



# City of Santa Barbara



Volume 2, Issue 12

## Get Ready Santa Barbara! Explore Emergency Management in 2012

December 2012

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## Preparedness Kits

Not sure what to get that special someone in your life this holiday season? Nothing says you care like an emergency preparedness kit! Whether you put it together yourself or buy a ready-to-go kit you can feel good knowing that your gift will keep those you love safe and prepared all year long. Plus, why stop at those you love, go ahead, make one, or buy one, for yourself too while you are at it! Now that you are convinced that an emergency preparedness kit really is the perfect gift you are surely wondering, "what should I include in this kit?"

The basic kit should sustain one person with enough food and drinking water for a minimum of 72 hours and also include a battery powered flashlight, a small first aid kit, a battery powered or hand crank radio, extra batteries (for both the flashlight and the radio), maps, pens, paper, baby wipes and garbage bags (for sanitation purposes and/or keeping things dry). Food included in the kit should be shelf stable (meaning no refrigeration required) and if any of it is in cans it is a good idea to throw a manual can opener into your kit. A basic kit is excellent for the car, especially for people that commute regularly or take weekend trips.

Beyond the basics, a home kit should include essentials such as closed toed shoes and a change of clothes (for each member of the family), copies of important family documents (such as insurance policies and passports or ID's, and copies of any prescriptions you may have), cash (in small denominations), waterproof matches, plastic sheeting, bleach (for purifying water), mess kits (dishes and utensils), duct tape, work gloves, blankets, personal hygiene items, solar and or car phone charger (make sure it fits your most current cell phone!), extra medicines and/or eye-glasses, emergency contact phone numbers (written, not stored on your phone), basic tools and a utility knife.

To really personalize a kit consider the type of disaster the kit will be used during and the person or family using it. In Santa Barbara common disasters would be earthquakes, wildfires and flooding. Consider adding a particulate mask (for ash and dust), a whistle, tools (for turning off utilities) and sunscreen. For families with children or infants include toys, games, books, formula and spare diapers and wipes. For families or individuals with pets include extra water for your pet as well as pet food, a leash, a toy and some treats.

Lastly, if you really want to trick out a preparedness kit here are some items that are often overlooked: photos of family and pets (for identification purposes in large scale disasters), Ziploc bags, a sewing kit, vaccine records for your pet, rope or twine, reusable bags, fire starter (lint, or cotton balls dipped in Vaseline work well). Last, but not least, a list and/or picture of valuable items in your home (and their location) that if given time, you would want to take with you as these can be hard to think of on the spot.

### Upcoming Issue: Fire Extinguishers



Next month we will go over the different types of fire extinguishers, including how and when to use a fire extinguisher. On top of that we'll be providing some good tips for starting your year off safely as well as taking a look at winter weather!



### Holiday Safety Tips!

On behalf of the City of Santa Barbara Office of Emergency Services and the Santa Barbara City Fire Department, we want to wish you all a safe and fun holiday season. With that being said though, we can't release a holiday news letter without some holiday safety tips!

- \* If you purchase a tree, make sure it is fresh. A fresh tree is less of a fire hazard. Look for a tree that is green, whose needles are hard to pull off and whose trunk is sticky with resin. Water the tree daily.
- \* If you purchase an artificial tree this year, make sure it is labeled "fire resistant".
- \* Regardless of the type of tree, keep it away from heat sources (fireplaces, space heaters, heater vents).
- \* Keep candles away from children and pets and place them on sturdy surfaces in heat proof containers. DO NOT leave them unattended.

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- \* If using a ladder to put up lights make sure you always keep three points of contact with the ladder and hold on to the rungs, not the side rails. Reposition the ladder as you go.
- \* Plug no more than 3 strings of lights into one extension cord. Consider replacing your old lights for new LED lights which are cooler and use less electricity.
- \* Most "traditional" holiday plants (mistletoe and poinsettia) are harmful if ingested by humans and pets
- \* Stand by your pan! Never leave cooking food unattended! The best way to put out a grease fire is to smother it with a pan lid!
- \* Keep packages in the trunk of your car and be sure to lock your vehicle.
- \* And if all of this wasn't enough, check out the [CDC's "The 12 ways to health" holiday song.](#)

### 2013 Upcoming Topics

December

Preparedness Kits

January 2013

Fire Extinguishers

February 2013

L.I.E.S

March 2013

Hazardous Materials

April 2013

First Aid

May 2013

30-2-Can Do

## Did You Know: Extreme Winter Weather

Lets face it, we are spoiled in Santa Barbara. Many places in the U.S. don't enjoy our temperate climate. For instance, the coldest temperature ever recorded in the U.S. was -80 F on January 23, 1971 in Prospect Creek Camp, Alaska located near the Arctic Circle. Not counting Alaska, and staying in the lower 48, the second coldest temperature was recorded in Rogers Pass, MT on January 20, 1954 and was -70 F.

