



GET READY, SANTA BARBARA!

Home & Family Awareness

Sustainability—Planning Ahead for Disaster Recovery

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Upcoming Issue in April 2015



Most people don't consider a garage as dangerous, but in next month's newsletter there will be helpful hints on how to make sure that your garage is safe for family and guests.

2015 Topics

March
Living & Dining

April
Garage

May
Defensible Space

June
Vacation Safety

July
Water Safety

August
Back to School

Disaster recovery actually begins before a disaster occurs. Emergency managers refer to this as preparedness, the phase during which people get ready for the onslaught and aftermath of a disaster. By planning for such activities as warnings, evacuation and sheltering you give yourself a more manageable plan. In disaster prone regions, communities may even preplan debris removal, utility restoration and the management of donations and volunteers. These pre-disaster activities have a dramatic impact upon a community's ability to respond and recover from a disaster.

A community's response to a disaster lays the groundwork for both short and long-term recovery. So, how does this affect you as part of the community? In creating a disaster plan, some things you may want to address in your plans would be sheltering, lack of utilities, transportation and movement, as examples. Developing a disaster plan goes beyond just making sure you have food and water; it's looking at the big picture. Most people may make minor mitigation changes after an event, such as relocation of a book shelf or making sure the television is properly secure. But what about the other issues involving disasters?

Think about this, what happens when the utilities go out? Do you have flashlight, radio, etc.? What about water and sewer issues? Did you know that 3-ply garbage bags and kitty litter are a good thing to have around if you have no sewer service?

Or, what about sheltering, what are your plans if you need to evacuate to a shelter or there is a need for you to shelter in place? What if you're not home and your family has to evacuate? Thinking about how to handle this situation beforehand will make it easier on everyone involved. During the 1990 Paint Cave Fire in Santa Barbara County one evacuee was stated that the only thing they grabbed when they were evacuated were their bills.

Holistic disaster recovery is about change. Because the disaster recovery process begins before the disaster, the best change to foster post-disaster change is to include sustainability in our plans. It's time to think outside the box and get ready Santa Barbara.

Except from Holistic Disaster Recovery
Produced by Natural Hazards Center Revised 2005

New Words:

Mitigation: The effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Mitigation is taking action *now*—before the next disaster—to reduce human and financial consequences later (analyzing risk, reducing risk, insuring against risk). [FEMA](#)

Disaster Recovery: Process of returning an organization, society, or system to a state of normality after the occurrence of a disastrous event.

Safety in the Living and Dining Rooms

Safety is more than minimizing damage to buildings. We must also secure the contents of our homes to reduce the risk to our lives and our pocketbooks.

Several people died and thousands were injured in the Northridge earthquake because of unsecured building contents such as toppling bookcases. Many billions of dollars were lost due to this type of damage. Much of this damage and injury could have been prevented in advance through simple actions to secure contents.

You should secure anything 1) heavy enough to hurt you if it falls on you, or 2) fragile or expensive enough to be a significant loss if it falls.

There may be simple actions you can do right now that will protect you. **START NOW** by moving furniture such as bookcases away from beds, sofas, or other places where people sit or sleep. Move heavy objects to lower shelves. Then begin to look for other items in your home that may be hazardous.

Some of the actions recommended may take a bit longer to complete, but all are relatively simple. Most hardware stores and home centers now carry earthquake safety straps, fasteners, and adhesives.

Objects on shelves or tables.

Collectibles, pottery objects, and lamps can become deadly projectiles. Use either hook and loop fasteners on the table and object, or non-damaging adhesives such as earthquake putty, clear quake gel, or microcrystalline wax to secure breakables in place. Move heavy



Since the living and dining rooms are common places to relax and entertain family and friends, it is important that it be a safe environment.



items and breakables to lower shelves.

Hanging objects.

Mirrors, framed pictures, and other objects should be hung from closed hooks so that they can't bounce off the walls. Pictures and mirrors can also be secured at their corners with earthquake putty. Only soft art such as tapestries should be placed over beds or sofas.

Electronics.

Televisions, stereos, computers and microwaves and other electronics are heavy and costly to replace. They can be secured with flexible nylon straps and buckles for easy removal and relocation.

Furniture.

Secure the tops of all top-heavy furniture, such as bookcases and file cabinets, to a wall. Be sure to anchor to the stud, and not just to the drywall. Flexible fasteners such as nylon straps allow tall objects to sway without falling over, reducing the strain on the studs. Loose shelving can also be secured by applying earthquake putty on each corner bracket.

Other considerations.

- Throw rugs, can cause a slip hazard so make sure that you use rug grippers or padding.
- If possible, use electrical power strips for all your electronics. Unplug equipment such as toaster and microwaves when not in use. Do not place power cords under rugs.
- Keep combustibles away from the fire place. Have your fire-place checked annually.

Community Corner – Kick’n It

Living Room, family room, den, no matter what you call it, this space is the spot to gather in our homes. Safety in this room seems simple, and it should be. With some inspection, you too can create a safe and comfy place to be with family and friends of all ages.

