

# Emergency Preparedness



LAA / LAW  
Cluster

How to be sure you are your Host Kids are safe when the unexpected happens

# Earthquake!

- “An **earthquake** is what happens when two blocks of the earth suddenly slip past one another. The surface where they slip is called the **fault**”<sup>\*1</sup>. The location on the earth’s surface above where the earthquake starts is called the **epicenter**.
- **Foreshocks** and **aftershocks** are smaller quakes that happen before or after the mainshock in the exact same location as the main earthquake.
- Small earthquakes happen all the time (approximately 10,000 of them per year) and most of them we don’t even feel or notice.
- In an average year, there will likely be one earthquake of 8+ magnitude somewhere in the world, and one earthquake of 5.5+ magnitude somewhere in California.<sup>\*2</sup>

\*1 <https://www.usgs.gov/>

\*2 <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/>

# What to expect in an earthquake



Magnitude	Class	Earthquake Effects
2.5 -	Minor	Usually not felt, but can be recorded by seismograph.
2.5 to 3.9	Light	sometimes felt, but only causes minor damage, if any.
4.0 to 5.4	Light to Moderate	Often felt, but only causes minor damage.
5.5 to 6.0	Moderate	Slight damage to buildings and other structures.
6.1 to 6.9	Strong	May cause a lot of damage in very populated areas.
7.0 to 7.9	Major	Major earthquake. Serious damage.
8.0 +	Great	Great earthquake. Can destroy communities near the epicenter.

Graph 1

*rolling, shaking, tremor, seism*

*“some items fell from shelves...”*

*“sudden large jolt then more strong shaking...”*

*“a gentle bump and then a rolling sensation...”*

*“wondered if it was a small earthquake or vertigo...”*



# What to do in an earthquake



- Drop, Cover and Hold On!
- If you are indoors, stay there; most buildings in California are built to withstand even a major earthquake
- Step away from glass, such as windows, glass doors, large mirrors or light fixtures
- If you are outside, move away from structures, electrical wires and anything that could fall.
- Stay where you are until the shaking has stopped
- If you are driving, pull over and stop, avoid overpasses, stay in the car
- If you are right next to your children, bring them with you under a sturdy object, such as a table
- If your children are across the room or in another room, wait until the shaking has fully stopped before going to check on them
- Text your host family that you are OK; do not make unnecessary phone calls; do not call 911 unless you truly need emergency service professionals to come to your aid

# Wild Fire!

- Wildfires can be caused by a lightning, a downed power line, a stray cigarette, careless campers, and sometimes even arson
- Any area of dry brush or forest is at risk for wildfire; in California our hot, dry summers and autumns bring great opportunity for fire to spread
- If a wildfire approaches a residential area, the local news will begin reporting on television and radio



# What to do if a wildfire is near

- If the news reports a wildfire in your area, stay tuned for details
- Dress yourself and the children in comfortable, practical clothing and have face masks handy in case the air becomes smokey
- If local authorities call for evacuation, they will do so in stages: neighborhood by neighborhood, first voluntary evacuations, then mandatory evacuations
- Ask your host parents where the family should go in case of wildfire evacuation (often the home of a family member in another city)
- Have needed papers and medications at the ready (your passport, license and irreplaceable documents, any medications you or the children take regularly or that might be needed in a smokey or stressful situation)
- Tell the children you may need to go somewhere else if the fire comes to close or if the neighborhood gets too smokey, but let them know they will be safe and you will all be together.



***Foschek** is a brightly colored fire-retardant that the fire service sprays from planes to prevent the fire from spreading*



# Landslide & Mudslides!

- **Landslides** occur when masses of rock, earth, or debris move down a slope. They are caused by disturbances in the natural stability of a hillside, often in heavy rains after a period of drought or an earthquake.
- **Mudslides** are much more dangerous. Also referred to as Debris Flows, they can easily exceed speeds of 15 kph and often flow at rates of more than 30 mph. Usually occurring on steep slopes, Mudslides develop when water rapidly saturates the hillside carrying Water-saturated rock, clay, earth, and debris downward.
- Because mudslides travel much faster than landslides, they can cause deaths, injuries and significant property damage.
- Both Landslides and Mudslides can be activated after other natural disasters. Slopes where wildfires or construction have destroyed vegetation are especially vulnerable.



# What to do in a landslide or mudslide

- Look for tilted trees, telephone poles, fences, or walls, and for new holes or bare spots on hillsides. Listen for rumbling sounds that might indicate an approaching landslide or mudflow.
- Be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and for a change from clear to muddy water.
- If you are in areas susceptible to landslides and debris flows, consider leaving if it is safe to do so; move to a second story if possible.
- Be especially alert when driving in intense rain. Embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to landslides. Watch the road for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flows.
- If intense rain is predicted, such as often occurs at least once in a California winter, ask your Host Parents if there have been any drought or wildfire issues in the past year that could lead to landslides.
- In a landslide, move out of the path the water is flowing!



