

KEEPING SAFE IN — AND AFTER—AN EMERGENCY

A Handbook for Altis Beaumont Residents

Our small city of Beaumont offers wintertime picture-postcard views of snow-capped mountains, and summers pleasantly cooler than its downhill neighbors. Unfortunately, as with other communities, Beaumont, and its newest community of Altis are also subject to disasters — both natural and man-made, that can strain the resources of local authorities.

Yes, disasters happen. Surviving disasters doesn't *just* happen. It requires planning and preparations.

To better prepare ourselves for all these disasters — earthquakes, wildfires, severe weather causing power interruptions and floods — Altis Beaumont Community Awareness committee has produced this emergency preparedness handbook. It offers guidelines and suggestions that will help all of us prepare for, and survive, a catastrophic event.

PLEASE NOTE: The information in this handbook is not intended to replace guidance provided by local, state, or federal authorities before, during or after an emergency.

Since most of us spend much of our time in our Altis homes, we begin our planning there. Round up additional supplies of fresh water. Locate fresh batteries for flashlights and portable radios. And then decide where family members will meet up outside your homes or if separated when disaster strikes.

Living by yourself? That's fine. Less confusion and less coordination needed. But you will still need those same supplies.

Since local phone lines and cell towers may become overloaded or damaged, choose an out-of-the area relative or friend to contact. Program that number into your cell phones and phone books. Then let that person know that you will be checking in.

SHELTERING IN PLACE...HOME SWEET HOME, NOT ALWAYS

If a quake, or flooded roads, or the "snowstorm of the century", or the authorities, force you to "shelter in place," there are certain steps to take to ensure your continued safety. The first step: you guessed it: planning. Along with certain preparations.

Depending upon the type of emergency or disaster, fresh water may be cut-off, waste removal may be unavailable, (that's right, no toilet flushing) and electricity and natural gas may be non-existent. You might not even be able to walk out your front door due to flooding or huge snow drifts.

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Here's a quick list of supplies you will need to "shelter in place."

- **Water**, at least 1 gallons per person per day, for drinking, hygiene and cooking.
- **Food**, easy-to-prepare meals, (non-perishable items), protein bars, canned fruit and vegetables, and canned seafood (that would be sardines, not lobster.)
- **Ice Chest**, have ice and freeze blocks on hand. These should be stored in your freezer, so they are available during a power outage or other emergency.
- **Sanitation Supplies**, liquid dish-washing soap, liquid bleach, sturdy 5-gal. bucket with tight-fitting lid, garbage bags to fit in the bucket, toilet paper.
- **Flashlights** and extra **batteries**
- **Portable radio** and extra **batteries** for news reports and weather warnings
- **Tools**, e.g. hammer, nails, screwdrivers, heavy leather gloves and pliers.
- **Manual can opener**
- **Blankets/sleeping bag**
- **Alternate fuel and cooking supplies** (camp grill and bottled propane). *Never use a camp grill or charcoal grill indoors; it will deplete the oxygen.*
- **Disposables**: utensils, plates, napkins, paper towels
- **Vitamins** and **medications**
- **First Aid Kit** – be sure to include materials to stop heavy bleeding

And if you have a "fluffy" or "fido", your pets will also need a supply of food and medicines.

EVACUATION...TO WHERE, AND HOW

Now we know what to do if we cannot leave our home. But what happens if we cannot **stay** in our house? If we are ordered to evacuate?

Again, advance planning could save your life. Before it is necessary, decide where to go: a hotel or motel, an evacuation center, or take this as an opportunity to stay with friends or family. In addition, if access from the community is cut off (due to damaged or blocked roadways, and/or other conditions), the Vuepoint may be used as temporary evacuation location. If it is unavailable, the pickleball court is an alternative evacuation location within the community.

Now, how would you get there? What route would you take? And what are some alternate routes? It is not uncommon for freeways and other main traffic arteries to become unusable due to earth movements, flooding, or snow accumulations.

Compile a list of pet-friendly motels and animal shelters that are along your evacuation routes.

The evacuation order may come during a major weather event, and heavy traffic fleeing the area could halt your escape midway. You could be stuck in your car for hours, or

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longer. Keep a small travel bag filled with bottled water, nutritious snacks, easy-open cans of fruit, medications...and toilet paper. Also, emergency blankets, matches in a watertight container. You will need a charger for your cell phone. A shrill whistle. Maps of the area. And at least one flashlight. Proof of your address may be required by authorities to return to your home.

