

**T H E**  
**T O P A N G C A**  
**D I S A S T E R**  
**S U R V I V A L**  
**G U I D E**



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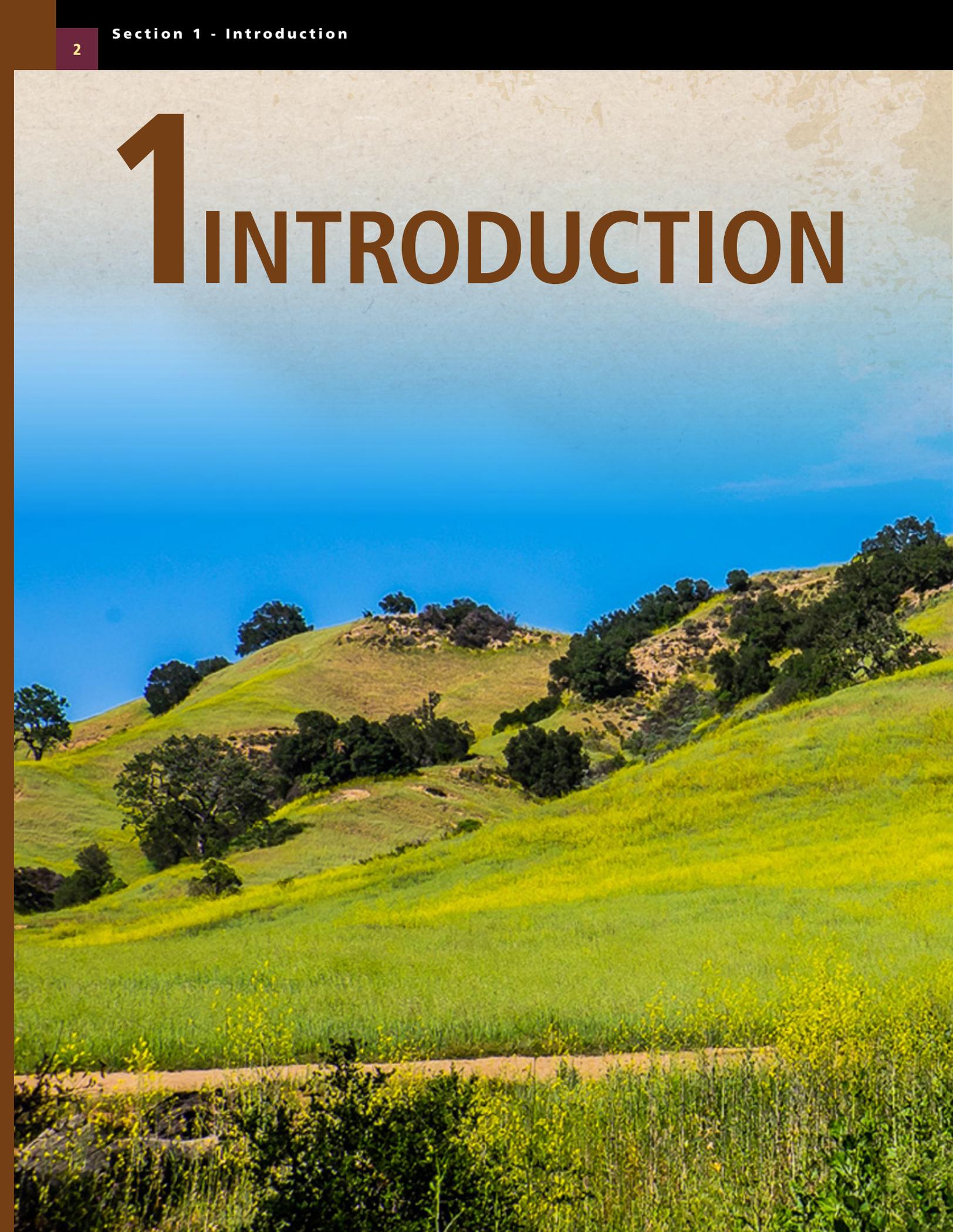
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# 1 INTRODUCTION



# 1 - INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Topanga is a unique community—both in terms of its community spirit and natural beauty—but natural beauty comes with a price. The same forces of ecology and geography that make Topanga one of the most spectacular places in Southern California have also made it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters such as wildfires and floods.

Topanga is setting a nationwide standard in community disaster preparedness. Back in 2000, Topanga was chosen to pilot Los Angeles County's directive to develop a community-based emergency management plan in collaboration with local government, relevant agencies, and community-based organizations, which could then be a "model" for other county communities.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors-appointed Topanga Emergency Management (TEM) Task Force was charged with implementing this initiative. The Task Force is comprised of select Los Angeles County and state agencies (Fire, Sheriff, CHP, Public Works, Office of Emergency Management, Board of Supervisor's 3rd District Office, Animal Control, and others), plus the American Red Cross and Topanga's emergency-related volunteer organizations, including Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP), North Topanga Canyon Fire Safe Council, Arson Watch, Topanga Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Topanga Town Council, Topanga Chamber of Commerce, Topanga Animal Rescue, and more.

The Topanga Disaster Survival Guide, first published in 2005, puts all of the Task Force's planning, insights, and recommendations into a single booklet for the Topanga community. This updated edition contains many important revisions to the Emergency Management Plan and is designed to help residents become better prepared for any disaster.

We encourage you to study it with your family and loved ones. Pay special attention to the Zone maps starting on page 84 and the evacuation instructions on page 51, along with the tips on creating a Family Emergency Plan on page 13. It is by no means an overstatement to say that following the recommendations in this Topanga Disaster Survival Guide could save your life and the lives of your loved ones.

**Stay safe...and above all...PREPARE!**

**—Topanga Emergency Management Task Force**

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

AMERICAN RED CROSS	(800) 733-2767
CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL (office)	(818) 888-0980
CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL (dispatch)	(323) 982-4900
CALTRANS	(800) 427-7623
LOST HILLS SHERIFF'S STATION	(818) 878-1808
POISON CONTROL CENTER	(800) 876-4766
ROAD & WATER EMERGENCY HELP LINE	(800) 675-4357
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON	(800) 611-1911
TCEP HOTLINE	(310) 455-3000

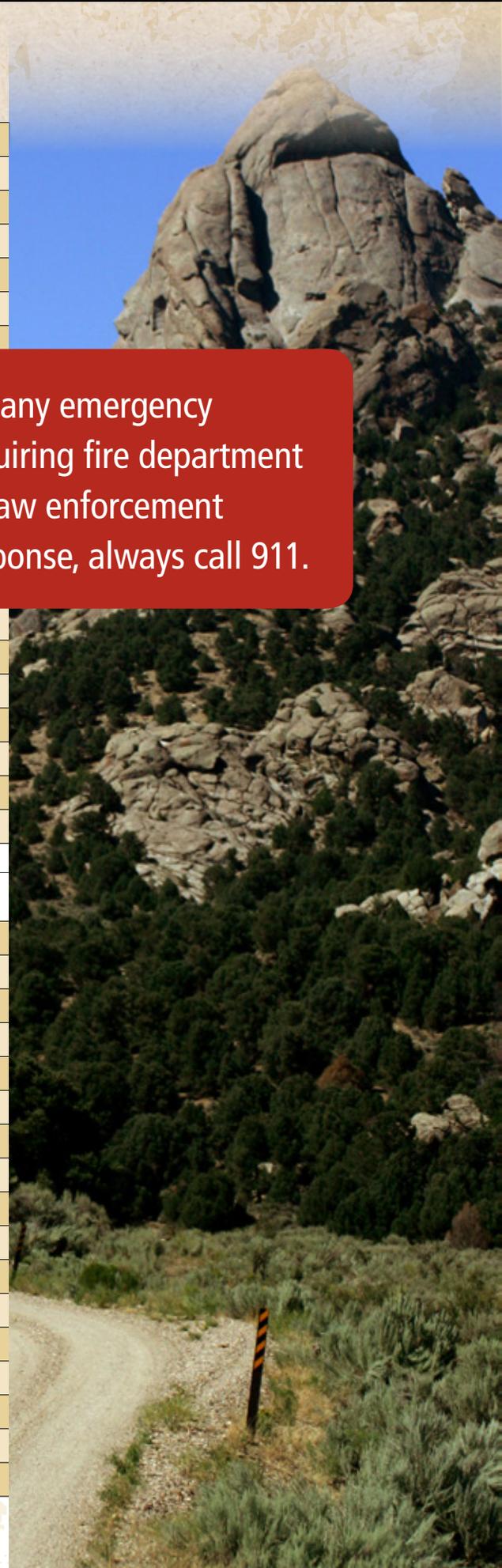
### Los Angeles County

211 LA COUNTY (for information and referrals)	211
AGOURA HILLS ANIMAL SHELTER	(818) 991-0071
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' 3RD DISTRICT OFFICE	(818) 880-9416
BUILDING AND SAFETY	(818) 880-4150
FORESTRY DIVISION	(818) 222-1108
LA COUNTY ROAD MAINTENANCE	(626) 458-4357
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS	(562) 466-1310
TOPANGA LIBRARY	(310) 455-3480
WATER DISTRICT 29	(310) 456-6621
WEED ABATEMENT	(818) 833-6647

### Schools

LA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HOTLINE	(213) 241-1000
LAS VIRGENES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	(818) 880-4000
SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	(310) 450-8338
CHILDREN'S CORNER	(310) 455-2467
TOPANGA MONTESSORI	(310) 455-3373
TOPANGA ELEMENTARY	(310) 455-3711
AGOURA HIGH SCHOOL	(818) 889-1262
CALABASAS HIGH SCHOOL	(818) 222-7177
MALIBU HIGH SCHOOL	(310) 457-6801
MANZANITA SCHOOL	(310) 455-9700
PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL	(310) 230-6623
PAUL REVERE CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL	(310) 917-4800
SANTA MONICA HIGH SCHOOL	(310) 395-3204
TAFT HIGH SCHOOL	(818) 227-3600
TOPANGA MOUNTAIN SCHOOL	(818) 346-8355
VIEWPOINT SCHOOL	(818) 591-6500
WOODLAND HILLS ACADEMY	(818) 348-8770

For any emergency requiring fire department or law enforcement response, always call 911.



## ONLINE RESOURCES - WEBSITES

### EMERGENCY PREP EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

NAME	URL	DESCRIPTION
American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>	Provides compassionate care to those in need during and after disasters
California My Hazards Awareness Map	<a href="http://www.myhazards.calema.ca.gov">www.myhazards.calema.ca.gov</a>	Enter "Topanga, CA" and click "Map Search"; select "Earthquake," "Flood," and "Fire" tabs at top to read about hazards in our area
California Office of Emergency Services	<a href="http://www.caloes.ca.gov">www.caloes.ca.gov</a>	California governor's Office of Emergency Services enhances safety and preparedness across the state
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="http://www.bt.cdc.gov">www.bt.cdc.gov</a>	Prepares for and responds to public health emergencies
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	<a href="http://www.fema.gov">www.fema.gov</a>	Federal government's agency that supports citizens and first responders to help respond to and recover from disasters
LA County Department of Animal Care and Control	<a href="http://www.animalcare.lacounty.gov">www.animalcare.lacounty.gov</a>	Animal care centers serving over 3 million residents of LA County
LA County Fire Department	<a href="http://www.fire.lacounty.gov">www.fire.lacounty.gov</a>	Official website for services, safety preparedness, and special services
LA County Emergency Operations Center	<a href="http://www.lacoa.org">www.lacoa.org</a>	County of Los Angeles Office of Emergency Management providing links to federal, state, and local government emergency operations departments
LA County Emergency Survival Program	<a href="http://www.espfocus.org">www.espfocus.org</a>	Large-scale community education outreach program offering materials to help promote preparedness and self-sufficiency in the event of disasters
National Fire Protection Association	<a href="http://www.nfpa.org">www.nfpa.org</a>	The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety; also sponsors the Firewise Communities project
North Topanga Canyon Fire Safe Council (NTCFSC)	<a href="http://www.ntcfsc.org">www.ntcfsc.org</a>	Resources for home hardening and making Topanga a Fire-Adapted Community
Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP)	<a href="http://www.tcep.org">www.tcep.org</a>	TCEP provides emergency preparation education and disaster status information
Topanga Animal Rescue	<a href="http://www.topangaanimalrescue.com">www.topangaanimalrescue.com</a>	Local fostering and placement services plus medical field triage and treatment for animals
Topanga Disaster Survival Guide	<a href="http://www.topangasurvival.org">www.topangasurvival.org</a>	Helpful information for preparing and responding to disasters in the Canyon, including a digital version of this guide

## REAL-TIME EMERGENCY UPDATES

The following websites make every effort to provide real-time information and updates during emergencies.

NAME	URL
Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP)	<a href="http://www.tcep.org">www.tcep.org</a>
InciWeb Incident Information System	<a href="http://www.inciweb.nwcg.gov">www.inciweb.nwcg.gov</a>
Los Angeles County Fire Department	<a href="http://www.fire.lacounty.gov">www.fire.lacounty.gov</a>
Los Angeles County	<a href="http://www.lacounty.gov">www.lacounty.gov</a>
OneTopanga.com	<a href="http://www.onetopanga.com">www.onetopanga.com</a>

## TRAFFIC UPDATES

NAME	URL	DESCRIPTION
Caltrans Highway Conditions	<a href="http://www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi">www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi</a>	Check information for any state highway; Topanga Canyon Blvd. is Highway 27 and PCH is Highway 1
CHP Traffic Incident Page	<a href="http://www.cad.chp.ca.gov/traffic.aspx">www.cad.chp.ca.gov/traffic.aspx</a>	Lists all reported traffic incidents by area; refreshes every 60 seconds

## WEATHER

NAME	URL	DESCRIPTION
National Weather Service (NOAA)	<a href="http://www.weather.gov">www.weather.gov</a>	Enter 90290 in location box in upper left corner, then bookmark resulting page for Topanga; if "Red Hazardous Weather Conditions" link is visible at top, click for more information

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Twitter

Twitter is one of the best places to get real-time updates on major unfolding events. Even if you have no interest in Twitter, it should be part of your Emergency Kit. Think of it as a special emergency alerts radio. You just need to know how to turn it on and which channels to tune in. Follow the accounts below, and with the proper set-up, you'll get information pushed to your computer and/or cell phone. Practice using Twitter a few times a year so you remember how to get the notifications.

To receive Twitter updates from dozens of handpicked emergency-related accounts, subscribe to TCEP's Emergency Updates List.

NAME	TWITTER ACCOUNT
Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP)	@TCEP90290
LA County Fire Department Division 7 (Topanga/Malibu area)	@LACoFD_DivVII
LA County Fire Department Public Information	@LACoFDPIO
LA County Fire Department Main	@LACo_FD
CHP Southern Division	@CHPsouthern
Lost Hills Sheriff's Station	@LHSLASD

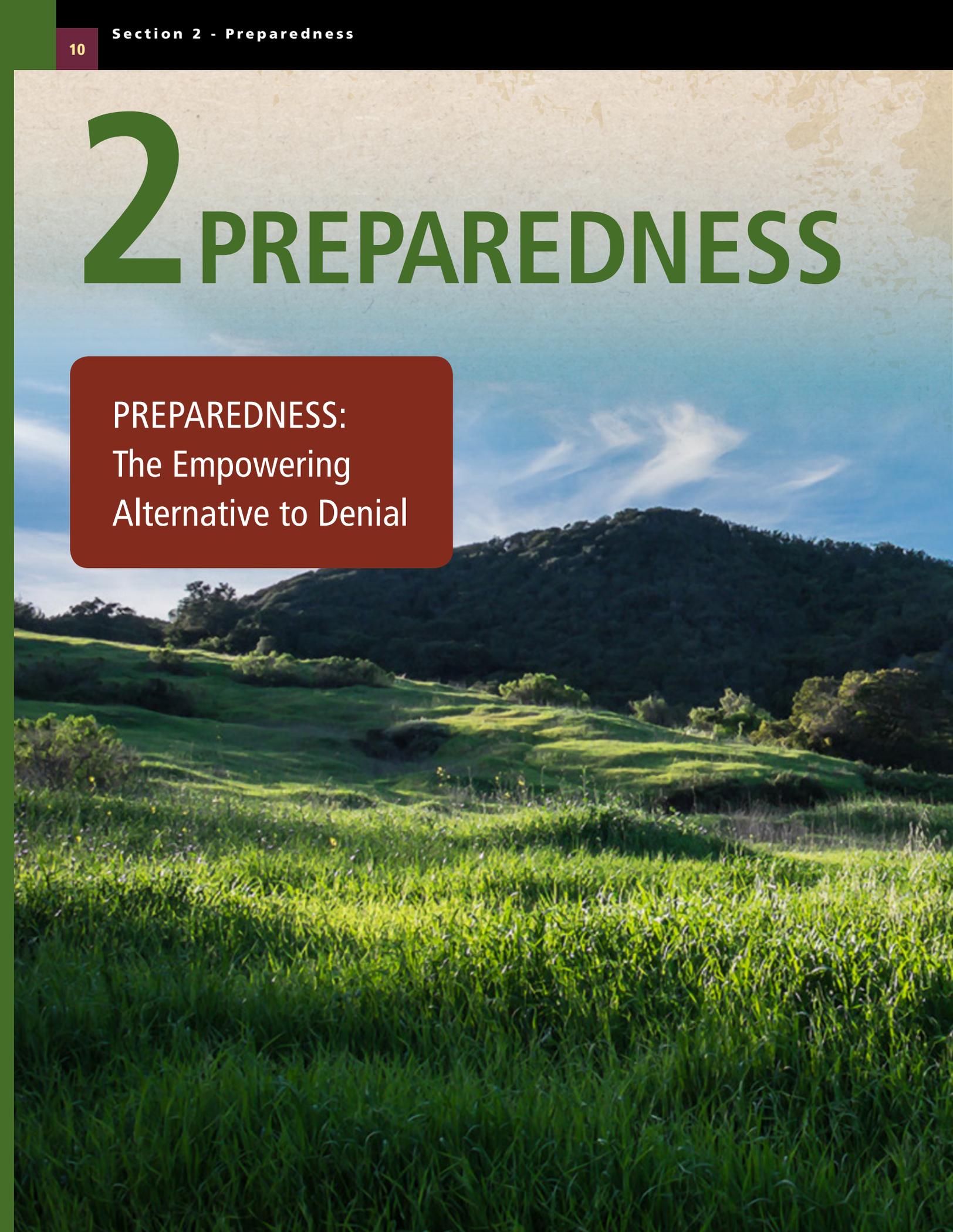
### Facebook

Use Facebook to get tips and resources on emergency preparedness. Facebook should not be relied upon for real-time incident information.

NAME	FACEBOOK PAGE
Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP)	facebook.com/TCEP90290
Topanga Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)	facebook.com/TopangaCERT
LA County Fire Department Division 7 (Topanga/Malibu area)	facebook.com/LACountyFIRE7
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)	facebook.com/CaliforniaOES
American Red Cross	facebook.com/redcross
LA County Sheriff's Department (Lost Hills Station)	facebook.com/losthillssheriffsstation
Cal Fire	facebook.com/CALFIRE
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	facebook.com/CDC
US National Weather Service	facebook.com/NWS
Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills	facebook.com/greatshakeout

# 2 PREPAREDNESS

**PREPAREDNESS:**  
The Empowering  
Alternative to Denial



# SECTION 2 – PREPAREDNESS

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## FOUR STEPS TO GENERAL PREPAREDNESS

Preparing for a disaster is scary and unpleasant. So, many of us don't do it. It's called "disaster denial." Topangans have a responsibility to themselves and their neighbors to be prepared for the many disasters that could happen here. This section provides general information to help you get started.

Before we get into detailed preparedness information for Topanga-specific disasters, here are four things you need to do right now to prepare you and your family for just about anything.

Are you prepared to survive a major earthquake, tsunami, fire, flood, act of terrorism, or other disaster? The time to start thinking about what to do in an emergency is before it happens.

The County of Los Angeles and each city in the County maintain formal disaster plans designed to coordinate emergency services provided by county, state, federal, and volunteer agencies. While every effort will be made to preserve basic services to all residents of the County, survival during a disaster depends on your individual and family preparedness.



**1. Make Plans**

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**2. Gather and Maintain Supplies**

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**3. Stay Informed**

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**4. Get More Involved**

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## 1. MAKE PLANS

There's no place like home to get started on your plans. First up is a Family Emergency Plan. Your Plan should include every member of your household. If you have kids in school, take a look at the school safety preparedness suggestions. If you have animals large or small, you need separate plans for the critters. And if you run a business, you'll need a plan tailored to your specific business needs and location.

### FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

The following questions will help get you thinking about what should go into your family plan:

- **What are the threats in your community?**
- **Have you identified meeting places?**
  - Meeting places should include locations outside your home, outside your neighborhood, and outside of the Canyon.
- **Do you have an out-of-state contact?**
  - Make sure all members of your family are communicating with the same out-of-state contact.
- **Do you know at least two ways to leave the area from your home?**
  - Do you know your Zone? See page 84 for more on evacuating according to Zone.
- **Do you know how to shut off your utilities?**
- **If applicable, do you know the emergency policies of your schools, day care centers, or adult care centers?**
- **Have you identified safe spots in each room of your house where you can take cover, if needed?**
- **Have you assembled your Disaster Supply Kit (see page 21)?**
- **Have you reviewed your insurance policies?**
  - Do you have adequate homeowner's coverage? Will your policy cover the cost of repairing or rebuilding at today's standards and costs?
  - Does your insurance policy cover "replacement" value for your belongings?
  - Have you taken pictures, videos, and created inventory lists (with purchase receipts and/or replacement costs) of your belongings?
  - Knowing your home and belongings are insured makes the decision to evacuate easier. Most of your stuff can be replaced. The stuff that can't should be part of your evacuation plan or protected in some other way.
- **Do you practice your family plan at least twice a year?**
  - It is a good idea to hold fire drills and earthquake drills with your family to practice how you would react to a sudden emergency.



## Include Everyone in Your Household

Make sure your Family Emergency Plan includes the needs of all members of your household. Also, think about how you can help your neighbors and canyon visitors. Consider forming a TCEP Neighborhood Network to get all of your immediate neighbors on the same preparedness page, and especially to help those who may have special needs in times of emergency. See page 26 for more on Neighborhood Networks.

### People who may need extra time or assistance include:

- The elderly
- Pregnant women or parents with newborns
- Small children
- Non-English-speaking individuals
- People with physical or emotional disabilities
- People with special dietary needs
- Casual, part-time, or temporary workers
- Stay-at-home individuals or individuals confined to their homes
- Post-surgery patients
- Individuals with no access to transportation

## EMBRACE YOUR WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD WHEN MAKING PLANS

Include people with mobility and other limitations, including seniors and children.

Everyone might not be able to do everything, but there is a job for everyone.

- Older children can sit with anxious animals and younger children to help them stay calm.
- Encourage neighbors to choose their emergency roles based on their own limitations and comfort levels.
- Match skills and hobbies with jobs that need to get done, such as caring for others or translating.
- Don't forget to include people with limited English language skills.
- The plan needs to be understandable and appropriate for the people in the neighborhood.

## Create a Home Fire Escape Plan

- Sit down with your family and design a step-by-step plan for escaping from your home during a fire or other emergency.
- Draw a diagram of your home and plan two ways out of every room, especially the bedrooms. See page 100 for more information.
- Show everyone how to unlock all locks and open all windows and doors quickly.
- If you have safety bars on your windows, practice removing them quickly, or replace them with bars that have built-in releases.
- If you must escape from a second-story window, be sure you have a safe way to reach the ground, such as a rope or folding ladder. Make special arrangements for small children and people with disabilities.

## SCHOOL SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS PLAN

If you have children attending school, it's important to get a copy of the school's disaster plan and include it in your Family Emergency Plan. Your school's plan should answer the following questions:

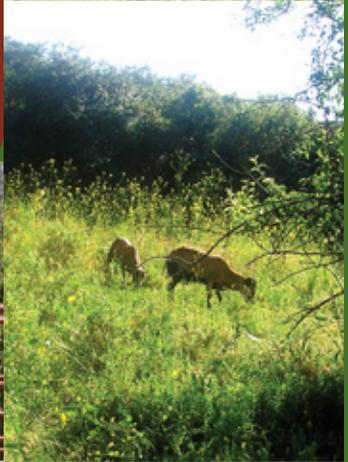
YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will my child be sheltered in place during a wildland fire or other emergency?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If so, do I know what precautions my school has taken to ensure my child's safety?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the school maintain a parent-provided disaster supply kit for my child?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If so, have I recently updated its contents?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the school have adequate emergency supplies on hand to care for my child?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will I be able to pick up my child, or send someone else to pick up my child?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will my child be evacuated?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If so, do I know to what location my child might be evacuated?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If my child needs special medications, can a short-term supply of these medications be kept at the school nurse's office for use during an emergency?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your child's emergency contact information up-to-date?

