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City of Santa Barbara

Get Ready Santa Barbara!

Explore Emergency Management in 2012



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Upcoming in August: WHAT? School is starting again!?!?



Whether you are sending them to pre-school or back to college; school is starting again! Kids spend the majority of their days at school so why not prepare them? Our August issue will be full of tips to help you prepare your kids and yourself for disasters and emergencies during the school year. Everything from updating their emergency contacts to making a disaster plan. We'll even tell you how you can arrange for a safety demonstration for your child's school or organization!

2012 Upcoming Topics

August

What? School is Starting Again!?

September
National Preparedness Month

October
Fire Prevention Month

November
Reverse 911

December
Preparedness Kits

January
Stay tuned for our 2013 newsletter topics!!

WHAT IS FEMA?



FEMA

As we learned last month, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

FEMA's primary goal is to support citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. FEMA's primary goal is to reduce loss of life and property during and after any and all types of disasters.

FEMA was established in 1979 by executive order. From 1979 to 2002 FEMA was its own, independent, agency the head of which reported directly to the President. In 2003 FEMA was re-organized as an agency within DHS. The current FEMA administrator, W. Craig Fugate, was appointed administrator by President Obama in May of 2009.

Presently, FEMA has 10 regional offices across the United States which allows for individual states to be assisted on a more local level. California and Nevada make up Region Nine with the regional office located in Oakland, CA. FEMA can't do it alone however. The Agency regularly works with numerous other agencies at every level: federal, state, local, tribal and private to carry out its mission.

Last year, FEMA provided approximately \$2.9 billion in federal preparedness grants to assist states, territories, urban areas, federally recognized tribes, non-profit agencies, and the private sector in strengthening our nation's ability to prevent, protect, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. FEMA responded to a record 98 major disaster declarations, 26 emergency declarations, and 112 fire management assistance grant (FMAG) declarations.

In response to a record number of disasters affecting 47 states in 2011, including Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee and multiple tornadoes, floods and severe weather throughout the U.S., FEMA and its inter-agency partners delivered over 24 million meals, almost 12 million liters of water, thousands of cots, blankets and tarps, infant and toddler kits, durable and consumable medical equipment and over 4,000 temporary housing units to disaster survivors. The Agency also obligated \$4.7 billion in assistance, primarily for Individual Assistance (including housing, crisis counseling, legal services, disaster case management, and unemployment assistance, among other services) and Public Assistance (including reimbursement to clear debris and rebuild roads, schools, libraries, and other public facilities).

FEMA has helped train more than 428,000 individuals as part of the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) program. Overall, more than 1.3 million CERT volunteer hours were recorded in 2011. CERT teams in all 50 states responded to both small and large incidents providing local support to local citizens first. Check out the [OES website](#) to find out how to be involved with Santa Barbara City's CERT program!

FEMA also oversees the [Ready.gov](#) campaign to prepare citizens for disasters and emergencies. On the [Ready.gov](#) website you can find disaster tips and checklists to educate yourself, your family and even your business about what to do during various emergencies and how best to prepare for them. The website also links to ways that you can get involved in your community. For kids, or the kid in you, check out the [Ready.gov kids page](#) which is filled with interactive puzzles and games, all with an emergency preparedness twist!

To get more info on FEMA or what they have done in the last year, check out the [State of FEMA](#) publication or their website at www.FEMA.gov!

Did you Know?

Communicating After a Disaster: In the event of an emergency phone lines may quickly be overwhelmed and cell towers may be damaged. What to do? How do you reach out to friends and family to let them know you are okay or to check on them? Send a text! Text messages actually take up less bandwidth and often can be sent with less signal than a phone call. Just a simple text to friends and family to let them know you are okay can put their mind at ease and free up phone lines for other calls from those who may need more assistance.

The *Text First Call Second* campaign is sponsored by the Foundation for a Safe America. They recommend a short text such as "I M OK" (on a non-smart phone that would be the 4-6-6-5 keypad buttons) to friends and family after a disaster. For those trying to reach someone affected by a disaster, The Foundation recommends the short text "R U OK" (on a non-smart phone that would be 7-8-6-5 keypad buttons).

The reason behind keeping these messages short? The bandwidth taken up by 800 of these four-character messages is equivalent to one, one-minute phone call, according researchers from the University of Missouri.

If you absolutely need to get in touch with someone after a disaster you may have a better chance of reaching them at an out-of-area (at least 100 miles from the disaster area) number. Having an out-of-area contact that everyone in your family knows to communicate with after an emergency helps to do two things: it cuts down the number of calls that are being made and it also centralizes information so you can get all your family updates with just one phone call.

