



State of California – Military Department
California Cadet Corps

CURRICULUM ON CITIZENSHIP

Strand C5: Emergency Preparedness

Level 11

This Strand is composed of the following components:

- A. California Disasters
- B. Family Disaster Planning
- C. Community Emergency Response Training (CERT)



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A. California Disasters

Standard #2

Standard #2: Students learn duty, service, and responsibility as a citizen of their school, their community, the State of California, and the United States.

OBJECTIVES

DESIRED OUTCOME (Self-Mastery)

Cadets are familiar with the disaster emergencies that commonly occur in California and how to prepare, respond, and recover from them.

Plan of Action:

1. Describe the Emergency Alert System and options available for US residents.
2. Identify key elements of preparedness for active shooter incidents.
3. Identify key elements of preparedness for attacks in public places.
4. Identify key elements of preparedness for cybersecurity situations.
5. Identify key elements of preparedness for and response to drought.
6. Identify key elements of preparedness for earthquakes.
7. Identify key elements of preparedness for extreme heat.
8. Identify key elements of preparedness for floods.
9. Identify key elements of preparedness for HAZMAT incidents.
10. Identify key elements of preparedness for home fires.
11. Identify key elements of preparedness for household chemical emergencies.
12. Identify key elements of preparedness for staying safe during civil unrest.
13. Identify key elements of preparedness for landslides & debris flow.
14. Identify key elements of preparedness for pandemic.
15. Identify key elements of preparedness for power outages.
16. Identify key elements of preparedness for snowstorms & extreme cold.
17. Identify key elements of preparedness for thunderstorms & lightning.
18. Identify key elements of preparedness for volcanic eruptions.
19. Identify key elements of preparedness for wildfires.
20. Identify key elements in recovering from disaster.

Information in this strand is taken from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (Government, 2020) website. For updated information and more disaster related topics, go to:

- DHS: www.ready.gov

A1. Emergency Alerts

When emergencies strike, public safety officials use timely and reliable systems to alert you. This page describes different warning alerts you can get and how to get them.

WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are just one of the ways public safety officials can quickly and effectively alert the public to serious emergencies. They are sent through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), which integrates the nation's alert and warning systems, technologies and infrastructure.

What you need to know about WEAs:

- WEAs can be sent by state and local public safety officials, the National Weather Service, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the president of the United States.
- WEAs can be issued for three alert categories: imminent threat, AMBER and presidential.
- WEAs look like text messages, but are designed to get your attention with a unique sound and vibration repeated twice.
- WEAs are no more than 90 characters and include the type and time of the alert, any action you should take and the agency issuing the alert.
- WEAs are not affected by network congestion and will not disrupt texts, calls or data sessions that are in progress.
- Mobile users are not charged for receiving WEAs and there is no need to subscribe.
- To make sure your device is WEA-capable check with your service provider.

EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a national public warning system that allows the president to address the American people within 10 minutes during a national emergency. The alerts are sent through broadcasters, satellite digital audio services, direct broadcast satellite providers, cable television systems and wireless cable systems.
- The EAS may also be used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information such as weather information, imminent threats, AMBER alerts and local incident information targeted to specific areas.
- The president has sole responsibility for determining when the national-level EAS will be activated. FEMA is responsible for national-level EAS tests and exercises.
- The EAS is also used when all other means of alerting the public are unavailable.



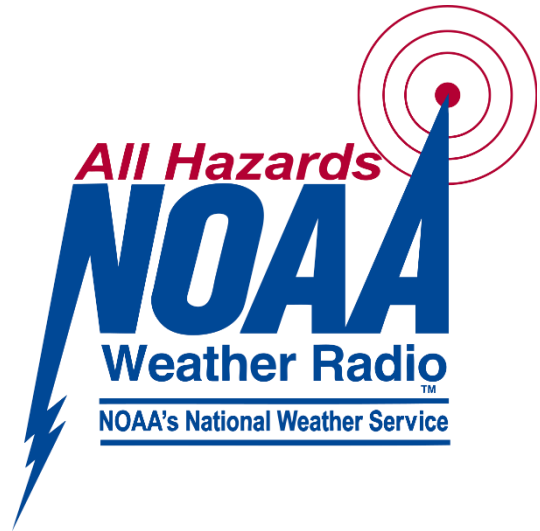
NOAA WEATHER RADIO

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast continuous weather information from the nearest National Weather Service office.

- NWR broadcasts official warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- NWR also broadcasts alerts of non-weather emergencies such as national security or public safety threats through the Emergency Alert System.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Know Your Alerts and Warnings](#) (PDF)
- [Emergency Alert System Fact Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [Kids: Wireless Emergency Alerts \(WEA\) and Word Search Puzzle](#) (PDF)
- [Educators: Wireless Emergency Alerts Instructional Materials](#) (PDF)
- [Wireless Emergency Alerts \(English\), PSA \(:30\)](#) (Video)
- [Wireless Emergency Alerts \(Spanish\), PSA \(:30\)](#) (Video)
- [Integrated Public Alert and Warning System \(IPAWS\)](#) (Link)
- [Emergency Alert System](#) (Link)
- [NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards \(NWR\)](#) (Link)



A2. Active Shooter

This page describes what to do in an active shooter event. Remember during an active shooting to RUN. HIDE. FIGHT.

BE INFORMED

- Sign up for an active shooter training.
- If you see something, say something to the authorities right away.
- Sign up to receive local emergency alerts and register your contact information with any work-sponsored alert system.
- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers.

MAKE A PLAN

- Make a plan with your family and make sure everyone knows what to do if confronted with an active shooter.
- Wherever you go look for the two nearest exits, have an escape path in mind and identify places you could hide if necessary.
- Understand the plans for individuals with disabilities or other access and functional needs.

DURING:

RUN and escape if possible.

- Getting away from the shooter or shooters is the top priority.
- Leave your belongings behind and get away.
- Help others escape, if possible, but evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Warn and prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Call 9-1-1 when you are safe and describe the shooter, location and weapons.

HIDE if escape is not possible.

- Get out of the shooter's view and stay very quiet.
- Silence all electronic devices and make sure they won't vibrate.
- Lock and block doors, close blinds and turn off lights.
- Don't hide in groups. Spread out along walls or hide separately to make it more difficult for the shooter.
- Try to communicate with police silently. Use text message or social media to tag your location or put a sign in a window.
- Stay in place until law enforcement gives you the all clear.
- Your hiding place should be out of the shooter's view and provide protection if shots are fired in your direction.

ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE

LEARN HOW TO SURVIVE A SHOOTING EVENT



FIGHT as an absolute last resort.

- Commit to your actions and act as aggressively as possible against the shooter.
- Recruit others to ambush the shooter with makeshift weapons like chairs, fire extinguishers, scissors, books, etc.
- Be prepared to cause severe or lethal injury to the shooter.
- Throw items and improvise weapons to distract and disarm the shooter.

AFTER

- Keep hands visible and empty.
- Know that law enforcement's first task is to end the incident and they may have to pass injured along the way.
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns or handguns and may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation.
- Officers will shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.
- Follow law enforcement instructions and evacuate in the direction they come from unless otherwise instructed.
- Take care of yourself first, and then you may be able to help the wounded before first responders arrive.
- If the injured are in immediate danger, help get them to safety.



- While you wait for first responders to arrive, provide first aid. Apply direct pressure to wounded areas and use tourniquets if you have been trained to do so.
- Turn wounded people onto their sides if they are unconscious and keep them warm.
- Consider seeking professional help for you and your family to cope with the long-term effects of the trauma.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [RUN. HIDE. FIGHT.® Surviving an Active Shooter Event - English](#) (Video)
- [Active Shooter Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Active Shooter Preparedness Resources](#) (Training, videos, brochures and more for individualized audiences link)
- [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Active Shooter Preparedness Resources Translated](#) (Link)
- [Conducting Security Assessments: A Guide for Schools and Houses of Worship Webinar](#) (Link)

A3. Attacks in Public Places

While the threat of mass attacks is real, we can all take steps to prepare, protect ourselves and help others.

WHAT ARE MASS ATTACKS?

Assailant(s):

- Use weapons to attack crowds.
- Target less protected indoor or outdoor spaces.
- Intend to harm multiple victims.
- Use the attack(s) to intimidate.
- Can use makeshift or modern weapons.



Types of Mass Attacks

- Active shooter: Individuals using firearms to cause mass casualties.
- Intentional Vehicular Assault (IVA): Individuals using a vehicle to cause mass casualties.
- Improvised Explosive Device (IED): Individuals using homemade bombs to cause mass casualties.
- Other methods of mass attacks may include knives, fires, drones or other weapons.

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST A MASS ATTACK

- Stay alert.
- Seek safety.
- Cover and hide.
- Defend yourself.
- Help the wounded.

If You See Something Say Something®

- Report suspicious behavior, items or activities to authorities.

Observe Warning Signs

- Signs might include unusual or violent communications, expressed anger or intent to cause harm and substance abuse. These warning signs may increase over time.

Be Alert to Your Surroundings

- Observe what is going on around you and avoid distractions such as texting, listening to headphones or being on your cell phone.

Have an Exit Plan

- Identify exits and areas to hide under cover wherever you go, including at work, school and special events.

Plan to Seek Cover for Protection

- Map out places to seek cover. Place a barrier between yourself and the threat using solid objects, walls and locked doors as protection.

Learn Lifesaving Skills

- Take trainings such as [You Are the Help Until Help Arrives](#) and first aid to assist the wounded before help arrives.

How to Stay Safe When a Mass Attack Threatens:**PREPARE NOW**

- Be alert to your surroundings. If You See Something, Say Something®

Observe warning signs:

- Unusual or threatening communications.
- Expressed grievances related to a workplace, personal or other issues.
- Ideologies promoting violence.
- Suspicious behavior such as excessive questioning or attention to security details.
- Unusual items or packages.