These questions also apply to anyone who is responsible for caring for your child or any other member of your household, such as babysitters, in-home health care providers, tutors, and counselors.





Remember  
Your Pets



## ANIMAL PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Topangans are passionate about their pets! Your animal loved ones depend on you for their safety and well-being, so when planning for possible crises, it helps to think of your pets as small children. In a wildfire or other emergency, there are unfamiliar smells, panicked humans (not you, of course, because you're prepared), and scenes of chaos. Pets may quickly become stressed, have difficulty breathing, overheat, or behave erratically.

**Be their best friend—have a special plan just for them!**

### County Department of Animal Care and Control Equine Response Team (ERT)

The ERT is a County-wide volunteer organization that originated in the Topanga/Malibu area after the 1993 Old Canyon fire. The ERT's purpose is to assist with the safe evacuation of horses and livestock during large- and small-scale disasters. Team members must complete from 10 to 50 hours of training, which includes fire safety, first aid, horse handling, and tow vehicle classes. The group also works to educate horse owners on disaster preparedness.

#### RESOURCE:

ERT Coordinating Officer Contact: (661) 575-2805; [www.animalcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.animalcare.lacounty.gov); [ert@animalcare.lacounty.gov](mailto:ert@animalcare.lacounty.gov)  
29525 Agoura Rd., Agoura, CA 93012

### Small Pets and Service Animals

Whether you are away from home for a day or a week, you'll need essential pet supplies. Keep items in an accessible place, or store them in sturdy containers that can be carried easily (such as duffel bags or covered trash containers).

#### Your pet disaster supply kit should include:

- Medications and medical records (stored in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit. It's recommended that you keep a one-month supply of pet medications on hand.
- Leashes, harnesses, and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape. (Pets are not allowed at Public Safe Refuges unless they are restrained. See page 86.)
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter and pan, and can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable.

### CHIP YOUR PETS

Los Angeles County law requires dogs to be microchipped. It can save your pet's life if you are separated in an emergency.



## ANIMALS OTHER THAN CATS AND DOGS

### Know Where You Can Take Your Pets Safely if You Must Evacuate the Canyon

- Make a list of hotels and motels outside your immediate area that accept pets. Note any restrictions on number of animals, size, and species.
- Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area if they can shelter your animals.
- If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable if kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.
- Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who can shelter animals in an emergency (include 24-hour phone numbers).

### Pet Identification Is Critical During Chaotic Times and When You're Away from Home

- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars with securely fastened current identification.
- Attach the phone number and address of your temporary shelter, if you know it, or of a friend or relative outside the disaster area.
- You can buy temporary tags or put adhesive tape on the back of your pet's ID tag, adding information with an indelible pen.
- Talk to your vet about microchipping your dogs.



**Birds** should be transported in a secure travel cage with a blanket for cold weather or a plant mister for hot weather. Give them some fruits and vegetables with high water content. Bring extra cage liners and change them frequently. Have leg bands on your birds and keep a photo in your wallet.



**Snakes** can be transported in a pillowcase but must be transferred to more secure housing when you reach the evacuation site. Take a water bowl large enough for soaking and a heat source. Bring food if they need to eat often. When transporting HOUSE LIZARDS, follow the instructions for birds.



**Small Mammals (Rabbits, Hamsters, Gerbils, etc.) and Chickens** should be transported in secure carriers suitable for the animals to live in while they are being sheltered. Take bedding materials, cage liners, food bowls, and water bottles.



**Fish** should be transported in a shatterproof container with a lid, such as an insulated ice chest. Fill only 1/2 to 3/4 full of water and avoid overcrowding. Take food and any equipment needed to keep the water circulated, oxygenated, heated, and cleaned as necessary.



## EVACUATE LARGE ANIMALS EARLY!

Leave the canyon as soon as you hear an Evacuation Warning (or before)—do not wait for an Evacuation Order (see page 51 for definitions).

DO NOT turn your horses loose! Although your instinct may be to let your animals loose, they are safer in their corrals. Loose horses can pose a life-threatening danger to themselves, the public and to emergency responders. In the 1993 Old Topanga fire, the only horse fatality was a horse that was turned loose.

During an emergency, call the TCEP Hotline at (310) 455-3000 for updated information on where to take evacuated horses.

## HORSES AND OTHER LARGE LIVESTOCK

Living and owning horses in Topanga has its special challenges, particularly when it comes to emergency preparedness. It is every horse owner's responsibility to have a Large Animal Emergency Plan in place.

- Plan ahead with your neighbors to help ensure that animals get out early or can safely shelter in place, if necessary.
- Have a halter and rope readily available for each horse. Make sure halters are marked/engraved with your contact information.
- Take photographs and prepare a written description of each horse including vaccination and medical information.
- Microchip your horses. This is an effective way to identify ALL of your animals.
- Keep trucks and trailers well-maintained and ready to move. A broken-down horse trailer could block a road.
- Make sure your gas tank is at least 1/2 full, particularly during Red Flag days.
- Plan NOW for horse and livestock emergency sheltering. Make plans with a friend, commercial stable, or other suitable facility outside of Topanga where you can take your animals if you must evacuate.
- If your horse is not trained to load into a trailer easily or safely, you must work in advance to make your stable area as safe as possible to shelter in place. This also applies to livestock such as cattle, llamas, and pigs. If sheltering your animals in place is your only option:
  - Make sure there is adequate clearance by removing hay and brush from the corral or pen environment.
  - Provide sufficient food and water for at least 3 days.
  - Suggested water supply is 20 to 30 gallons per animal, per day.

### Assemble an Animal Disaster Supply Kit

Store non-perishable supplies in a portable container such as a trash can or duffle bag. At a minimum, your kit should include:

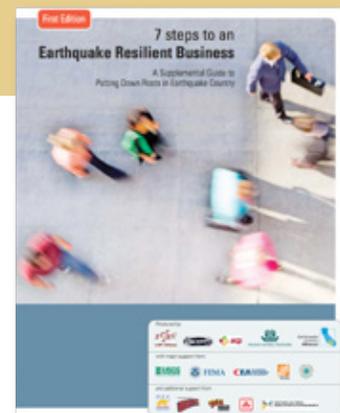
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feed/feed buckets                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photo identification/information for each animal | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit with leg wraps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Duct tape                    |

## BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Running a business in Topanga requires a heightened level of preparation compared to a business in Encino, for example. Having a well-thought-out and up-to-date emergency plan for your Topanga business can make a big difference in your ability to recover after a disaster. Here are some steps to get you started:

ACTION STEPS	EXAMPLES	
1. Recognize potential hazards and how they can impact your business operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthquake</li> <li>• Power outage</li> <li>• Water damage</li> <li>• Security risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire</li> <li>• Flood</li> <li>• Theft</li> </ul>
2. Prepare a disaster and continuity plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency contact list</li> <li>• Vital records</li> <li>• Alternate work locations</li> <li>• Register your phone number(s) with AlertLA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key contacts</li> <li>• Know your Zone number</li> <li>• Critical equipment</li> </ul>
3. Stockpile supplies and encourage employees to keep emergency supplies at work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• First Aid</li> <li>• Communications tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Hygiene and sanitation</li> </ul>
4. Identify steps you can take to mitigate potential building damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to building owner</li> <li>• Consult Fire Marshal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request safety inspections</li> </ul>
5. Practice Drop, Cover and Hold On!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under desk or table</li> <li>• Stay low</li> <li>• Hold on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away from windows</li> <li>• Cover your head</li> </ul>
6. Once the danger has passed, first check for injured people, then look for serious damages to your building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address life safety issues</li> <li>• Address internal building safety</li> <li>• Perform more detailed building assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address outer building safety</li> <li>• Have a meeting place</li> </ul>
7. Use plan to resume business operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a detailed assessment of your vulnerability to hazards</li> <li>• Communicate with employees and customers about your plan</li> <li>• Find the resources you need to recover in your community</li> <li>• Refine your disaster plan with best practices</li> </ul>	

**RESOURCE:** For earthquake-specific preparedness tips, download the publication "7 Steps to an Earthquake Resilient Business" at [www.earthquakecountry.info/roots](http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots).



## 2. GATHER AND MAINTAIN EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

A Disaster Supply Kit is any pre-assembled group of items that will improve the health and safety of your family during a disaster. Kits can be purchased or homemade. They can be as small as a shaving kit for your car glove box or as big as a 50-gallon drum for your business.

In general, kits should be easy to carry and as lightweight as possible. You can have many kits, each suited to a different purpose or kept in a different location (home, work, car, school). Here's a suggested list of essential emergency supplies for your kits:

- Water—1 gallon per person per day (absolute minimum—more is better)
- Human and pet food (assuming you have pets) for 10-14 days
- First aid kit with basic first aid instructions
- Flashlights with extra batteries
- AM/FM radio with extra batteries (remember—your car has a radio)
- FRS (Family Radio Service) walkie-talkies for each family member
- Prescription and non-prescription medications and eye glasses
- Cash and important documents (small bills and coins, birth certificates, tax returns, deeds, titles, insurance papers, medical cards)
- Extra clothing (appropriate for the current season) and sturdy shoes
- Goggles, N-95-rated dust masks
- Tools (wrench, duct tape, fire extinguisher, sturdy gloves, whistle)
- Sanitation and hygiene supplies

### BUILD A 10-DAY KIT

Topanga is vulnerable to many types of disasters, and emergency access could be delayed for a long time. Residents are encouraged to be self-sufficient and store at least 10 days (preferably more) of supplies, particularly water, food, and medicine.



### PERSONALIZE YOUR KIT

Store-bought kits are fine, but you may have to live off this kit for a while, so include personal items that will make you and your family members as comfortable and self-sufficient as possible.

In addition to your own comfort items, here are a few more things to consider keeping on hand:

- Camping stove, fuel, pots and pans, aluminum foil, paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- Emergency blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra set of car, home, and safe deposit box keys
- Portable toilet, toilet paper, and plastic bags for human waste
- Compass
- Pens, pencils, and paper tablets
- Toys, crayons, and books to keep children busy

If you already have one or more kits, check and update them at least annually. Consider keeping a kit at home, in each car, and at work. You never know where you'll be when disaster strikes.

### 3. STAY INFORMED

During and after disasters, communication is king. If you suspect something is wrong but don't have any details, it's easier to panic and make bad decisions. Since communication can be unreliable in a disaster, try to have several ways to get updated information as part of your Family Emergency Plan. Some alerts may come to you automatically from County authorities. But you need to figure out where and how to get continuously updated information for yourself.

Here are some of the ways you can get important emergency information:

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#### EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS)

For emergency events and conditions of widespread concern, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department will broadcast a message on radio and television stations. This message will interrupt programming and you'll hear a voice message and see text on TV.

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#### INTEGRATED PUBLIC ALERT AND WARNING SYSTEM (IPAWS)

During an emergency, officials can provide the public with life-saving information quickly through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

Alerts are sent to mobile phones that have Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) capabilities built in. Most major mobile service providers sell WEA-capable phones with the service already opted in, so you don't have to activate or sign up for anything. But not all cell phones have WEA. Check with your carrier to see if your phone has the technology.

Alerts come through like text messages, but they are sent using a different kind of technology that allows them to be delivered even if mobile networks are congested or overloaded. They do not trigger text message charges for the user.

There are three types of IPAWS alerts:

- Presidential Alerts. Special alerts issued by the president.
- Imminent Threat Alerts. These include severe man-made or natural disasters, such as hurricanes or earthquakes, where an imminent threat to life or property exists.
- AMBER Alerts. These alerts are based on the US Department of Justice's criteria to help law enforcement search for and locate an abducted child.

One big advantage of IPAWS is the ability to deliver alerts only to phones located within a specific geographic area. The system does not track or locate your phone or personal data. It simply broadcasts to all phones that are connected to cell towers within the designated area. So, if you have relatives visiting from New York, and a wildfire strikes Topanga, they will get the IPAWS alerts on their New York-based phones (assuming they are WEA-capable) because their phones are in Topanga.

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#### ALERT LA COUNTY

Alert LA County is a Community Mass Notification System that will be used in emergencies to contact County residents and businesses by recorded phone messages, text messages, and e-mail. Landline phones are automatically in the system. To also register your cell phone, voice-over-IP phone number, and e-mail address, go to [www.alert.lacounty.gov](http://www.alert.lacounty.gov).

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#### TCEP HOTLINE AND EMERGENCY STATUS WEB PAGE

The Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP) staffs an all-volunteer Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during major emergency events. The purpose of TCEP is to gather, verify, and push out critical information to the community. If TCEP has activated its EOC, you can get updated information by calling the TCEP Hotline at (310) 455-3000, by visiting [www.tcep.org/emergencystatus](http://www.tcep.org/emergencystatus), and by monitoring @TCEP90290 on Twitter.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter is a powerful way to get real-time information about a major incident. Even if you have no use for Twitter in your day-to-day life, it should be part of your emergency communication plan because so much information flows through Twitter continually, especially in a disaster. Set up a Twitter account, and learn how to log on from your computer and smartphone. Follow TCEP (@TCEP90290), County first responders, and local news outlets to see real-time updates.

The TCEP Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/TCEP90290](http://www.facebook.com/TCEP90290)) is a good place to view emergency preparedness information, and then share and comment on the posts. So follow TCEP. But don't rely on Facebook for real-time updates during emergencies. Twitter is a much better tool.

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## BROADCAST TV AND RADIO

Listen to radio and watch TV broadcast stations for regional emergency alert information in the Los Angeles County area. Many TV stations interrupt regular programming to provide ongoing coverage during disasters. Because power failures are likely in an emergency, keep at least one battery-powered radio in your disaster supply kit. A small battery-powered TV with a rabbit ear antenna might be a good idea. Don't forget to use your car radio.

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## MOBILE APPS

There are many smartphone apps designed to help you manage disasters. The Federal Emergency Management Agency ([www.fema.gov/smartphone-app](http://www.fema.gov/smartphone-app)) and the American Red Cross ([www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps)) offer free apps for the major mobile platforms that provide disaster safety tips, emergency kit lists, emergency meeting location information, along with shelter locations, FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs), and more.

Go online and search for "how to turn your smartphone into an emergency kit" to find lists of apps. Many are free. Research their capabilities and read reviews. Download the apps that look good to you, and then practice using them.

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## TEXT/EMAIL MESSAGES

LA County Fire Department can send you a text message in the event of a major wildfire in the Santa Monica Mountains affecting Topanga. Text the word EVACUATION to 888-777 to subscribe to this service. Normal text message rates apply.

Many first responder agencies, such as Los Angeles County Fire, Los Angeles County Sheriff, California Highway Patrol, Los Angeles Police Department, Malibu Emergency Services, and others, use an alert publishing system called Nixle to push out SMS messages and emails to subscribers in specific geographic areas. It's free to sign up. Once you set up your account, you can choose which agencies to receive alerts from and how those alerts get delivered. Go to [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) to set up your custom alerts.

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## WEBSITES

As long as you've got Internet service, the Internet is an endless source of information. It's a great place to dig deeper into emergency preparation tips and resources. Bookmark a selection of emergency-related websites on your computer and smartphone and visit them often for updated information

**RESOURCE:** We've got you covered with a list of emergency-related websites. See page 7.

In a total communication breakdown, you'll be glad you can fire up your ham radio and find out what's going on.



## HAM RADIOS

If landline phones, cell phones, TV, cable, and Internet communications go down for an extended period of time (and rural, isolated Topanga is quite vulnerable to that kind of total communications collapse), ham radio may be the only way to communicate, other than shouting across your backyard fence at your neighbor. You need to pass a test to get a ham license from the FCC, and then purchase and learn how to use a radio. But don't worry, it's not hard to pass the test. Scores of Topangans from age 10 on up have gotten their license and use their radios regularly. And small, handheld ham radios can be purchased for under \$100.

The big advantage of ham radios is their range. You can talk to other hams across most of Topanga. And depending on signal strength and other factors, you can potentially listen to and talk to hams across the greater Los Angeles area.

The Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP) operates a Disaster Radio Team (DRT) dedicated to keeping Topangans informed during disasters. DRT members are ham vets and they are more than happy to help newbies get licensed, assist with radio programming and generally teach new hams which buttons to push so you can make the most of your new ham communication skills.

### RESOURCES:

- To learn more about the benefits of becoming a ham, email the friendly folks at TCEP's DRT: [drt@tcep.org](mailto:drt@tcep.org)
- Affordable one-day ham classes and FCC license testing are scheduled regularly throughout the year. Check the latest schedule at [www.qualitymatrix.com/hamclass](http://www.qualitymatrix.com/hamclass).
- Los Angeles County Disaster Communications Service (DCS) works with ham operators throughout the County to provide reliable emergency communications. To learn more about DCS, contact the Lost Hills Sheriff's Station at (818) 878-1808.
- Everything you always wanted to know about ham radios plus a lot of radio-related stuff you can't even imagine can be found at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org).

## FRS RADIOS

While ham radios require a license from the FCC and some training on proper usage, FRS radios can be used by anyone. No license or training required. FRS stands for Family Radio Service, and these two-way, walkie-talkie type radios are great for communicating with neighbors and family members who are nearby (usually within one to two miles).

If landlines and cell phones go out in a disaster, FRS two-way radios can be used to receive and broadcast critical information, like road closures, evacuation orders, and progress and position of nearby wildfires. Here's a quick primer on these handy radios.

## Buying FRS Radios

Look for radios with at least 14 channels. Some will claim ranges up to 5 miles, but that's not realistic in Topanga. FRS radios work best in a "line of sight" environment. A small change in your location (like moving to higher ground) may help your reception.

## Using FRS Radios

- When Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness activates its Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the Disaster Radio Team (DRT) will broadcast emergency updates at the top of each hour on FRS channel 7. These top-of-the-hour reports will last approximately five minutes. LISTEN ONLY. NEVER talk on channel 7.
  - The reports provide updated information about the emergency, including road closures, school closures, evacuation orders, and more.
  - TCEP will make every effort to broadcast these reports at the top of each hour, but circumstances could cause a delay. Please be patient when tuning in to listen these FRS reports.
- When the top-of-the-hour report is finished, tune your radio to the assigned channel for your area. See page 96 for assigned FRS channels by street name.
  - If you are part of a TCEP Neighborhood Network, LISTEN for your Neighborhood Network coordinator to ask for check-ins. He or she may repeat the top-of-the-hour report and then ask for specific people to check-in. Wait your turn before speaking. If more than one person tries to talk at once, nobody will be heard.
- Turn off all sub-channel codes, privacy filters, and tones, all of which can hamper your ability to monitor broadcasts in an emergency.
- Do not use the call button—it may cause interference when communicating in a group.
- Have extra batteries. Talking (transmitting) will use up batteries quickly. Listening uses less battery power. So listen more and talk only when necessary.

## More FRS Tips

TCEP's DRT broadcasts a test of the top-of-the-hour report on FRS Channel 7 quarterly. Email [drt@tcep.org](mailto:drt@tcep.org) for the most current top-of-the-hour test schedule. FRS channel 7 is always LISTEN ONLY. This is your opportunity to locate where you need to be on your property to hear the report. Figure this out before a disaster strikes.

You should also practice communicating with your neighbors to learn who can hear you and who can't. Do this neighborhood practice on your area's assigned FRS channel. See page 96 for your channel. When you want to talk, press the transmit button, wait one second, then speak. If you start talking at the same time you push the transmit button, the first part of your message will be cut off. Never push the transmit button if someone else is talking on the channel or you will cut them off. Hold the radio about an inch from your mouth and angle the radio slightly so that you talk across the microphone, not directly into it.

To start transmitting when there is no voice traffic on the channel, say something like: "Calling any station, this is (your name)." Wait to be recognized before continuing.

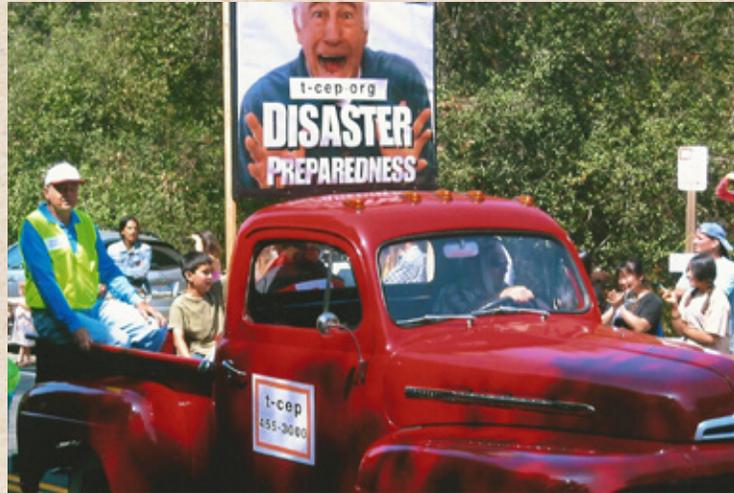
## PRACTICE YOUR FRS CHOPS

Learn how to use your radio and practice regularly. During a disaster, you don't want to be fumbling with buttons trying to get the radio to work.

## 4. GET EDUCATED. GET INVOLVED.

The serenity and solitude of Topanga can lull you into complacency when it comes to the inherent disaster dangers. But choosing to live here comes with unique responsibilities you wouldn't have in urban areas. Your awareness of your environment and how quickly it could turn deadly must be at a much higher level.

One of the best ways to get better educated about the unique special emergency preparedness requirements of living in Topanga is to volunteer.



## VOLUNTEER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Topanga is such a wonderful, tight-knit community, and people love to share their knowledge and experiences with others by volunteering.

See page 76 (other Topanga Organizations) for descriptions and contact information for these vital Topanga volunteer organizations. You can also find a list of volunteer organizations at [OneTopanga.com](http://OneTopanga.com).

## TCEP NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness's Neighborhood Network program helps neighbors form an organized alliance so they can share contact information, alert each other to any problems, and help out after a disaster. Getting to know your neighbors and making sure you "have each other's backs" is a good feeling.

For more information on starting a TCEP Neighborhood Network in your area, see page 78, or send an email to [nn@tcep.org](mailto:nn@tcep.org).



## ARSON WATCH

Arson Watch is a volunteer program of the Malibu–Lost Hills Sheriff's station whose goal is to prevent wildfires in the Santa Monica Mountains. On high fire danger days, volunteers patrol the area looking for signs of fires, fire hazards, and suspicious, dangerous, or careless activities that might start a fire. Patrols are by car, horseback, bicycle, and foot. Members communicate by two-way radio.



## TAKE CERT TRAINING—IT'S FREE!

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program was developed as a way to get residents trained to be self-sufficient. The program was adopted nationally by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

CERT training provides an overview of specific disaster preparedness and response skills, including multi-casualty triage, basic first aid, light search and rescue, fire suppression, disaster psychology, and team organization.

Topanga has its own CERT team and is always looking for new volunteers. See page 78 for more information.



## LEARN FIRST AID AND CPR

Learning First Aid and CPR can help you be prepared. According to the American Heart Association, most people who experience Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) at home or in public die because they don't receive immediate CPR from someone on the scene. CPR is a simple yet powerful technique that everyone should know how to perform. It only takes a few minutes to learn. The latest technique is "Hands-Only" CPR, which eliminates mouth-to-mouth contact with the victim.

If someone suddenly collapses, call 911 or have someone close by make the call. If the person is unresponsive, start hard compressions in the center of the chest just below the breastbone. Push to the beat of the classic disco song "Stayin' Alive." Keep this up until help arrives. Performing CPR in this way can more than double a person's chances of survival.

## PulsePoint

### CROWD SOURCING GOOD SAMARITANS

The LA County Fire Department has linked its dispatch system to a mobile app called PulsePoint that will notify CPR-trained citizens when someone in a public space near them is having a cardiac arrest. With this app on your phone, you can become a first responder and possibly save lives by starting hands-only CPR before EMTs arrive on the scene. Visit [www.pulsepoint.org](http://www.pulsepoint.org) for details.

### RESOURCES:

- Visit the American Heart Association website at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) and search for "CPR."
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a comprehensive emergency preparedness website at [www.ready.org](http://www.ready.org). Download the general guide to citizen preparedness titled "Are You Ready?".
- The American Red Cross offers training courses with and without certification. Visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).





