

Entertainment

The lack of cellular and internet service for several days can affect the mood of people accustomed to on-demand entertainment. There will be no texting, streaming services, or social media. A Bluetooth speaker linked to a smart phone can provide some relief. Set the phone to “air-plane mode” (including turning off Wi-Fi) to improve battery life. The photo shows a USB phone power pack and a speaker with solar cells for recharging. Place them in bright sunlight for as long as possible each day.



Neighborhood Shelter

If homes are unsafe, you may need to live outside. Work in advance with neighbors, as some might have camping equipment or have attended events like Burning Man, which means they have special equipment or survival skills. Grab your Go Bag and your Shelter Kit tote to add to the Neighborhood Shelter equipment and supplies.

Additional items that improve Neighborhood Shelter:

- Tents, tarps or other shelters
- Camping vehicles or motorhomes
- Warm sleeping bags and air mattresses
- Camp stoves or propane barbecue equipment
- Shovels, sledge hammers, or crowbars that may be helpful for rescue or improvising shelter

Public Shelter

If the government calls for evacuation, Red Cross or other agencies may set up Public Shelters. These provide basic survival equipment, such as sleeping cots, blankets, or basic food. Your Go Bag provides the temporary support needed to move from your home to the shelter. The shelter might be outside your neighborhood, so you might need to move to a location to be transported. Listen to the official radio stations for details on locations and transportation options. Keep household members together and communicate with your contact outside the area.

For more details about preparing your home or business for disasters see: DisasterReadyDHSF.com

Resilient Diamond Heights (RDH) is part of the San Francisco Neighborhood Empowerment Network (NEN) empowersf.org

Sheltering During Disasters



In an emergency, you might be able to “shelter-in-place” (stay in your own home) or may need to evacuate to a public shelter. Conditions can change quickly, utilities may fail and electronic communications may be nonexistent. Equip your home now to be self-reliant for at least 5 days, as store shelves empty quickly after a major event.

Assess the Risk

Your first priority is to size-up the physical safety of your home. Determine how close and from which direction the threat is approaching before sheltering-in-place from a police action, chemical spill, storm, flood or wild fire. Confirm the structural integrity of your building if the incident is an earthquake or nearby explosion. Evacuate immediately if the building makes unusual sounds such as creaking or snapping. Inspect the exterior of the building, and leave if you find cracks, sagging, collapse, or distorted door or window frames. Pound on neighbors’ doors to warn others of damage. Recheck if aftershocks occur which can worsen damage.

Communications

Incidents can overwhelm or destroy communications technology. Take two steps now to reduce the impact in future events:

- Agree on a reunification point outside your home to meet or leave paper messages for other family members if you move to a safer location.
- Select a contact person living outside the area where messages can be left for housemates. It may be possible to call or send a text outside the area when local connections are overwhelmed. Carry phone numbers on paper in case electronic address books don’t work. Look for a pay phone or someone who has an old-fashioned landline to attempt a message, as cell and cable-based phones might not work.

Water

Running water may be interrupted by broken water mains or lack of power at pumping stations. Store 5 gallons of drinkable water per person (one gallon a day per person for five days). Loss of water also affects sanitation, as flush toilets no longer work.



Electricity

Power might be lost for days or weeks. This can eliminate cellular, cable-based telephone and internet service. If you have local power, nearby black-outs can block communications. Refrigerated food begins to spoil after 4 hours without power, so stock least 5 days of non-perishable food.

Lighting

WARNING: Never use candles for emergency lighting because of fire risks.

LED lighting is inexpensive and offers ten-times better battery life than older lights. There are many styles, from flashlights to area lanterns.

Stock 5 days of spare alkaline batteries. Replace the spare batteries every year and move the current spares to everyday use, even if the expiration date is in the future. Replace all batteries inside lights to prevent leakage. If you store lights without batteries, have at least one light with batteries in your Go Bag to get started.

If equipment has rechargeable batteries, recharge them every 6 months, because they self-discharge when sitting. Place two calendar reminders in your smart phone: 1) A 6-month repeat to recharge batteries, and 2) A yearly repeat to upgrade spare batteries and consumable Shelter Kit items.

Generators

If you own a gasoline generator to power refrigeration or lighting, ensure that the generator is operated far enough from the living area to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. *Never connect a generator to the building's electrical system unless isolation equipment is properly installed by a qualified electrician to prevent electrocution or fire.*

Never store fuel in the living space, as it is both a health and fire hazard. Use extreme caution when refueling. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby. Because gasoline goes bad in storage, consider using fuel from your vehicle so storage is unnecessary. Have appropriate syphoning equipment.

Natural Gas

Gas stoves, furnaces or water heaters might not operate without electricity as newer gas appliances use electrical ignition. You *might* be able to use a match to light the flame if you hear gas when you turn on a burner. *If the gas to your building has been shut off, only qualified utility workers can restore it safely.*

Safety Kits

Prepare 2 home safety kits: 1) The “Go Bag” is a smaller kit that allows evacuation, and 2) The “Shelter Kit” lets you shelter-in-place.

NOTE: The Go Bag is part of the Shelter Kit when you shelter-in-place, so it is not necessary to duplicate the contents.

Go Bag

The Go Bag lets you move your family to a place of safety. The Go Bag must be easy to carry. It is intended to get you to shelter, not support living outside the home. Build it in a backpack or a small roller-type suitcase. Keep it near your main entrance where everyone knows its location. While appropriate clothing is important, grab it on the way out rather than trying to pack it in the Go Bag.

Go Bag items:

- A basic first-aid kit
- An LED flashlight with fresh batteries
- A battery powered or hand-cranked AM/FM radio (in San Francisco, the official stations are 740 AM* or 88.5 FM*)
- At least \$100 in small bills as credit card and ATM systems may not work because of power or internet outages
- Photocopies of insurance documents, property lists, living wills, powers of attorney, etc.
- Paper copies of phone numbers as phone address books may be down
- A USB battery pack with needed cables for your phone; recharge every 6 months
- A notebook with pens and pencils, as electronic note apps may not work
- A pet carrier and food if appropriate

Additional items for EACH person:

- A 1-Liter bottle of water
- Energy or protein bars to provide 500 calories; refresh annually
- Mylar safety blankets and plastic rain ponchos
- Photocopies of identification (passport, green card, driver license, etc.)
- Essential medications for 5 days. Rotate the Go Bag medicine every time you get a new prescription so they are not out-of-date. (If medications are refrigerated, grab them as you leave.)
- Small bottles of hand sanitizer
- N95 hazard masks
- Small toys if you have children
- Baby formula if appropriate; refresh as needed

Shelter Kit

You need additional items to shelter-in-place. Except for the water, pack supplies in a large container (such as a tote bin) so they are not consumed during normal times and can be moved outside quickly if external shelter is needed. Refresh the consumable contents yearly.

Shelter Kit items:

- 5 gallons of drinkable water per person (1 gallon/person/day for 5 days)
- Protein bars or other non-perishable food to supply 1000-2000 calories per person for 5 days
- Manual can opener
- A larger first-aid kit than in the Go Bag
- LED powered area lights and additional flashlights
- Adult or infant diapers if appropriate
- Spare batteries as needed for lights and other equipment
- (2) Fire Extinguishers, size 4A40BC (or larger)
- Large trash bags and toilet paper for sanitary needs
- A sealed pack of baby wipes for hygiene purposes when there is no water
- A large bottle of hand sanitizer
- A gas shut-off tool

*San Francisco values only. Other cities may use different radio frequencies.