Keep the travel bag at home in a cool location; the floor of your pantry would be a good candidate. Any perishable items should be rotated out prior to expiration dates.

Since an extended evacuation order is possible, a larger, more complete supplies bag is advisable. Items to keep in this bag include a first aid kit, duct tape, multipurpose tool (e.g. Swiss army-style knife), rain gear, work gloves, extra clothing, two-way radios, and currency in small denominations in the event credit cards machines do not work. Recent photos of your pets, in the event you are separated from them, may help reunite your family. **Many of the items in your “shelter-in-place” supplies bag are identical to the ones in your evacuation bag.**

Before you evacuate your home —IF THERE IS TIME AND IT CAN BE DONE SAFELY — turn off the natural gas line and freshwater line to your house. Here’s another instance where advance planning is necessary: do you know where and how to turn off those supply lines?

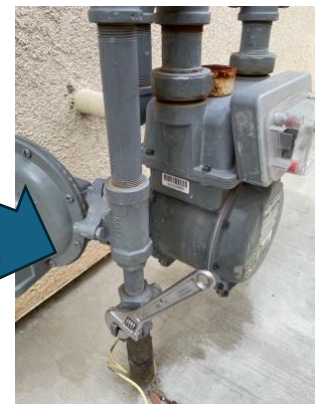
UTILITY LINE SHUT-OFF...PREVENTING EXPLOSIONS AND FIRES

NATURAL GAS: Natural gas leaks can cause an explosive and flammable atmosphere inside a building. After an earthquake — or at any time —if you smell gas or hear gas escaping, see a broken gas line, or even just suspect a leak, shut off the main valve and open all windows. NEVER use candles or matches after dark if you suspect escaping gas. And because they can create a spark when you turn them on, never turn on a light switch or use an electric appliance. Immediately leave the building and call SoCalGas at 800/427-2200. Remain outside until the open widows have allowed any remaining gas fumes to dissipate.

See illustration to turn off the gas:

Shut off valve is located at base of meter. To shut off gas, use a wrench to turn the valve perpendicular to the pipe.

You can also have an automatic shut-off valve installed. Southern California Gas can advise you about adding this type of valve to your gas line.



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ELECTRICITY: Locate the main electric switch on the side of your house. Pull this switch if there are sparks or smoke in electric devices, if there is flooding or a significant water leak, if you smell burning insulation, if the area around switches or plugs is hot or blackened, or all power is suddenly lost, and you smell burning material.



Service Disconnect

WATER: In an emergency, water can quickly become scarce. It is vital that you don't waste any water. You can do this by shutting off the main house valve. This will help prevent any contaminants from entering the main water supply through a cracked pipe. Shutting the valve will also prevent vital water supplies in your toilet tanks from draining to the main line, leaving you without those several gallons of emergency water. **DO NOT** attempt to use the water in the toilet tank if you are using a toilet bowl-cleaning product that turns the water blue or any other color.



Water shut off valve.

WATER...NO SURVIVAL WITHOUT IT

Regardless of the type of emergency, three days is the maximum time we can go without water. Therefore, water storage and water treatment are two of the most important elements in survival planning.

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Of course, it is always best to store sufficient water supplies to last a week or so. But your water storage area may be damaged or otherwise inaccessible. You may have to use other sources of water...including water whose purity and safety is questionable. In that case, there are two procedures to follow to ensure your water is safe to use: clean the water, and then decontaminate it.

CLEANING WATER. Water with dirt or other debris must be filtered. Put the water in a tall container and leave it for 24 hours. Most of the debris will settle to the bottom. Then carefully skim off the top clear water into another container. Run this cleaner water thru a filter (e.g., a coffee filter, paper towel, clean cloth such as a piece of t-shirt.) The water at this stage can be used to clean items like clothes or floors. It is still NOT safe for drinking.

TREATING WATER. Cleaned water must be treated to be safe for drinking. You can treat water either chemically or with heat. Boiling water for at least 10 minutes will sanitize it by killing bacteria and viruses. If boiling water to cook, add the food after the water has boiled for 10 minutes. If heat is not available to boil the water, then sanitize with bleach. Use common bleach WITHOUT preservatives or scents. Fill a gallon container with the *cleaned* water and add 16 drops of bleach. Stir and let it stand for at least 30 minutes.