**READY  
SET  
GO!**



**Topanga Evacuation** 



## WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

Wildfire is probably the greatest risk to life in Topanga. Fires can be dangerous here because of seasonal winds, rugged terrain, heavy vegetation growth, many older combustible homes clustered together, and narrow roads.

Because of the unique challenges this community faces when a wildfire occurs, Topanga has been divided into nine Tactical Zones to assist emergency responders in issuing targeted evacuation orders based on fire size and direction. Please refer to the Zone Maps starting on page 84. Additional information about Zones can be found on page 82.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department's Personal Wildfire Action Plan called "READY! SET! GO!" offers tips and tools to help you prepare for and survive a wildfire. This section contains highlights of the program. Download the full booklet at [www.fire.lacounty.gov](http://www.fire.lacounty.gov).



### WHAT'S A WUI?

WUI stands for Wildland Urban Intermix, which is a geographical area where homes are intermixed within and around wildland vegetation, as in Topanga. It also stands for Wildland Urban Interface, which is a developed area of homes and structures that come right up against wildland vegetation, usually with a clear delineation at the interface. See the glossary on page 108 for more information.

## CREATE A DEFENSIBLE HOME

Although wildfires can ignite at any time of the year, there are certain times when Topanga is more susceptible to fires that can quickly spread out of control. These "fire season" conditions generally exist between September and December, when the potent combination of dry brush, strong Santa Ana winds, and relatively low humidity is more common. But in the Santa Monica Mountains, these conditions can crop up almost any time of year.

Thousands of homes in Topanga and the surrounding mountain areas are in serious danger of destruction by fire because they are in the Wildland Urban Intermix, or WUI. But there are steps homeowners can take to reduce the chance of home ignition, including home hardening and creating defensible space through proper brush clearance.

### Hardening Your Home

Wildfire behavior is influenced by five main factors:

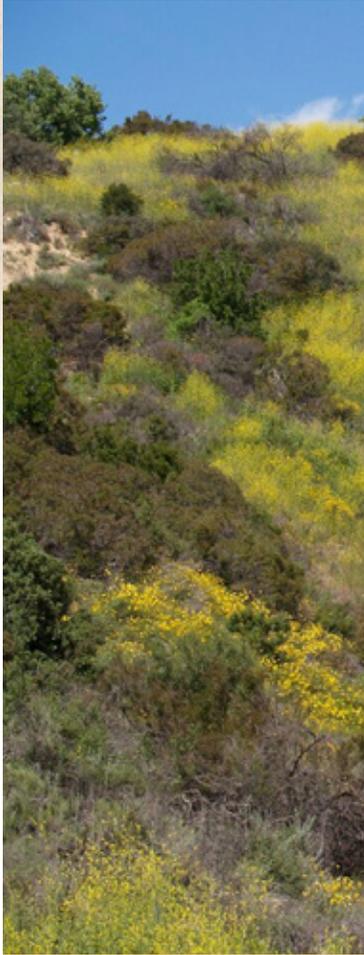
- Topography
- Weather
- Fuel
- Vegetation
- Structure

The one factor we can control all year-round is fuel. Remove fuel and you decrease the chance of your home igniting from a wildfire. Research shows that in wildfires, most houses ignite and burn from flying embers or "firebrands" that sail through the air ahead of the fire. These embers fall to the ground or collect under eaves, and ignite flammable materials, such as leaves or dry vegetation which can spread to the home itself. This can happen in as little as 30 to 45 seconds.

Fire science demonstrates the need to manage your "home ignition zone" (your home and up to 200 feet around it). Hardening your home raises its defensibility out to about 30 feet. Brush clearance will take care of the rest and is discussed in the next section.

## Other Tips and Considerations

- Prune trees and vegetation away from the house. Ideally, you don't want tree limbs touching the structure. Vines growing up walls provide a potential "ladder" where fire climbs from the ground into the home. Trees should be limbed-up so branches are not near the ground.
- Use fire-resistant building materials, such as brick, cement, masonry, or stucco, whenever possible.
- Cover rain gutters to prevent accumulation of pine needles, leaves, and roofing sand runoff. There are many products on the market, from gutter guard screens to fire-resistant foam inserts that seal gutters from debris but allow water to penetrate.
- Keep the area around, under, and over propane tanks clear of tree branches and leaves. Generally, most home propane tanks must be located at least 10 feet from the house.



**RESOURCE:** The North Topanga Canyon Fire Safe Council (NTCFSC) offers free Home Ignition Zone Evaluations, where trained volunteers visit homeowners and offer suggestions to make homes less vulnerable to ember intrusion. More tips and resources can be found at [www.ntcfsc.org](http://www.ntcfsc.org), or email [firesafe@ntcfsc.org](mailto:firesafe@ntcfsc.org).

The vast majority of homes that burn to the ground in a wildfire ignite not from the actual flames, but rather, from flying embers or "firebrands."



## FOUR CRITICAL KEYS FOR WILDFIRE SURVIVAL

1. **KNOW** your Zone. Evacuation orders will be identified by Zone Numbers.
2. **KEEP** your disaster supply kit up-to-date.
3. **COMMUNICATE** with family, neighbors, and authorities, and be ready to evacuate.
4. **EVACUATE** immediately when told to do so.

## WHERE IS THIS HOME VULNERABLE TO EMBER ATTACK?



### Ember Awareness Checklist

Some content was adapted from Be Ember Aware!, UNCE publication #FS-09-05, with permission from University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and the Living With Fire Program.

- 1 Wood Roof**  
Replace wood shake and shingle roofs with fire-resistant types such as composition, metal and tile.
- 2 Roof Openings**  
Plug openings in roof coverings, such as the open ends of barrel tiles, with non-combustible materials.
- 3 Roof Debris**  
Routinely remove plant debris, such as pine needles, leaves, branches and bark, from the roof.
- 4 Skylights**  
Replace plastic skylights with types constructed of double-pane glass. One of the panes should be tempered glass. Close skylights if wildfire is threatening.
- 5 Spark Arrester**  
Install an approved spark arrester on chimneys.
- 6 Windows**  
Replace single-pane, non-tempered glass windows with multiple-pane, tempered-glass types. Close all windows if wildfire is threatening.
- 7 Vents**  
Cover attic, eave and foundation vents with 1/8-inch wire mesh or install new vent types designed to prevent ember entry. If wildfire is threatening, consider covering vent openings with pre-cut plywood or aluminum foil folded several layers thick and stapled.
- 8 Rain Gutters**  
Keep rain gutters free of plant debris during fire season. Consider using rain gutter covers to reduce maintenance.
- 9 Siding**  
Fill gaps in siding and trim materials with a good quality caulk and replace poor condition building materials.
- 10 Woodpiles**  
Move firewood stacks and scrap lumber piles at least 30 feet from the house or other buildings.
- 11 Patio Furniture**  
Place combustible patio furniture, such as lounges, tables and hammocks, inside the house or garage if wildfire is threatening.
- 12 Deck Boards**  
Replace deck boards that are less than one inch thick or that are in poor condition with thicker, good condition boards. Use metal flashing between the deck and the house.
- 13 Deck Debris**  
Remove plant debris from the gaps between deck boards, the gap between the deck and house, and lying on top of the deck.
- 14 Porch and Deck Accessories**  
If wildfire is threatening, remove combustible materials from the porch and deck including newspapers, wicker baskets, door mats, pine cones and dried flower arrangements, and place BBQ propane tanks indoors.
- 15 Under the Deck**  
Remove plant debris, wood piles and other easily ignited materials from under decks. Consider enclosing the open sides of the deck with siding materials that are properly vented or 1/8-inch wire mesh to reduce maintenance and deter ember entry. Do not use wooden lattice to enclose decks.
- 16 Flowerboxes**  
Remove wooden flowerboxes from beneath windows if wildfire is threatening.
- 17 Eaves**  
Cover open eaves with sheathing, such as plywood or fiber-cement board. Use tongue and groove joints or other intricate joint types and don't use butt joints.
- 18 Flowerbeds**  
Replace wood mulches with noncombustible types and remove plant debris, including dried grass and flowers, dead leaves and dead branches from flowerbeds next to the house, other buildings and next to wooden fences. Replace ornamental junipers with low-growing deciduous shrubs or flowers under irrigation.
- 19 Vehicles**  
Close vehicle windows. Back into the garage and close the garage door or park away from the house.
- 20 Garage Door**  
Adjust garage doors to achieve as tight a fit as possible with the door frame. Consider using trim around the garage door opening to reduce the size of gap openings. Close the garage door if wildfire is threatening.
- 21 Garbage Cans and Recycling Bins**  
Use garbage cans covered with tight fitting lids near the house or other buildings. Move newspaper recycling bins indoors.
- 22 Wooden Fences**  
Maintain wooden fences in good condition and create a noncombustible fence section or gate next to the house for at least five feet.



This house was ignited by burning embers landing on vulnerable spots. Notice the adjacent forest is not burning.

## Defensible Space and Brush Clearance

It is the legal responsibility of property owners to properly clear vegetation up to 200 feet around all structures (or out to your own property line, whichever is less), according to County regulations. If an adjacent structure is within 200 feet of your property line, you may be required to perform brush clearance to provide defensible space for the structure. Defensible space provides firefighters the best opportunity to protect property—both yours and your neighbor's.

Defensible space does NOT mean clear cutting trees and all vegetation in an attempt to create a "moonscape." It means managing shrubs, creating space around plants, limbing-up trees, and clearing dead vegetation.

The Fire Department performs annual brush clearance inspections at the beginning of May. Homeowners can play a role by maintaining year-round defensible space and reporting what you believe to be unsafe conditions. Contact Fire Station 69 at (310) 455-1766 or the Brush Clearance Unit at (626) 969-2375.



### Brush Clearance Requirements for Topanga Canyon Property Owners

The law requires Topanga property owners to keep their properties cleared according to brush clearance guidelines. The County sends out annual brush clearance notices in the mail to remind you of your responsibilities. Brush clearance is a year-round responsibility. Keep your property up to code at all times, because you never know when wildfire will threaten the canyon.

If hazardous fire conditions exist on your property at the time of inspection, you will be issued an Official Inspection Report (OIR) that will indicate any violations, provide specific clearing instructions, and a compliance deadline. **Failure to comply with the OIR issued at the time of the inspection will result in an administrative penalty and an additional special assessment on your annual property tax bill.**

#### **BUT MY PLANTS ARE LUSH AND GREEN!**

All plants will burn under extreme fire weather conditions. Fire-resistant plants burn at a relatively low intensity, with slow rates of spread and shorter flame lengths. Even green plants can harbor highly flammable dead material underneath the pretty foliage.



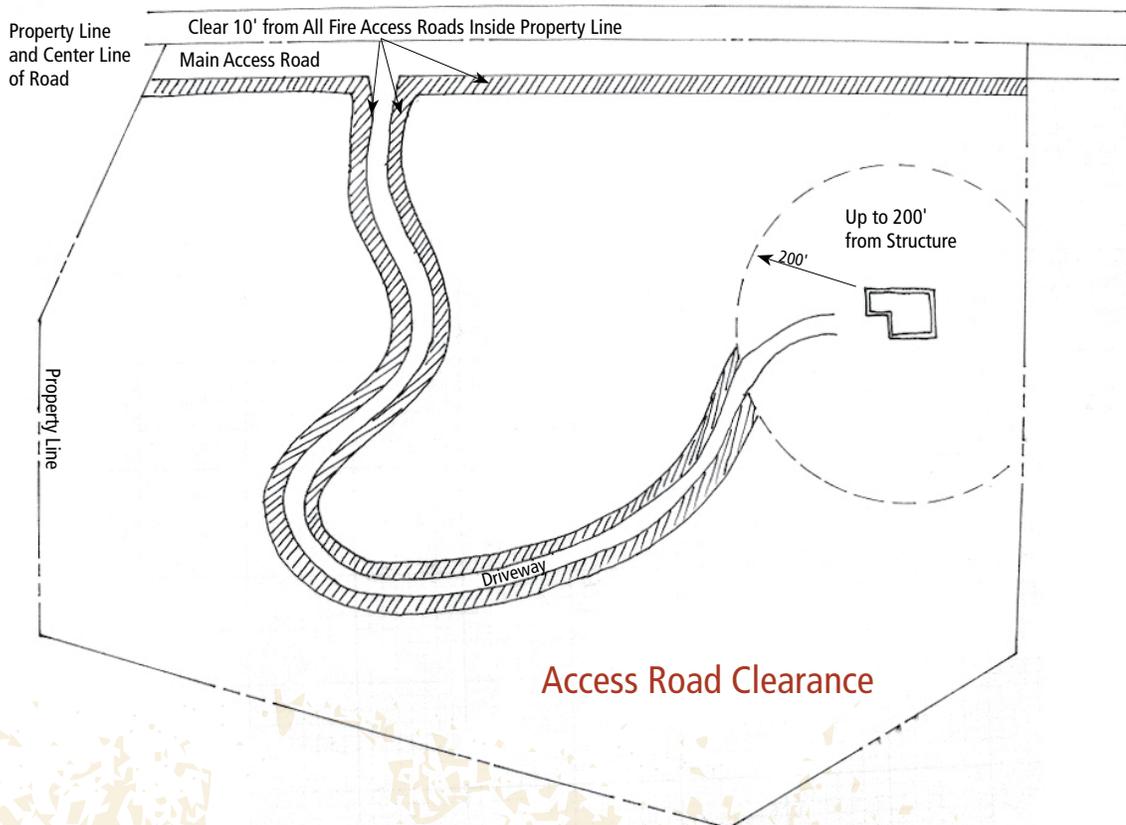
### Here are the guidelines and specific distances you need to follow:

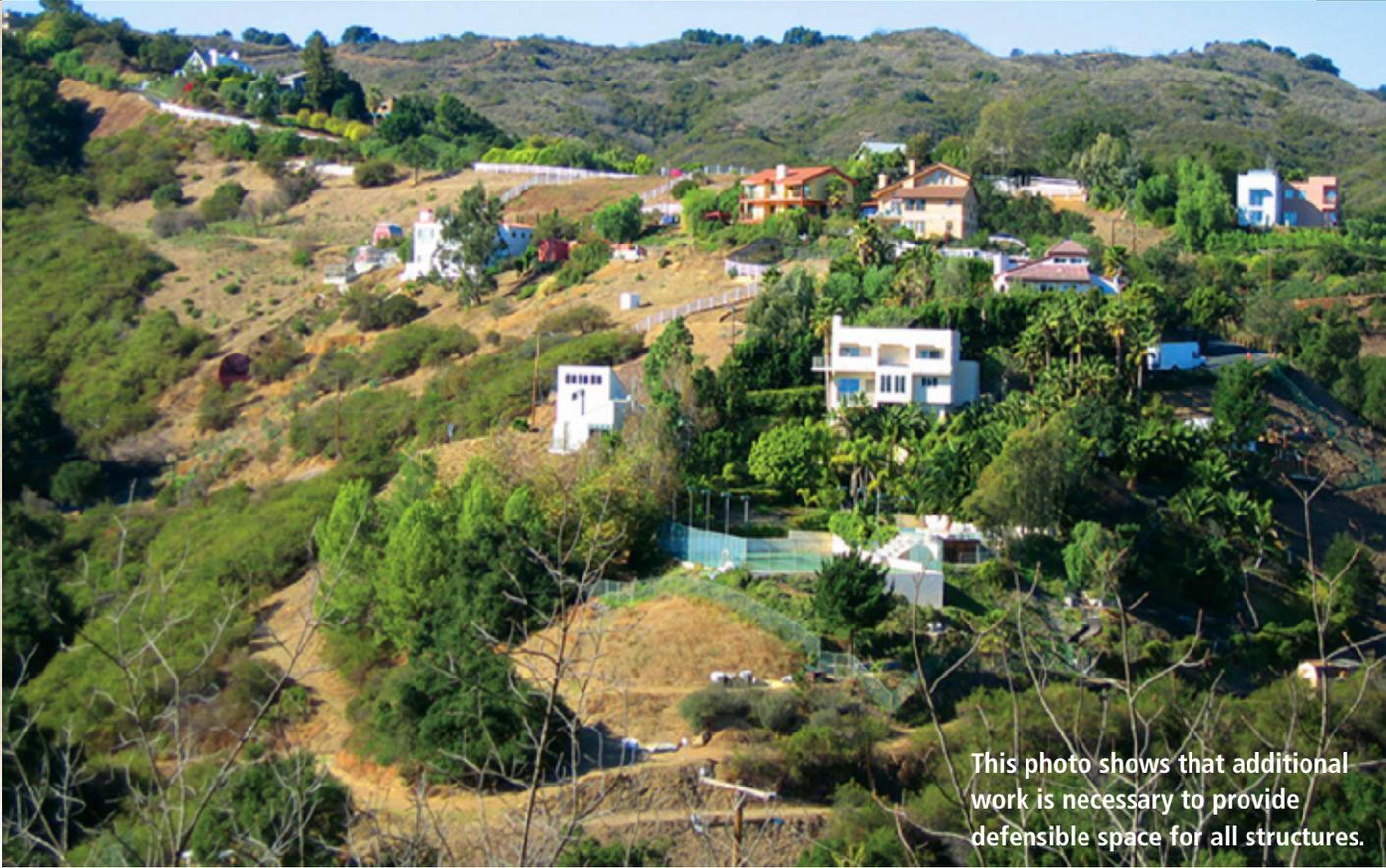
- All flammable vegetation shall be mowed or cut to a stubble height of 3 inches for 50 feet around any structure.
- Create a firebreak for the next 150 feet, for a total of 200 feet (or to your property line), around any structure by clearing, trimming, thinning, cutting back, and removing flammable vegetation.
- Single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or ground covers are permissible, provided they do not form a means of transmitting fire from native growth to the structure. It is recommended that specimens shall be spaced a minimum of 15 feet or 3 times their diameter from other specimens, structures, and surrounding native brush.
- Roads shall be maintained with a minimum of 10 feet of brush clearance on each side, and fire access roads shall have an unobstructed vertical clearance to the sky. Trees overhanging roads shall be maintained to provide adequate vertical clearance.
- Provide a minimum of 3 feet of brush clearance around all fire hydrants, and a minimum of 10 feet around and above all propane tanks. If possible, keep the area above the tank clear to the sky.
- It is strongly recommended that all trees and shrubs be maintained to be free of dead wood and litter. Trees and shrubs may be required to be trimmed up from the ground 1/3 of their height.

### Technical information about brush clearance requirements:

- Clearance distances indicated on the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Official Inspection Report (410B) are measured on a horizontal plane. If a structure sits on a slope, the actual distance down a slope will be longer than the 200 feet typically required for brush clearance. Increasing slopes require longer distances.
- Erosion can be an important consideration, and brush clearance activities will need to be reduced. There should be a balance between fire safety and erosion potential.
- Trees and shrubs should be lollipopped. Dead wood must be removed. If shrubs are removed, the roots should remain in the soil to hold it in place, not grubbed out.
- Some separation of canopies will reduce fire behavior.

**RESOURCE:** For additional information regarding specific clearing requirements, contact your local fire station or the Brush Clearance Unit at (626) 969-2375. Your local fire station also maintains a list of vendors who can be hired for brush clearance work.

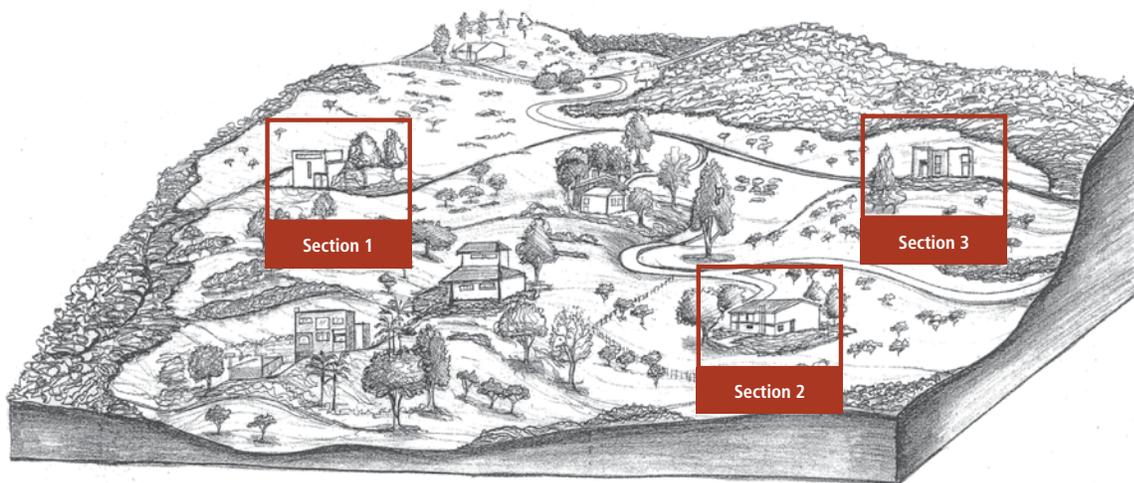




## Fuel Modification Zones

Brush clearance varies depending on steepness of the hill slopes above and below your home, and where your home is situated on the hillside.

The illustration below identifies three different home environments (flagged as Section 1, 2, and 3) common in Topanga. On the following pages you'll find illustrations showing a side view cutaway of each section, along with appropriate brush clearance considerations.