We love our electronics devices, video games, hand controls, remotes, televisions, cable boxes, modems and more. With a few exceptions these items come with wires, cords, and require more outlets than our standard homes contain. Power strips with heavy duty plugs and many outlets often are stashed behind the media cabinet. Bundling cords reduces electrical chaos plus reduces the chances of tripping or having a toddler or pet get wrapped accidentally with a loose cord. Never route cords under carpet. It may look less unsightly, but tack strips and foot traffic wear cords, and worn cords become fire and electrical hazards. In addition, do not run cords or electric flex under furniture or across walkways. Replace frayed or cracked flex.

Leave space around electronics to prevent overheating.

Window coverings often have cords. Blinds and drapes sometimes have long cords, and having the cords out of reach of children reduces the risk of strangulation.

Rugs and carpets need to be in good condition, and vacuumed regularly to avoid airborne allergens. Put a non slip coating or pad under area rugs. Never polish the floor under an area rug.

Of course we never leave a fire in a fireplace unattended, and it is important to have the chimney cleaned. Keep the hearth free of flammable materials such as matches and newspapers. Never cook in the fireplace.

Your front entry is part of the emergency exit plan for your home and family, so keep it clear of clutter and furnishings that might block the way.

Some homes are older, and have lead paint on the walls, and older asbestos “cottage cheese” ceilings. Know before you take on redecorating on your own. Kits are readily available for testing from any hardware store. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors must be operational, and do check the batteries.

With just a few considerations our living rooms can be the cozy retreats for binge-watching your favorite programs, or entertaining guests.

Pass the popcorn and the fuzzy throw. The dog and I are ready!

By the way CERT Classes start on Tuesday March 10th from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. If you are interested contact Yoli McGlinchey at 805-564-5711. The classes will be held at Station 1, 121 W. Carrillo Street.



Stella Larson,
Mesa Resident

If you would like to contribute to this column, please contact Yoli McGlinchey at ymcglinchey@santabarbaraca.gov

Disasters— New London School Explosion

In 1937 New London, Texas, in northwest Rusk County, had one of the richest rural school districts in the United States. Community residents in the East Texas oilfield were proud of the beautiful, modern, steel-framed, E-shaped school building. On March 18 students prepared for the next day's Interscholastic Meet in Henderson. At 3:05 P.M. a worker turned on a sanding machine in an area which, unknown to him, was filled with a mixture of gas and air ignited. Immediately the building seemed to lift in the air and then smashed to the ground. Walls collapsed. The roof fell in and buried its victims in a mass of brick, steel, and concrete debris. The explosion was heard four miles away, and it hurled a two-ton concrete slab 200 feet away, where it crushed a car. Three days after the explosion, inquiries were held to determine the cause of the disaster. From these investigations, researchers learned that until January 18, 1937, the school had received its gas from the United Gas Company. To save gas expenses, plumbers with the knowledge and approval of the school board and superintendent, tapped a residue gas line. School officials saw nothing wrong because the use of "green" or "wet" gas was a frequent money-saving practice in the oilfield. The researchers concluded that gas had escaped from a faulty connection and accumulated beneath the building. Green gas has no smell; no one knew it was accumulating beneath the building. The most important result of the disaster was the passage of a state odorization law, which required that distinctive malodorants be mixed in all gas for commercial and industrial use so that people could be warned by the smell. For more information [click here](#).



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We're on the Web!

www.santabarbaraca.gov/oes

and



Building a Disaster Kit on a Budget—Staying Informed

As we sit in our silent living or dining rooms without power, no TV, no internet, and yes neighbors...no YouTube, no Facebook and most definitely no Netflix!

We've checked for hazards and made sure everything is secured. Now what? When we think about disasters, we are uncertain of the scale of the impact they will have on us. Hence the staying informed and knowing what is going on in our community is important.

There are an array of choices when it comes to radios we could include in our kit; hand cranked radio, battery operated radio, or even the radio in our car will do (it just won't quite fit in my go kit).

Radios come in different shapes, colors and sizes; some come with extras, like flashlights, cell phone chargers and some are solar powered. No matter which one you decide to include as part of your kit, you can start with one that achieves its goal, Communication!

So, I encourage you to look in your local hardware store, or online for great deals; no more staying disconnected! [Click here](#) for Radio Ready stations in English and Spanish.














Liliana Encinas

Do you have an idea you want to share? Maybe you have another way of saving money when building your kit; we want to hear about it. Send your ideas, questions, or comments to: LiEncinas@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Upcoming Events

March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2	3 	4	5	6 Employee Appreciation Day 	7
8 Spring Forward 	9 Panic Day 	10	11	12 Plant a Flower Day 	13	14 
15 Ides of March 	16	17 	18	19	20 Proposal Day 	21
22 Nat'l Goof Off Day 	23	24	25 Waffle Day 	26	27 	28
29	30	31 