Swimming pool and spa water supplies are NOT safe to drink. Pool chemicals used to keep the water crystal clear and free of harmful bacteria will kill the good bacteria in your stomach. However, pool water can be used to fill and flush toilet tanks if the sewers are working (if not see below), as well as for household cleaning and laundry.

SEWERS...STINKY BUT INDISPENSIBLE

While excess snowfall isn't likely to damage sewer lines, earthquakes certainly can. Broken sewer lines can leak untreated waste into the community, causing disease and pest infestations. If you have been alerted that sewer lines in your area have been damaged, use your sinks, tubs, and laundry as little as possible. **DO NOT FLUSH YOUR TOILETS.** Of course, when you gotta go, you gotta go.

If the toilet bowl is undamaged, drape a heavy-duty garbage bag in the bowl to contain waste. Or use a 5-gallon plastic bucket, lined with a garbage bag. Make sure you have a tight-fitting lid for the bucket. A small amount of disinfectant, e.g. bleach, kitty litter, or camping chemical supplies, will help to reduce "bathroom odors". Do not use this "chem toilet" after adding bleach, as bleach can burn sensitive skin.

PERSONAL HYGIENE...THE WATERLESS WAY

Frequent hand washing, before cooking and eating, and after using the toilet, is the best way to prevent the spread of disease. In an emergency, this can be a challenge when

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water or waste disposal is not available. There are waterless and low-water methods of cleaning.

You probably used one of these frequently during the pandemic: lotions and sprays containing high concentrations of rubbing alcohol. You can also use baby wipes, but NEVER attempt to flush these, even if your sewer works. Hydrogen peroxide makes an excellent mouthwash. There are waterless body cleansers and scented body sprays. None is as good as plain old water and soap, but in an emergency, you use what you have on hand.

EARTHQUAKES...PREPARE AND SURVIVE

There's nothing as frightening and as damaging as a big earthquake close. Unlike snowstorms and floods, Mr. Weatherman is not going to give you any warning. No time to fill the bathtub with fresh water; no time to search the kitchen drawers for fresh batteries.

There's nothing. Then suddenly there's devastation. And you could be in the middle of it. Here's how to prepare for it, and here's how to react during and after it.

PREPARING FOR AN EARTHQUAKE:

Pick a 'safe' place in each room of your home. This would be against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or other tall furniture that could fall on you. Then practice drop-cover-hold in each place. No sturdy furniture to hide under? Then sit on the floor next to that interior wall and cover your head and neck.

Some do's:

- Keep a flashlight, a whistle, bottle of water and sturdy shoes by each person's bed.
- Bolt bookcases, china cabinets and other tall furniture to wall studs.
- Do not hang heavy items, such as pictures, mirrors, TVs, near beds and couches.
- Install strong latches on cabinet doors to prevent glassware from spilling out and shattering.

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE:

If at home, drop, cover, and hold as you have practiced. If in bed, quickly roll onto the floor right next to the bed pulling the covers and pillow over your head for protection. Avoid walking where broken glass may cover the floor from shattered windows.

If outside, drop to the ground away from tall buildings, powerlines, trees, streetlights.

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If driving, pull over to a clear location, avoiding overpasses and powerlines, and stop. If a powerline falls onto your vehicle, DO NOT get out. The rubber tires will insulate you from electrical surges. Wait there for assistance. Continue driving if safe, but expect traffic signals and streetlights to be inoperable.

If in The Vuepoint, drop-cover-hold under one of the heavy tables or the pool table. Stay away from the large windows. If aftershocks are not too violent, walk or drive home.

AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE:

Expect and prepare for aftershocks. Park your car outside of the garage; continued shaking may damage the garage door opener.

Put on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and heavy gloves. Inspect your home for obvious damage; if the building appears heavily damaged and unsafe, take everyone outside and remain there. If you are not seriously injured, try helping others who may be trapped or injured. But do not overestimate your abilities and strength. Remain part of the solution, not the problem.

If you are injured or help is needed, attempt a telephone call to request emergency assistance.

Listen for up-dated emergency information and instructions on a portable, battery-operated, or hand-crank radio.

If you smell gas, immediately turn off the supply line to the gas meter, open windows to clear the building of any remaining gas.

If meeting outside with friends and neighbors, be prepared for strong aftershocks.