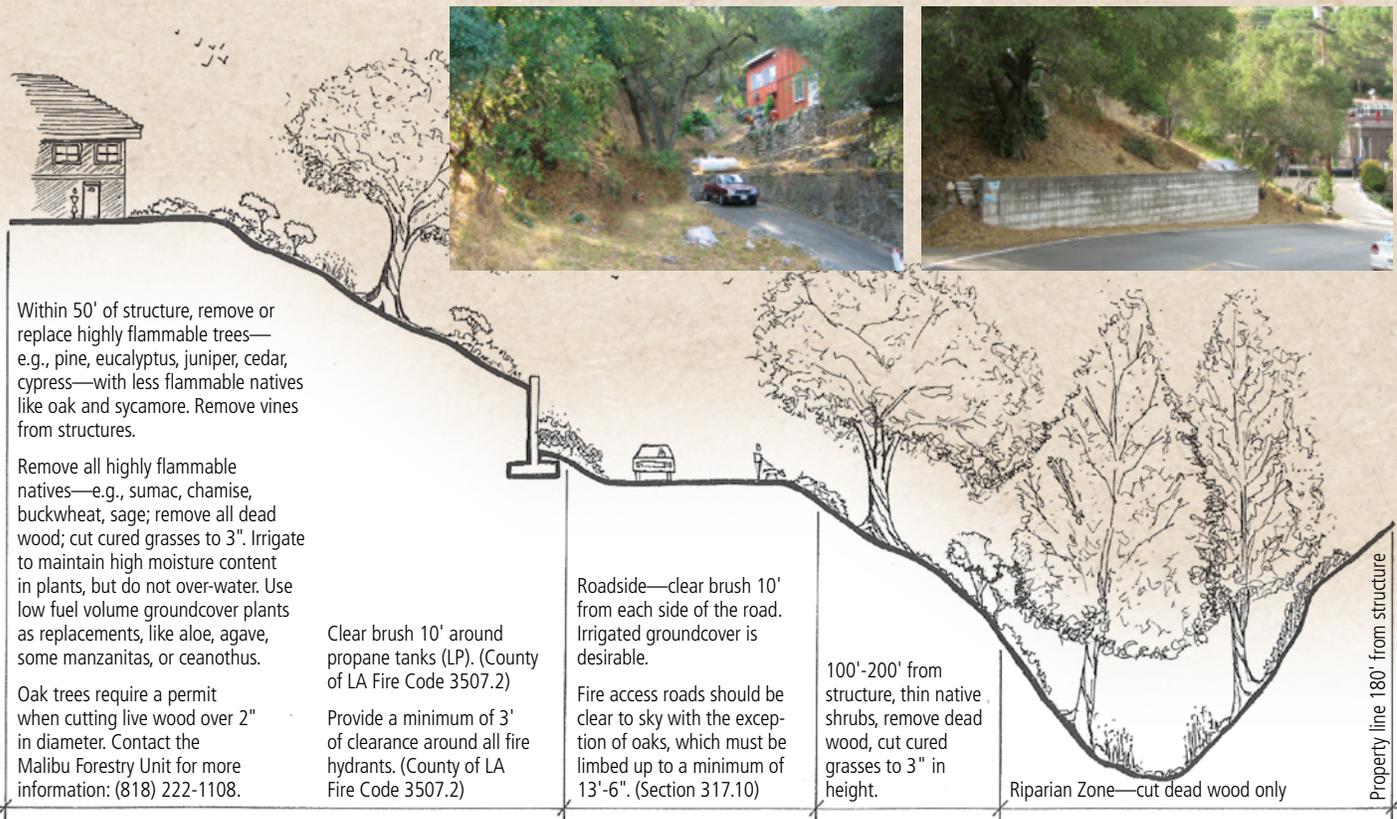


**Section 1:**  
Structure on top of slope with riparian zone below

**Section 2:**  
Structure surrounded by native brush and mild slopes

**Section 3:**  
Structure mid-slope with brush above and below and steep slopes

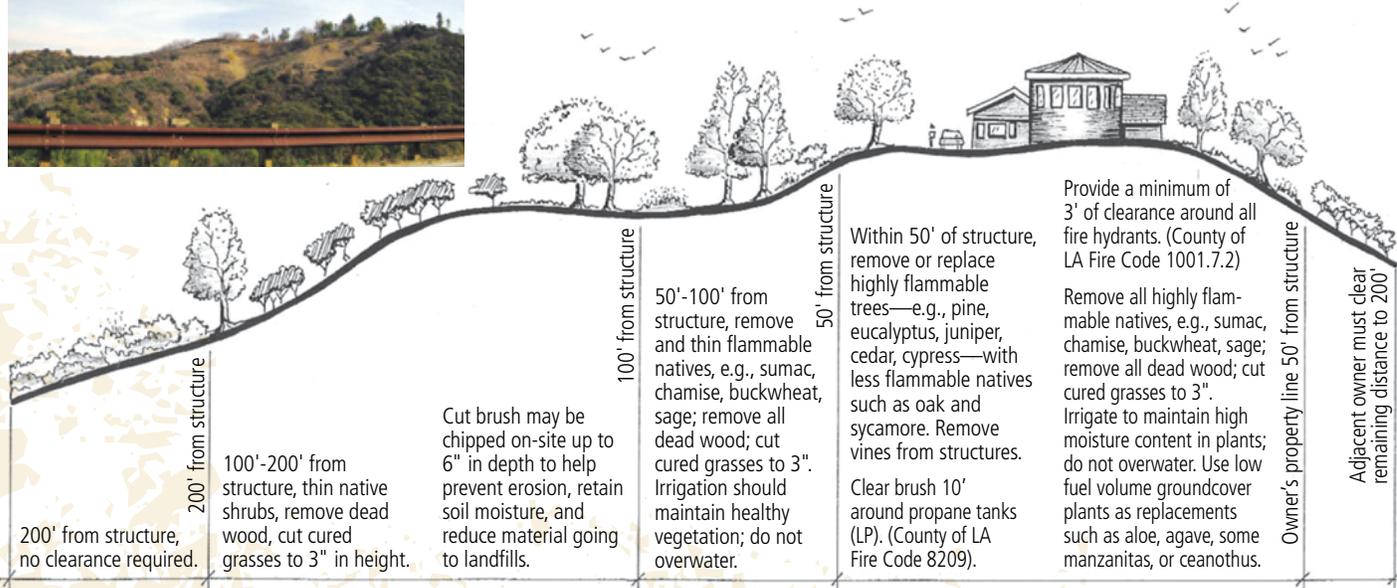
## SECTION #1 Structure at Top of Slope



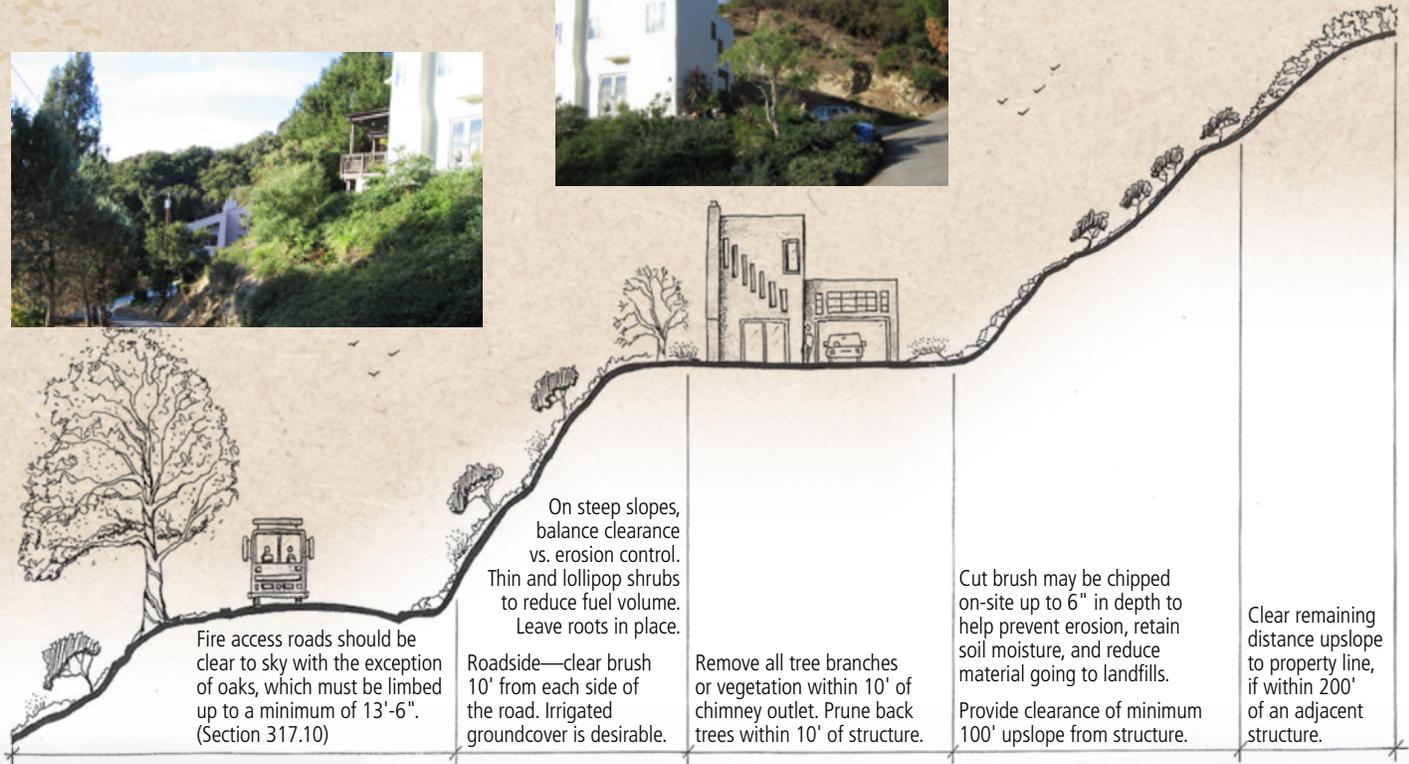
## SECTION #2 Mild Slope with Native Brush



**Neighborhood cooperation is imperative to ensure defensible space for all structures.**



### SECTION #3 Structure at Mid-Slope



## Fire-Safe Landscaping

In addition to maintaining proper brush guidelines, consider landscaping with fire-resistant plants, which tend to have a high moisture content and are low-growing.

Fire-resistant Plants						
SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FIRE RESISTANCE	HEIGHT	SPREAD	EXPOSURE	FLOWER COLOR
<b>Succulents:</b>						
Agave species	Agave	high	1–6'	1–10'	sun	yellow-green
Dudleya species	Bluff lettuce	high	<1.5'	varies	sun/part shade	yellow
Sedum species	Stonecrop	high	<1'	varies	sun/part shade	many
<b>Low-Growing Ground-Cover Plants:</b>						
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi	Compact manzanita	low	1'	6'	sun/part shade	white-pink
Baccharis pilularis	'Twin Peaks' dwarf coyote brush	medium	1–2'	6'	sun/part shade	white
Ceanothus gloriosus	Pt. Reyes ceanothus	low	1–1.5'	4–6'	sun/part shade	blue
Ceanothus griseus var. horizontalis	Carmel creeper	low	1–3'	5–15'	sun/part shade	blue
Heuchera maxima	Island alum root	medium	1–2'	1–2'	shade	white
Mahonia repens	Creeping barberry	medium	1–3'	3'	sun/part shade	yellow
<b>Shrubs and Trees:</b>						
Calliandra eriophylla	Fairy duster	low	3'	4–5'	sun	pink, white
Cercis occidentalis	Western redbud	low	10–20'	8–10'	sun/part shade	magenta
Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon, hollywood	low	6–10'	6–10'	sun/part shade	white
Mimulus aurantiacus	Sticky monkey-flower	low	3'	3'	sun	orange
Platanus racemosa	California sycamore	low	30–80'	20–50'	sun	—
Quercus species	Oaks	low	to 100'	to 60'	sun	—
Rhamnus californica	Coffeeberry	low	3–15'	3–10'	sun/part shade	yellow-green
Rhus integrifolia	Lemonadeberry	low	4–5'	15'	sun/part shade	pink
Romneya coulteri	Matilija poppy	high	6'	6–8'	part shade/shade	white
<b>Perennials and annuals:</b>						
Achillea species	Yarrow	medium	2–3'	may spread	sun/part shade	white, yellow
Cistus species	Rockrose	medium	1–5'	1–4'	sun/part shade	white, pink
Clarkia amoena	Farewell-to-spring	low	4–5"	<1'	sun/part shade	pink, lavender
Epilobium californica (syn. Zauschneria)	California fuchsia	low	1–3'	1–3'	sun	red
Eriophyllum species	Golden yarrow	low	1–2'	1–2'	sun	yellow
Eschscholzia californica	California poppy	low	8–24"	to 1'	sun	orange
Iris douglasiana	Douglas iris	medium	1–2'	clumping	sun/part shade	varies
Isomeris arborea	Bladder-pod	high	2–4'	3–4'	sun/part shade	yellow
Layia platyglossa	Tidytips	low	5–16"	to 1'	sun	yellow
Lupinus nanus	Sky lupine	low	8–24"	to 2'	sun	blue
Nemophila menziesii	Baby blue eyes	low	6–12"	to 1'	sun/part shade	blue
Penstemon species	Beard tongue	low	1–3'	1–3'	sun/part shade	purple, red
Phacelia campanularia	California desert bluebells	low	6"–3'	6"–3'	sun	blue, purple
Sisyrinchium bellum	Blue-eyed grass	low	8–10"	clumping	sun	blue-purple
Sisyrinchium californicum	Yellow-eyed grass	low	1'	clumping	sun/part shade	yellow



Restricted Plant List/Plants to Avoid		
Acacia species . . . . . Acacia . . . . . (trees and shrubs) Adenostema fasciculatum . . Chamise, greasewood Ailanthus altissima . . . . . Tree of heaven Artemisia californica . . . . . California sagebrush Bougainvillea . . . . . Bougainvillea Cedrus species . . . . . Cedar Cortaderia selloana . . . . . Pampas grass Cupressus species . . . . . Cypress	Dodonea viscosa . . . . . Hopseed bush Eriogonum fasciculatum . . . Buckwheat Eucalyptus species . . . . . Eucalyptus, gum tree Gelsemium sempervirens . . Carolina jessamine Hakea suaveolens . . . . . Hakea Hedera species . . . . . Ivy Juniperus species . . . . . Juniper Malosma laurina . . . . . Laurel sumac Pennisetum species . . . . . Fountain grass	Phoenix canariensis . . . . . Canary Island . . . . . date palm Picea species . . . . . Spruce Pinus species . . . . . Pine Ricinus communis . . . . . Castor bean Spartium junceum . . . . . Spanish broom Taxus species . . . . . Yew Thuja species . . . . . Arborvitae Washingtonia species . . . . California and Mexican
Spanish Broom	Pampas Grass	Washingtonia Palm
		
Consult the local LA County Fire Department Forestry Division, Fuel Modification Unit, or Brush Clearance Unit with questions. Go to <a href="http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/forestry-division/forestry-contact/">www.fire.lacounty.gov/forestry-division/forestry-contact/</a> for specific contact numbers.		

**The Public/Private Land Interface**

Many homes in Topanga are adjacent to open state parkland. The management of these publicly-owned parklands, including policies regarding fuel modification and brush clearance, is governed by statute and science-based principles, and may differ from local regulations. If you have questions about how the land next to your property is being managed, please contact the appropriate park agency that owns the land.

**Southern California Edison (SCE) Power Line Clearance**

Anyone can request a power line inspection from SCE if tree branches or palm fronds are observed within 4 feet of any transmission line. Trees or vegetation touching transmission lines, called “burners” or TLCs (Tree Line Contact), are very dangerous and should be reported immediately for corrective pruning. Do not attempt to prune any tree with this condition yourself—touching a high voltage line can cause severe injury or death. SCE has trained tree maintenance workers who perform this work on a daily basis. Typically, TLCs are immediately inspected by SCE and pruned within 24 hours of inspection.

**RESOURCE:** SCE Line Clearing for Malibu and Topanga: (805) 497-5683

## Emergency Oak Tree Permits (EOTPs)

A permit is required for any activity affecting the health of an oak tree, when the tree is 25 inches or more in circumference, or 8 inches in diameter (6 inches in Coastal zones) at 4.5 feet above mean natural grade. Multiple-trunk trees also fall under these requirements if at least two trunks, when combined, total 12 inches in diameter (8 inches in Coastal zones).

Dead limbs, as well as live limbs up to 2 inches in diameter, may be removed at any time. Removing limbs within 10 feet of a chimney is allowed to maintain fire clearances. All other pruning activity involving live wood over 2 inches in diameter requires a permit.

If requested to prune oak trees by a County of Los Angeles Fire Department Official Inspection Report, please request an Emergency Oak Tree Permit (EOTP); there is no fee to obtain a permit.



**RESOURCE:** Contact the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Environment Review Unit at (818) 890-5719.



## HAVE YOUR OWN WILDFIRE ACTION PLAN

Think of your Wildfire Action Plan as a subset of your broader Family Emergency Plan, which addresses all types of disasters. You need to develop specific plans focused on what you will do if a wildfire strikes Topanga or any of the immediate surrounding areas, which include Malibu, Calabasas, Woodland Hills, and Pacific Palisades. All members of your household need to know their safest options when a big fire threatens Topanga, whether they are home or outside of the canyon.

After you design your plan, keep it close by, and practice it at least once a year with your family.

### Here are some things to consider.

- Plan multiple escape routes from your home and other parts of the canyon that you frequent. Learn the evacuation route that will most likely be used for your Zone (see page 84). Study the locations of your nearest Public Safe Refuge and Public Temporary Refuge Areas (see pages 83-94).
- Pick a location to the North (Valley) and South (Santa Monica/West LA) where family members coming from different areas can meet up.
- Make sure your disaster supply kit contains appropriate protective clothing for fire conditions (long-sleeved cotton T-shirts, jeans, cotton/wool blankets, scarves/bandannas, gloves, N-95 dust masks, goggles, hard hats).
- Create 3 evacuation lists, based on the amount of time before you have to leave. Include critical items that you want to take with you and their location in your home. Build a 5-minute list, a 30-minute list, and a 1 to 2-hour list, then practice to see if you can gather all of the items in the specified time frame. Download evacuation list templates from [www.tcep.org/familyplan](http://www.tcep.org/familyplan).
- Have several ways to communicate with family and friends. Texting may be a more reliable way to communicate if cell and landline telephone networks are overloaded. FRS radios can be used when you are within a mile or so of each other, depending on the terrain (mountains and tall buildings can interfere with FRS radio reception). See page 25 for more information.
- Know how to get updates on fire progress and location through cell phone apps, social media, AM/FM radios, and ham or commercial radios. See page 24 for more information.

**RESOURCES:** Keep up with what the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) experts are saying about wildfire preparedness at [www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness](http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness). This information-rich website includes research, videos, online courses, toolkits, and a free monthly newsletter with tips on reducing your wildfire risks.



## EVACUATION IS YOUR BEST CHANCE FOR SURVIVING A WILDFIRE

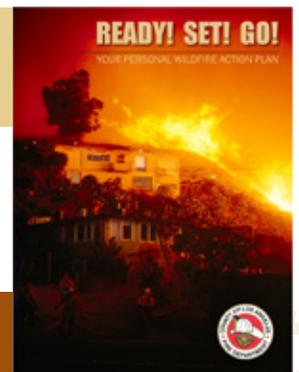
Topanga is famous for its independently minded, self-sufficient citizens. Some folks say they are determined to stay behind and fight a wildfire to protect their property. Some may have experienced the handful of fires we've had around Topanga since 1993, none of which burned ferociously in Topanga Canyon proper. It's likely many of these well-intentioned people have underestimated the extremely hazardous conditions surrounding a raging wildfire. One-hundred-foot flame heights. 80-mile-per-hour winds. Toxic gases from burning homes. 2000 degree temperatures. Smoke so thick it looks like nighttime at noon. You do not want to be in the middle of that. You want to be as far away as possible. Think about it: your possessions and your house are not worth your life. Please, buy sufficient insurance, then evacuate early and live to tell the tale.

You also don't want to be on the roads with hundreds of other people when a huge fire is bearing down on you. Roads are dangerous in heavy smoke conditions as visibility drops to zero, and you could be overrun by the fire. Plus, there will be a lot of emergency vehicles needing to enter the canyon. This is why you want to evacuate EARLY, at the first sign of potential danger. Leaving early gives your family the best chance of survival and it helps firefighters by keeping the roads less congested.

### Things to Remember:

- Keep a pair of old shoes and a flashlight handy in case of a night evacuation.
- Keep the six "Ps" ready for immediate evacuation (see below).
- Pull garden hoses out to their full length and leave on the ground. This is NOT for you to fight the fire. It's to aid firefighters who may come onto your property. If you have extension ladders, pull them out in plain view.
- Close all windows and doors and open window coverings/curtains (unless coverings/curtains are fire resistant). This will help your home be more visible to firefighters.
- Don't wait to be told by authorities to leave. They may not have the time or manpower to knock on every door or drive down every street. Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion. You can always come back if the fire does not get to your area.
- Think three (at least) times about trying to defend your home. It's extremely dangerous even for well-trained firefighters. You could become a victim in need of rescuing, which will put firefighters at risk as they attempt to save you. Leaving is the safest option to be well away from the threat.

**RESOURCE:** For more on the READY! SET! GO! program, pick up a copy of the brochure at your local fire station or download a copy at [www.fire.lacounty.gov](http://www.fire.lacounty.gov).



## The 6 Ps

1. People and pets
2. Papers, phone numbers, and important documents
3. Prescriptions, vitamins, and eyeglasses
4. Pictures and irreplaceable memorabilia
5. Personal computers (information on hard drives and discs)
6. Plastic (credit cards, ATM cards) and cash

## Red Flag Warnings

A Red Flag Warning is issued by the National Weather Service and local authorities when weather conditions include a combination of sustained winds over 25 mph and relative humidity below 15%. In these conditions, a wildland fire is more likely to spread rapidly. On average, Southern California experiences 15 Red Flag Weather days per year.

If your lips are chapped, your throat is dry, and the wind is whipping around, it's possibly Red Flag. For sure, the fire danger is elevated, even if an official Red Flag Warning hasn't yet been issued.

### There are several ways to get the official status:

- Red Flag Hotline: (310) 456-5783
- TCEP Facebook and Twitter feeds (TCEP90290)
- TCEP website: [www.tcep.org/emergencystatus](http://www.tcep.org/emergencystatus)
- OneTopanga website: [www.onetopanga.com](http://www.onetopanga.com)
- National Weather Service: [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) (search by Topanga zip code and bookmark the page)
- Local TV and radio newscasts
- Smartphone apps (search for apps that push weather alerts)

## DURING RED FLAG CONDITIONS

### DO

#### Position your car heading out.

Close the windows and keep keys handy for quick evacuation.

#### Gather evacuation items.

Stage items near the door (or inside your car) so they are easy to grab if you face evacuation panic mode.

#### Put pet carriers in car.

If you evacuate, you must have a safe way to control pets at your destination.

#### Move flammable items away from house.

Patio furniture, doormats, brooms, potted plants, and anything that looks like kindling should be moved as far away from the house perimeter as possible.

#### Override automatic garage door openers.

If the power goes out, you'll need to be able to open the door manually to get your car out.

### DON'T

#### Whack your weeds.

Sparks from hitting rocks can start fires.

#### Weld or cut metal.

Flying sparks can ignite nearby brush or grass.

#### Smoke cigarettes.

Please...just don't smoke in the canyons.

#### Have any open flames outside.

Open flames are illegal anywhere in the Santa Monica Mountains during Red Flag conditions; outside of Red Flag conditions, open flames such as campfires are permitted only in designated areas.

#### Operate gas-powered garden tools.

Sparks and open gasoline containers can start and rapidly spread fires.

### If you leave your home during Red Flag conditions, follow the DOs above, plus...

- **Close exterior doors and windows** (this helps keep flying embers out).
- **Close interior doors** (this helps slow the spread of fire inside if your home ignites).
- **Open drapes** (this may help slow heat buildup around windows and keeps flammable material further from the glass).



## EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS

Southern California is earthquake country. We get a lot of them, and some can be very destructive. According to the experts, the probability of us experiencing a big quake with a magnitude greater than 6.7 on the Richter Scale in the next 30 years is 99.7%. That means it's going to happen. And it could happen today or tomorrow. So the time to prepare is right now.

A very large earthquake along the southern San Andreas fault could have particularly devastating impacts for Topanga, including:

- Direct damage to homes and businesses.
- Landslides that could make roads impassable.
- Water shutoff from damaged tanks and delivery pipes.
- Power and communication outages.
- House fires from broken propane lines and damaged appliances.

Topanga is an isolated and sparsely-populated canyon community with only 4 firefighters present on a daily basis. It could be days before any significant professional help arrives here. This means Topangans need to prepare to be self-sufficient, possibly for a week or longer.

**Here are a few things you can do to prepare:**

- **Maintain disaster and first aid kits.** Have a kit at home, at work, and in each of your cars.
- **Know how to react.** Identify safe spots in each room of your home away from windows, mirrors, hanging objects, and fireplaces. Practice "drop, cover, and hold on," which means get under a sturdy table or desk, put your arms over your head and hang on until the shaking stops.
- **Keep emergency water on hand.** One gallon per person (and pet) per day is the rule of thumb. But that is the bare minimum just for drinking. You can never have enough stored water. Consider installing a large water storage tank that can hold several hundred gallons. Southland water supplies may be cut off for weeks.
- **Keep non-perishable food on hand.** Imagine backpacking for a week. What would you take for food? Have that in your cabinets. Avoid salty foods.
- **Keep shoes, clothing, and eyeglasses by your bed.** The number one injury after an early morning earthquake is cut feet as people jump out of bed barefoot and step on broken glass. Put your items in a bag and tie it to the bed frame so that if the bed moves, your stuff moves with it.
- **Secure large household items.** Strap down water heaters and major appliances, along with TVs, tall furniture, mirrors, picture frames, and anything that could fall and cause injury. Visit [www.earthquakecountry.org/roots](http://www.earthquakecountry.org/roots) and read *Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country* for more tips.
- **Store items safely.** Keep breakable items, heavy objects, and flammable or hazardous liquids such as paints, pest sprays, and cleaning products in secured cabinets or close to the ground.
- **Check your house construction.** Have a contractor check your chimneys, roof, walls, and foundation to make sure everything is up to the latest codes for earthquake safety.
- **Know proper utility shut off procedures.** Learn how to shut off propane tanks, water mains, and electricity breakers.
- **Practice.** Conduct "drop, cover, and hold on" drills with your family at different times of the day. Run through your Family Emergency Plan (see page 13) so everyone knows what to do if they are in different geographic locations, and how to reach an out-of-state contact to make status reports.
- **Learn emergency skills.** Learn CPR and take CERT or ARC training (see pages 26-27) so you can help injured family members and neighbors.
- **Decide how and where your family will reunite if separated during an earthquake.**

**RESOURCES:** For more earthquake information and tips, visit these websites:  
[www.dropcoverandholdon.org](http://www.dropcoverandholdon.org)  
[www.shakeout.org](http://www.shakeout.org)  
[www.earthquakeauthority.com](http://www.earthquakeauthority.com)

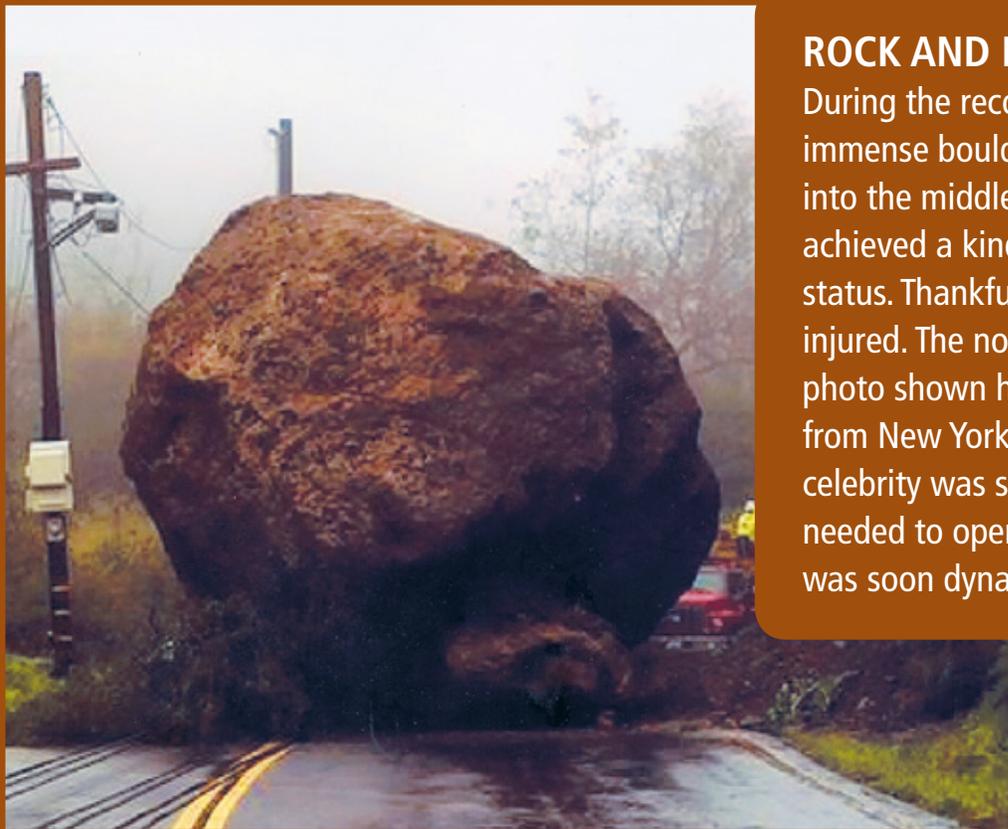
**YOU CALL THAT MODERATE?**  
The 1994 Northridge quake was a 6.7 and was considered to be a moderate earthquake!