Know Exits and Areas to Cover and Hide

- When visiting new places, take time to identify at least two nearby exits.
- Identify areas you could hide under cover in case of attack in familiar places such as work, school and outdoor events.

Be Ready to Help

- Learn and practice skills such as casualty care, CPR and first aid. Teach others.
- Organize and participate in safety drills in places where people gather including home, school and work.

SURVIVE DURING**Stay Alert**

- Pay attention to what is happening around you so that you can react quickly to attacks.

Run to Safety

- If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the building or area regardless of whether others agree to follow.

Cover and Hide

- If evacuation is not possible find a place to hide out of view of the attacker and if possible, put a solid barrier between yourself and the threat.
- Keep silent.

Defend, Disrupt, Fight

- As a last resort, when you can't run or cover, attempt to disrupt the attack or disable the attacker.
- Be aggressive and commit to your actions.

Help the Wounded

- Take care of yourself first and then, if you are able, help the wounded get to safety and provide immediate care.

BE SAFE AFTER

Call 9-1-1

- When you are safe, call 9-1-1 and be prepared to provide information to the operator including location of the incident, number of injured and details about the attacker(s).

Continue Lifesaving Assistance

- If you are able, continue to provide care until first responders arrive.

When Law Enforcement Arrives

- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Keep hands visible and empty.
- Report to designated areas to provide information and get help.

Monitor Communications

- Listen to law enforcement's messages for information about the situation. Share updates with family and friends.

Consider Seeking Professional Help

- Be mindful of your health. If needed, seek help for you and your family to cope with the trauma.



A4. Cyber Attacks

Cyberattacks are malicious attempts to access or damage a computer system. Cyberattacks can lead to loss of money, theft of personal information and damage to your reputation and safety.

Cybersecurity involves preventing, detecting, and responding to cyberattacks that can have wide-ranging effects on individuals, organizations, the community and at the national level.

Cyberattacks:

- Can use computers, mobile phones, gaming systems and other devices.
- Can include identity theft.
- Can block your access or delete your personal documents and pictures.
- Can target children.
- Can cause problems with business services, transportation, and power.



TYPES OF CYBER ATTACK

- Phishing
- Malware
- Man-in-the-Middle (MITM)
- Denial of Service (DoS)
- SQL Injected Attack
- Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)
- Rogue Security Software
- Drive-By Downloads
- Password Attacks

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST A CYBER ATTACK

- Keep software and operating systems up to date.
- Use strong passwords and two-factor authentication (two methods of verification).
- Watch for suspicious activity. When in doubt, don't click. Do not provide personal information.
- Use encrypted (secure) Internet communications.
- Create backup files.
- Protect your home and/or business WiFi network.

BEFORE A CYBER ATTACK

You can increase your chances of avoiding cyber risks by setting up the proper controls. The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your property before a cyberattack occurs:

- Use strong passwords that are 12 characters or longer. Use upper and lowercase letters, numbers and special characters. Use a password manager.
- Use a stronger authentication such as a PIN or password that only you would know. Consider using a separate device that can receive a code or uses a biometric scan (e.g. fingerprint scanner).
- Watch for suspicious activity that asks you to do something right away, offers something that sounds too good to be true or needs your personal information. Think before you click.
- Check your account statements and credit reports regularly.
- Use secure Internet communications.
- Use sites that use HTTPS if you will access or provide any personal information. Do not use sites with invalid certificates. Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that creates a secure connection.
- Use antivirus solutions, malware and firewalls to block threats.
- Regularly back up your files in an encrypted file or encrypted file storage device.
- Limit the personal information you share online. Change privacy settings and do not use location features.
- Protect your home network by changing the administrative and WiFi passwords regularly. When configuring your router, choose the WiFi Protected Access 2 (WPA2) Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) setting, which is the strongest encryption option.



DURING A CYBER ATTACK

- Limit the damage. Look for unexplained charges, strange accounts on your credit report, unexpected denial of your credit card, posts you did not make showing up on your social networks and people receiving emails you never sent.
- Immediately change passwords for all of your online accounts.
- Scan and clean your device.
- Consider turning off the device. Take it to a professional to scan and fix.
- Let work, school or other system owners know.
- Contact banks, credit card companies and other financial accounts. You may need to place holds on accounts that have been attacked. Close any unauthorized credit or charge accounts. Report that someone may be using your identity.
- Check to make sure the software on all of your systems is up-to-date.
- Run a scan to make sure your system is not infected or acting suspiciously.
- If you find a problem, disconnect your device from the Internet and perform a full system restore.
- If in a public setting immediately inform a librarian, teacher or manager in charge to contact their IT department.

AFTER A CYBER ATTACK

- File a report with the [Office of the Inspector General \(OIG\)](#) if you think someone is illegally using your Social Security number.
- File a complaint with the [FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#). They will review the complaint and refer it to the appropriate agency.
- File a report with the local police so there is an official record of the incident.
- Report identity theft to the [Federal Trade Commission](#).
- Contact additional agencies depending on what information was stolen. Examples include contacting the [Social Security Administration](#) (800-269- 0271) if your social security number was compromised, or the Department of Motor Vehicles if your driver's license or car registration has been stolen.
- Report online crime or fraud to your local United States Secret Service (USSS) [Electronic Crimes Task Force](#) or the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).
- For further information on preventing and identifying threats, visit US-CERT's [Alerts and Tips page](#).

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#) (Link)
- [Cyberattack Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [DHS United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team \(US-CERT\)](#) (Link)
- [DHS Stop.Think.Connect.™ Campaign](#) (Link)
- [United States Secret Service Electronic Crimes Task Force](#) (Link)
- [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) (Link)
- [Department of Justice](#) (Link)
- [Federal Communications Commission](#) (Link)
- [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) (Link)
- [Federal Trade Commission](#) (Link)
- [National Cyber Security Alliance](#) (Link)
- [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline](#) (Link)

- [Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce](#) (Link)
- [NetSmartz](#) (Link)
- [iKeepSafe](#) (Link)
- [iSafe](#) (Link)

A5. Drought

Nearly every part of the U.S. experiences periods of reduced rainfall. In California over the past hundred years, at least half of those years have been characterized by below-average rainfall. The wet years have usually been “El Nino” occurrences, where warm water in the Pacific Ocean changes the weather along the west coast of North and South America. Planning in advance for a drought can protect us in dry years.



BEFORE A DROUGHT

The best way to prepare for a drought is to conserve water. Make conserving water a part of your daily life.

Indoor Water Conservation Tips Before a Drought:

GENERAL

- Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it. For example, use it to water your indoor plants or garden.
- Fix dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water a year.
- Check all plumbing for leaks and have any leaks repaired by a plumber.
- Retrofit all household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.
- Install an instant hot water heater on your sink.
- Insulate your water pipes to reduce heat loss and prevent them from breaking.
- Install a water-softening system only when the minerals in the water would damage your pipes. Turn the softener off while on vacation.
- Choose appliances that are more energy and water efficient.

BATHROOM

- Consider purchasing a low-volume toilet that uses less than half the water of older models.
Note: In many areas, low-volume units are required by law.

- Install a toilet displacement device to cut down on the amount of water needed to flush. Place a one-gallon plastic jug of water into the tank to displace toilet flow. Make sure it does not interfere with the operating parts.
- Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version.

KITCHEN

- Instead of using the garbage disposal, throw food in the garbage or start a compost pile to dispose it.

Outdoor Water Conservation Tips Before a Drought**GENERAL**

- Check your well pump periodically. If the automatic pump turns on and off while water is not being used, you have a leak.
- Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees. Once established, your plants won't need as much watering. Group plants together based on similar water needs.
- Don't buy water toys that require a constant stream of water.
- Don't install ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless they use re-circulated water.
- Consider rainwater harvesting where practical.
- Contact your local water provider for information and assistance.

LAWN CARE

- Position sprinklers so water lands on the lawn and shrubs and not on paved areas.
- Repair sprinklers that spray a fine mist.
- Check sprinkler systems and timing devices regularly to be sure they operate properly.
- Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches or to its highest level. A higher cut encourages grass roots to grow deeper and holds soil moisture.
- Plant drought-resistant lawn seed. Reduce or eliminate lawn areas that are not used frequently.
- Don't over-fertilize your lawn. Applying fertilizer increases the need for water. Apply fertilizers that contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.
- Choose a water-efficient irrigation system such as drip irrigation for your trees, shrubs and flowers.
- Turn irrigation down in fall and off in winter. Water manually in winter only if needed.
- Use mulch around trees and plants to retain moisture in the soil. Mulch also helps control weeds that compete with plants for water.
- Invest in a weather-based irrigation controller—or a smart controller. These devices will automatically adjust the watering time and frequency based on soil moisture, rain, wind, and evaporation and transpiration rates. Check with your local water agency to see if there is a rebate available for the purchase of a smart controller.

POOL

- Install a new water-saving pool filter. A single back flushing with a traditional filter uses 180 to 250 gallons of water.
- Cover pools and spas to reduce water evaporation.



DURING A DROUGHT

Always observe state and local restrictions on water use during a drought. Contact your [state or local government](#) for current information and suggestions.

Indoor Water Conservation Tips During a Drought**BATHROOM**

- Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other similar waste in the trash rather than the toilet.

- Take short showers instead of baths. Turn on the water only to get wet and lather and then again to rinse off.
- Avoid letting the water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving.
- Place a bucket in the shower to catch excess water for watering plants.