Assistance from local authorities will probably not be prompt. More severely damaged residential areas, especially in the older parts of town, will likely receive higher priority for first responders.

SEVERE WEATHER...IF THUNDER ROARS, STAY INDOORS

With a few important exceptions, preparations for such incidents as hurricane-like winds, rain and lightning are the same as those for the other emergencies covered in this handbook. These exceptions include:

- Prevent flood damage by sandbagging entrances to your home and garage. Play it safe by stacking sandbags two—high. Sandbags can be obtained at our local fire station at 1550 E 6th Street or as directed by local officials.

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- Make trees and large shrubbery wind-resistant by keeping them trimmed and removing damaged branches.
- Clean openings to underground drains to ensure that surface runoff drains away from your home to the street.
- At the beginning of the winter storm season, contact the solar power provider and request that your solar panels be inspected for wind resistance.

If you see signs of an approaching storm, such as darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing winds, listen to local news or the NOAA weather radio for emergency updates.

DURING A SEVERE-WEATHER STORM:

Avoid leaving the building you are in; many people are struck by lightning miles from where it is raining. If in your car, pull to the side of the road and keep the windows rolled up. Turn on the emergency flashers. DO NOT park under a tree; lightning generally strikes the tallest object in an area.

Tips:

- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. Play it safe: remain sheltered for a half-hour after the final thunderclap.
- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones; these can attract lightning. Instead use battery-powered phones and radios.
- As with other types of hazardous weather, close all windows and then seek shelter as far as possible from any windows.
- Do not take a bath or shower during the storm, and if possible, avoid using the toilet.

AFTER A SEVERE WEATHER STORM:

Inspect the interior and exterior of your home for damage or flooding. If rising water or flooding is a concern, obtain sandbags to protect your home.

Tips:

- Never drive through a flooded intersection.
- Continue to monitor radio news broadcasts.
- Avoid downed utility poles and power lines. Report them immediately to the local utility provider or call 911.

No matter the type of weather-caused emergency, proper planning and preparation can help you to avoid becoming a victim.

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Prepare for Wildfires

Before

Talk with members of your household about wildfires - how to prevent and respond to a wildfire.

Tips

- Post emergency phone numbers in convenient easily accessible locations.
- Make sure driveway entrances and your house number or address are clearly marked.
- While it is advisable to have a portable fire extinguisher available, it is good practice to set aside household items that can be used as fire tools: a rake, ax, hand saw or chain saw, bucket, and shovel. You may need to fight small fires before emergency responders arrive.
- Select building materials and plants that resist fire.
- Regularly clean roofs and gutters.

During

Be ready to leave at a moment's notice, following the directions of the First Responders. Listen to local radio and TV stations for updated emergency information.

Tips:

- Always back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape.
- Confine pets to one room so that you can find them if you need to evacuate quickly.
- Arrange for temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area.
- Listen and watch for air quality reports and health warnings about smoke. Keep indoor air clean by closing windows and doors. Close all interior doors before you evacuate.
- Use the recycle or recirculate mode on the air conditioner in your home or car. If you do not have functioning air conditioning and it is too hot to stay inside with closed windows, seek shelter elsewhere.
- When smoke levels are high, do not use anything that makes smoke, including gas stoves. Do not vacuum as it stirs up particles that are already inside your home.
- Remove all flammable patio cushions, pillows, and umbrellas from exterior locations.
- If you have asthma or another lung disease, follow your health care provider's advice and seek medical care if your symptoms worsen.

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After

Do not enter your home until fire officials say it is safe. Use caution when entering burned areas as hazards may still exist, including hot spots. Follow public health guidance on safe cleanup of fire ash and safe use of masks.

Tips

- Avoid damaged or fallen power lines, poles, and downed wires.
- Watch for ash pits. Ash pits are caused by underground material burning in the fire (such the root of a large tree). This can create hidden pits that are very dangerous and should be marked - warn others to keep clear of the pits.
- Watch animals closely and keep them under your direct control. Hidden embers and hot spots could burn your pets' paws.
- Wet debris down to minimize breathing dust particles.
- Wear leather gloves and heavy soled shoes to protect hands and feet.
- Cleaning products, paint, batteries, and damaged fuel containers need to be disposed of properly to avoid risk.
- Ensure your food and water are safe.
- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, or soot.
- Do NOT use water that you think may be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, or make ice.