## FLOODS, SLIDES, AND STORMS PREPAREDNESS

The downside of living in a canyon with a picturesque creek running through it is that you have to deal with potential flooding, along with the rocks, trees, and mud that cascade down the mountainsides during and after torrential rainstorms. Here are a few tips for when the weather turns wildly wet:

- Assess the safety of your house and belongings in case of a flood or mudslide. Are you near a creek? Do you live above or below a steep hillside? Do you have to drive over a creek or bridge to get to a main road? If so, devise a "Plan B" for getting out (or in).
- Maintain supplies that can support you and your family in case you are on your own.
- Clean drains around the house and house gutters in the fall before the winter rains come. Check drains on nearby streets. If blocked, clean them or notify Public Works or Caltrans.
- Maintain all slopes to minimize slides. Use appropriate plantings, slope coverage, and drainage channels.
- If you're in a location where water or mud may need to be diverted, plan to fill sandbags ahead of time and have them ready. (Unlike earthquakes, we know when big rainstorms are headed our way.) Sandbags are available at your local fire station.

**RESOURCE:** For information on suitable slope plantings, contact the Resource Conservation District at (818) 597-8627 or the Fire Department at (818) 222-1108.



### ROCK AND ROLL

During the record rains of 2005, an immense boulder rolled smack-dab into the middle of Highway 27 and achieved a kind of instant celebrity status. Thankfully, no one was injured. The now-famous AP wire photo shown here made headlines from New York to China. But its celebrity was short-lived as Caltrans needed to open the road, so the rock was soon dynamited to pebbledom.





# EXTREME WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

## HEATWAVES

When temperatures soar, prolonged sun exposure can cause all kinds of medical problems, especially for young children and the elderly. According to the American Red Cross, excessive heat in recent years has caused more deaths than all other weather events, including floods.

### Here are a few tips for dealing with high heat:

- Never leave children, elderly people, or pets unattended in closed vehicles, even with the windows cracked open.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Drink water or sports drinks often and avoid drinking alcohol.
- Offer help to those in your neighborhood with limited access to air conditioning and transportation, such as seniors or those who are ill.
- During peak heat hours stay in air-conditioned areas. Visit public facilities such as shopping malls, parks, and libraries to stay cool.
- Have a cooling contingency plan in case of a power outage.
- Avoid unnecessary exertion, such as vigorous exercise, during peak sun hours.
- Stay out of the sun, if possible. If you are in the sun, wear a hat, preferably with a wide brim.
- The American Red Cross often operates "cooling centers" for people without air conditioning. Check the American Red Cross website for locations.

## Treating Heat-Related Illnesses

Excessive heat can produce three health issues in people. Here's how to recognize and treat them.

- **Heat cramps**
  - Muscular pains and spasms, usually in the legs or abdomen.
  - Get the person to a cooler place and have them rest. Gently massage the cramping area.
  - Give them water or a sports drink to help replenish electrolytes. Do not give them salt tablets.
- **Heat exhaustion**
  - More severe than cramps, with signs of cool, moist, hot, sweaty, pale, or flushed skin; headache; nausea; dizziness; weakness
  - Move the person to a cooler environment with circulating air.
  - Remove or loosen as much clothing as possible and apply wet towels to the skin.
  - Fan the person, spray water on them, or submerge their arms in a bucket of ice water.
  - If conscious, give small amounts of cool fluid such as a sports drink.
  - If the person's condition does not improve or gets worse, call 911.
- **Heat stroke**
  - Life threatening condition that occurs by ignoring signs of heat exhaustion.
  - Signs include extremely high body temperature; red skin, which may be dry or sweaty; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; shallow breathing; confusion; vomiting and seizures.
  - Call 911 then rapidly cool the body by immersing the person in cold water up to the neck, dousing or spraying with cold water, or sponging with ice water-doused towels over the entire body.

## COLDSNAPS AND FREEZES

Cold weather generally isn't an issue as long as you aren't stranded outside, and your home heating system is working. However, certain parts of the canyon are prone to freezing, which can create all kinds of problems for people and property.

**Here are a few things you can do to prepare for when the thermometer heads south:**

- Review and update your Family Emergency Plan.
- Know where you can go to find warm shelter if your home heating systems fails.
- Replenish your disaster supply kit, including battery-operated radio and flashlights. Keep extra blankets on hand.
- Have a plan for meeting the needs of infants, children, seniors, people with disabilities, and pets.
- Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock, or equipment. Clear rain gutters, repair roof leaks, and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.
- Insulate pipes and allow faucets to drip during cold weather to avoid freezing. Learn how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.
- Have the home heating system inspected before winter rolls in, and ensure that your chimney is cleaned and maintained.
- Keep plenty of heating fuel on hand.
- Move outdoor family pets indoors or to an enclosure out of the elements. Protect livestock or other large animals from the cold weather.
- Move plants indoors or cover with blankets or plastic to prevent freezing.
- Do NOT bring outdoor heating devices, barbecues, and other cooking equipment or fuel-burning devices into the home. These items can produce deadly carbon monoxide and raise the risk for house fires.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home to reduce the risk of poisoning.
- If you use an outdoor generator, place it as far away from the home as possible.

### Use Layers to Stay Warm

- Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing, rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water-repellent.
- Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves, and a hat.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

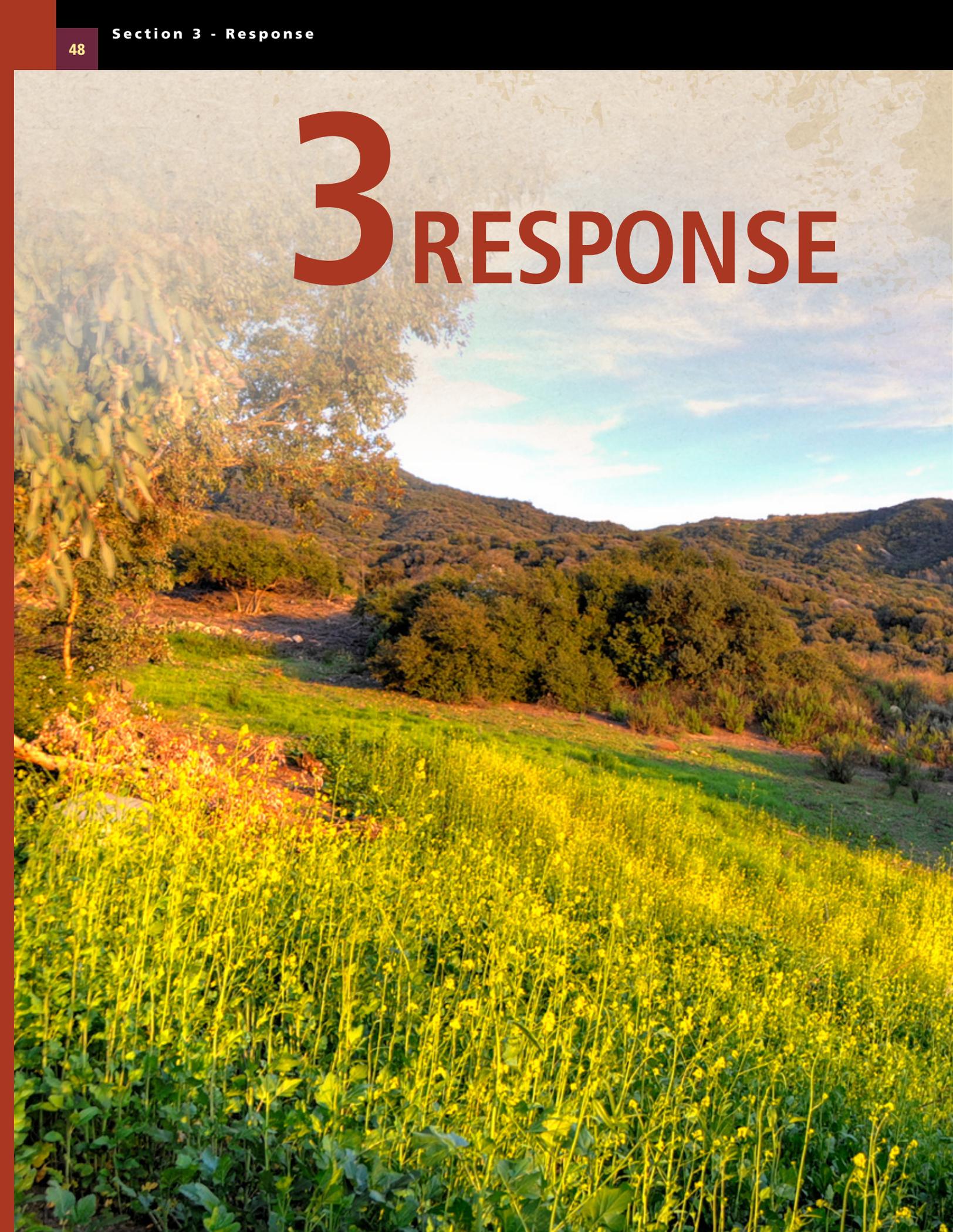
### Travel with Caution

- Let others know of your route and your estimated time of arrival.
- Make sure your tires have adequate tread.
- Augment your car's emergency supply kit with a shovel, windshield scraper, and blankets.
- Maintain at least a half tank of gas at all times during the winter season.
- Check road conditions. Slow down—especially on curves and around corners—and watch for ice on the road.
- Recognizing symptoms of exposure:
  - Confusion, dizziness, exhaustion, and shivering are signs of hypothermia. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.
  - In the case of overexposure to freezing temperatures, remove wet clothing and immediately warm the body with a blanket or warm fluids, like hot cider or soup. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.

A winter shelter program is available for seniors and those looking for a place to beat cold weather. Visit [www.lahsa.org](http://www.lahsa.org), or call LA County Information line at 211 from any landline or cell phone.

**RESOURCE:** For more tips on dealing with extreme weather, go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), and search for "Extreme Weather."

# 3 RESPONSE



# 3 - RESPONSE

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## GENERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

# 911

### CALL 911

For any type of emergency, including medical situations, traffic accidents, house fires, wildfires, or other scenarios that require professional response, **call 911**.

Many Topangans think that calling local Fire Station 69 directly will result in a faster response. This may actually delay response in an emergency due to the way emergency calls must be logged and dispatched in LA County.

If you can, call 911 using a landline phone, so your location can be accurately recorded. Never assume that someone else has already called. If you witness an emergency, call 911 and report it. The more people who call 911 about the same event, the better. Each call helps to gather additional information, which can assist dispatchers in sending the proper equipment and personnel to the scene.

If you must call 911 on a cell phone, keep in mind that your location is not always captured automatically. Always give the 911 operator your cell number immediately in case the call is dropped. When asked, be prepared to report the exact location of the incident.



### **DO NOT CALL FIRE STATION 69 IN AN EMERGENCY!**

About 40% of emergency calls in Topanga are called directly into Fire Station 69. Five years ago, this number was even higher, but it still needs to come down significantly. Calling the fire station directly may delay response to an emergency. Please spread the word among community members that in the event of an emergency, they must call **911**. It could be a matter of life or death.

## WILDFIRE

### EVACUATION WARNING (VOLUNTARY EVACUATION)

An Evacuation Warning is an urgent call for the community to immediately prepare for possible evacuation due to a wildfire in the area. Evacuation Warnings will be issued for particular Topanga Zones. See the Zone Maps starting on page 84.

When a warning is issued, you should prepare to leave the canyon. This is also the time to evacuate people in need of assistance and your horses. Most Evacuation Warnings become Evacuation Orders, so it's best to get your Emergency Plan together as quickly as possible and then leave as soon as you can.

#### Here's what you should do when an EVACUATION WARNING has been issued:

- Contact family members and make sure they are ready to leave the canyon.
- Gather all items on your evacuation lists and put them in your car.
- Attach garden hoses with nozzles to spigots and place them so that they can reach all areas of your home. (These hoses can be used by firefighters engaged in structure protection to put out spot fires once the fire has passed. Please note that garden hoses are ineffective in terms of fighting a wildland fire.)
- Fill sinks and bathtubs with water. Fill trashcans and buckets with water and place them around your house for easy access by firefighters.
- Close all windows and doors around your home to keep embers from blowing inside. Close window shutters and blinds only if they are fire-resistant.
- Move furniture away from windows and sliding glass doors to avoid their ignition from the fire's radiant heat.
- If you have children in school, follow their school's Disaster Plan.
- If you have time, cover windows, attic openings, eaves, and vents with fire-resistant material such as 1/2-inch or thicker plywood.

### EVACUATION ORDER (MANDATORY EVACUATION)

An Evacuation Order is a directive from the sheriff or fire department to leave your home or business immediately. Failure to follow an Evacuation Order could put your own life and those of your neighbors, along with firefighters and other emergency responders, in jeopardy. As with warnings, Evacuation Orders will be issued for specific Topanga Zones.

#### When an EVACUATION ORDER has been issued for your area:

- **Gather all items** on your evacuation lists, including your disaster supply kit, and place them in your car.
- **Dress appropriately**—layered clothing, long pants (preferably jeans), sturdy shoes (no sandals or flip flops), long sleeve cotton shirt (avoid synthetic fabrics, which are less resistant to heat and flames), head covering (cap or towel), dry bandanna or scarf to cover your mouth (do not wet the bandanna), and eye covering, such as goggles or glasses. Do not wet yourself down.
- **Immediately** leave your home or business.
- **Follow directions** from sheriff and fire department personnel.
- **Drive carefully** at a safe speed with your headlights on.
- **Never park** or leave your vehicle in a traffic lane or safety area.
- **Keep pets** in carriers or on leashes.
- **Stay calm** and head to an appropriate evacuation location that you previously identified in your Family Emergency Plan.

#### HOSING YOUR ROOF DOESN'T HELP

Pre-wetting your home and surrounding areas will not improve the safety of your home due to rapid evaporation, and it wastes valuable water needed by firefighters.

## EARTHQUAKE

It's important to have already rehearsed in your mind what you would do if an earthquake struck RIGHT NOW, right where you are! Do this at home and whenever you are out in public. Take a few seconds to size up your immediate surroundings and determine the best way to protect yourself if the building started shaking. Generally, that means drop, cover, and hold on right where you are. It can be very dangerous to move around or to attempt to get to a different location during the shaking. If you're inside a building, DO NOT run outside.

At home, identify sturdy furniture you can get under. In public stores or theaters, be aware of parts of the building or inventory that could fall on you, and scope out areas that can give you some protection.

### WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE STRIKES

IF YOU ARE...	DO THIS...
<b>Indoors</b>	Drop, cover, and hold on. Take cover under a sturdy table or desk. If a table isn't available, drop to the floor against an interior wall, away from windows or objects that could fall, and protect your head. Do not run out of the building!
<b>In Bed</b>	Generally, stay in bed, roll onto your stomach, and protect your head with a pillow. Hold on to the bed. Always put on shoes before getting out of bed after the shaking stops to avoid stepping on broken glass.
<b>In a Wheelchair</b>	Get to a safe position in the room and lock the wheels. Cover your head and neck with your arms. If unable to move quickly, stay where you are and protect your head.
<b>Outdoors</b>	Move away from buildings to a clear area if you can safely do so. Avoid power lines, trees, signs, vehicles, or anything that could fall onto or move into you.
<b>Driving or Riding in a Vehicle</b>	Pull to the side of the road safely, turn off the car, and set the parking brake. Avoid stopping under overpasses, bridges, or other falling hazards. Stay in the vehicle until the shaking stops. If power lines come down on or near your vehicle, stay inside until a professional first responder says it's safe to move.

## After the Shaking Stops

- Stay calm. Aftershocks can be frequent and may cause additional damage, so be prepared to drop, cover, and hold on, at any time.
- Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- If there is a significant fire, get away immediately and call 911. If it's just a small spot fire, try to put it out with a fire extinguisher.
- Check for damage, such as gas and water leaks, broken electrical wiring, cracks in the wall, and loose items that could fall in an aftershock. Turn off utilities if you suspect a problem. Unplug damaged electrical appliances.
- Use extreme caution in cleaning up liquid spills. Many household cleaning agents can be toxic when mixed.
- Once you've taken care of yourself and your family, check on your neighbors. Avoid downed power lines. Don't enter buildings that appear damaged.
- Do not use your vehicle except in case of emergency.
- Do not use the telephone unless there is a life-threatening emergency. This helps to keep phone lines open for emergency response requests.
- Turn on your emergency radio to listen for news reports. Follow your Family Emergency Plan.

## "TRIANGLE OF LIFE" ROUNDLY DEBUNKED

If you see an email chain letter advocating the Triangle of Life as an earthquake response strategy, ignore it. The concept was based on incorrect assumptions and faulty experiments about how most buildings in California will behave in an earthquake. "Drop, cover, and hold on" is the best way to lower your risk of being killed or injured during an earthquake.

**RESOURCES:** For more information and tips, visit these websites:

[www.dropcoverandholdon.org](http://www.dropcoverandholdon.org)

[www.shakeout.org](http://www.shakeout.org)

[www.earthquakeauthority.com](http://www.earthquakeauthority.com)

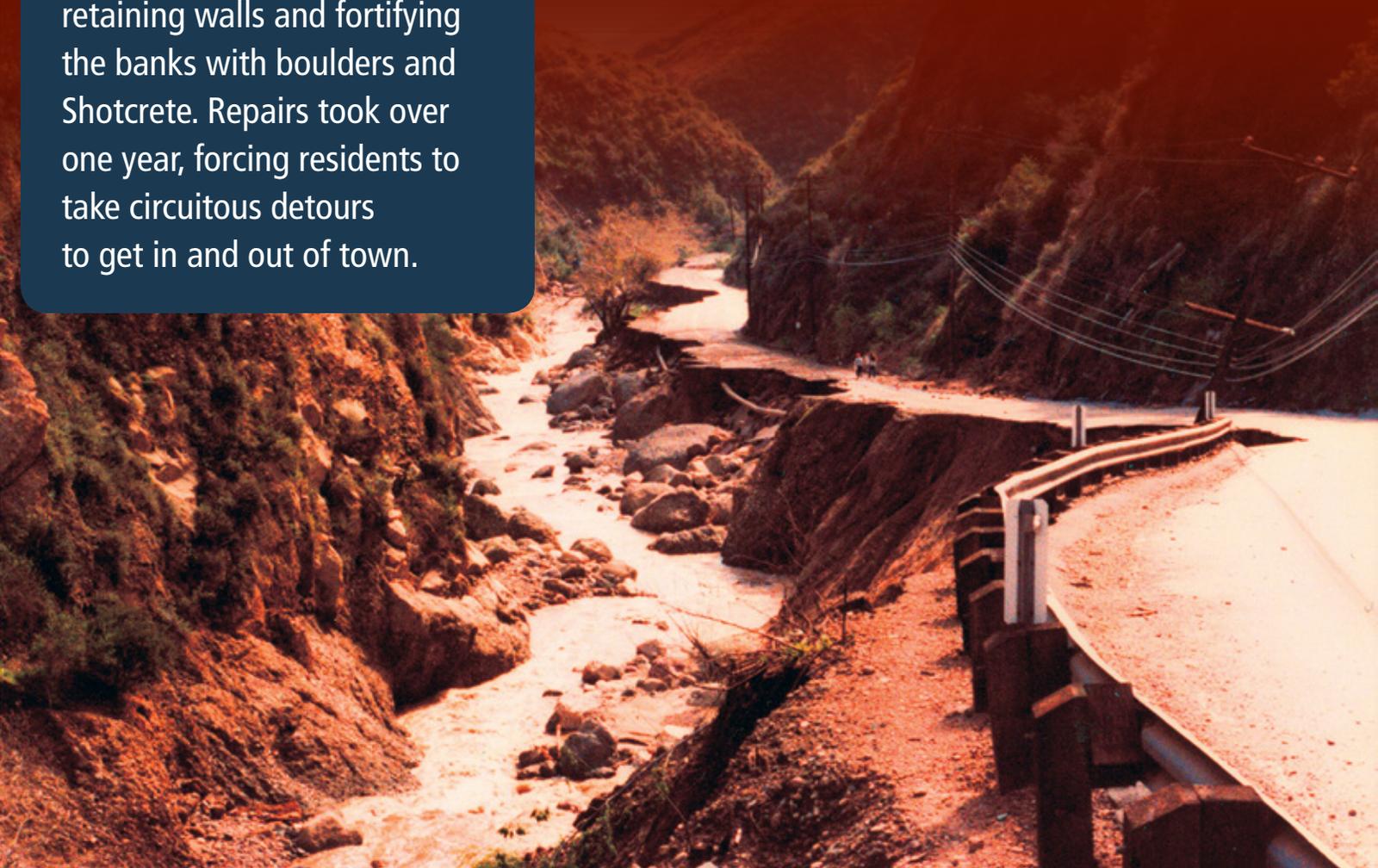




Massive rains flooded Paradise Lane in 1980.

### THE "S CURVES," 1980

Torrential rains washed out Topanga Canyon Blvd. in many places and damaged the water main. Afterward, the roadway was "hardened" by building retaining walls and fortifying the banks with boulders and Shotcrete. Repairs took over one year, forcing residents to take circuitous detours to get in and out of town.



## FLOODS, SLIDES, AND STORMS

### DURING THE STORM AND FLOODING

- Don't cross rapidly flowing streams. Stay on one side until the water recedes. Most streams in this area recede in a couple of hours once it stops raining.
- Don't drive through flooded intersections or flooded roadways, particularly when flooding signs are posted.
- During the storm, check drainage systems at your house and driveways to maintain a safe situation and to limit damage from backed-up water.
- Watch for signs of potential mudslides and adjust drainage to reduce the risk of mudslides.
- Keep family and animals inside and away from rapid water.
- If you notice a major mud slippage either above or below your house, move your family to a safe location, and notify your neighbors and County officials, as appropriate.