# Flash Flood!

- A **Flash Flood** is “A flood caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time, generally less than 6 hours. Flash floods are usually characterized by raging torrents...they can occur within minutes or a few hours of excessive rainfall.”
- Flash floods occur when heavy rainfall exceeds the ability of the ground to absorb it, or when enough water accumulates for streams to overtop their banks, causing rapid rises of water in a short amount of time.
- Densely populated areas are at a high risk for flash floods. The construction of buildings, highways, driveways, and parking lots increases runoff by reducing the amount of rain absorbed by the ground. This runoff increases the flash flood potential.
- A Flash Flood **Watch** means the conditions indicate a flash flood is possible in the designated area
- A Flash Flood **Warning** means a flash flood is happening or is likely to occur very soon.

# What to do in a flash flood warning

- Get to high ground.
- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters; fast-moving waters can easily knock you down.
- **“Turn Around, Don’t Drown!”** According to the CDC, over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water.
- Stay off of bridges, which can be washed away without warning
- If you are driving, stop. Stay in the car as long as possible, only climbing to the roof if the car fills with water.
- If you are trapped in a building, go to the highest floor, but stay inside. Only go to the roof if the top floor is no longer habitable or if you need to signal for help.
- Once the rain has stopped be wary of the deep waters. Dangers include electricity, unseen physical items, wildlife, and germs or contamination

# Extreme Heat!

- Extreme heat is defined as a long period of high heat combined with humidity and temperatures above 90 degrees. In extreme heat, evaporation is slowed and the human body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. Children are at much greater risk than adults.
- Several different heat-related illnesses can occur when exposed to high temperatures over a period of time. Temperatures exceeding 90° or 100° f (32° to 38° celsius) can heat illness to arise, sometimes without warning.
  - Heat Stroke – Headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, temperature
  - Heat Exhaustion – sweating, clammy skin, nausea, cramps, exhaustion, headache, weakness
  - Heat Cramps – heavy sweating & muscle spasms (especially during exercise)
  - Sunburn – painful red or pink warm skin
  - Heat Rash – clusters or red blisters or dots, especially near neck, chest, groin and elbow

<https://www.cdc.gov/>



# How to protect yourself & the children

- Watch the weather forecasts especially in the summer months
- Avoid the sun between 10am and 3pm, dress children appropriately
- Drink more water than you think you need to and provide water and juice to the children throughout hot days
- Replace salts and minerals that are excreted when sweating (juice, sports drinks, popsicles, potato chips, salty snacks)
- Keep the children indoors in the air conditioning during the midday heat
- If you lose electricity, find a place that is cool!
- Seek medical attention if you suspect Heat Exhaustion or Heat Stroke or if blisters develop on the skin

# Wildlife Threats!

- **Black Bears**

- About a meter or taller at the shoulder
- can be black, brown or reddish
- Usually interested in trash cans or the smell of food



- **Coyotes**

- Related to dogs
- About 10 to 16 kg, scruffy fur, long tail
- Eat berries, nuts, and small wild rodents like rabbits and gophers



- **Mountain Lions (aka Cougar, Puma)**

- Rarely seen, occasionally heard, they avoid people
- Related to cats but much larger, can be 30 to 100 kg
- Tend to be found in the same places as deer (their main prey)
- Adults have a uniform tan color with a long (cat-like) tail



- **Bobcats (aka lynx)**

- Often mistaken for mountain lions
- Mottled grey-ish fur, very short / bobbed tail, dark-tipped ears
- Half to 2/3 the size of a mountain lion



- **Rattlesnakes**

- Black and brown diamond pattern
- Triangular shaped head (pouches containing venom on either side of their face)
- Usually a rattle on their tail. Just because you don't hear the rattle or even if it is broken off, it still could be a rattlesnake
- Rattlesnakes can leap forward almost as far as they are long.



# What to do if you encounter dangerous wildlife

- Pick up small children immediately
- Be loud. Make noise so that you do not startle the animal
- Respect the animal's space – never, ever get between a Mama and her cub
- Make yourself look large – stand on something, raise your arms, stand with your legs wide, hold open your jacket if wearing one
- Do not run away or turn your back; you might cause the animal to instinctually chase you
- Back away slowly and deliberately; behave as calmly as possible
- Fight back (only) if attacked
- Stay at least 10 feet away from rattlesnakes; back off and go the other direction
- If you are bitten call 911 immediately





# Know your resources!



- *City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department*
- *Los Angeles County Department of Public Health*
- *County of Los Angeles Fire Department*
- *Community Emergency Response Team*
- *California Department of Public Health*
- *California Department of Fish & Wildlife*
- *211 Los Angeles County (guide to services)*
- *Ready.gov*
- *USA.gov/Emergency and Disaster Preparedness*
- *National Park Service*
- *National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration*
- *United States Geological Survey*
- *US Environmental Protection Agency*
- *Centers for Disease Control*
- *American Red Cross*



# Be prepared!

- Talk to your Host Family about emergency plans
- Practice those plans with the children
- Search your city's website for local emergency preparedness info
- Sign up for text alerts through NIXLE / everbridge
- Download the free PulsePoint App & open your city and surrounding cities
- Have numbers for poison control, your local police and fire departments saved in your phone

If your host family has not put together Family Emergency Plan, create one together.  
Start here: <https://lacounty.gov/emergency/emergency-survival-guide/>