



**Santa Barbara County
Aware & Prepare Initiative**
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PRESS RELEASE

July 1, 2013

Do You Have a Family Disaster Plan?

A disaster can force you either to evacuate your neighborhood or stay in your home. What would you do if basic services, such as water, gas, electricity, or telephones were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away. Families can cope with disasters by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Knowing what to do is your best protection.

1. Find out what could happen.

- What is most likely to occur where you live? Flooding, downed power lines, landslides, etc.

2. Create and plan and take action.

- Teach all family members how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity.
- Check insurance coverage.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
 - Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a possible home hazard. During an earthquake or a tornado, a hot water heater or a bookshelf could turn over or pictures hanging over a couch could fall and hurt someone. Look for electrical, chemical, and fire hazards.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a [Disaster Supplies Kit](#).
- Buy a portable crank or battery-operated radio and extra batteries.
- Make two photocopies of vital documents and keep originals in a safe-deposit box.
 - Keep one copy in a safe place in the house and give the second copy to an out-of-town friend or relative.

3. Practice and maintain your plan.

Other populations to consider:

Pets:

- If you must evacuate, make sure you take your pets. Be aware, however, they might not be permitted in public shelters according to many local health department regulations. Service animals are an exception.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency; include 24-hour phone numbers. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including their phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies.
- Assemble a portable pet disaster supplies kit with identification, collar, leash, proof of vaccinations, and a current photo of your pets in case they get lost.
- If you must leave your pets behind, prepare an emergency pen in the home that includes a three-day supply of dry food and a large container of fresh water.

People with disabilities:

- Create a network of relatives, friends, or co-workers to assist in an emergency.
- Maintain a list of important items and store it with your emergency supplies.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability in case of an emergency.
- If you are dependent on dialysis or other life-sustaining equipment, know the location and availability of more than one facility in the area.
- If you need a wheelchair, show friends how to operate your wheelchair so they can move you if necessary.

People with severe speech, language, hearing or visual disabilities:

- Store a writing pad and pencils to communicate with others.
- Keep a flashlight and whistle handy to signal your whereabouts.
- Remind others that you cannot completely hear warnings or emergency instructions. Ask them to be your source of emergency information.
- If you have a service dog, be aware that the dog may become confused or disoriented in an emergency. Store extra food, water, and supplies.
- If you have a guide dog, store extra food, water, and supplies.

Learn more about Family Disaster Plans by contacting your local emergency management office or the [American Red Cross Santa Barbara County Chapter](#).

Add the following tag line in your email signature and share it with your neighbors. Click on the links below for more information.



Don't be Scared; Be Prepared Have a Family Plan
[Ready.gov – Plan to Protect Yourself and Your Family](#)
[Family Emergency Response Plan Template](#)
[www.AwareandPrepare.org](#)

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The Aware & Prepare Initiative is a public-private partnership to enhance the capabilities of non-profit organizations and government agencies to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area. The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management manages the Initiative in cooperation with the local emergency management community.

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