### AFTER THE STORM

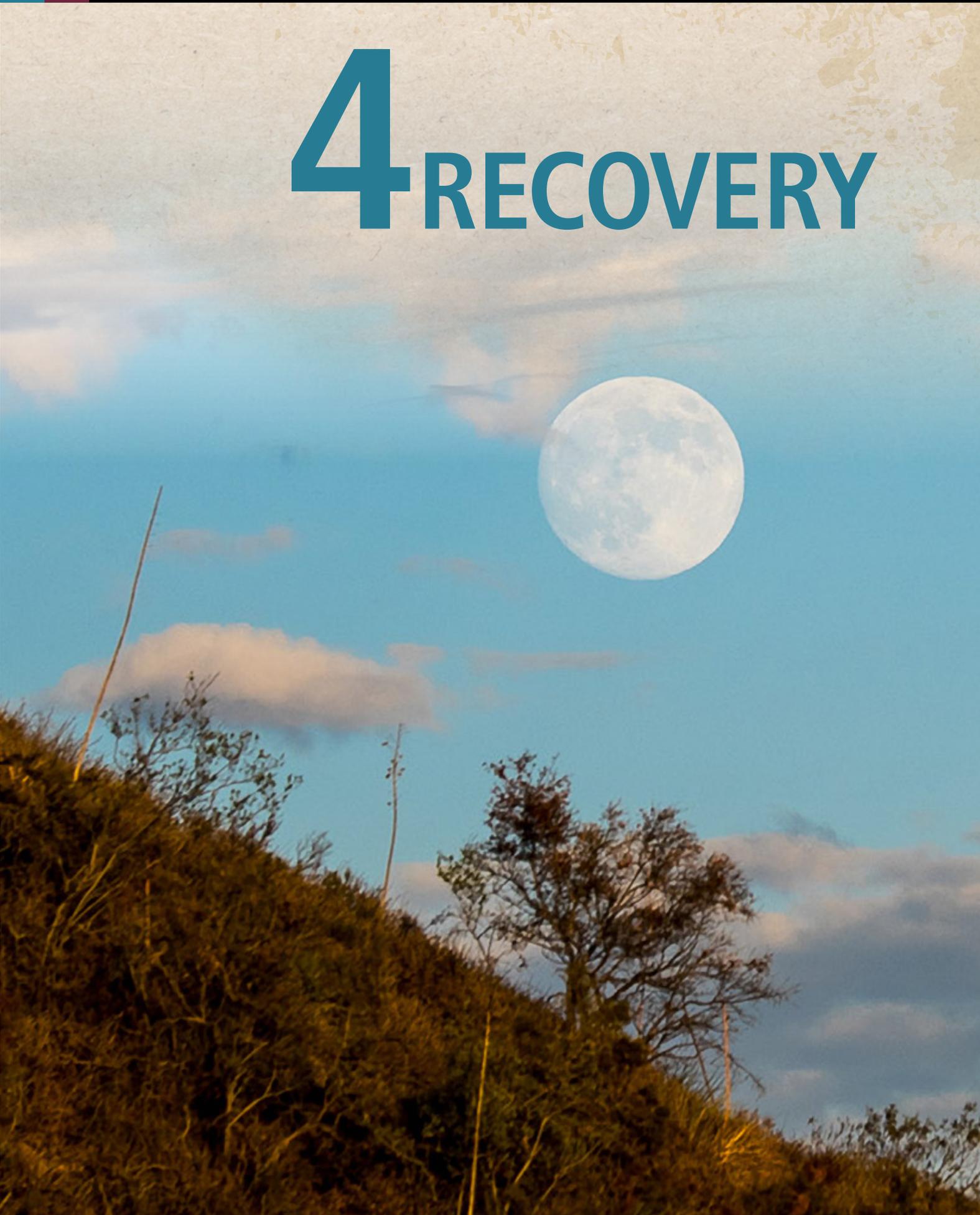
- Look for damage. Check hillsides for slope movement, and houses for settling and water damage.
- When driving, go slowly and be particularly alert as many roads may have mud, debris, holes, and washed-out areas.
- Bridges may be washed out and culverts overtopped. When you see water over a roadway, there is no way to see if the road underneath has been washed out or damaged. The water can be deeper and more powerful than you expect.
- Check with [ladpw.org](http://ladpw.org) or [tcep.org](http://tcep.org) to find out what roads in Topanga, if any, have sustained damage.
- Logs, boulders, mud and other debris can create temporary dams, which can burst days after the rain has stopped.
- Remember, many mudslides occur as the soils dry, after an extended wet period.
- Winter is often the best time to plant slopes, so try to anticipate rainy seasons and fix problem areas before the rains come.



Survivors Carl and Jennifer Strom stand at the base of a mudslide. Surrounding them are thick-diameter rebars to keep concrete barriers in place, which prevent the mud from creeping out onto the busy street. During the storm, they watched in horror as the earth opened up in their front yard and the hillside started to move down.

**IT DOES RAIN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**  
 Mother Nature dumped a record 64.82 inches of rain on the Robinson Road area of Topanga in 2004–2005. This topped the 55 inches that fell in both 1978 and 1998. Data kept by Lee Haines, founder of the Pierce College weather station in 1949, and augmented by Topanga residents in recent years, showed an average of 24.9 inches of rainfall in the canyon over the past 45 years.

# 4 RECOVERY



# 4 - RECOVERY

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## DISASTER PSYCHOLOGY

When disaster strikes, you and your family may be affected in several ways, ranging from injuries (physical and/or emotional) to property damage or loss. How quickly you can get back on your feet will depend on many factors, including the overall scope of the disaster, the severity of its direct impact on your life, and your level of pre-disaster planning and preparation.

### HOW TO REDUCE DISASTER STRESS

Following a disaster you'll be very busy taking care of your immediate needs. As the shock wears off, you may find yourself thinking and behaving in ways that are troubling to you. Generally, these feelings don't last long. But it's common to feel let down and resentful for a longer period of time. Be aware that some feelings or responses may not appear until weeks, or even months, after the disaster.

**Here are a few tips to help reduce stress during and after a disaster:**

- **Slow down.** Take a deep breath, look around, and think carefully. You will make better decisions and be more efficient if you take your time before acting.
- **Stay in control.** Recognize what you can control and what you can't. You can control your own reactions, so don't get angry, or become aggressive, and don't blame others. Your attitude should be, "We're all in this together and we'll get through it if we collaborate."
- **Take care of yourself.** If you are freaking out, you won't be of much help to your family or neighbors. Stay hydrated and eat regularly. This will help you think more clearly. Get plenty of sleep. Help others once you are under control. Do not take stimulants, such as coffee, without eating food first. Limit or avoid alcohol use, as it can dehydrate your body and impair your judgment.
- **Get updates.** Your Family Emergency Plan should include multiple ways of getting information updates. Call the Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness Hotline at (310) 455-3000, and check Twitter (@TCEP90290) for updates on what is happening in Topanga Canyon. Monitor your ham radio and listen to channel 7 on your FRS radio for TCEP top-of-the-hour reports (available only during major canyon-wide disasters when the TCEP Emergency Operation Center has been activated). You'll be much calmer if you stay on top of what's going on around you. Share your feelings and emotions with others, rather than keeping them bottled up inside. It helps the healing.
- **Listen carefully to others.** Everyone experiences and processes disasters differently. Listen to what others are saying so you can understand what's important to them at a particular moment.
- **Give yourself some time off.** Take time for some relaxation. Find a place where you can get away from the chaos for a little while. You don't have to solve all the problems right away.
- **Rebuild relationships.** Keep your loved ones together and put aside petty differences. Talk and try to have some fun with those you love and cherish.



## COMMON RESPONSES TO DISASTERS

- Irritability and anger
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to sleep
- Nightmares
- Sadness
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Hyperactivity
- Lack of concentration
- Hyperalertness
- Increase in alcohol or drug consumption

## SMALL CHILDREN HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

Small children require special attention. They may become clingy, refuse to sleep alone, and become unusually upset by small things. They may hit siblings, defy adults, or act out in other ways. Take extra time to understand what your child is thinking and provide extra love, support, and reassurance. Reestablish routines such as meals, bedtime, and playing with familiar toys as soon as possible.

## HELPING ADOLESCENTS COPE

Older children are more capable of understanding what happened, but don't expect them to be miniature adults. Adolescents are often very helpful during a disaster, but can display more difficult behavior after the immediate crisis has passed. Common behavior includes neglecting things that they usually do and becoming forgetful.

They may also have physical complaints and may be sad, restless, defiant, or withdrawn. They may stay away from home or become involved with drugs and alcohol. To help them, make time to talk. Determine what they want to do to make their world organized again, and help them to do these things—even if you have to delay other things that need to be done.

**RESOURCE:** If stress, anxiety, depression, or physical problems continue, you may wish to contact a counselor, a mental health center, or the post-disaster services provided by the American Red Cross.

## STEPS AND RESOURCES

Once the immediate threat has passed, the recovery process begins—for you, and for the community at large. Road closures, temporary ordinances, and business relocations are only a few of the community recovery strategies that may be used during this phase.

Programs aimed at assisting businesses and residents may be of benefit, but only if you know about them. Attend community meetings, talk to neighbors, monitor official websites, Facebook, and Twitter feeds, and visit information centers set up by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Red Cross, and local authorities, to be sure you know what is happening in your area.

NEED	FIRST STEPS	NEXT STEPS	WHO CAN HELP
<b>Get the Latest Information</b>	Listen to local radio/television and monitor trusted social media accounts  Visit local information centers such as shelters for health alerts and emergency information.	Getting the correct information about your area can be a real challenge. Know how to get information from public safety officials and reliable news sources. Community centers, churches, and schools are often used as information hubs for local residents. Remember...your car has a radio!	TCEP Hotline: (310) 455-3000 <a href="http://www.tcep.org/emergencystatus">@TCEP90290</a>  LAUSD: (213) 241-1000  Caltrans: (800) 427-7623  CHP: (818) 880-0980; <a href="http://cad.chp.ca.gov">cad.chp.ca.gov</a>
<b>Find Shelter</b>	Even if your home is livable, you may not be able to get fresh food or water. Keep at least a 10-day supply of food and water. Know the likely areas where there may be a shelter.	American Red Cross shelter locations will be provided to local media. Non-Red Cross shelters may sometimes be available.	American Red Cross: (800) 733-2767 <a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>  TCEP: <a href="http://www.tcep.org/emergencystatus">www.tcep.org/emergencystatus</a>
<b>Register for Help</b>	Assistance from the federal government may be available for home repair loans, business loans, housing, and other specific emergency needs. Keep a set of financial and insurance records in your emergency kit so you have the information you will need to complete applications.	If federal assistance is made available, you will need to register with FEMA or the Small Business Administration (SBA). Local Assistance Centers may be established to provide face-to-face assistance. Remember, FEMA/SBA assistance does not make you whole again, but it can give you a helping hand to start the recovery process.	Toll-free telephone numbers and instructions on how and where to register will be broadcast through various media channels if federal assistance is made available.
<b>Get MORE Help</b>	Contact local assistance providers for direct assistance, such as food and clothing, mental health counseling, medical assistance devices, materials in languages other than English, longer-term housing, and more.	LA County provides information and referral services for a variety of available health and community resources. Local Assistance Centers may also have services for disaster victims. Many employers have employee assistance services available. The Red Cross Safe & Well program can help you let family and friends know you are alright.	211 LA County: Information and referral services 24 hours a day. Dial 2-1-1  Contact your health insurance provider.  <a href="http://www.safeandwell.org">www.safeandwell.org</a>
<b>Document everything—before the disaster and after</b>	Keep duplicate sets of important documents in your emergency kit and at a remote location. Take pictures before, during, and after all repairs. Keep all receipts!	Whether you receive FEMA grants, SBA loans, or other assistance, you will be required to have documentation for all claims. You will need proof of employment, copies of insurance payments, and receipts for equipment and supplies.	There are many software programs that can help you create a complete home inventory for insurance purposes. Reviews of the top 10 home inventory software programs can be found here: <a href="http://www.home-inventory-software-review.toptenreviews.com">www.home-inventory-software-review.toptenreviews.com</a> .
<b>Utility Safety and Service Restoration</b>	Propane: If you have a propane tank and you smell propane leaking, shut it off at the tank. Keep your propane company's phone number in your emergency kit.  Natural gas: If you smell gas, turn it off at the meter. Keep a gas shut-off wrench in your emergency kit.	Propane: Once your propane tank has been inspected and deemed safe, you can turn the tank valve back on.  Natural gas: Once your natural gas line has been turned off at the meter, only Southern California Gas or a licensed plumber can restore service.	Southern California Gas Co.: (800) 427-2200  LA County Public Works (Water): (800) 675-4357  Verizon: (800) VERIZON
<b>Rebuilding</b>	Pay attention to the credentials provided by contractors who want your business. Get multiple written bids for repair work, get and keep all receipts as documentation.	Unlicensed contractors can create more harm than good if they do not get building permits or perform shoddy work. You may jeopardize grants and loans if your contractors are not qualified.	Check the Contractors State License Board website before hiring a contractor: <a href="http://www.cslb.ca.gov">www.cslb.ca.gov</a>
<b>Understanding Assistance Limits</b>	Ask lots of questions and read the small print on offered loans and grants. Know what you can expect from your insurance policies and understand that you will have to declare your insurance proceeds to FEMA and the SBA if you accept funds.	To receive grant assistance from FEMA, you must fill out an SBA loan application. Grants and loans from these agencies are limited and intended to help you get back on your feet. They are not designed to compensate you for your entire loss.	<a href="http://www.disasterassistance.gov">www.disasterassistance.gov</a>



## DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The federal government's Disaster Assistance Improvement Program provides disaster survivors with information, support, services, and a one-stop way to apply for disaster assistance.

If you can't access the website, disaster assistance phone numbers will be posted at County libraries and broadcast by the news media. Federal disaster assistance is not intended to restore your damaged property to its pre-disaster condition, but it may help you get back on your feet. FEMA disaster assistance is only available if the President signs a declaration of disaster.

**At [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov), you can:**

- Apply for the disaster assistance that best fits your needs.
- Locate a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center near you.
- Learn about Small Business Administration (SBA) loans for homeowners, renters, and businesses.
- Check the status of assistance applications.
- Find a hotel or place to live.
- Get information on food and nutrition programs.

### Getting in Touch with Family Members

The American Red Cross Safe and Well website ([www.safeandwell.org](http://www.safeandwell.org)) is a central location for people in disaster areas to report their current status, and for their loved ones to access that information. Letting your family and friends know you are safe and well can bring them greater peace of mind and reduce overall stress levels. Just follow the instructions on the website to register. Review the process ahead of time with friends and family so that everyone knows how to use the site in case disaster strikes.

### If Your Home Is Destroyed

- For immediate housing needs, the American Red Cross and other volunteer agencies set up shelters for people who cannot return to their homes.
- For health and space reasons, pets are not permitted in public emergency shelters. Contact the emergency management office, your local animal shelter or humane society to see if there is a place that can take your pets in an emergency.
- For those who have longer-term housing needs, FEMA may offer several types of assistance, including services and grants to help people repair their homes and find replacement housing.
- For long-term assistance after a Presidentially Declared Disaster, call the FEMA registration number and apply for FEMA and Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance programs.

### Getting Food and Water Following a Disaster

If you follow the preparedness advice in this guide, you'll have a large supply of food and water at home. But if you've been displaced from your home, and local stores have bare shelves, you may need food and water. After a disaster, the American Red Cross and other volunteer agencies will provide food, water, and clothing to the best of their ability. Distribution locations will be broadcast on TV, radio, and social media channels.

### If You Lose Your Job or Can't Work Because of a Disaster

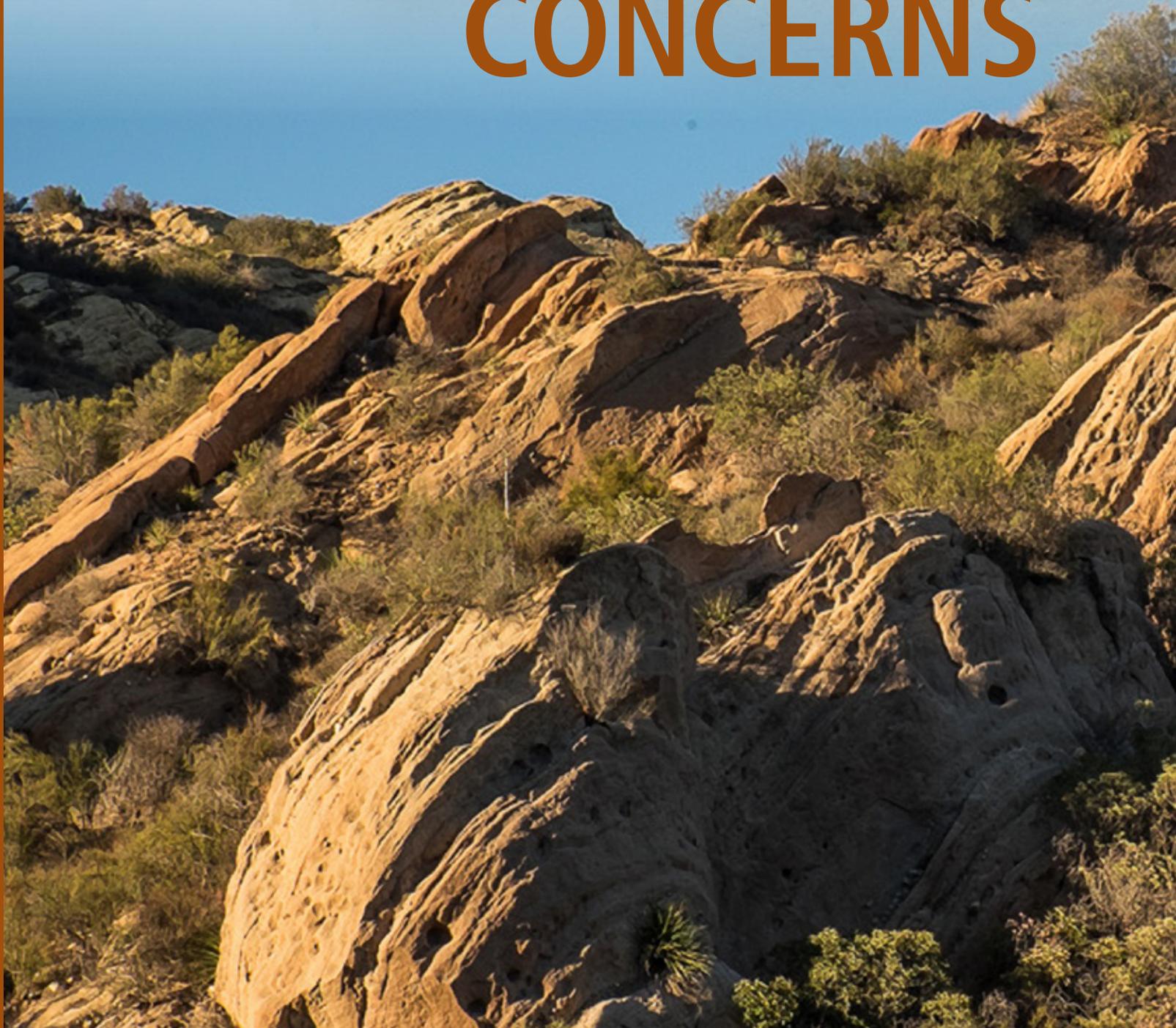
People who lose their jobs because of a disaster may apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). DUA provides weekly benefits to individuals who are unemployed and not eligible for regular unemployment insurance compensation. Apply by registering with FEMA or contacting your local unemployment office.

### Getting Legal Help

Local nonprofit organizations often provide legal assistance to individuals who have been impacted by disasters. Also, local members of the American Bar Association offer free legal counseling to low-income individuals. You can get more information at a Local Assistance Center or Disaster Recovery Center that is set up after the president declares a major disaster.

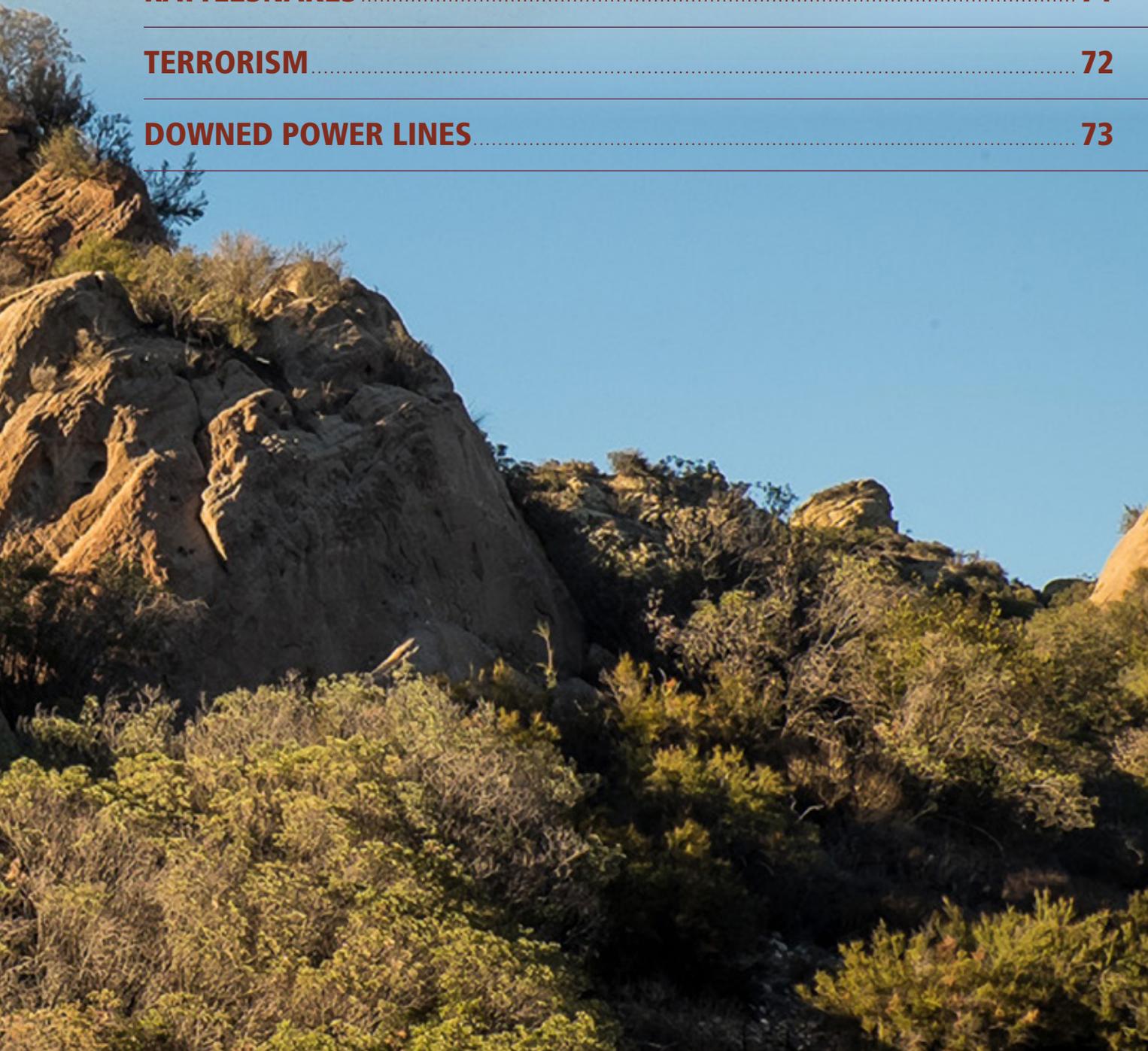
**RESOURCES:** FEMA provides several sources of assistance. Visit [www.fema.gov/webform/disaster-assistance](http://www.fema.gov/webform/disaster-assistance) and [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov) for more information. The IRS also has resources to help prepare and recover financially from disasters. Visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and search for disaster assistance. Finally, the US Small Business Administration can help business owners to prepare and know the services available to them. Visit [www.sba.gov/content/disaster-assistance](http://www.sba.gov/content/disaster-assistance).

# 5 OTHER HAZARDS AND CONCERNS



# 5 - OTHER HAZARDS AND CONCERNS

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## FIRE STATION RESPONSE TIME AND PARKING HAZARDS

On average, Fire Station 69 responds to 400 service calls every year. These calls include structure and brush fires, emergency medical services, snake removal, and other public assistance.

For every service call, response time is critical. In Topanga, rapid response is a challenge because of our narrow, winding roads. But those challenges can be magnified, and response time delayed, due to improperly or illegally parked cars blocking the roads.

