of-state contact is and instruct them to call this person and tell him/her where they are.
- Locate the gas main and other **utilities** and make sure family members know when and how to turn them off.
- Practice your evacuation routes, Drop, Cover & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll drills.
- Teach each member of your family 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 or people with disabilities**, family members that don't speak English and **pets**.

**HOME SAFETY** - During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. However, there are simple steps you can take to make your home safer. Start by viewing each room with a “disaster eye” and identify potential hazards – bookshelves that could tip over in an earthquake and block exits or heavy objects that could fall and cause injury.

- 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 ABC type fire extinguishers 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.
- Know how and when to switch off your utilities.
- 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.

**CHILDREN** - Plan: Include your children in family discussions and planning for emergency safety.

- 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 to get to them.
- Regularly update your child’s school with current emergency contact information and persons authorized to pick up your child from school.
- Make sure each child knows the family’s alternate meeting sites if you are separated in a disaster and cannot return to your home.
- Make sure each child knows how to reach your family’s out-of-state contact person.
- Teach children to dial their home telephone number and Emergency 9-1-1.
- Teach children what gas smells like and advise them to tell an adult if they smell gas after an emergency.
- 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.
- Role-play with children as to what they should do if a parent is suddenly sick or injured.
- Role-play with children on what to say when calling Emergency 9-1-1.





## SENIORS AND DISABLED

**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.

**PLAN FOR PETS-** 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 ahead 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 micro-chipped.
- Make a pet disaster kit.



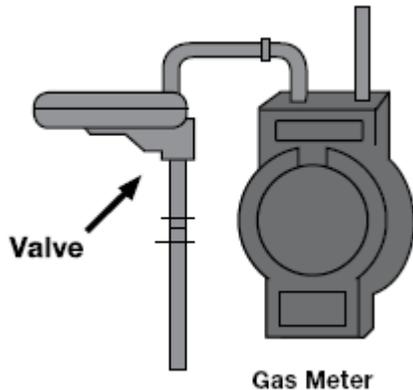
## UTILITIES

[Natural Gas](#) | [Electricity](#) |

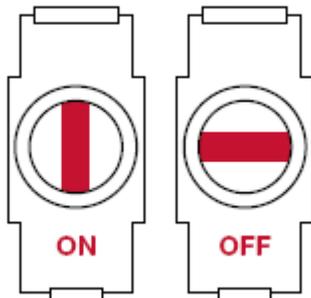
Natural gas leaks can cause an explosive and flammable atmosphere inside a building.

### Natural Gas

- 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. Your main valve may look like this:



- To turn gas off, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction. When the lever crosses the direction of the pipe (see below) the gas is off.



- 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 turned back on.

## 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.

PG&E: (800) 743 -5000 or [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com)

## 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.
- Include baby food and formula or other diet items for infants or seniors.
- 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 don't re-store a bottle once it's 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. If it is cloudy, add 16. Shake or stir, then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal.

**FIRST AID KIT-** In any emergency, you or a family member may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. Keep a basic first aid kit so you are prepared to help when someone is hurt. First aid kits can be purchased inexpensively at local stores.



**VEHICLE KIT** - A component of your disaster kit is your Vehicle kit. Put the following items together in a backpack or another easy to carry container in case you must evacuate quickly. Prepare one vehicle kit for each vehicle. Consider what you would need for your immediate safety. Such as: **flashlight, battery operated radio, batteries, whistle, dust mask, pocket knife, cash, sturdy shoes, clothes, local map, food and water, photos of family and pets for ID purposes, list of emergency contacts, copies of health cards and ID's. Special needs items.**

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

- Long-distance phone lines often work before local phone lines, so identify an out-of-state contact and provide this person with the contact information of people you want to keep informed of your situation. Share this information with your family and friends locally.
- Avoid making non-urgent phone calls after a disaster – even if phone lines are undamaged, increased phone traffic can jam phone circuits.
- Don't 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 re-assured of your safety status.
- Keep coins in your vehicle 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 and are tying up a line.

## **VOLUNTEER**

Before a disaster, get involved and become familiar with community resources:

- Find out which community organizations need your skills and expertise.
- Find out what cities have Citizens CERT Teams– Coordinates volunteer programs to support first responders.
- Volunteer to develop site-specific disaster plans for your workplace, child's daycare center, or apartment building if they don't already have one.



## **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 downtown, it is safer to remain inside a building after an earthquake unless there is a fire or gas leak. There are no open areas in downtown San Francisco far enough from glass or other falling debris to be considered safe refuge sites. Glass from high-rise buildings does not always fall straight down; it can catch a wind current and travel great distances.
- If you are in bed, stay there and cover your head with a pillow.
- Do not use elevators.
- 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're driving, pull to the side of the road and stop. Avoid stopping under overhead hazards
- If you are on the beach, move to higher ground. An earthquake can cause a tsunami.

### **Once the earthquake shaking stops:**

- Check the people around you for injuries; provide first aid. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger.
- 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.
- Turn off the gas only if you smell gas.
- Check your phones to be sure they have not shaken off the hook and are tying up a line.
- Inspect your home for damage.

### **If you are trapped in debris:**

- Move as little as possible so that you don't 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.

## **STORM AND FLOODING**

Winter rains can cause floods, landslides, uprooted trees, and downed or broken utility lines in almost any neighborhood. Identify local sand bag locations and prepare to fill your own sand bags.

During the Storm:

- If water has entered a garage or basement, do not walk through it – it may contain hazardous materials.
- Do not try to drive over a flooded road. If your car stalls, abandon it immediately. Attempting to move a stalled vehicle in flood conditions can be fatal.
- Tune to KUIC 95.3 FM and local TV channels for emergency advisories and instructions.
- If you are asked to leave your property, disconnect all electrical appliances.

## **TERRORISM**

Terrorism may involve devastating acts using weapons of mass destruction. These weapons range from chemical agents, biological hazards, a radiological or nuclear device, and other explosives. The primary objective of a terrorist is to create widespread fear.

If there is a Terrorist Attack:

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

## **POWER OUTAGE**

Power cuts can occur due to rolling blackouts, extreme weather conditions, or can accompany other disasters such as earthquakes. If there is no power in your neighborhood:

- 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.
- See the [Food](#) section to learn about food safety when your refrigerator's power is off.



## **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 over and over 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.

## **SHELTER IN PLACE**

One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency is to shelter-in-place. This means you should stay indoors until authorities tell you it is safe or you are told to evacuate.

- Select a small, interior room, with no or few windows.
- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Close the fireplace damper.
- Bring your family disaster supply kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Bring your pets.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select (cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency)
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Listen to your radio or television for further instructions or updates.
- If you are in your car, close windows and turn off vents and air conditioning.