KITCHEN

- Operate automatic dishwashers only when they are fully loaded. Use the "light wash" feature to use less water.
- Hand wash dishes by filling two containers—one with soapy water and the other with rinse water containing a small amount of chlorine bleach.
- Clean vegetables in a pan filled with water rather than running water from the tap.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator. Do not let the tap run while you are waiting for water to cool.
- Avoid wasting water waiting for it to get hot. Capture it for other uses such as plant watering or heat it on the stove or in a microwave.
- Don't rinse dishes before placing them in the dishwasher, just remove large particles of food.
- Avoid using running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or use the defrost setting on your microwave.

LAUNDRY

- Operate clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or set the water level for the size of your load.

Outdoor Water Conservation Tips During a Drought:**CAR WASHING**

- Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- If you wash your own car, use a shut-off nozzle that can be adjusted down to a fine spray on your hose.

LAWN CARE

- Avoid over watering your lawn and water only when needed.
- A heavy rain eliminates the need for watering for up to two weeks. Most of the year, lawns only need one inch of water per week.
- Check the soil moisture levels with a soil probe, spade or large screwdriver. You don't need to water if the soil is still moist. If your grass springs back when you step on it, it doesn't need water yet.
- If your lawn does require watering, do so early in the morning or later in the evening, when temperatures are cooler.

- Check your sprinkler system frequently and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- Water in several short sessions rather than one long one, in order for your lawn to better absorb moisture and avoid runoff.
- Use a broom or blower instead of a hose to clean leaves and other debris from your driveway or sidewalk.
- Avoid leaving sprinklers or hoses unattended. A garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours.
- In extreme drought, allow lawns to die in favor of preserving trees and large shrubs.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)
- [National Integrated Drought Information System \(NIDIS\)](#) (Link)
- [US Drought Monitor](#) (Link)
- [US Economic Costs of Drought](#) (Link)
- [National Drought Mitigation Center](#) (Link)
- [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) (Link)

A6. Earthquakes

An earthquake is a sudden, rapid shaking of the ground caused by the shifting of rocks deep underneath the earth's surface. Earthquakes can happen without warning and can result in injuries and damage to property and roads. Earthquakes can cause fires, tsunamis, landslides or avalanches. While they can happen anywhere, areas at higher risk for earthquakes include California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Mississippi Valley.



If an earthquake happens, protect yourself right away.

- If you are in a car, pull over and stop. Set your parking brake.
- If you are in bed, turn face down and cover your head and neck with a pillow.
- If you are outdoors, stay outdoors away from buildings.
- Do not get in a doorway.
- Do not run outside.



STAY SAFE DURING AN EARTHQUAKE: DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON

Protect Yourself During Earthquakes!



Drop: Wherever you are, drop down on to your hands and knees. If you're using a wheelchair or walker with a seat, make sure your wheels are locked and remain seated until the shaking stops.

Cover: Cover your head and neck with your arms. If a sturdy table or desk is nearby, crawl underneath it for shelter. If no shelter is nearby, crawl next to an interior wall (away from windows). Crawl only if you can reach better cover without going through an area with more debris. Stay on your knees or bent over to protect vital organs.

Hold on: If you are under a table or desk, hold on with one hand and be ready to move with it if it moves. If seated and unable to drop to the floor, bend forward, cover your head with your arms and hold on to your neck with both hands.

PREPARE BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

The best time to prepare for any disaster is before it happens.

- Practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On with family and coworkers.
- Secure heavy items in your home like bookcases, refrigerators, televisions and objects that hang on walls. Store heavy and breakable objects on low shelves.
- Create a [family emergency communications plan](#) that has an out-of-state contact. Plan where to meet if you get separated.
- [Make a supply kit](#) that includes enough food and water for at least three days, a flashlight, a fire extinguisher and a whistle.
- Consider obtaining an [earthquake insurance policy](#). A standard homeowner's insurance policy does not cover earthquake damage.
- Consider making improvements to your building to fix structural issues that could cause your building to collapse during an earthquake.



STAY SAFE AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

If an earthquake has just happened, there can be serious hazards such as damage to the building, leaking gas and water lines, or downed power lines.

- Expect aftershocks to follow the main shock of an earthquake.
 - Check yourself to see if you are hurt and help others if you have training. [Learn how to be the help until help arrives.](#)
- If you are in a damaged building, go outside and quickly move away from the building. Do not enter damaged buildings.

- If you are trapped, protect your mouth, nose and eyes from dust. Send a text, bang on a pipe or wall or use a whistle instead of shouting to help rescuers locate you.
- If you are in an area that may experience tsunamis, go inland or to higher ground immediately after the shaking stops.
- Text messages may be more reliable than phone calls.
- Once you are safe, listen to local news reports for emergency information and instructions via battery-operated radio, TV, social media or from cell phone text alerts.
- Be careful during post-disaster cleanup of buildings and around debris. Do not attempt to remove heavy debris by yourself. Wear protective clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves and sturdy, thick-soled shoes during cleanup.
- Register on the American Red Cross [“Safe and Well”](#) website so people will know you are okay.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Earthquake Informational Poster](#) (PDF)
- [How to Prepare for an Earthquake](#) (PDF)
- [How to Prepare Your Organization for an Earthquake](#) (PDF)
- [Earthquake Preparedness: What Every Childcare Provider Should Know](#) (PDF)
- [When the Earth Shakes](#) (Video)
- [The Great ShakeOut: Earthquake Drills](#) (Link)
- [U.S. Geological Survey Earthquake Hazards Program](#) (Link)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)
- [Earthquake Country Alliance](#) (Link)
- [National Science Foundation](#) (Link)
- [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#) (Link)

A7. Extreme Heat

Extreme heat is a period of high heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two to three days. In extreme heat your body works extra hard to maintain a normal temperature, which can lead to death. In fact, extreme heat is responsible for the highest number of annual deaths among all weather-related hazards.

Remember:

- Extreme heat can occur quickly and without warning.
- Older adults, children and sick or overweight individuals are at greater risk from extreme heat.
- Humidity increases the feeling of heat as measured by a heat index.



IF YOU ARE UNDER AN EXTREME HEAT WARNING:

- Find air conditioning.
- Avoid strenuous activities.
- Wear light clothing.

- Check on family members and neighbors.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Watch for heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- Never leave people or pets in a closed car.



HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN EXTREME HEAT THREATENS

PREPARE NOW

- Find places in your community where you can go to get cool.
- Keep your home cool:
 - Cover windows with drapes or shades.
 - Weather-strip doors and windows.
 - Use window reflectors, such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
 - Add insulation to keep the heat out.
 - Use attic fans to clear hot air.
 - Install window air conditioners and insulate around them.
- Learn to recognize the signs of heat-related illness.

BE SAFE DURING

- Never leave a child, adult or animal alone inside a vehicle on a warm day.



- Find places with air conditioning. Libraries, shopping malls and community centers can provide a cool place to take a break from the heat.
- If you're outside, find shade. Wear a hat wide enough to protect your face.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. If you or someone you care for is on a special diet, ask a doctor how best to accommodate it.

- Do not use electric fans when the temperature outside is more than 95 degrees, as it could increase the risk of heat-related illness. Fans create air flow and a false sense of comfort, but do not reduce body temperature.
- Avoid high-energy activities.
- Check yourself, family members and neighbors for signs of heat-related illness.

RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND

Know the signs of heat-related illness and how to respond to it.

HEAT CRAMPS

- Signs: Muscle pains or spasms in the stomach, arms or legs
- Actions: Go to a cooler location. Remove excess clothing. Take sips of cool sports drinks with salt and sugar. Get medical help if cramps last more than an hour.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Signs: Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea, vomiting
- Actions: Go to an air-conditioned place and lie down. Loosen or remove clothing. Take a cool bath. Take sips of cool sports drinks with salt and sugar. Get medical help if symptoms get worse or last more than an hour.

HEAT STROKE

- Signs:
 - Extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees) taken orally
 - Red, hot and dry skin with no sweat
 - Rapid, strong pulse
 - Dizziness, confusion or unconsciousness
- Actions: Call 9-1-1 or get the person to a hospital immediately. Cool down with whatever methods are available until medical help arrives.

**ASSOCIATED CONTENT**

- [Extreme Heat Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Extreme Heat Safety Social Media Toolkit \(Link\)](#)
- [National Weather Service Heat Safety Tips and Resources \(Link\)](#)
- [National Weather Service - Dangers of Heat \(Link\)](#)
- [National Weather Service - Safety During Heat Wave \(Link\)](#)
- [National Weather Service Summer Safety Weather Ready Nation Outreach Materials \(Link\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Link\)](#)
- [National Integrated Drought Information System \(Link\)](#)
- [National Integrated Heat Health Information System \(Link\)](#)

A8. Floods

Flooding is a temporary overflow of water onto land that is normally dry. Floods are the most common natural disaster in the United States. Failing to evacuate flooded areas or entering flood waters can lead to injury or death.

Floods may:

- Result from rain, snow, coastal storms, storm surges and overflows of dams and other water systems.
- Develop slowly or quickly. Flash floods can come with no warning.



- Cause outages, disrupt transportation, damage buildings and create landslides.

IF YOU ARE UNDER A FLOOD WARNING, FIND SAFE SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. Turn Around, Don't Drown!
 - Just six inches of moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Stay off of bridges over fast-moving water.
- Depending on the type of flooding:
 - Evacuate if told to do so.
 - Move to higher ground or a higher floor.
 - Stay where you are.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A FLOOD THREATENS

PREPARE NOW

- Know types of flood risk in your area. Visit FEMA's [Flood Map Service Center](#) for information.
- Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide [emergency alerts](#).
- If flash flooding is a risk in your location monitor potential signs, such as heavy rain.
- Learn and practice [evacuation routes](#), shelter plans and flash flood response.
- Build an [emergency supply kit](#) in case you have to leave immediately or if services are cut off.
- Purchase or renew a flood insurance policy. Homeowner's policies do not cover flooding. It typically takes up to 30 days for a policy to go into effect so the time to buy is well before a disaster. Get flood coverage under the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#).
- Keep important documents in a waterproof container. Create password-protected digital copies.
- Protect your property. Move valuables to higher levels. Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves. Consider a sump pump with a battery.