### PARKING REGULATIONS

Imagine a house at the end of your road catches fire, but firefighters can't reach it because cars are parked illegally. Think that might endanger your own home? Make sure everyone in your neighborhood, including visitors and temporary workers, follows these parking rules:

- Vehicles may park in one spot on a street for up to 72 consecutive hours. After that, the car can be ticketed and towed.
- LA County fire engines are wide and firefighters work off the sides of the engines, so they generally need 15 feet of roadway clearance. Also, there must be 15 feet of clearance, in both directions, from fire hydrants and intersections. If parked cars restrict this clearance, firefighters may not be able to reach that burning house or that heart attack victim in time.
- Cul-de-sacs need to be kept clear of vehicles and other hindrances to leave enough room for emergency vehicles to turn around.
- Vehicles must park within 18 inches of the side of the road. That means as close as possible on the passenger side. Vehicles parked facing the wrong direction may be ticketed and towed.
- On roads with solid white "fog lines," all four wheels of parked cars must be inside the fog line.
- Large trash bins create a hazard for emergency personnel because they have to maneuver around them in situations where seconds count. There is a 27-hour window for trash bins to be left on a street, starting no earlier than 5:00 P.M. the day before trash day, and no later than 8:00 P.M. the day of trash pickup. The rest of the time trash bins have to be off the street.
- County zoning codes state that all residents must provide off-street parking for any vehicles connected to their homes, including those of renters, and anyone living on the property. Street parking should be reserved for visitors, not residents.
- Cars that block emergency access can be ticketed or towed by the CHP or sheriff's department.

Cars parked properly within the fog line:



## Keep Your Roads Clear and Safe

Work with your neighbors to voluntarily limit parking to one side of the road, especially on the narrowest streets, to allow for 15 feet of clearance and eliminate the need for emergency vehicles to “slalom” down a street, which slows them down. If access remains a problem, contact the LA County Department of Public Works, Traffic & Lighting Division, at (626) 300-4769 to request appropriate parking restrictions. The California Highway Patrol, sheriff’s department, and fire department will also request that Public Works install parking restrictions, as appropriate.

Mindful and considerate parking practices may save the lives of your family and your neighbors by allowing emergency personnel to respond as fast as possible.



Illegally parked vehicle



### **RULE OF THUMB**

To estimate a safe distance from a hazardous materials incident, look toward the incident, hold your thumb out in front of you at arm's length and close one eye. Alternate your thumb angle both vertically and horizontally. If you can still see the incident (such as an overturned tanker truck) on either side of your thumb, then you are too close. Back away from the incident until your thumb covers the entire width of the scene.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Chemicals can play a positive role in our lives, however they can be hazardous to humans or the environment if used or released improperly. Problems happen during production, storage, transportation, use, or disposal. Any local chemical accident is bad news for you and the community.

The two most common causes of widespread improper chemical exposure are transportation accidents and accidents at processing plants. However, you can be at risk if a couple of bottles of caustic chemicals under your sink break during an earthquake.

### REMEMBER RAIN

If you think you've got a problem with spilled hazardous materials, large or small, remember the mnemonic **R-A-I-N**: Recognize the danger. Avoid the area. Isolate the area to keep others away, and...Notify authorities by calling 911.

If you find yourself in the vicinity of a toxic chemical spill, you want to be UP—uphill, upwind, and upstream—from the suspected hazard. Here are a few additional tips:

IF YOU ARE...	DO THIS...
<b>Asked to Evacuate</b>	<p>Leave at once and take your Family Emergency Plan and Disaster Supply Kit with you, just as with any evacuation.</p> <p>Follow the routes recommended by the authorities—your normal shortcuts may not be safe.</p> <p>Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance, including infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Monitor radio, TV, and social media for information on evacuation routes, temporary shelters, and procedures.</p>
<b>Caught Outside</b>	<p>In general, try to move yourself at least one-half mile (usually 8-10 city blocks) from the danger area; use the "Rule of Thumb" (see page 68).</p> <p>Do not walk into or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists, or condensed solid chemical deposits. Try not to inhale gases, fumes and smoke. If possible, cover your mouth with a cloth while leaving the area.</p> <p>Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified.</p>
<b>In a Motor Vehicle</b>	<p>Stop and seek shelter in a permanent building. If you must remain in your car, keep car windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner and heater so the car's ventilation system is not pulling in outside air.</p>
<b>Ordered by Authorities to Stay Indoors</b>	<p>Bring pets inside.</p> <p>Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close vents, fireplace dampers, and as many interior doors as possible.</p> <p>Turn off air conditioners and ventilation systems.</p> <p>Go into a room above ground that has the fewest openings to the outside.</p> <p>Depending on the severity of the event, and directions of authorities, once inside the room, seal gaps under and around doorways, windows, exhaust fans, and vents. Use wet towels, plastic sheeting, duct tape, wax paper, or aluminum foil.</p> <p>If you suspect gas or vapors could have entered the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or a towel. Avoid eating or drinking any food or water that may be contaminated.</p>



**LEAVES OF THREE,  
LET THEM BE!**

## POISON OAK

Poison oak can be found throughout Topanga, in backyards and in parklands. Learn how to spot it from several feet away. It has a distinctive three-leaf pattern.

People allergic to poison oak may require medical attention if exposed. If you have trouble breathing or swallowing, experience swelling, or if a rash appears on your face, get to an emergency room right away.

Most people can safely treat a poison oak rash at home. If you come into contact with these plants, here are some immediate first aid tips:

- Rinse the affected area of your body with lots of lukewarm, soapy water as soon as possible. Since the oily resin does not wash off easily, it is critical that you rinse with a lot of water. Using just a small amount of water will only spread the poison.
- Use anti-itch cream. Consider using pre-exposure lotion, which creates a barrier against poison oak and sumac oils. Additionally, poison cleansers are available that can be used up to 8 hours after exposure.
- Wash your clothing.
- DO NOT scratch the rash or blisters as this can cause infection.

**RESOURCE:** Visit the American Academy of Dermatology website at [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org), and search for "poison oak."



## TRAIN YOUR DOGS

Dogs are naturally curious and don't understand the difference between a harmless snake and a dangerous rattler. Rattlesnake aversion training will teach your dog to respect rattlesnakes and help prevent a painful, costly, and potentially deadly snakebite. If a snake bites your cat or dog, keep the animal calm and immediately take it to a veterinarian who keeps antivenin in stock for treatment. (Know this before your dogs go outside where they might encounter a snake.)

## RATTLESNAKES

Rattlesnakes are the only reptiles in Southern California considered dangerous to humans. They are particularly active during the spring and summer months, and play a very important role in our ecosystems. You sometimes find them hiding in warm areas, such as underneath rocks, in trash piles, or inside animal burrows. Since trash and woodpiles are favorite hiding places, never work in these areas with bare hands or feet; use a stick or tool to make some noise and vibration before moving items around. This will likely scare away any snakes.

Many people are afraid of snakes, but rattlers are shy creatures and they don't like people (not even really nice people!). They are quite reasonable in how they defend themselves. First, they simply lie motionless. If you cut off their retreat, they offer an audible warning—the telltale rattling sound. If you move closer, they are likely to head for cover. Their venom is intended for prey (humans don't count) so they are reluctant to bite. In fact, anywhere from 25% to 50% of rattler bites are dry, with no venom injected.

There are many other species of snakes in our parts, and they can often be found sunning themselves during the daytime. Learn to recognize the difference between these harmless snakes and the potentially dangerous rattlers, so you don't freak out unnecessarily when you see a slithery serpent.

## IF YOU SEE A RATTLESNAKE...

- Leave it alone and give it plenty of room to escape. Believe it or not, the snake is more afraid of you than you are of it.
- If the snake is on your property and in a place that makes it impossible to avoid, such as coiled up by your front door, and you can't wait for it to move away on its own, you can:
  - **CALL 911.** Firefighters will be dispatched, but official department policy states they must kill the snake. Consider this a last resort, because as much as you may dislike snakes, they are just trying to survive in their natural habitat and don't deserve to die just because you think they are icky.

## IF BITTEN BY A RATTLESNAKE...

- Immediately move away from the snake.
- **Call 911** as soon as possible. If you can't use a phone immediately, get to the nearest emergency room or clinic.
- Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the victim's heart. If the bite is on a hand or arm, remove all jewelry or tight clothing. Keep the victim as still as possible.

### DO NOT:

- Apply a tourniquet
- Suck out the venom
- Give the victim caffeine, alcohol, or any medication
- Apply heat or ice to the bite
- Cut into the bite area

**RESOURCE:** For more on California reptiles and amphibians, visit the California Herps website at [www.californiaherps.com](http://www.californiaherps.com).

## TERRORISM

Since 9/11, the threat of terrorism within our borders has kept many on edge. Other than being vigilant about reporting any suspicious activity you see to the police, you can't do much to stop terrorist events from happening. But you can prepare in much the same way as you do for any disaster:

- Have a Family Emergency Plan, including an evacuation plan, and a family meeting place outside of the area.
- Establish emergency communications options for getting timely updates.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit.

## WHAT COULD HAPPEN

- There can be significant human casualties and damage to buildings and infrastructure.
- Massive local, state, federal law enforcement, and media response follows a terrorist attack due to the event's criminal nature.
- Workplaces and schools may be closed, and there may be restrictions on domestic and international travel.
- You may have to evacuate an area, avoiding roads blocked for your safety.

## FOLLOW THE DIRECTIVES OF AUTHORITIES

Monitor radio, TV, and social media to keep up with the latest information as the event unfolds. If the police ask you to leave your home, assume they have a good reason, and do what they say. Similarly, if you are advised by local officials to "shelter in place," there may be suspected biological or chemical toxins in the air. Follow the guidelines in the Hazardous Materials section on page 78.

## POSITIVE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

Young children watching televised reports may not realize that they are watching multiple airings of the same video footage. They may think the event is happening again and again, which can ratchet up the stress level. Shield them from disturbing visuals.

## ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS

Incidents of armed people entering schools, office buildings, and malls—so called "active shooter incidents"—are not uncommon. The Department of Homeland Security offers online training, including Webinars and downloadable materials to help the public prepare for, and respond to, active shooter crisis situations. A few of the suggested actions include:

- If you have a safe evacuation route, get out of the building or area as fast as possible, leaving belongings behind. Help others escape, if possible, but do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Once outside, **call 911** and provide as much detail about the shooter and location as possible. Keep others from entering the building.
- Follow the instructions of police officers. As you evacuate, keep your hands visible to officers at all times. Arriving police are very tense and won't immediately be able to identify the victims from the shooters.
- If you can't get out, find a place to hide that does not trap or restrict your options for movement. Lock or block doors and close, cover and move away from windows. Remain quiet and silence your cell phone.
- If you are out in the open and can't conceal yourself from the shooter, work with others to overpower the shooter using whatever items you can quickly find, such as fire extinguishers, scissors, or other heavy blunt objects.

Visit [www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness](http://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness) for links to training resources.

## DOWNED POWER LINES

Southern California Edison distributes electricity over 50,000 square miles of territory through both overhead and underground lines. The electricity running through these lines is inherently dangerous, and coming into contact with it can cause serious injury or death. Many people think all power lines have a protective covering on them, but they don't.

Overhead power lines connected by poles can topple over from storms or when hit by vehicles. If you see a downed power line, Edison recommends that you:

- **Call 911.** Tell the operator it is an electrical emergency and provide location information.
- **Stay away.** Never approach or touch any downed line or any person or object in contact with it. This includes a car in contact with a downed line, even if an injured person is inside the car. Always assume lines are live and that there are energized objects around them. Electricity always searches for ground, and any object that can conduct electricity can serve as a pathway to ground.

## IF YOU SEE SOMEONE IN CONTACT WITH A POWER LINE

If you see someone injured, your instinct is to help them. However, if they are in contact with or near a power line, or if there is water around them, never approach the scene. Don't even try to use an object to free them. Call 911 and wait for professional help.

## IF YOU'RE IN A CAR ACCIDENT

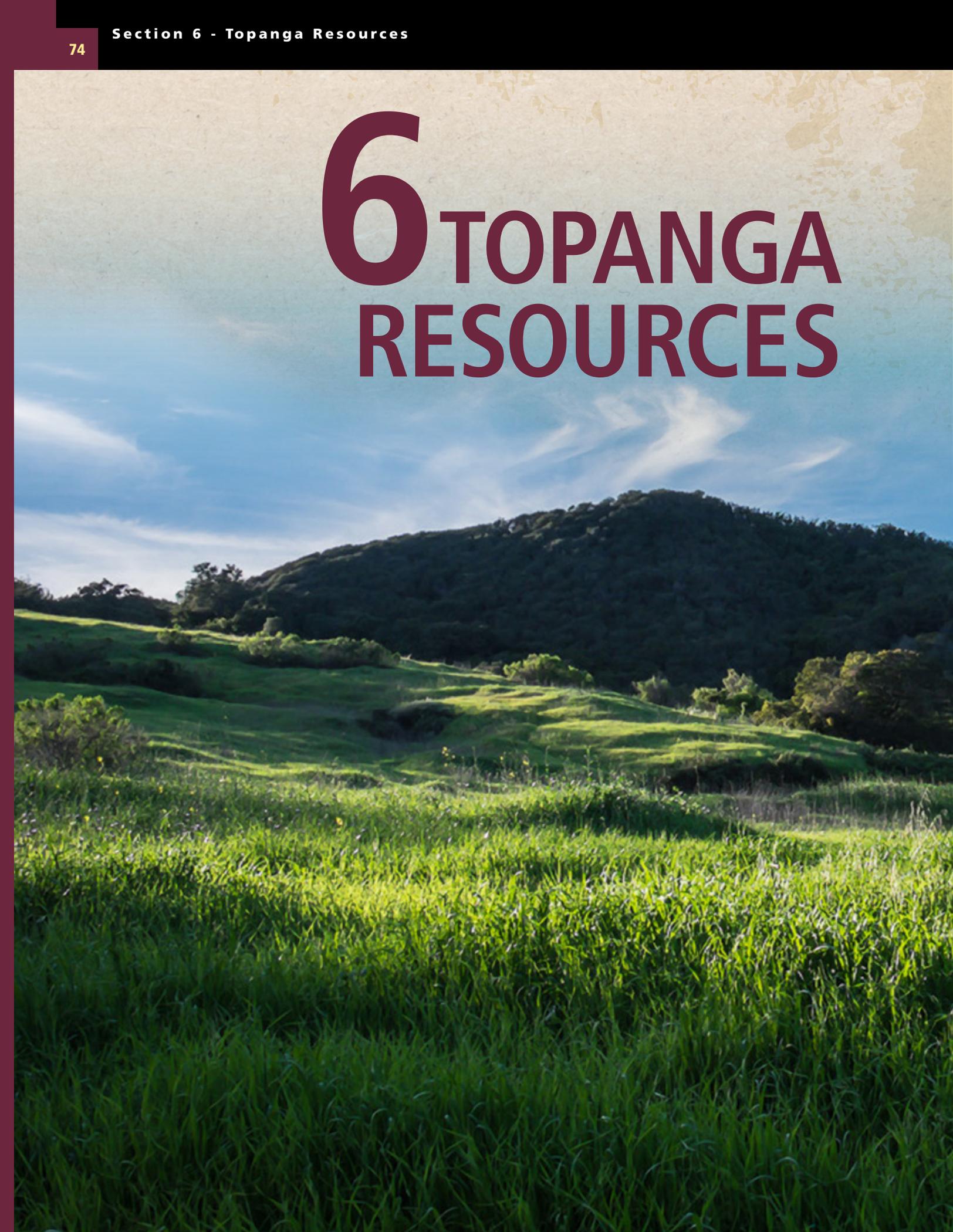
If you're in an accident and a power line is on or near your car, unless you are in immediate danger from a spreading car fire, do not leave the vehicle until a qualified Edison worker tells you it's clear. You can safely use your cell phone to call 911 for help. Lower your windows and warn others not to approach your car and ask them to call 911. If it's absolutely critical to leave the vehicle due to impending danger, follow these steps:

- Before opening the car door, make sure it is not in contact with any object touching the ground, such as trees or a fire hydrant.
- With the door fully open, position yourself facing out with both feet on the doorsill and both hands on the door frame. Take a moment to get your body balanced equally on both feet.
- In one swift motion, jump clear of the vehicle, landing on both feet without touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time, while avoiding any wires on the ground. Maintain your balance so you don't fall back against the car, or fall down on the ground.
- Walk carefully and slowly away from the vehicle by shuffling your feet in small movements. This minimizes the difference between electrical voltages between your steps. Keep shuffling until you are a significant distance away from the car and downed lines.

**RESOURCE:** Find more information about electrical safety at home, outside, and at work on Edison's website at [www.sce.com](http://www.sce.com) and search for "power lines and trees."



# 6 TOPANGA RESOURCES



# SECTION 6 - TOPANGA RESOURCES

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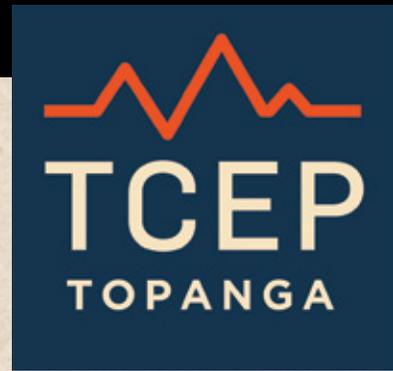
<b>TOPANGA COALITION FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (TCEP) .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>TCEP NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS .....</b>	<b>76</b>
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## TOPANGA COALITION FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (TCEP)

The Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP) is a nonprofit, all-volunteer public benefit corporation that provides emergency preparedness education and disaster status information to the Topanga community. By conducting drills, hosting community fairs and presentations, posting regularly on Facebook and Twitter, and contributing to this Survival Guide, TCEP helps Topangans prepare with tips on creating a Family Emergency Plan, a Wildfire Action Plan, and assembling disaster supply kits.



### TCEP RISES FROM THE ASHES—LITERALLY

As the last of the ashes from the devastating 1993 Old Topanga and Malibu fires were settling, a small group of Topanga residents were concerned about the lack of accurate information about how the fires were impacting Topanga. They decided to create a system for disseminating reliable emergency information and educating the public on preparing for disasters. With initial funding from former Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, TCEP was formed. Thanks in part to ongoing support from the Board of Supervisor's 3rd District Office, TCEP has grown so that today, LA County emergency first responders and political leaders use TCEP as a model for how rural communities can organize citizen volunteers to help respond to wildfires, earthquakes, floods and other disasters.

### RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATIONS

When a major disaster strikes the greater Topanga area, TCEP staffs its own Emergency Operations Center utilizing a wide-ranging communications network that gathers, verifies, and distributes emergency information through a telephone hotline, an Emergency Status web page, Twitter, and via FRS radio Top-of-the-Hour reports, giving residents the information they need to make decisions.

### TCEP NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

TCEP oversees Topanga's Neighborhood Network program. A Neighborhood Network is a group of neighbors who organize to share contact information, special skills, resources and communications to help each other during disasters. There are many Neighborhood Networks established across the canyon, with more forming all the time. Some have 12 households, while others have up to 40 households. They have brought neighbors together, fostered new friendships, created efficient emergency notification systems, and generally helped give people greater peace of mind as they face Red Flag days and the prospect of all hell breaking loose in our idyllic, but dangerous, community.

TCEP volunteers can help you set up a Neighborhood Network in your area. If you (and several friends) choose to be the coordinator of your Neighborhood Network, you will be the first to receive information from TCEP about wildfire breakouts, fire direction and areas threatened, road closures, and other pertinent updates. You can then relay this info to your neighbors through a phone tree, text messages, emails, or FRS radio.

Some Neighborhood Networks are now using commercial mass notification systems such as One Call Now or Call-Em-All, which allows one individual to record a notification message, and with a single phone call, broadcast it immediately through voice and text message to every phone number of everyone in their Network. It's the fastest and easiest way to call multiple phone numbers with an emergency message. The cost is very reasonable when shared among all members of the network.

**Resource:** (310) 455-3000; [info@tcep.org](mailto:info@tcep.org); [www.tcep.org](http://www.tcep.org); for Neighborhood Networks, email [nn@tcep.org](mailto:nn@tcep.org)  
PO Box 1708, Topanga, CA 90290; Twitter: @TCEP90290; Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TCEP90290](http://www.facebook.com/TCEP90290)

**TCEP HOTLINE:  
(310) 455-3000**



## **TCEP TEAMS GET THE JOB DONE**

TCEP is comprised of specialized teams that focus on specific aspects of the emergency preparation, response and recovery process. We are always looking for new volunteers who want to give back to the community.

**Neighborhood Networks**—Helps neighborhoods get organized so neighbors can assist each other before, during and after disasters.

**Disaster Radio Team (DRT)**—Communicates field conditions back to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) using ham radios.

**Hotline**—Delivers verified updates to people who call (310) 455-3000 during large disasters.

**Webtools**—Maintains the TCEP website and helps to manage information flow within the EOC network.

**Information Technology (IT)**—Runs and services computers, servers and software in the EOC.

**Social Media**—Posts tips and incident updates and engages the community on social media accounts.

**Logistics**—Maintains TCEP's physical infrastructure and property.

## OTHER TOPANGA ORGANIZATIONS

Besides TCEP, Topanga has several other community organizations—all run by volunteers—that are involved with emergency preparedness, response, and education. If you'd like to help make Topanga safer for yourself and others, and get to know some wonderful, caring individuals, consider lending your talents to one or more of these groups.

### TOPANGA COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (TOPANGA CERT)

The Topanga Community Emergency Response Team is made up of Topanga residents of all ages and backgrounds who provide support to the Los Angeles County Sheriff and Los Angeles County Fire personnel during and after major disasters such as wildfires, earthquakes, and floods. The team, which operates under the guidance of the LA County Sheriff's Department, also educates the public on emergency preparedness, offers free CERT training annually, and conducts regular drills to keep skills sharp.

The team is actively recruiting volunteers. Anyone age 16 or older can complete the FREE training and become a CERT volunteer. There are roles on the team for everybody, regardless of age or physical abilities.

#### Topanga CERT

(310) 903-2112; cert90290@gmail.com

PO Box 225, Topanga, CA 90290



### ARSON WATCH

Arson Watch is a volunteer program of the Malibu-Lost Hills Sheriff's Station whose goal is to prevent wildfires in the Santa Monica Mountains. On high fire danger days, volunteers patrol the area, looking for signs of fires, fire hazards, and suspicious, dangerous, or careless activities that might start a fire. Patrols are by car, horseback, bicycle, and foot. Members communicate by two-way radio.

#### Topanga Arson Watch

info@arsonwatch.com; www.arsonwatch.com

PO Box 197, Topanga, CA 90290



### TOPANGA ANIMAL RESCUE

Topanga Animal Rescue (TAR) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping animals in Topanga and beyond. It provides field medical assistance and transport for injured animals. Serving the public for the past 25 years, TAR's important services also include community education programs for schools, seniors, veterans, the homeless and community organizations. TAR has been recognized for its outstanding public service by the LA County Board of Supervisors, LA County Fire Department and Sheriff's Department, and has been honored to receive a Chamber of Commerce "Service Organization of the Year" award.

#### Topanga Animal Rescue

(310) 455-SCOT (7268); www.topangaanimalrescue.org



## NORTH TOPANGA CANYON FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (NTCFSC)

The North Topanga Canyon Fire Safe Council (NTCFSC) was formed in 2010. Its mission is to “inspire and empower our community to mitigate the risks of fire to Topanga through collaboration, education and development of resources.” It is a volunteer organization made up of Topanga residents who collaborate with other residents, the California Fire Safe Council, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, the National Park Service, Southern California Edison, and other stakeholders, to help make Topanga a more fire adapted community. The NTCFSC website offers many preparedness and educational resources, including videos on how to make your home and property more fire safe, and information on signing up for a free Home Ignition Zone Evaluation.

### NTCFSC

firesafe@ntcfsc.org; www.ntcfsc.org  
PO Box 1748, Topanga, CA 90290



## TOPANGA TOWN COUNCIL

The Topanga Town Council is a 501(c)(4) non-profit, all-volunteer organization. It interfaces with county, state, and federal agencies and provides a forum for the Topanga community to address important local matters affecting residents, businesses, property owners, wildlife, and the environment in Topanga and across the Santa Monica Mountains. The council is responsible for two main emergency-related programs: Access Cards and onetopanga.com.



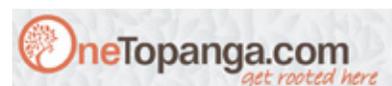
### Topanga Resident Access Cards

Access Cards can be a very important part of your Family Emergency Plan. The cards may help to expedite entry into the Canyon when the road is closed to the general public during a disaster. Access Cards don't guarantee entry, but if officials deem it safe for residents to enter, the card can speed the process of proving your residency in a specific Zone for the traffic control officer at the roadblock.

If you've purchased a card in the past, you may renew by registering and paying online at [www.topangatowncouncil.org](http://www.topangatowncouncil.org). If you've never had a card and want to get one, you have to apply in person at an authorized Access Card location to register and have your photo taken.