To implement an out-of-area contact plan for your family pick one or two relatives or close friends that live far apart from each other and you (the further, the better!). Let them know you have designated them as your out-of-area contact person and that in the event of an emergency they will be in charge of keeping track of updates from various family members. Be sure to then provide all members of your family with your new out-of-area contacts phone number. You can find templates for wallet-sized emergency contact cards [here](#).

You can also enter an emergency contact into your cell phone by using the acronym ICE (In Case of Emergency) in front of their name, so when your contacts are alphabetized, they fall under 'I'. This is a common acronym for first responders to search under to find emergency contact information for a victim that is unable to provide it.

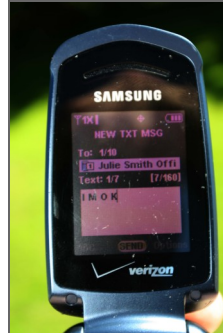


Photo courtesy of Foundation for a Safe America

Please Abide, Move Aside: Have you heard of this campaign sponsored by the California Office of Traffic Safety? Do you know the rules of the road when it comes to emergency vehicles? Section [21806 \(a\) \(1\)](#) of the California Vehicle Code (CVC) mandates that any authorized emergency vehicle using its siren and displaying at least one red light has the right of way on the road.

Upon seeing or hearing an emergency vehicle going 'code 3', (the term given to emergency vehicles traveling with light(s) and sirens), motorists should pull to the right shoulder as soon as it is safe to do so. At an intersection it may be necessary to go through a green light (but never a red) before pulling to the right as it is critical for emergency vehicles that intersections remain clear! On the freeway, traffic should slow and yield for an emergency vehicle, but not stop completely as this may cause accidents.

When all emergency vehicles traveling code 3 have safely passed, motorists should pull back onto the road, however CVC section [21706](#) mandates that motorists may not follow closer than 300 feet behind an emergency vehicle traveling code 3 so keep some distance! For more information, check out the LAPD website [here](#).



City of Santa Barbara Office of Emergency Services



OES is on the web!

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

Newsletter Author:

Danielle Danetra, Emergency Services Intern

DDanetra@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Originally Created by: Lindsay Barker, MPH

Disaster Facts: A Look Back at The Zaca Fire



July 4, 2012 marks the five-year anniversary of the start of the Zaca Fire. The Zaca fire is the second largest fire in California's recorded history, burning over 240,000 acres. As some residents may remember, the Zaca fire began in our own backyard, just northeast of Buellton near Zaca Lake. Started by sparks from a grinding tool, the fire burned for months, not being declared officially controlled until October 29, 2007. 988 firefighters from several agencies and departments including the U.S. Forest Service, Santa Barbara County, Los Angeles County, Ventura County and Cal Fire battled the blaze.

Remarkably, no major structures were destroyed, though, there was threat of it at various times which resulted in evacuations for some residents in the county. The monster fire did run up quite a tab of over \$115 million, before being completely doused. Read more about the technology and science used to fight the fire [here](#).

Initially, once the fire was out, there was concern from county officials that the land affected by the fire would lead to larger amounts of rainfall making its way into populated areas of the county. It was feared that this increase in run-off would potentially lead to more flooding. To combat this, there was some preparation of the land for rains during the winter of 2007. This included planting vegetation near levee banks and adding a floating debris boom in Lake Cachuma to catch material and debris before it can move father downstream.

Recently, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has proposed a plan to rehabilitate even more of the land affected by the fire. If passed, the plan would rehabilitate up to 4,200 acres burned by the Zaca Fire that would otherwise be unlikely to recover to 'management approved condition' by the USFS. This rehabilitation includes tree planting and repairs of roads and trails affected by the blaze. To read more about the proposal or comment on it, click [here](#).

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City News – Promoting BBQ Safety!

These basic BBQ safety tips are a must-now that summer is here and we dust off our barbecues. Whether you choose charcoal or gas, safety is key! Here are three things to think about:

THE GRILL. Make sure that the barbecue is in good working order, on a flat surface, away from any low-hanging trees or shrubs and never try to move the barbecue while it's hot! Above all, never leave the barbecue unattended, you may even consider keeping a bucket of water or sand nearby.



THE FOOD. Think about food safety. Store the meat in the refrigerator until just before grilling to ensure that the meat temperature doesn't rise to dangerous bacteria-breeding levels. Always wash your hands thoroughly before handling any raw meat, and make sure not to place raw meat next to cooked meat on the grill, which could cause cross-contamination.

CLEANUP. If your barbecue is gas-powered, make sure the tap is turned off before changing the gas container. Gas containers should always be changed in a well-ventilated area. If the barbecue uses charcoal, use only enough charcoal to cover the bottom of the grill, usually about 2 inches. Never use gasoline to start your grill. Finally, when disposing of ashes, make sure they're completely cooled before disposing of them.