SURVIVE DURING

- Go to the safe location you previously identified.
- If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.
- Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.
- Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters. Turn Around. Don't Drown!
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water. Fast-moving water can wash bridges away without warning.
- If your car is trapped in rapidly moving water stay inside. If water is rising inside the car get on the roof.
- If trapped in a building, go to its highest level. Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising floodwater. Only get on the roof if necessary and once there signal for help.



BE SAFE AFTER

- Listen to authorities for information and instructions. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Avoid driving except in emergencies.
- Snakes and other animals may be in your house. Wear heavy gloves and boots during clean up.
- Be aware of the risk of electrocution. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off the electricity to prevent electric shock.
- Avoid wading in floodwater, which can be contaminated and contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can

also electrically charge the water.

- Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machinery ONLY outdoors and away from windows.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Coronavirus](#) (Federal Government Response) (Link)
- [Flood Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#) (Link)
- [Flood Safety Social Media Toolkit](#) (Link)
- [National Weather Service Weather Ready Nation Spring Safety Outreach Materials](#) (Link)
- [Flood Insurance Facts](#) (Link)
- [Six Things to Know Before a Disaster](#) (Video)
- [When the Cloud Forms](#) (Video)
- [How to Prepare for a Flood](#) (Link)
- [File A Flood Insurance Claim](#) (Link)
- [Your Homeowners Insurance Does Not Cover Flood](#) (PDF)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)

**A9. HAZMAT Incidents**

Hazardous materials can include explosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons and radioactive materials. Emergencies can happen during production, storage, transportation, use or disposal. You are at risk when chemicals are used unsafely or released in harmful amounts where you live, work or play.

BEFORE A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

Many communities have Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) who are responsible for collecting information about hazardous materials in the community and planning, which is available to the public upon request. Contact your [local emergency management office](#) for more information on LEPCs.

Protect yourself from a hazardous materials incident:

- Build an [Emergency Supply Kit](#) with the addition of plastic sheeting and duct tape.
- Make a [Family Emergency Plan](#).
- Know how to operate your home's ventilation system.
- Identify an above-ground shelter room with as few openings as possible.
- Read more about [sheltering in place](#).

DURING A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

Listen to local radio or television stations for detailed information and follow instructions carefully. Remember that some toxic chemicals are odorless.

If you are:	Then:
Asked to evacuate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do so immediately. • Stay tuned to the radio or television for information on evacuation routes, temporary shelters and procedures. • If you have time, minimize contamination in the house by closing all windows, shutting all vents and turning off attic fans. • Take pre-assembled disaster supplies. • Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance — infants, elderly people and people with access and functional needs.
Caught Outside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay upstream, uphill and upwind. In general, try to go at least a half mile (usually 8-10 city blocks) from the danger area. • Do not walk into or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists or condensed solid chemical deposits. Try not to inhale gases, fumes and smoke. If possible, cover mouth with a cloth or mask while leaving the area. • Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified.
In a car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop and seek shelter in a permanent building. • If you must remain in your car, keep car windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner and heater.
Asked to stay indoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring pets inside. • Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close vents, fireplace dampers and as many interior doors as possible. • Turn off air conditioners and ventilation systems, or set ventilation systems to 100 percent recirculation so that no outside air is drawn into the building. • If gas or vapors could have entered the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or a towel. • Avoid eating or drinking any food or water that may be contaminated. • Go into your pre-selected shelter room. • Seal gaps under and around the following areas with wet towels, plastic sheeting, duct tape, wax paper or aluminum foil: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doorways and windows ○ Air conditioning units ○ Bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans ○ Stove and dryer vents with duct tape and plastic sheeting

AFTER A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

- Listen to local radio or television stations for the latest emergency information.
- Go to a designated public shelter if you have been told to evacuate or you feel it is unsafe to remain in your home.
- Act quickly if you have come in to contact with or have been exposed to hazardous chemicals.
- Follow decontamination instructions from local authorities.
- Seek medical treatment for unusual symptoms as soon as possible.
- Place exposed clothing and shoes in tightly sealed containers.
- Advise everyone who comes in to contact with you that you may have been exposed to a toxic substance.
- Return home only when authorities say it is safe. Open windows and vents and turn on fans to provide ventilation.
- Find out from local authorities how to clean up your land and property.
- Report any lingering vapors or other hazards to your local emergency services office.

**ASSOCIATED CONTENT**

- [Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration](#) (Link)

A10. Home Fires

In just two minutes a fire can become life-threatening. In five minutes a residence can be engulfed in flames.

LEARN ABOUT FIRES

- Fire is FAST! In less than 30 seconds a small flame can turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house or for it to be engulfed in flames.
- Fire is HOT! Heat is more threatening than flames. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs and melt clothes to your skin.
- Fire is DARK! Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness.
- Fire is DEADLY! Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by a 3-to-1 ratio.

**BEFORE A FIRE**

Create and Practice a Fire Escape Plan

In the event of a fire, remember that every second counts. Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly. Twice each year, practice your home fire escape plan. Some tips to consider when preparing this plan include:

- Find two ways to get out of each room in the event the primary way is blocked by fire or smoke.
- A secondary route might be a window onto a neighboring roof or a collapsible ladder for escape from upper story windows.
- Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly and that security bars can be properly opened.
- Practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters.



Smoke Alarms

A working smoke alarm significantly increases your chances of surviving a deadly home fire.

- Install both ionization AND photoelectric smoke alarms, OR dual sensor smoke alarms, which contain both ionization and photoelectric smoke sensors.
- Test batteries monthly.
- Replace batteries in battery-powered and hard-wired smoke alarms at least once a year (except non-replaceable 10-year lithium batteries).
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement, both inside and outside of sleeping areas.
- Replace the entire smoke alarm unit every 8-10 years or according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Never disable a smoke alarm while cooking – it can be a deadly mistake.

Smoke Alarm Safety for People with Access or Functional Needs

- Audible alarms for visually impaired people should pause with a small window of silence between each successive cycle so that they can listen to the instructions or voices of others.
- Smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light are available for the hearing impaired. Contact your local fire department for information about obtaining a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm.
- Smoke alarms with a strobe light outside the home to catch the attention of neighbors and emergency call systems for summoning help are also available.



More Fire Safety Tips

- Make digital copies of valuable documents and records like birth certificates.
- Sleep with your door closed.
- Contact your local fire department for information on training on the proper use and maintenance of fire extinguishers.
- Consider installing an automatic fire sprinkler system in your residence.

DURING A FIRE

- Crawl low under any smoke to your exit. Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling.
- Before opening a door, feel the doorknob and door. If either is hot, or if there is smoke coming around the door, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.
- If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 9-1-1 or the fire department. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.
- If pets are trapped inside your home, tell firefighters right away.
- If you can't get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1 or your fire department. Say where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.
- If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop, and roll – stop immediately, drop to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out. If you or someone else cannot stop, drop, and roll, smother the flames with a blanket or towel. Use cool water to treat the burn immediately for three to five minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1 or the fire department.

**Fire Escape Planning for Older Adults and People with Access or Functional Needs**

- Live near an exit. You'll be safest on the ground floor if you live in an apartment building. If you live in a multi-story home, arrange to sleep on the ground floor and near an exit.
- If you use a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to be sure you get through the doorways.
- Make any necessary accommodations – such as providing exit ramps and widening doorways – to facilitate an emergency escape.
- Speak to your family members, building manager or neighbors about your fire safety plan and practice it with them.
- Contact your local fire department's non-emergency line and explain your special needs. Ask emergency providers to keep your special needs information on file.
- Keep a phone near your bed and be ready to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number if a fire occurs.

AFTER A FIRE

The following checklist serves as a quick reference and guide for you to follow after a fire strikes.

- Contact your local disaster relief service, such as The Red Cross, if you need temporary housing, food and medicines.
- If you are insured, contact your insurance company for detailed instructions on protecting your property, conducting inventory and contacting fire damage restoration companies. If you are not insured, try contacting private organizations for help.
- Check with the fire department to make sure your residence is safe to enter. Watch out for any structural damage caused by the fire.

- The fire department should make sure that utilities are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. DO NOT attempt to reconnect utilities yourself.
- Conduct an inventory of damaged property and items. Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made.
- Begin saving receipts for any money you spend related to fire loss. The receipts may be needed later by the insurance company and for verifying losses claimed on your income tax.
- Notify your mortgage company of the fire.

PREVENT HOME FIRES

Home fires are preventable! The following are simple steps that each of us can take to prevent a tragedy.

Cooking



- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time turn off the stove.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking.
- Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet around the stove.
- Position barbecue grills at least 10 feet away from siding and deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

Smoking

- Smoke outside and completely stub-out butts in an ashtray or a can filled with sand.
- Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them away. Never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash can.
- Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used, even if it is turned off. Oxygen can be explosive and makes fire burn hotter and faster.
- Be alert – don't smoke in bed! If you are sleepy, have been drinking or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy, put your cigarette out first.



Electrical and Appliance Safety

- Frayed wires can cause fires. Replace all worn, old or damaged appliance cords immediately and do not run cords under rugs or furniture.
- If an appliance has a three-prong plug, use it only in a three-slot outlet. Never force it to fit into a two-slot outlet or extension cord.
- Immediately shut off, then professionally replace, light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that flicker.