Power Outages... Don't be Left in the Dark

The key to staying safe and comfortable during a power outage is preparation. Planning is easier than you think and the best way to ensure everyone's safety until the lights come back on. Your emergency supplies kit discussed previously will suffice for most power outages with a few exceptions.

Tips

Electronics and appliances can be vulnerable to an outage. Follow these simple procedures to help keep you safe and protect them from damage.

- Unplug household appliances such as televisions, computer equipment, washers, dryers, game consoles, fans, and lights to prevent them from being damaged.
- Use surge protectors to help prevent damage to electronics.
- Turn off all light switches and lamps except for one. Leave one on so you'll know when power returns.

Perishable foods in your refrigerator and freezer may not be safe to consume after an electric outage, depending on the length of the outage and outdoor temperatures. There

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are steps you can take to make sure your food is still safe to eat once the fridge is running again.

- Keep the refrigerator closed, opening doors only when necessary. Depending on the outside temperature, an unopened refrigerator can keep foods cold enough for several hours. Placing blocks of ice inside will also help keep food cold longer. Check food carefully for signs of spoilage.
- Draw the line at 40 degrees. Perishable foods should not be held above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours.
- Coolers and ice chests. For outages lasting more than two hours, food items such as dairy products, meats, fish, poultry, eggs, and leftovers should be packed into a cooler with ice. A separate cooler can be packed with frozen items.
- Canned and dry goods, as well as powdered or boxed milk, can be eaten cold or warmed on a grill.
- Leave a light on when you go to bed. It will wake you when power returns so you can check the condition of your food.
- If you're not home when a power outage occurs, determine how long power has been out. Very quickly, check the internal temperature of perishables in your refrigerator with a quick-response thermometer – any item above 40 degrees should be thrown out. If power comes back on within 24 hours, and your freezer is close to full, your frozen items should be safe. If the refrigerator was out for more than 24 hours, you should get rid of perishables.

Some people depend on uninterrupted power to operate medical equipment in their homes. SCE attempts to notify Medical Baseline customers before maintenance outages and rotating outages. Since they cannot guarantee uninterrupted service, you should always have a backup plan. This could mean a backup power system or other arrangements.

- SCE offers a Critical Care Backup Battery (CCBB) program available at no cost to eligible customers requiring the use of an electrically powered medical device.
- Develop an emergency or backup plan with your medical equipment supplier. Some companies may supply additional medical equipment and other services during emergency situations.
- Contact your local fire department to learn whether they maintain a list of people with special medical needs. Adding you to their list may help them better respond to you during emergencies.
- Keep emergency phone numbers handy in your cell phone contacts and near your landline. This includes your doctor, police, fire, and durable medical equipment company (if applicable).
- Develop contingency a plan to go to another location in the event of a lengthy power outage. Share this plan with family, friends, and others that should be aware.

Generators that provide a backup power source can keep you up and running during a power outage. However, generators can be dangerous to you and the utility crews if

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connected or used improperly. Every year people die in portable-generator-related accidents. Before using a generator, you must consult an electrician to determine the proper equipment and safe set-up for your residence or business.

- Equipment options: Choose a generator rated for more power than you think you will need. This is best determined by an electrician.
- Safety hazards: The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock, electrocution, and fire. Follow the directions supplied with your generator.
- Getting connected: Use a heavy-duty, outdoor extension cord to connect electrical equipment to a portable generator. Be sure the cord is rated more than the sum of the power drawn by the connected appliances. Make sure the cord has no cuts or tears, and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin. Do not run a portable generator indoors, nor connect a portable generator to your home's electrical wiring or electrical panel. This can lead to serious injury or electrocution.
- Beware of backfeeding: Never try to power the house wiring by plugging a generator into a wall outlet. This is extremely dangerous and can electrocute utility workers and even neighbors. Electrocution is the fifth leading cause of all reported occupational deaths.
- Work with an electrician: If you wire a generator directly to your home, California state law mandates that you notify SCE. The only recommended method to connect a generator to house wiring is by having a licensed electrician install a power transfer switch, in compliance with national, state, and local electrical codes.
- Portable vs. permanent: Even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded or overheated, stressing the generator components, which can lead to generator failure. For power outages, permanently installed, stationary generators are better suited for providing backup power to your home or business.

In all these and other emergency situations, *planning and preparation* are the keys to survival.

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