These are clearly extreme temperatures though, neither of these places sustain temperatures like this for more than a few days in a row. Some places in the U.S. however, do sustain below freezing average temperatures all year round. Places such as Mount Washington, New Hampshire (with an average temperature of 27.4 F) and Climax Mine, CO ( with an average temperature of 30.6) are just cold all the time! If you are wondering what makes these places extra cold the answer is elevation! Nineteen of the 20 places in the U.S. with the lowest average temperature are located above 6,000 feet many of them located along the Continental Divide in Colorado and Yellowstone National Park.

California, as it turns out, holds its own special cold title. Bodie, CA, a ghost town just east of the Sierra Nevada mountain range, holds the title (outside of Alaska) for Most Days of Freezing Temperatures, 308 out of 365! Second place goes to Darwin Ranch, WY with 298 days a year.

The last extreme cold title, goes to Stanley, ID for having the most days with the coldest temperature (of all recorded places) in the contiguous United States. In other words, on any given day, the coldest place in the U.S. is probably Stanley, ID. Now there is some trivia!

Sometimes with extreme cold, can come snow, lots of snow. On December 4, 1913, Georgetown, CO experience 63 inches (5.25 feet) of snow in a single 24 hour period. Unfortunately for them, the [slow blower was not invented until 1925](#).

If you are a true snow fan, Mount Rainer, WA takes the title not only for heaviest yearly snowfalls (671 inches/yr) but also for most days with fresh snow (121.4).

You can check out more cold and snow facts [here](#) and if you are traveling to colder climates this winter, be sure and check out the CDC's [frostbite](#) and [hypothermia](#) fact pages.



## Disaster Facts: Bhopal Disaster

Not all disasters are natural in origin. The ones that are not fall into two categories, intentional, and accidental. The Bhopal Disaster in Bhopal, India is the largest accidental and intentional disaster in the world to date. In the late night and early evening hours of December 2-3, 1984 the Union Carbide India Limited pesticide plant experienced a deadly gas leak.

That night a tank of one of the highly toxic gasses, methyl isocyanate (MIC), used in the making of pesticides, experienced a water leak. When mixed with water, the MIC reacted, building pressure inside its holding tank. Within minutes the pressure in the tank came be so great that the emergency vent was activated releasing approximately 30 metric tons of toxic gas into the atmosphere over a 45-60 minute period. A series of catastrophic failures in the safety equipment at the plant not only produced the disaster, but also prevented it from being stopped. Systems in place to "scrub" toxic gasses, bringing them down to safe concentrations, failed that night as well.

Much of the area directly surrounding the company was comprised of shantytowns, there were few if any phones and most people were asleep. There was no warning for most of these people. A disproportionate number of children were affected due to the density of the gas which hovered just a few feet off the ground.

It is estimated over 7,000,000 people were exposed to the toxic gas cloud. The official, immediate death toll is listed as 2,259. It is estimated another 8,000 died within two weeks of exposure. Within days of exposure several thousand livestock perished and many nearby plants lost their leaves.

Many people who lived through the initial exposure suffered long-term effects including blindness and other symptoms that resulted in earlier than normal deaths from cancer and respiratory problems. For more information on this disaster watch the videos on the [BBC webpage](#).

### Quiz Time, Just for fun!

Are you an expert on Christmas Trivia? See if you can answer these three questions?

1. **Imp Repulsion**—In Greek legend, malicious creatures called Kallikantzaroi sometimes play troublesome pranks at Christmas time. What should you do to get rid of them?
  - a. Placate them with gifts of rice pudding
  - b. Burn either salt or an old shoe
  - c. Sing gyms in a loud voice
  - d. Throw your sandals at them
2. The **jólasveina** or "Yule Lads", are a traditional part of an Icelandic Christmas. What are they?
  - a. A band of 13 gift-giving goblins
  - b. In charge of Santa's reindeer
  - c. Woodcutters
  - d. Best male singers of each village

3. **Opening night**—George Frederick Handel's great Christmas oratorio, *The Messiah* was first performed in 1742. Where did it take place?

- a. London
- b. Dublin
- c. Vienna
- d. Jerusalem

4. **Whence the poinsettia**—The poinsettia is a traditional Christmas flower. Where did it originally grow?

- a. Canada
- b. Mexico
- c. China
- d. Spain



Answers: 1) c; 2) a; 3) b; 4) b;

## City of Santa Barbara Office of Emergency Services

OES is on the web!

<http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/OES>

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### City News

On November 15th the City was involved in a Statewide Public Health Drill. The City's OES only activated the Public Works portion of the EOC that worked on water issues. However, in that drill OES and members of the Operations Staff utilized the new WebEOC Program. The WebEOC program is a web-enhanced crisis information management system that provides secure real-time information sharing to help managers make sound decisions quickly during an incident. WebEOC was originally developed for public safety and emergency officials.

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice/Office of Science and Technology conducted an evaluation of what is now known as Crisis Information Management Software (CIMS). At that time there existed relatively few software firms providing CIMS. Now, the County Office of Emergency Management, with Homeland Security Grant money, has given access to this software to all EOC's in the County Operational Area. We are currently in the training phase of the program. In the coming year the State of California will also be using this system. For more information checkout their website at <http://www.esi911.com/esi>.

Do you have a question about disasters or disaster preparedness you want answered? Send an email to the above address and you might just see it in the next newsletter!