Portable Space Heaters

- Keep combustible objects at least three feet away from portable heating devices.
- Buy only heaters evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Check to make the portable heater has a thermostat control mechanism and will switch off automatically if the heater falls over.
- Only use crystal clear K-1 kerosene in kerosene heaters. Never overfill it. Use the heater in a well-ventilated room.



Fireplaces and Woodstoves

- Inspect and clean woodstove pipes and chimneys annually and check monthly for damage or obstructions.
- Use a fireplace screen heavy enough to stop rolling logs and big enough to cover the entire opening of the fireplace to catch flying sparks.
- Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.

Children



- Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy.
- Store matches and lighters out of children's reach and sight, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children unattended near operating stoves or burning candles, even for a short time.

More Prevention Tips

- Never use a stove range or oven to heat your home.
- Keep combustible and flammable liquids away from heat sources.
- Portable generators should NEVER be used indoors and should only be refueled outdoors or in well ventilated areas.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [U.S. Fire Administration \(USFA\)](#) (Link)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)
- [Sparky the Fire Dog](#) (Link)

A11. Household Chemical Emergencies

Knowing how to handle household products containing hazardous materials or chemicals can reduce the risk of injury.

BEFORE A HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL EMERGENCY

Only store household chemicals in places children can't get to them.

Hazardous household chemicals may include:

- Aerosol cans (including hair spray and deodorant)
- Nail polish and nail polish remover
- Cleaning products and furniture polishes
- Pesticides
- Automotive products (like antifreeze or motor oil)
- Miscellaneous items (like batteries, mercury thermometers and florescent light bulbs)
- Flammable products (like kerosene, home heating oil, propane tanks and lighter fluid)
- Workshop or painting supplies (such as paint thinners and turpentine)
- Lawn and garden products (like herbicides and insecticides)



Guidelines for buying and storing hazardous household chemicals safely:

- Keep products containing hazardous materials in their original containers and never remove the labels unless the container is corroding. Corroding containers should be repackaged and clearly labeled.
- Never store hazardous products in food containers.
- Never mix household hazardous chemicals or waste with other products. Some chemicals, such as chlorine bleach and ammonia may react, ignite or explode.
- Never use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products or pesticides near an open flame
- Clean up any chemical spills immediately. Allow the fumes in the rags to evaporate outdoors, then dispose of the rags by wrapping them in a newspaper and placing them in a sealed plastic bag in your trash can.
- Dispose of hazardous materials correctly.
- Save the national poison control number in your cell phone and post it next to landlines in your home 800-222-1222.

DURING A HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL EMERGENCY

If there is danger of fire or explosion get out immediately.

- Stay upwind and away from the residence to avoid breathing toxic fumes.
- Recognize and respond to symptoms of toxic poisoning including:
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Irritation of the eyes, skin, throat or respiratory tract
 - Changes in skin color
 - Headache or blurred vision
 - Dizziness, clumsiness or lack of coordination
 - Cramps or diarrhea
- If someone is experiencing toxic poisoning symptoms or has been exposed to a household chemical, call the **national poison control center at 800-222-1222**.
- Follow the emergency operator or dispatcher's first aid instructions carefully. The first aid advice found on containers may be out of date or inappropriate. Do not give anything by mouth unless advised to do so by a medical professional.

**AFTER A HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL EMERGENCY**

Discard clothing that may have been contaminated. Some chemicals may not wash out completely.

MORE INFORMATION

- [Chemical Attack: Warfare Agents, Industrial Chemicals and Toxins](#) (Link)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)
- [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (Link)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (Link)

A12. Civil Unrest

This page describes what to do in the event of civil unrest. Civil unrest, or civil disturbance, is an activity arising from a mass act of civil disobedience (such as a demonstration, riot, or strike) in which the participants become hostile toward authority, and authorities incur difficulties in maintaining public safety and order over the disorderly crowd. This does not include peaceful demonstrations, but those may easily turn violent, even when that is not the intention of the leaders, or indeed many of the people, involved. The best advice for remaining safe is not to get yourself involved in a situation that may become violent. If you want to protest, try to do so with a group committed to nonviolence. Stay aware of what's happening around you, and if the mood of the crowd or the reaction by police seems to be turning, leave immediately.



BE INFORMED

- Monitor media (including social media) about planned demonstrations
- Sign up to receive local emergency alerts and register your contact information with any work-sponsored alert system.
- Follow extremist group communications. They will often publicize where they plan to operate, giving you a heads up where NOT to be.

MAKE A PLAN

- Make a plan with your family and make sure everyone knows what to do if drawn into a violent demonstration.
- When participating in a situation involving a crowd, especially a protest or demonstration, be prepared to get out quick. If in the middle of a mob, work your way to the outer edges and make your escape.
- To be safe, stay home.

**DURING:****If caught up in a crowd that starts becoming violent (Mom, 2020)**

- Getting away from the elements initiating the violence is the top priority. This may be demonstrators, rabble-rousers, or civil authorities. Work your way to the edge of the crowd.
- Leave your belongings behind and get away.
- Help others escape, if possible, but evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Warn and prevent individuals from entering an area where the out-of-control crowd may be.
- If you can't get out, take cover, hide, but be prepared to defend yourself and your loved ones.
- Don't get caught against a wall or fence. You can be trapped and possibly injured or killed.
- Take cover, get indoors (if it's safer) if possible. If you hear breaking glass or smell smoke, assume your location is no longer safe.
- If going to a demonstration, be prepared for it to turn ugly: carry a scarf to cover your face, wear sensible shoes, do not carry weapons

If you are confronted by angry, belligerent, or violent individuals, use the following steps when communicating with them. (University, n.d.)

- Remain calm.
- Be courteous and confident.
- Allow the opportunity for the person to express their feelings and concerns.
- Listen respectfully and objectively.



Do Not:

- Corner or crowd the hostile individual.
- Attempt to touch the individual.
- Blame anyone.
- "Blow off" the hostile individual.

AFTER, if you're still in the area where the disturbance took place

- Keep hands visible and empty.
- Know that law enforcement's first task is to end the incident and they may have to pass injured along the way.
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns or handguns and may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation.
- Officers will shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.
- Follow law enforcement instructions and evacuate in the direction they come from unless otherwise instructed.
- Take care of yourself first, and then you may be able to help people who have been injured.
- If the injured are in immediate danger, help get them to safety.
- Turn wounded people onto their sides if they are unconscious and keep them warm.
- Consider seeking professional help for you and your family to cope with the long-term effects of the trauma.

A13. Landslides & Debris Flow

Landslides occur in all U.S. states and territories and can be caused by many factors including [earthquakes](#), [storms](#), [volcanic eruptions](#), [fire](#) and human modification of land. The most deadly landslides are the ones that occur quickly, often with little notice.

In a landslide, masses of rock, earth or debris move down a slope. Debris and mud flows are rivers of rock, earth and other debris saturated with water. They develop during intense rainfall, runoff, or rapid snowmelt, changing the earth into a flowing river of mud or "slurry." They can flow rapidly, striking with little or no warning at avalanche speeds (faster than a person can run). They also can travel many miles from their source, growing in size as they pick up trees, boulders, cars and other materials. Debris flows don't always stay in stream channels and they can flow sideways as well as downhill.

When a wildfire burns a slope, it increases the chance of debris flows for several years. Although some landslides require lengthy rain and saturated slopes, a debris flow can start on a dry slope after only a few minutes of intense rain. "Intense" rain means a burst of rain at a fast rate, about half an inch in an hour. With debris flows, the rate matters more than total rainfall.

How to protect yourself or your property depends on the type of landslide. Land-use zoning, professional inspections, and proper design can reduce many landslide problems but evacuation is often the only way to protect lives from a debris flow or other fast-moving landslide. Never ignore an evacuation order.



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BEFORE A LANDSLIDE

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property from the effects of a landslide or debris flow:

- To begin preparing, you should [build an emergency kit](#) and make a [family communications plan](#).
- Connect with your local emergency services, heed evacuation warnings.
- Leave if you have been told to evacuate or you feel it is unsafe to remain in your home. Text SHELTER + your ZIP code to 43362 (4FEMA) to find the nearest shelter in your area (example: **shelter 12345**).
- Prepare for landslides by following proper land-use procedures - avoid building near steep slopes, close to mountain edges, near drainage ways or along natural erosion valleys.
- Become familiar with the land around you. Learn whether landslides have occurred in your area by contacting local officials. However, don't assume that what happened last time will happen next time. Debris flows can start in places they've never been and return to slopes where they've already been.
- Get an assessment of your property by a qualified geotechnical professional.
- Consult a professional for advice on appropriate preventative measures for your home or business, such as flexible pipe fittings, which can better resist breakage.
- Protect your property based on recommendations from the 'qualified geotechnical professional' and/or local city/county guidance on protection from debris flow and flooding. You can't stop or change the path of a debris flow. However, you may be able to protect your property from floodwaters or mud by use of sandbags, retaining walls or k-rails (Jersey barriers).
- In mud and debris flow areas, consider building channels or deflection walls to try to direct the flow around buildings. Be aware, however, that when a flow is big enough, it goes where it pleases. Also, if you divert a flow and it flows on a neighbor's property, you may be liable for damages.
- If you are at risk from a landslide talk to your insurance agent. Debris flow may be covered by flood insurance policies from the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#).

**Recognize Warning Signs**

Watch for debris flows and other fast-moving landslides that pose threats to life:

- If you are near a wildfire burn area, sign up for emergency alerts and pay



attention to weather forecasts for the burn area. The weather in the burn area could be very different from where you are.

- Listen and watch for rushing water, mud, unusual sounds.
- Unusual sounds, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together, might indicate moving debris.
- A faint rumbling sound that increases in volume is noticeable as the landslide nears.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles, k-rails, boulders, or trees move.
- Huge boulders in the landscape can be signs of past debris flows.