### OneTopanga.com – Topanga's Community Website

Onetopanga.com is the central online hub for all things Topanga. The site provides news, resources, education, and links to everything that is happening in the canyon, across the county, and beyond. You can find emergency information, alert and notification links, area hospitals, 24-hour animal clinics, current weather conditions and advisories, traffic conditions, daily fire danger levels, and much more. The community calendar keeps you up-to-date on events in the canyon, including emergency preparedness classes and training.



### Topanga Town Council

(310) 455-3001; [contact@topangatowncouncil.org](mailto:contact@topangatowncouncil.org); [www.topangatowncouncil.org](http://www.topangatowncouncil.org); [www.onetopanga.com](http://www.onetopanga.com)  
PO Box 1085, Topanga, CA 90290

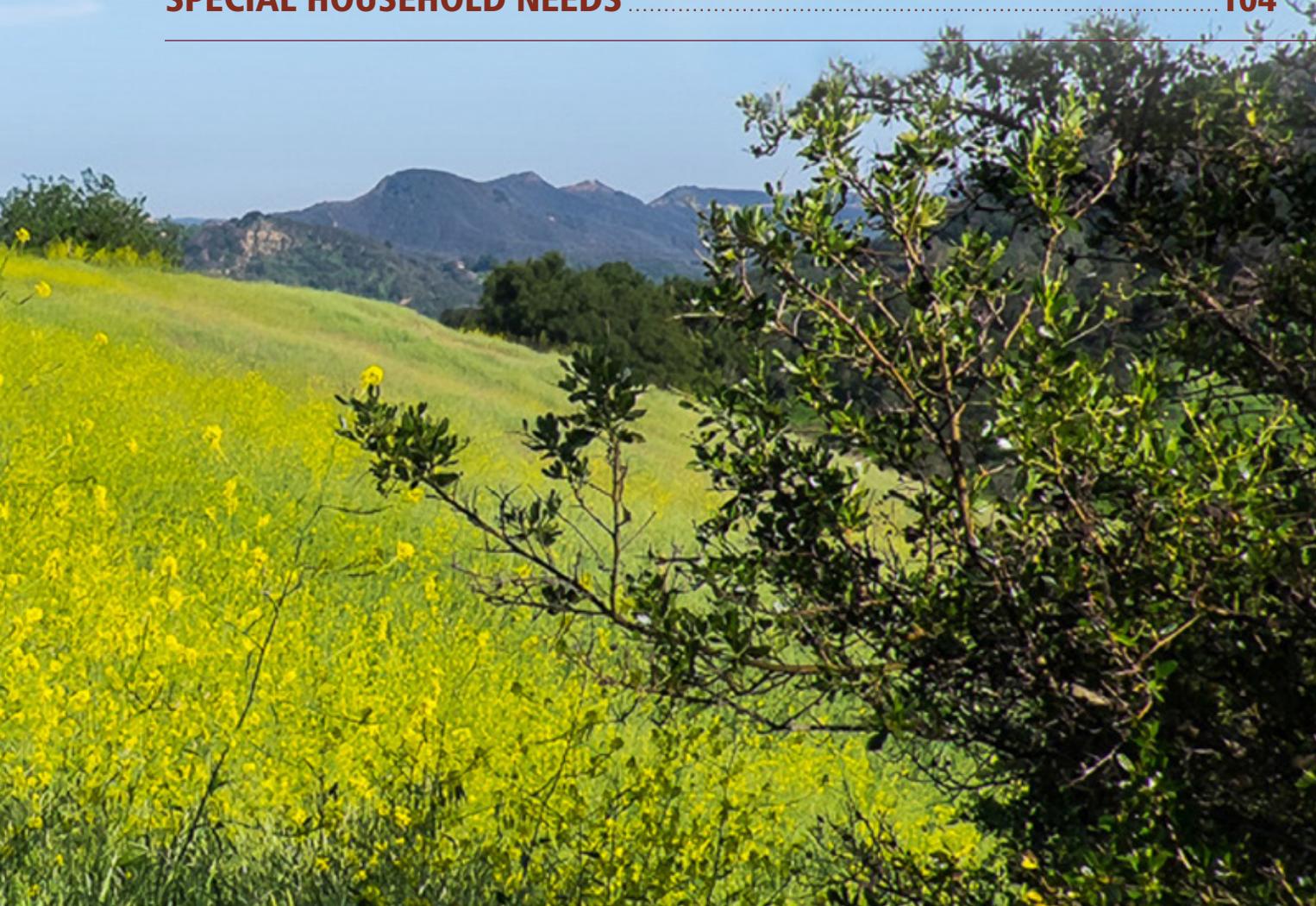


# 8 MY EMERGENCY PLAN



# 8 - MY EMERGENCY PLAN

<b>FIRE ESCAPE PLAN GRID</b> .....	<b>100</b>
<b>IDENTIFY OUT-OF-STATE CONTACT</b> .....	<b>101</b>
<b>PERSONAL INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>102</b>
<b>FAMILY REUNION INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>102</b>
<b>PET AND VET INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>103</b>
<b>EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>104</b>
<b>SPECIAL HOUSEHOLD NEEDS</b> .....	<b>104</b>



## FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

Use this grid to draw your home escape routes and note the locations of various emergency gear as shown in the key. Rehearse with your family and keep this with your Family Emergency Plan.



A large grid for drawing home escape routes and emergency gear locations. The grid is 30 squares wide and 30 squares high. A legend on the right side of the grid provides symbols for various emergency items:

- ↗ ESCAPE ROUTES
- F FLASHLIGHTS
- + FIRST AID KIT
- FE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS
- D DISASTER SUPPLY KIT
- E EMERGENCY SUPPLIES
- G GAS SHUT-OFF
- W WATER SHUT-OFF
- C CIRCUIT BREAKERS
- S SMOKE DETECTORS
- L LADDERS

## IDENTIFY OUT-OF STATE CONTACT

In the event of a major disaster that would affect telephone service, make sure everyone in your family carries this contact information at all times. If family members are separated during a disaster, the out-of-state contact can provide information to each family member as they check in.

Telephone service is usually interrupted during a major disaster. Telephone service is restored as quickly as possible, and is restored in the following order:

1. Emergency services
2. Long-distance carriers
3. Pay phones
4. Business and residential service

It is conceivable that as service is restored and you hear a dial tone, you may be able to call out-of-state, but not your next-door neighbor.

**FILL IT IN!**

	Primary Contact	Secondary Contact
Name		
Address		
Home Phone		
Business Phone		
Cell Phone		
Email		

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

**FILL IT IN!**

Name

Home Address

Home Phone

Cell Phone

**Additional Household Members**

**Phone**

**Cell**

**Email**

Additional Household Members	Phone	Cell	Email

## FAMILY REUNION INFORMATION

- Meet with family members, and decide where you will all reunite in the event of an emergency.
- Choose reunion locations both inside and outside of your home, as well as outside of the canyon.
- Identify an out-of-state contact, and make sure everyone in your family carries this contact information at all times.  
In the event that family members are separated during a disaster, the out-of-state contact can provide information to each family member as he or she checks in.
- Make sure your children know what to do and where to go in the event of an emergency if no adult is present.

**If Reuniting...**

**Reunion Location**

Inside the home

\_\_\_\_\_

Outside the home

\_\_\_\_\_

Outside of Topanga - South

\_\_\_\_\_

Outside of Topanga - North

\_\_\_\_\_

Other (Specify)

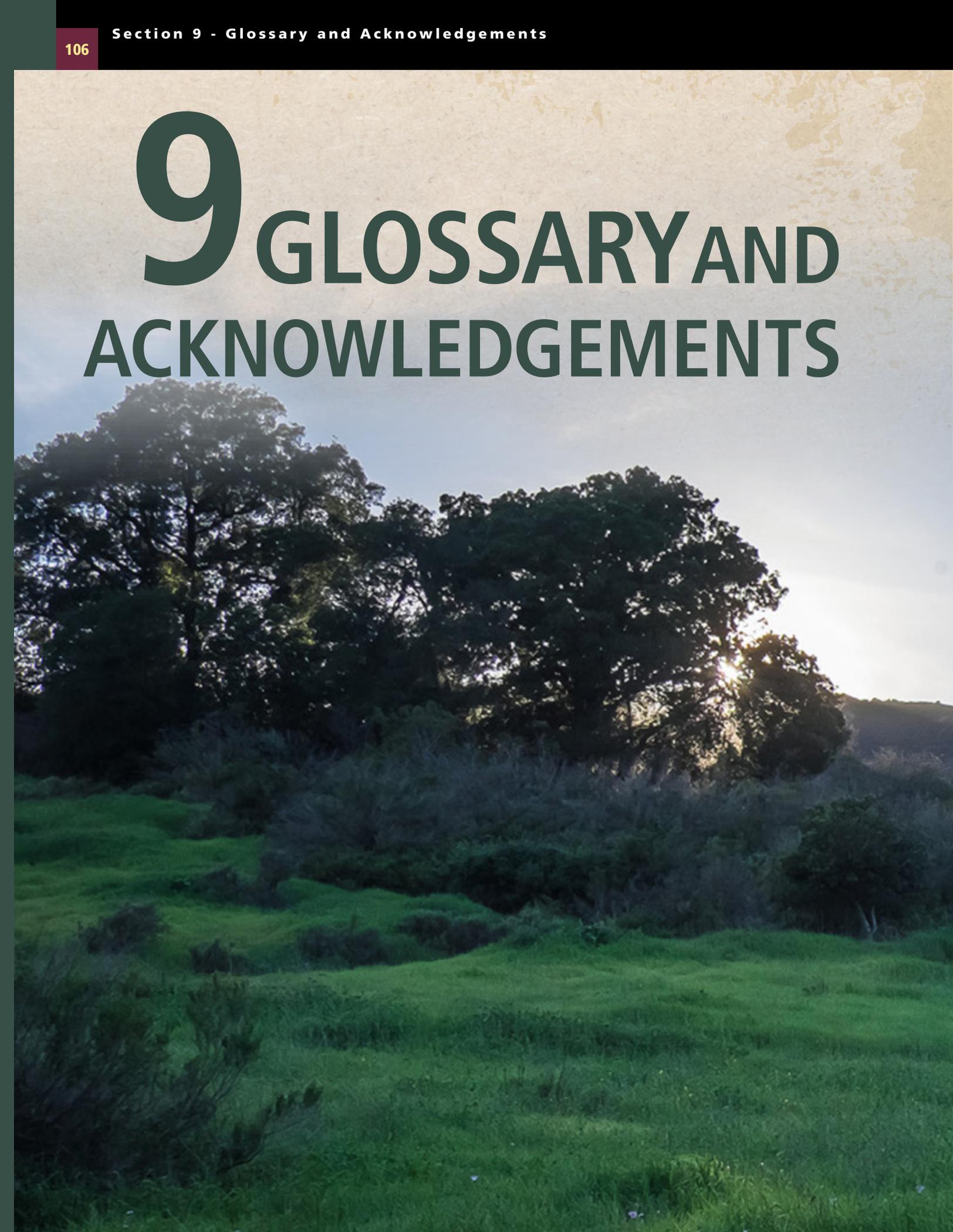
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# 9 GLOSSARY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



# 9 - GLOSSARY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**GLOSSARY** ..... 108

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ..... 112

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## GLOSSARY

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**2-1-1 LA COUNTY:** Dial 2-1-1 to receive information and referral to human services agencies throughout the County.

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**ACCESS CARDS:** The Topanga Resident Access Card is a local program approved by the California Highway Patrol and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, allowing Topanga card holders an easier and faster re-entry into the canyon during a "resident only" road closure, when officers deem it safe to return. The card is issued annually through the Topanga Town Council and is available only to Topanga residents.

---

**AERIAL FUELS:** All live and dead vegetation located in the forest canopy or above the surface fuels, including tree branches and crowns, snags, moss, and high brush.

---

**ARSON WATCH:** A volunteer program of the Lost Hills Sheriff's station whose goal is to assist in the prevention of wildfires in the Santa Monica Mountains.

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**CACHE:** A predetermined complement of tools, equipment, and/or supplies stored in a designated location and available for incident use.

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**CERT - COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM:** A citizen emergency response group.

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**CONFLAGRATION:** A raging, destructive fire; often used to denote such a fire with a moving front, as distinguished from a firestorm.

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**DRT - DISASTER RADIO TEAM:** A program of the Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (TCEP).

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**DISASTER SUPPLY KIT:** A pre-assembled group of critical items that will greatly improve the health and safety of individuals during a disaster. The kit should contain, at a minimum: goggles, bottled water, medications, respiratory protection (filter mask), glasses, personal items, flashlight, extra batteries, protective clothing (long-sleeved T-shirts, pants), cotton or wool blanket, and important documents.

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**DITCH:** If you cannot reach a Regional Shelter or a Public Temporary Refuge Area, a ditch or other low-lying area will provide more safety as a last resort than staying in your home or your car. In "The Wildfire Survival Chain" on page 53, this is plan D.

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**EQUINE RESPONSE TEAM:** The Equine Response Team is a countywide volunteer organization that assists with the safe evacuation of horses and livestock during large- and small-scale disasters. The group also works to educate horse owners on disaster preparedness. The group is sponsored by the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control.

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**EAS - EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM:** A voluntary, federally sponsored cooperative system comprised of a federal agency along with local and state governments working with private broadcasters to broadcast official alerts and warnings to local officials and the public.

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**EOC - EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER:** A facility established by an agency or jurisdiction to provide centralized management and multiagency coordination of jurisdictional response to an emergency. In accordance with California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), EOCs perform the function of the Multiagency Coordination Entity described in the National Incident Management System. See also Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness Volunteer EOC.

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**EVACUATION CENTER:** A temporary facility or location where people displaced by a disaster can go until a more permanent solution is established or they can return to their homes. In most cases, the American Red Cross will manage Evacuation Centers.

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**EVACUATION ORDER (MANDATORY):** A directive by law enforcement to evacuate a designated area immediately. Failure to follow this order may result in endangerment to the lives of others, personal injury, or death.

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**EVACUATION REFUSAL:** A formal, signed refusal by a resident to evacuate his or her home following an Evacuation Order. In this circumstance, adult residents assume responsibility for their own safety and acknowledge that they may be prosecuted under the California Penal Code.

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**EVACUATION ROUTES:** Roads and highways identified by law enforcement to evacuate individuals out of harm's way to a safe area or shelter. Evacuation Routes may be identified verbally during an Evacuation Order or pre-designated in a written plan.

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**EVACUATION WARNING (VOLUNTARY):** A warning by law enforcement either to leave a designated area because of a possible threat or to prepare to evacuate if an Evacuation Order is issued. This is the time to evacuate those in need of special assistance and your horses. The majority of Evacuation Warnings become Evacuation Orders.

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**FAIR PLAN ASSOCIATION:** A group of property insurers designed to provide affordable fire insurance to property owners in high fire danger areas.

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**FIREBREAK:**

- (1) An area around a structure where the vegetation has been modified to create defensible space (see Fuel Modification Zone);
  - (2) an area clear-cut by the fire department to halt the progress of a wildland fire.
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**FIRE SAFE COUNCIL:** Fire Safe Councils are grassroots, community-led organizations that mobilize residents to protect their homes, communities, and environments from wildfire.

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**FUEL LOAD:** Oven-dry weight of fuel per unit area (usually expressed in tons per acre).

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**FUEL MODIFICATION ZONES:** Also known as Brush Clearance Zones. The area around a structure, usually 200 horizontal feet, where vegetation needs to be managed for fire safety.

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**FRS RADIO:** Family Radio Service radios are a relatively inexpensive (approximately \$30 per pair) means of communicating in the event of a major disaster when phone service will likely be interrupted. Using FRS radios, you can communicate with your immediate neighborhood to assess damage and injuries and determine where resources are needed. See section 12 for more information on the FRS radio system for Topanga Canyon.

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**GROUND FUELS:** All materials lying on or immediately above the ground, including needles and leaves, duff, grass, small dead wood, downed logs, stumps, large limbs, and low brush.

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**HAM RADIO:** A popular term for amateur radio. Radio amateurs are prohibited by law from accepting compensation of any kind for any activities they perform as radio operators. The sheriff's department manages ham operators responding to disasters.

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**HIGH HAZARD AREA:** Geographic area prone to significant wildfire events owing to vegetation, topography, and weather. All of Topanga Canyon, Malibu, and the Santa Monica Mountains are in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

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**LOLLIPOP:** To limb up trees and shrubs by pruning the lower branches off, leaving one to three trunks, removing dead wood, while keeping the canopy relatively intact. Purpose: to separate ground fuels from aerial fuels and reduce fuel load.

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**MITIGATION:** Actions taken before an emergency to eliminate or reduce the impact of a threat or hazard. Brush clearance and brush clearance ordinances are examples of mitigation.

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**NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK:** A group of residents, usually organized by street, who come together to devise a plan of action in the event of a disaster. The plan may include the rescuing of pets, turning off utilities, retrieving items of value or sentiment, caring for children or neighbors in need of special assistance, and making sure everyone is safe in the Neighborhood Network area.

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**ONE TOPANGA:** Onetopanga.com is a community website featuring emergency information, local news, resources, directory, community calendar, and more.

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**PSR - PUBLIC SAFE REFUGE:** An area designated for individuals to find refuge during a large wildland fire. Individuals should first determine if they can evacuate the area to a safe location. A Public Safe Refuge will provide the safest area during a large wildland fire if individuals cannot evacuate the canyon completely. (Refer to the "Wildfire Survival Chain" diagram on page 53 for more information.)

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**PTRA - PUBLIC TEMPORARY REFUGE AREA:** An area designated for individuals to find refuge during a large wildland fire. PTRAs should be used only if residents cannot evacuate the canyon or reach a Public Safe Refuge (PSR) within the canyon. PTRAs are usually safer than sheltering in a home in highly vegetated areas such as Topanga, and are safer than sheltering in a vehicle. Refer to "The Wildfire Survival Chain" on page 53 for more information.

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**RED FLAG WEATHER:** Weather conditions in which winds are blowing in excess of 25 mph and humidity is below 15 percent, often but not necessarily combined with high temperatures. A Red Flag Warning is issued before the weather conditions arise, and a Red Flag Alert is issued when the conditions are in effect. Call the Red Flag hotline for information: (310) 456-5783.

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**REGIONAL SHELTER/RED CROSS SHELTER (PLAN A):** These facilities are usually pre-identified and are designed to shelter individuals in the event of a disaster. Facilities such as showers, sleeping areas, and kitchens may preexist or may have to be constructed during an incident. Regional Shelters are typically located away from the affected disaster area. For the purposes of this guide, which deals specifically with disasters in Topanga Canyon, any Regional Shelter will be located outside the canyon. (Refer to "The Wildfire Survival Chain" diagram on page 53 for more information.)

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**SCHOOL SHELTER:** A school that students will be transferred to, or remain in that will shelter them, during a large wildland fire or other disaster. School staff will supervise the students until an appointed time when they may be reunited with their parents or guardians.

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**SHELTER IN PLACE (PLAN E):** In some fires and disasters, it is safer for individuals to shelter in their homes or other locations rather than risk evacuation. NOTE: The only time it is safe to shelter in place in Topanga is when you have been instructed to do so by law enforcement or the fire department. This instruction may be delivered in person, via radio or television, or by other authorized agencies. (Refer to "The Wildfire Survival Chain" on page 53.)

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**TCEP - TOPANGA COALITION FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:** A nonprofit organization of community volunteers dedicated to emergency education, planning, preparedness, and response.

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**TCEP VOLUNTEER EOC:** An Emergency Operations Center created and staffed by local community volunteers for the Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness.

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**TACTICAL ZONE:** A geographical area used by emergency responders to improve coordination during a disaster. Topanga Canyon is divided into nine Tactical Zones, as shown on page 84. Identify the Zone(s) where you live or work, then review the detailed Zone maps starting on page 86 to locate your closest Public Safe Refuge and Public Temporary Refuge Areas.

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**TOPANGA ANIMAL RESCUE:** A nonprofit organization that has the ability to mobilize a veterinary field triage unit in the event of an emergency in Topanga; also provides ongoing animal education outreach programs for the community.

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**TOPANGA CREEK WATERSHED COMMITTEE:** A citizen group addressing environmental issues of the Topanga watershed.

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**TOPANGA SURVIVAL GUIDE:** A preparedness guide intended to inform residents in the Topanga Canyon community about safe practices for preparedness and response to disasters affecting the area. Download a copy of the guide at [www.topangasurvival.org](http://www.topangasurvival.org).

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**TOPANGA TOWN COUNCIL:** An all-volunteer, nongovernmental citizen's advisory group for the Topanga area.

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**TRAFFIC CLOSURE LEVELS:**

LEVEL 1: Open to the public.

LEVEL 2: Open to fire department, law enforcement, critical resources, and residents. (Critical resources include, but are not limited to, Municipal and Public Works, Edison, and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department volunteers.)

LEVEL 3: Open to fire department, law enforcement, and critical resources. Critical resources may need to be escorted.

LEVEL 4: Open to fire department and law enforcement only.

LEVEL 5: Closed to all traffic. Area blocked or not safe even for fire department and law enforcement.

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**TRAFFIC CONTROL POINT:** A geographical location determined by law enforcement to control access and entry to the area of an emergency incident.

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**WILDFIRE SURVIVAL CHAIN:** Ranging from A: Most Safe, to E: Least Safe, the Wildfire Survival Chain ranks options for residents attempting to evacuate the canyon in a fire. See page 53 for the full range of options.

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**WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE:** A geographical area where structures and other human development meets with wildland fuels or vegetative fuels. Generally, there is a clear delineation at this interface, with varying degrees of defensible space between the wildland fuels (brush and chaparral) and the non-combustible structures. This term would apply to many newer subdivisions built in surrounding areas and in outlying communities. Few homes in Topanga Canyon meet this criterion.

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**WILDLAND URBAN INTERMIX:** A term used to describe structures and other human development located and mixed within the wildland and vegetative fuels. The distinction between Interface and Intermix is there is no clear delineation between the wildland fuels and the structures themselves in areas considered to "intermix." In these cases, structures may be isolated or built in "clusters," often characterized with poor access roads, steep terrain, combustible construction, as well as heavy ground, ladder, and aerial fuel loading. Intermix areas are usually associated with isolated structures or with older communities, such as Topanga Canyon.

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**ZONE MAP:** For purposes of emergency response, Topanga has been divided into nine Tactical Operations Zones (see maps starting on page 85).

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### TOPANGA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (TEM) TASK FORCE

The mission of the Topanga Emergency Management Task Force, a partnership of designated public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community organizations, is to ensure the sustainability of emergency management efforts and strategies for the Los Angeles County unincorporated area of Topanga. The Task Force oversees the coordination and communication among governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the community to improve preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery. It will develop, review, and monitor community-based emergency plans, facilitate emergency planning exercises, ensure community involvement and educational outreach, and evaluate and update emergency plans after a disaster.

#### TEM Task Force Member Agencies/Organizations

Lead Coordinator, Third Supervisorial District  
 Co-Chair, Jeanne O'Donnell, CEO, Office of Emergency Management  
 Co-Chair, James Grasso, Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness

American Red Cross

California Highway Patrol

Departments of the County of Los Angeles:

Animal Care and Control and Equine Response Team

Board of Supervisors, Third Supervisorial District

Chief Executive Office—Office of Emergency Management and the Office of Unincorporated Area Services

Fire Department—Division VII, Battalion 5 and Forestry Division, Brush Clearance Unit

Public Library

Public Works—Waterworks District #29 and Road Division

Sheriff—Emergency Operations Bureau and Lost Hills Station

Los Angeles Red Cross

Los Angeles Unified School District

Non-Profits and Community Organizations:

Canyon Sages

North Topanga Canyon Fire Safe Council

Topanga Animal Rescue

Topanga Arson Watch

Topanga Chamber of Commerce

Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness

Topanga Community Emergency Response Team

Topanga Town Council

Southern California Edison

#### TEM Communications Committee Members

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Co-Chair, Maria Grycan, Los Angeles County Fire Department

Scott Ferguson, TCEP

James Grasso, TCEP

Susan Nissman, Topanga community member

Jeanne O'Donnell, CEO, Office of Emergency Management

Ryan Ulyate, North Topanga Canyon Fire Safe Council

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Stay safe...  
and above all...  
prepare!

This Guide has been prepared by the  
Topanga Emergency Management Task Force

The Topanga Disaster Survival Guide, first published in 2005, puts all of the Task Force's planning, insights, and recommendations into a single booklet for the Topanga community.

This updated edition contains many important revisions to the Emergency Management Plan and is designed to help residents become better prepared for any disaster.