

City of Bellflower's Emergency Preparedness Guide



The 6.7 magnitude 1994 Northridge Earthquake caused \$15 billion worth of damage and killed 57 people.

When Disaster Strikes... Are You Prepared?

Disasters can strike without warning. Recently, hurricanes caused billions of dollars in damage to the Gulf states. An earthquake killed thousands of people in Pakistan and India. The effects can be devastating: people left without water, food or shelter. The key to surviving a disaster often depends on preparation. In California, earthquakes pose the biggest, but not the only, danger.

"Whether wildfires, earthquakes or winter storms, it's not a matter of if, but when," said Maria Shriver, California's First Lady. "You need to be ready."

Disaster Shelters

Extreme emergencies such as when a natural disaster threatens Bellflower, local advisories on radio or television may advise you to evacuate your home and seek shelter. The City will open and operate short term shelters when conditions warrant. The City shelters are run under the guidelines of the American Red Cross by City employees. Shelter living will have its inconveniences. You should come prepared to cooperate and work together to get you and your family through the storm. When going to a shelter you'll need to consider the following: No pets are allowed in public shelters and noisy and disruptive behavior can not and will not be allowed. You should bring bedding and bedding material, water, and additional food, a supply of medication and prescriptions, a change of clothing, toiletries, and personal items and personal identification. You may also want to bring games, books and activities to pass the time.

No smoking, alcohol or weapons are allowed in the shelter. You should also eat well before coming to a shelter. Don't go to a shelter until its open and listen for local radio and TV announcements on shelter openings and times. The City has designated a number of City buildings as possible public shelters. The exact number of shelters open will be determined based up on the threatening conditions. The list includes those shelters that may be used. Listen to public announcements for more specific info on shelter openings shelters. These announcements will indicate which shelters will open and when they will open. Shelters will be opened according to need and will not automatically open. Primary shelters may include John F. Simms Park at 16614 S. Clark Avenue and T. Mayne Thompson Park at 14001 S. Bellflower Boulevard.

The following disaster preparation tips were culled from FEMA, American Red Cross and Governor's Office of Emergency Services:

Identify Risks and Get Informed - In the event of a disaster, the City will provide information to local radio and TV stations. If available, Bellflower will also post information on the City's website www.bellflower.org. If shelters are needed, local officials will designate facilities based on the emergency. Ask about emergency plans and procedures at your family's places of employment, schools and child care centers.

Make a Plan - Discuss with your family members ways to meet the challenges of a disaster. Explain the dangers to children and practice your emergency plan regularly. Share the information with caregivers. Your plan should include the following:

- **Contact List:** After a disaster, it is often easier to make a long distance phone call than a local call, so ask an out-of-town friend or relative to be your main contact. Following a disaster, family members who are separated should call this person and tell them where they are. Every-one in your family should know the contact's phone number, as well as numbers for family members, work, school and emergency services.

- **Meeting Place:** Choose a place outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire. Choose a place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. This helps if family members are separated during a disaster.

- **Special Needs:** Plan for those with disabilities or special needs, and pets. Keep support items in a designated place so they can be found quickly. Don't forget prescriptions and medical items. Take your pets with you if you evacuate. Pets are not usually permitted in emergency shelters, so prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians and "pet friendly" hotels to shelter your pet in an emergency.

- *Utilities:* Know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves at your residence and share this information with family members. Keep any tools you need near gas and water shut off valves. Turn off utilities only if you suspect a leak, lines are damaged, or local officials instruct you to do so.
- *Emergency Items:* Make sure all family members know the location of fire extinguishers, first aid kits and disaster supply kits.
- *Vital Records and Documents:* Keep vital family records and documents -- birth and marriage certificates, social security cards, passports, wills, deeds and financial, insurance and immunizations records -- in a safe deposit box or other safe location. If kept inside the home, keep in a fireproof and waterproof container near your disaster supply kit and other emergency items.
- *Write it Down:* Write down your plan and contact information, and keep it in wallets, purses, backpacks and vehicles. Be sure each family member has a copy, and post it near your telephone. Keep a touch-tone phone in your home that does not require plugging into an electric outlet.



How to prepare for an Earthquake

In preparing for earthquakes it's important to keep the following information in mind. Look for items in your home that could become a hazard in an earthquake. Repair defective electrical wiring, leaky gas and inflexible utility connections. Bolt down water heaters and gas appliances, place large or heavy objects on lower shelves, fasten shelves to walls, brace high and top heavy objects. Store bottled food, glass, china and other breakables on low shelves or cabinets that can fasten shut. Anchor overhead lighting fixtures. Check and repair deep plaster cracks in ceilings and foundations. Get expert advice especially if there are signs of structural defects. Be sure the house is firmly anchored to its foundation. Know where and how to shut off electricity, gas and water at main switches and valves. Check with your local utilities for instructions. Hold earthquake drills with your family. Locate safe spots in each room, under a sturdy table or against an inside wall. Reinforce this information by physically placing yourself and your family in these locations. Identify danger zones in each room, near windows where glass can shatter or near book cases or furniture that can fall over. During an earthquake each family member should move away from these danger zones to the nearest safe spot. Gather emergency supplies and prepare for evacuation in case earthquake damage is severe. Develop a plan for reuniting your family after an earthquake. Establish an out of state telephone contact for family members to call to let others know that they're OK. Review your insurance policy. Some damage may be covered even without specific earthquake insurance. Protect important home and business papers.

Reduce Home Hazards - In a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. Take steps to reduce risks:

- Have a professional repair defective wiring and leaky gas connections.
- Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves and hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
- Use straps or other restraints to secure tall cabinets, bookshelves, large appliances (especially water heaters, furnaces and refrigerators), mirrors, shelves, large picture frames and light fixtures to wall studs.
- Repair cracks in ceilings and foundations.
- Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products away from heat sources.
- Place oily rags and waste in covered metal cans; dispose according to regulations.
- Professionally clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, connectors and gas vents.

Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Next time disaster strikes you may not have much time to act, prepare now for a sudden emergency. Learn how to protect yourself and cope with disaster by planning ahead. Discuss ideas with your family, neighbors and coworkers then prepare an emergency plan. Become familiar with the plan and post it in plain site where everyone will see it such as the refrigerator or a bulletin board.

For additional information about how to prepare for hazards in your community, contact the City's Public Safety department emergency management coordinator at (562) 925-0124 or the American Red Cross, Long Beach Chapter at (562) 595-6341. If applicable, be sure to seek assistance regarding special assistance for elderly or disabled persons, and ask about work place emergency plans and emergency plans for your children's school or day care center.



Preparing a Disaster Supplies Kit

When preparing an emergency supplies kit, assemble supplies you might need in an evacuation. Store them in an easy to carry container such as a back pack or duffle bag. Include a supply of water, one gallon per person per day. Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Identify the storage date and replace every six months. A supply of nonperishable packaged or canned foods and a non-electric can opener. Change of clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes, blankets or sleeping bags. A first aid kit and prescription medication, an extra pair of glasses, a battery powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries. Credit cards and cash, an extra set of car keys, a list of family physicians, a list of important family information, the style and serial numbers of important medical devices such as pace makers, and special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

Assemble Emergency Supply Kits - In addition to emergency kits for the home, prepare kits for work and vehicles. Include basic items a family would need to stay safe and comfortable during and after an emergency. Store supplies in a portable container. Review the contents of kits every six months, replacing outdated items and making changes as family needs change. Recommended items:

- Three-day supply of nonperishable food and manual can opener.
- Three-day supply of water, one gallon of water per person, per day (replace every six months).
- Flashlights, portable, battery-powered radio or TV and extra batteries.
- First aid kit and instruction manual.
- Sanitation and hygiene items (soap, cleaning supplies, shampoo, hand sanitizer, moist towelettes, sunscreen and toilet paper).
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Extra set of car keys and other important keys.
- Extra clothing and blankets, jacket, sturdy shoes, gloves, sleeping bags, etc.
- Tools such as pliers, knife, screwdrivers, hammer, shovel, and hatchet.
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils.
- Photocopy of identification and credit cards, plus a list of bank accounts and insurance policy numbers.
- Prescriptions, medications, eyeglasses (extra set), contact lens solution and hearing aid batteries.
- Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles and pacifiers.

- Miscellaneous items like cash and coins, a whistle, pet supplies and a map of the local area.
- Other items to meet your unique family needs.

Preparing an Emergency Car Kit

An Emergency Car Kit should include the following items: a battery powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries, a blanket, booster cables, fire extinguisher (5 pound ABC type), first aid kit and manual, bottled water and nonperishable food, maps, a shovel and flares, tire repair kit and pump.

Additional Vehicle Note - Try not to let your vehicle fuel tank get below half. There is quite often a shortage of fuel following a disaster, and having fuel in your tank will help.

What to Do After an Earthquake

After an earthquake it's extremely important to keep the following information in mind: be prepared for aftershocks, these secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage to weakened structures. Check for injuries. Don't attempt to move seriously injured persons, unless they're in immediate danger of death or further injuries. If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back then call for help immediately. If the victim is not breathing but has good pupil reflex, 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 and never try to feed liquids to an unconscious person. If the electricity goes out, use flashlights or battery powered lanterns. Do not use candles, matches or open flames indoors after an earthquake because of possible gas leaks.

Wear sturdy shoes in areas covered with fallen debris and broken glass. Check your home for structural damage. If you have any doubts about safety, have your home inspected by a professional before entering. Check chimneys for damage. The initial check should be made from a distance. Have a professional inspect the chimney for internal damage before lighting a fire. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids inside buildings. Evacuate the building if gasoline fumes are heavy and the building is not well ventilated. Visually inspect utility lines and appliances for damage. If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing sound, open a window and leave the building. Shut off the main gas valve outside if you can. Report the leak to the gas company from a neighbor's house. Stay out of the building. If you shut off the gas supply at the main valve you'll need a professional to turn it back on.

If there is electrical damage switch off all electrical power at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If water pipes are damaged, shut off the water supply at the main valve. Don't flush the toilets until you know the sewage is intact. If water is cut off, use water from the water heater. Open cabinets cautiously. Beware of objects that can fall off shelves. Use the phone only to report a life threatening emergency. Listen to news reports for the latest emergency information. Stay off the streets. If you must go out, watch for hazards created by the earthquake such as fallen objects, downed electrical wires, weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks. And stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested by the sheriff, fire or relief organization.

What to Do During an Earthquake

In an earthquake keep calm and stay where you are. Most injuries during earthquakes occur when people are hit by falling objects when entering or exiting buildings. If you're indoors take cover under a sturdy desk, table, or bench, or against an inside wall and hold on. Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors or walls or anything that can fall such as lighting fixtures and furniture. If you're outdoors stay there. Move away from buildings, street lights, and utility wires. In a crowded public place, do not rush for a doorway, other people will have the same idea.

Take cover and move away from display shelves containing objects that can fall. In a high rise building, get under a sturdy desk away from the windows and outside walls. Stay in the building on the same floor, an evacuation may not be necessary. Be aware that the electricity may go out and the sprinkler system or fire alarms may go on. Do not use the elevator. In a moving vehicle, stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, or utility wires. Once the earthquake is over, proceed cautiously, watching for road or bridge damage.