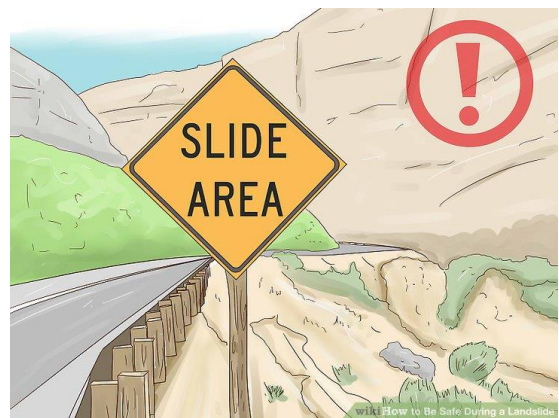
Watch for slow-moving landslides that pose threats to property:

- Changes occur in your landscape such as patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes (especially the places where runoff water converges) land movement, small slides, flows, or progressively leaning trees.
- Doors or windows stick or jam for the first time.
- New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick, or foundations.
- Outside walls, walks, or stairs begin pulling away from the building.
- Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas such as streets or driveways.
- Underground utility lines break.
- Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope.
- Water breaks through the ground surface in new locations.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles, or trees tilt or move.
- The ground slopes downward in one direction and may begin shifting in that direction under your feet.



DURING A LANDSLIDE

- Listen to local news stations on a battery-powered radio for warnings.
- Heed all warnings and evacuation notices.
- During a storm that could cause a landslide, stay alert and awake. Many deaths from landslides occur while people are sleeping.
- Be aware that by the time you are sure a debris flow is coming, that will be too late to get away safely. Never cross a road with water or mud flowing. Never cross a bridge if you see a flow approaching. It can grow faster and larger too quickly for you to escape.
- If you do get stuck in the path of a landslide move uphill as quickly as possible.
- Avoid river valleys and low-lying areas during times of danger.
- If you are near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow or water that changes from clear to muddy. These can be signs that a landslide is coming.



AFTER A LANDSLIDE

- Stay away from the slide area. There may be danger of additional slides.
- Listen to local radio or television stations for the latest emergency information.
- Watch for flooding. [Floods](#) sometimes follow landslides and debris flows because they may both be started by the same conditions.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide, without entering the direct slide area. Direct rescuers to their locations.
- Report broken utility lines and damaged roadways and railways to appropriate authorities. Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- Allow trained professionals to check the building foundation, chimney, and surrounding land for damage.
- Replant damaged ground as soon as possible since erosion caused by loss of ground cover can lead to flash flooding and additional landslides in the near future.
- Seek advice from a geotechnical expert for evaluating landslide hazards or designing corrective techniques to reduce landslide risk. A professional will be able to advise you of the best ways to prevent or reduce landslide risk, without creating further hazard.

TIP SHEETS

- [Landslide Information Sheet](#) (PDF)

MORE INFORMATION

- [U.S. Geological Survey Landslide Hazard Program](#) (Link)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)

A14. Pandemic

BEFORE A PANDEMIC

- Store additional supplies of food and water.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records from doctors, hospitals, pharmacies and other sources and store them, for personal reference. Get help accessing [electronic health records](#).
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.



DURING A PANDEMIC

Limit the Spread of Germs and Prevent Infection

- Americans can continue to use and drink tap water as usual during most pandemics. Please be sure to follow public health guidance as the situation develops.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.



- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Coronavirus](#) (FEMA) (Link)
- [Coronavirus](#) (Federal Government Response) (Link)
- [Coronavirus](#) (CDC) (Link)
- [Coronavirus](#) (EPA) (Link)
- [Talking with Children About Coronavirus Disease](#) (CDC) (Link)
- [www.flu.gov](#) (CDC) (Link)
- [Emergency Preparedness & Response](#) (CDC) (Link)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) (Link)

A15. Power Outages

Extended power outages may impact the whole community and the economy. A power outage is when the electrical power goes out. A power outage may:

- Disrupt communications, water, and transportation.
- Close retail businesses, grocery stores, gas stations, ATMs, banks, and other services.
- Cause food spoilage and water contamination.
- Prevent use of medical devices.



PROTECT YOURSELF DURING A POWER OUTAGE:

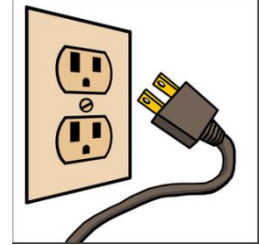
- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed.
- Only use generators outdoors and away from windows.
- Do not use a gas stove to heat your home.
- Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.
- Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines or using power-dependent medical devices.

- If safe, go to an alternate location for heat or cooling.
- Check on neighbors.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A POWER OUTAGE THREATENS:

PREPARE NOW

- Take an inventory of the items you need that rely on electricity.
- Talk to your medical provider about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medicines. Find out how long medication can be stored at higher temperatures and get specific guidance for any medications that are critical for life.
- Plan for batteries and other alternatives to meet your needs when the power goes out.
- Sign up for local alerts and warning systems. Monitor weather reports.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup in central locations on every level of your home.
- Determine whether your home phone will work in a power outage and how long battery backup will last.
- Review the supplies that are available in case of a power outage. Have flashlights with extra batteries for every household member. Have enough nonperishable food and water.
- Use a thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer so that you can know the temperature when the power is restored. Throw out food if the temperature is 40 degrees or higher.
- Keep mobile phones and other electric equipment charged and gas tanks full.

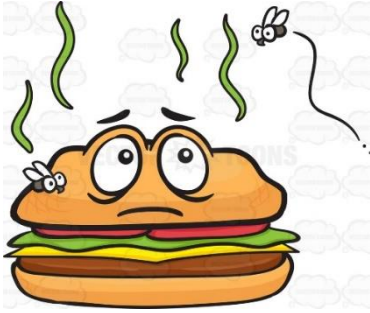


SURVIVE DURING

- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours. Use coolers with ice if necessary. Monitor temperatures with a thermometer.
- Maintain food supplies that do not require refrigeration.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Generators, camp stoves, or charcoal grills should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.
- Check on your neighbors. Older adults and young children are especially vulnerable to extreme temperatures.
- Go to a community location with power if heat or cold is extreme.
- Turn off or disconnect appliances, equipment, or electronics. Power may return with momentary “surges” or “spikes” that can cause damage.



BE SAFE AFTER



- When in doubt, throw it out! Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees or higher for two hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- If the power is out for more than a day, discard any medication that should be refrigerated, unless the drug's label says otherwise. If a life depends on the refrigerated drugs, consult a doctor or pharmacist and use medicine only until a new supply is available.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Power Outage Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [Department of Energy](#) (Link)
- [Individuals with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs](#) (Link)
- [Heat](#) (Link)
- [Winter Weather & Extreme Cold](#) (Link)
- [Centers for Disease Control](#) (Link)
- [Food Safety](#) (Link)
- [Generator Safety](#) (Link)

A16. Snowstorms & Extreme Cold

Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion. Winter storms and blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice, and high winds. A winter storm can:

- Last a few hours or several days;
- Knock out heat, power, and communication services; and
- Place older adults, young children, and sick individuals at greater risk.



IF YOU ARE UNDER A WINTER STORM WARNING, FIND SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

- Stay off roads.
- Stay indoors and dress warmly.
- Prepare for power outages.
- Use generators outside only and away from windows.
- Listen for emergency information and alerts.
- Look for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Check on neighbors.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A WINTER STORM THREATENS:

PREPARE NOW

- Know your area's risk for winter storms. Extreme winter weather can leave communities without utilities or other services for long periods of time.

- Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.
- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms. Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for several days without power. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights.
- Create an [emergency supply kit for your car](#). Include jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable snacks. Keep the gas tank full.
- Learn the signs of, and basic treatments for, frostbite and hypothermia.

SURVIVE DURING

Stay off roads if at all possible. If trapped in your car, then stay inside.

- Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, then wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows. Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.
- Reduce the risk of a heart attack. Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia and begin treatment right away.
- Check on neighbors. Older adults and young children are more at risk in extreme cold.

RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND

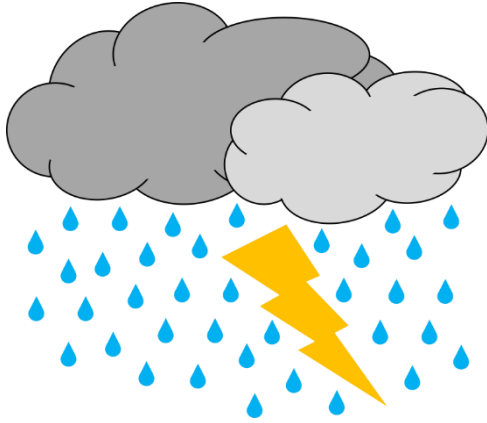
- Frostbite causes loss of feeling and color around the face, fingers, and toes.
 - Signs: Numbness, white or grayish-yellow skin, firm or waxy skin
 - Actions: Go to a warm room. Soak in warm water. Use body heat to warm. Do not massage or use a heating pad.
- Hypothermia is an unusually low body temperature. A temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency.
 - Signs: Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, or drowsiness
 - Actions: Go to a warm room. Warm the center of the body first—chest, neck, head, and groin. Keep dry and wrapped up in warm blankets, including the head and neck.



ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Winter Safety Social Media Toolkit](#) (Link)
- [Winter Storm Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [National Weather Service](#) (Link)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)
- [How to Prepare for a Winter Storm](#) (PDF)
- [Winter Storm Playbook](#) (PDF)
- [When The Sky Turns Gray - Animated](#) (Video)





A17. Thunderstorms & Lightning

Lightning is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards. Although most lightning victims survive, people struck by lightning often report a variety of long-term, debilitating symptoms. Thunderstorms are dangerous storms that include lightning and can:

- Include powerful winds over 50 MPH;
- Create hail; and
- Cause flash flooding and tornadoes.

IF YOU ARE UNDER A THUNDERSTORM WARNING, FIND SAFE SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

- When thunder roars, go indoors!
- Move from outdoors into a building or car.
- Pay attention to alerts and warnings.
- Unplug appliances.
- Do not use landline phones.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A THUNDERSTORM THREATENS:

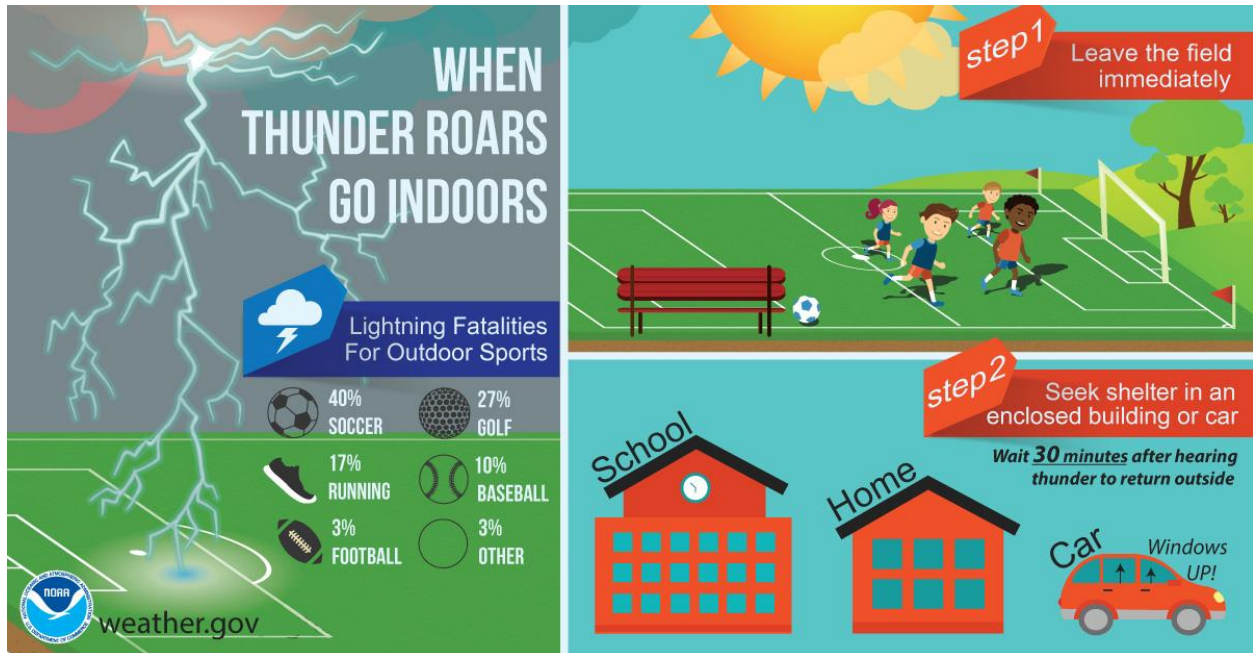
PREPARE NOW

- Know your area's risk for thunderstorms. In most places, they can occur year-round and at any hour.
- Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Identify nearby, sturdy buildings close to where you live, work, study, and play.
- Cut down or trim trees that may be in danger of falling on your home.
- Consider buying surge protectors, lightning rods, or a lightning protection system to protect your home, appliances, and electronic devices.

SURVIVE DURING

- When thunder roars, go indoors. A sturdy building is the safest place to be during a thunderstorm.
- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of thunderstorms. Be ready to change plans, if necessary, to be near shelter.
- When you receive a thunderstorm warning or hear thunder, go inside immediately.
- If indoors, avoid running water or using landline phones. Electricity can travel through plumbing and phone lines.
- Protect your property. Unplug appliances and other electric devices. Secure outside furniture.
- If boating or swimming, get to land and find a sturdy, grounded shelter or vehicle immediately.
- If necessary, take shelter in a car with a metal top and sides. Do not touch anything metal.
- Avoid flooded roadways. Turn Around. Don't Drown! Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.





If you're not able to take cover, the CDC says to crouch low but try to limit how much of your body is touching the ground. Electrical currents can run through the top of the ground. If you're outside when there's lightning:

- Keep away from metal conductors
- Stay away from open areas – you don't want to be the tallest object
- Avoid isolated tall trees, poles or towers
- Stay away from water – if you're in a pool or body water, get out immediately
- Don't lie flat on the ground

BE SAFE AFTER

- Listen to authorities and weather forecasts for information on whether it is safe to go outside and instructions regarding potential flash flooding.
- Watch for fallen power lines and trees. Report them immediately.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Thunderstorms Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [NOAA Watch](#) (Link)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Lightning](#) (Link)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)



A18. Volcanoes

A volcano is an opening in the Earth's crust that allows molten rock, gases, and debris to escape to the surface. Alaska, Hawaii, California, and Oregon have the most active volcanoes, but other states and territories have active volcanoes, too. A volcanic eruption may involve lava and other debris that can flow up to 100 mph, destroying everything in their path. Volcanic ash can travel 100s of miles and cause severe health problems. A volcanic eruption can:

- Contaminate water supplies.
- Damage machinery.
- Reduce visibility through smog and harmful gases that may threaten low-lying areas.
- Make it hard to breathe and irritate the skin, eyes, nose, and throat.

**IF YOU ARE UNDER A VOLCANO WARNING:**

- Listen for emergency information and alerts.
- Follow evacuation or shelter orders. If advised to evacuate, then do so early.
- Avoid areas downstream of the eruption.
- Protect yourself from falling ash.
- Do not drive in heavy ash fall.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A VOLCANO THREATENS:**PREPARE NOW**

- Know your area's risk from volcanic eruption.
- Ask local emergency management for evacuation and shelter plans, and for potential means of protection from ash.
- Learn about community warning systems by signing up for a free service called the [Volcano Notification Service \(VNS\)](#) that sends notifications about volcanic activity.
- Get necessary [supplies in advance](#) in case you have to evacuate immediately, or if services are cut off. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets.
- Consult your doctor if you have existing respiratory difficulties.
- Practice a [communication](#) and [evacuation](#) plan with everyone in your family.
- Have a shelter-in-place plan if your biggest risk is from ash.
- Keep important documents in a safe place. Create password-protected digital copies.
- Find out what your homeowner's insurance policy will cover when a volcano erupts.

SURVIVE DURING

- Listen to alerts. The Volcano Notification Service provides up-to-date information about eruptions.
- Follow evacuation orders from local authorities. Evacuate early.
- Avoid areas downwind, and river valleys downstream, of the volcano. Rubble and ash will be carried by wind and gravity.

- Take temporary shelter from volcanic ash where you are if you have enough supplies. Cover ventilation openings and seal doors and windows.
- If outside, protect yourself from falling ash that can irritate skin and injure breathing passages, eyes, and open wounds. Use a well-fitting, certified face mask such as an N95. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a [list of certified masks](#) and the maker's instructions on how to use the masks.
- Avoid driving in heavy ash fall.



BE SAFE AFTER

Listen to authorities to find out when it is safe to return after an eruption.

- Send text messages or use social media to reach out to family and friends. Phone systems are often busy after a disaster. Only make emergency calls.
- Avoid driving in heavy ash. Driving will stir up volcanic ash that can clog engines and stall vehicles.
- If you have any breathing problems, avoid contact with ash. Stay indoors until authorities say it is safe to go outside.
- Do not get on your roof to remove ash unless you have guidance or training. If you have to remove ash, then be very careful as ash makes surfaces slippery. Be careful not to contribute additional weight to an overloaded roof.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- [Volcano Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)
- [U.S. Geological Survey Volcano Hazards Program](#) (Link)

A19. Wildfires



“Have a 5-minute plan. Have a 2-minute plan.” Charles evacuated during the Camp Fire, taking little more than his family and a few critical belongings with him. With wildfire conditions still affecting multiple states today, Be Ready by making your plan.

Wildfires can ruin homes and cause injuries or death to people and animals. A wildfire is an unplanned fire that burns in a natural area such as a forest, grassland, or prairie. Wildfires can:

- Often be caused by humans or lightning.
- Cause flooding or disrupt transportation, gas, power, and communications.
- Happen anywhere, anytime. Risk increases with in periods of little rain and high winds.
- Cost the Federal Government billions of dollars each year.
-

IF YOU ARE UNDER A WILDFIRE WARNING, GET TO SAFETY RIGHT AWAY

- Leave if told to do so.
- If trapped, call 9-1-1.
- Listen for emergency information and alerts.
- Use N95 masks to keep particles out of the air you breathe.

HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A WILDFIRE THREATENS:

PREPARE NOW

- Sign up for your community’s warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Know your community’s evacuation plans and find several ways to leave the area. Drive the evacuation routes and find shelter locations. Have a plan for pets and livestock.
- Gather emergency supplies, including N95 respirator masks that filter out particles in the air you breathe. Keep in mind each person’s specific needs, including and updated asthma action plan and medication. Don’t forget the needs of pets.
- Designate a room that can be closed off from outside air. Close all doors and windows. Set up a portable air cleaner to keep indoor pollution levels low when smoky conditions exist.
- Keep important documents in a fireproof, safe place. Create password-protected digital copies.
- Use fire-resistant materials to build, renovate, or make repairs.
- Find an outdoor water source with a hose that can reach any area of your property.
- Create a [fire-resistant zone](#) that is free of leaves, debris, or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home.
- Review insurance coverage to make sure it is enough to replace your property.
- Pay attention to [air quality alerts](#).

SURVIVE DURING

- Evacuate immediately if authorities tell you to do so.
- If trapped, then call 911 and give your location, but be aware that emergency response could be delayed or impossible. Turn on lights to help rescuers find you.
- Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.
- Use an N95 masks to keep harmful particles out of the air you breathe.
- If you are not ordered to evacuate but smoky conditions exist, stay inside in a safe location or go to a community building where smoke levels are lower.

BE SAFE AFTER

- Listen to authorities to find out when it is safe to return, and whether water is safe to drink.
- Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and live embers. The ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire. Consider the danger to pets and livestock.
- Send text messages or use social media to reach out to family and friends. Phone systems are often busy following a disaster. Make calls only in emergencies.
- Wear a [NIOSH certified-respirator](#) and wet debris down to minimize breathing dust particles.
- Document property damage with photographs. Conduct an inventory and contact your insurance company for assistance.
- Wildfires dramatically change landscape and ground conditions, which can lead to increased risk of flooding due to heavy rains, flash flooding and mudflows. Flood risk remains significantly higher until vegetation is restored—up to 5 years after a wildfire. Consider purchasing flood insurance to protect the life you've built and to assure financial protection from future flooding.

**ASSOCIATED CONTENT**

- [Wildfires Move Fast. What's Your Plan? - Survivor Stories](#) (Video)
- [Wildfire Safety Social Media Toolkit](#) (Link)
- [Wildfire Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [Cloud of Smoke](#) (Video)
- [Fires and Your Health](#) (Link)
- [Fires Current Conditions](#) (Link)
- [When the fire starts](#) (Video)
- [United States Fire Administration](#) (Link)
- [Smokey Bear](#) (Link)
- [United States Forest Service](#) (Link)
- [American Red Cross](#) (Link)
- [NFPA's Firewise USA](#) (Link)
- [Fire Adapted Community](#) (Link)
- [How to Prepare for a Wildfire](#) (PDF)
- [Wildfire Playbook](#) (PDF)
- [Answers to Questions about Flood Insurance](#) (PDF)
- [Understanding Mudflow and the NFIP](#) (PDF)

A20. Recovering from Disaster

Recovering from a disaster is usually a gradual process. Safety is a primary issue, as are mental and physical well-being. If assistance is available, knowing how to access it makes the process faster and less stressful. This section offers some general advice on steps to take after disaster strikes in order to begin getting your home, your community and your life back to normal.

Health & Safety Guidelines

Recovering from disaster is usually a gradual process. Safety is a primary issue, as are mental and physical well-being. If assistance is available, knowing how to access it makes the process faster and less stressful.

Your first concern after a disaster is your family's health and safety. You need to consider possible safety issues and monitor family health and well-being.

AIDING THE INJURED

Administer first aid and seek medical attention for any injured person following a disaster.

- Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury. If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back, then call for help immediately.
- If the victim is not breathing, carefully position the victim for artificial respiration, clear the airway and commence mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- Maintain body temperature with blankets. Be sure the victim does not become overheated.
- Never try to feed liquids to an unconscious person.

HEALTH

Be aware of exhaustion. Don't try to do too much at once. Set priorities and pace yourself. Get enough rest.

- Drink plenty of clean water. Eat well.
- Wear sturdy work boots and gloves.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water often when working in debris.

SAFETY ISSUES

Be aware of safety issues after a disaster.



- Be aware of new safety issues created by the disaster. Watch for washed out roads, contaminated buildings, contaminated water, gas leaks, broken glass, damaged electrical wiring and slippery floors.
- Inform local authorities about health and safety issues, including chemical spills, downed power lines, washed out roads,

smoldering insulation and dead animals.

Returning Home



Returning home can be both physically and mentally challenging. Above all, use caution. You may be anxious to see your property but do not return to your home before the area is declared to be safe by local officials.

BEFORE YOU ENTER YOUR HOME



Inspect your home carefully before entering.

Walk carefully around the outside and check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage. If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- Use a battery-powered flash light to inspect a damaged home.
Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- Use the phone only to report life-threatening emergencies.
- As you return home, watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads and sidewalks.

Do not enter if:

- You smell gas.
- Floodwaters remain around the building.
- Your home was damaged by fire and the authorities have not declared it safe.

GOING INSIDE YOUR HOME

Be cautious when entering your home after a disaster.

When you go inside your home, there are certain things you should and should not do. Enter the home carefully and check for damage. Be aware of loose boards and slippery floors. The following items are other things to check inside your home:



- Natural gas. If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from the outside, if you can. Call the gas company from a neighbor's residence. If you shut off the gas supply at the main valve, you will need a professional to turn it back on. Do not smoke or use oil, gas lanterns, candles or torches for lighting inside a damaged home until you are sure there is no leaking gas or other flammable materials present.
- Sparks, broken or frayed wires. Check the electrical system unless you are wet, standing in water or unsure of your safety. If possible, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If the situation is unsafe, leave the building and call for help. Do not turn on the lights until you are sure they're safe to use. You may want to have an electrician inspect your wiring.
- Roof, foundation and chimney cracks. If it looks like the building may collapse, leave immediately.
- Appliances. If appliances are wet, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Then, unplug appliances and let them dry out. Have appliances checked by a professional before using them again. Also, have the electrical system checked by an electrician before turning the power back on.
- Water and sewage systems. If pipes are damaged, turn off the main water valve. Check with local authorities before using any water; the water could be contaminated. Pump out wells and have the water tested by authorities before drinking. Do not flush toilets until you know that sewage lines are intact.
- Food and other supplies. Throw out all food and other supplies that you suspect may have become contaminated or come in to contact with floodwater.

- Your basement. If your basement has flooded, pump it out gradually (about one third of the water per day) to avoid damage. The walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged.
- Open cabinets. Be alert for objects that may fall.
- Clean up household chemical spills. Disinfect items that may have been contaminated by raw sewage, bacteria, or chemicals. Also clean salvageable items.
- Call your insurance agent. Take pictures of damages. Keep good records of repair and cleaning costs.

BEING WARY OF WILDLIFE AND OTHER ANIMALS

Be wary of wildlife as you return home after a disaster.

Disaster and life-threatening situations will exacerbate the unpredictable nature of wild animals. To protect yourself and your family, learn how to deal with wildlife.

GUIDELINES

- Do not corner wild animals or try to rescue them. Wild animals will likely feel threatened and may endanger themselves by dashing off into floodwaters, fire, and so forth. Call your local animal control office or wildlife resource office.
- Wild animals often seek higher ground which, during floods, eventually become submerged (i.e., island) and the animals become stranded. If the island is large enough and provides suitable shelter, you can leave food appropriate to the species (i.e., sunflower seeds for squirrels). Animals have a flight response and will flee from anyone approaching too closely. If the animal threatens to rush into the water, back away from the island or you may frighten the animal into jumping into the water to escape from you.
- Do not approach wild animals that have taken refuge in your home. Wild animals such as snakes, opossums and raccoons often seek refuge from floodwaters on upper levels of homes and have been known to remain after water recedes. If you encounter animals in this situation, open a window or provide another escape route and the animal will likely leave on its own. Do not attempt to capture or handle the animal. Should the animal stay, call your local animal control office or wildlife resource office.
- Beware of an increased number of snakes and other predators. These animals will try to feed on the carcasses of reptiles, amphibians and small mammals who have been drowned or crushed in their burrows or under rocks.
- Do not attempt to move a dead animal. Animal carcasses can present serious health risks. Outbreaks of anthrax, encephalitis and other diseases may occur. [Contact your local emergency management office](#) or health department for help and instructions.
- If bitten by an animal, seek immediate medical attention.

Helping Others:

The compassion and generosity of the American people is never more evident than after a disaster. People want to help. Here are some general guidelines on helping others after a disaster:

DONATE CASH

Financial contributions to a recognized disaster relief organization are the most effective donation to make.

- Most needed and the most efficient way of helping those impacted by disaster.
- Allow voluntary organizations to fund response and recovery efforts, obtain goods and services locally, and provide direct financial assistance to disaster survivors to meet their own needs.
- Make a financial contribution to the voluntary organization of your choice.
- If you need help in determining who to give to, National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster website has a list of major non-profits that are active in disaster work or you can make your offer through the [National Donations Management Network](#).

When the public supports these voluntary organizations with financial contributions, it helps ensure a steady flow of important services to the people in need after a disaster.

VOLUNTEER



Volunteer with local organizations to aid disaster victims.

Volunteer with a recognized organization involved in disaster response and recovery prior to the next disaster event.

- Volunteer with a non-profit organization and be trained before the next event to find meaningful volunteer opportunities following a disaster.
- There are many organizations and faith-based groups in your community that have active disaster programs and need volunteers
- These groups offer a wide range of services following a disaster:

www.nvoad.org

www.serve.gov

www.citizencorps.gov

www.helpindisaster.org

www.networkforgood.org

The generosity and kindness of people around the country does a lot to help communities heal from the tragic consequences of disasters.

DONATE GOODS



Learn ways that you can effectively help others after a disaster.

Confirm what is needed BEFORE taking action!

- Donate in-kind goods that are specifically requested or needed by recognized organizations.
- Unsolicited donated goods such as used clothing, miscellaneous household items, and mixed or perishable foodstuffs require helping agencies to redirect valuable resources away from providing services to sort, package, transport, warehouse, and distribute items that may not meet the needs of disaster survivors.
- Confirm the needs by contacting the voluntary organization of your choice before starting to collect.
- If you have a quantity of a given item or class of item to donate, and you need help in determining which organizations to give to, you can make your offer through the [National Donations Management Network](#).

Everyone is moved when they hear the news that disaster has struck a community. By learning the best ways to donate and volunteer, we can all make a huge difference in the lives of those affected.

REFERENCES

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