



— N. SONOMA COUNTY —

Communities Organized to
Prepare for Emergencies

Disaster Knowledge Digest

Neighbors
Helping
Neighbors



Introduction	3
How to Be Prepared	4
Stay Informed	5
Make a Plan	6
Build a Kit (or Two)	10
Hazard-Specific Information	13
Wildfire	14
Earthquake	16
Tsunami	17
Winter Storm & Flood	20
Public Safety Power Shutoff	22
Now What?	24

This project was made possible through support provided by the USDA Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy, under the terms of the PERFACT III Agreement #21-CA-11132543-096. The content and opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of such agency, The Nature Conservancy, or the Watershed Center and no official endorsement should be inferred.

Research on preparedness shows that people who believe themselves “prepared” for disasters often are not as prepared as they think. 40% of survey respondents did not have a household plan, 80% had not conducted home evacuation drills, and nearly 60% did not know their community’s evacuation routes.

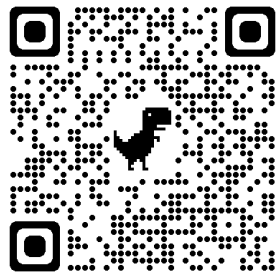
Becoming prepared can be done all at once, or in small steps along the way. This digest provides basic information on general preparedness and specific hazards in Sonoma County. We’ve included many ideas and ways in which you can begin to get prepared. Each section also includes important links for those of you who like to take a deeper dive into the science and the solutions.

As a COPE leader you will want to make sure you have a basic understanding of the all-hazards approach to preparedness. This digest will provide you with that information and more. Highlighting a different component of preparedness at community meetings provides an excellent opportunity to generate discussion and encourage your neighbors to “Get Ready Together!”

How to Be Prepared

An All-Hazards Overview

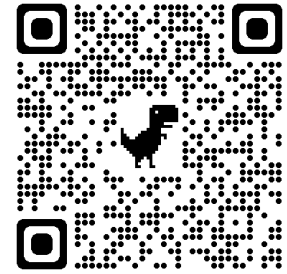
- This section will provide general guidance for preparedness for all hazards.
- An all-hazards approach helps us be ready for “whatever” might happen. If planning is too restrictive we can find ourselves faced with a new type of disaster and preparations that won’t work. An all-hazards approach allows for maximum flexibility.



Check out COPE’s webpage for more information and links to important resources. [→](#)

Stay Informed

You and your neighbors should sign up for both SoCoAlert and Nixle, and consider purchasing a NOAA Radio. Not all notification systems work in all situations, so using multiple systems will ensure that Emergency Services have every opportunity to inform you of life-saving information.



SoCoEmergency.org



Create a managed account to receive urgent notifications about local emergencies by phone and/or text message. Powered by CodeRED.
Learn more:

SoCoEmergency.org/home/emergency/stay-informed/socoalert



Text your zip code to 888777 to opt-in or sign up online to receive email, text or voice messages with alerts and advisories from local law enforcement. Learn more: Nixle.com



Get a NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) and leave it on at all times. When activated by an event, these radios generate an alarm, voice alert, and flasher. Sonoma County residents may tune their NOAA radio to **frequency 162.475**. If you are deaf or have hearing loss these radios have add-on equipment such as strobe lights and bed shakers to help alert everyone in the household that action is needed in an emergency. Learn more: weather.gov/nwr

Stay Informed

Other options for staying informed are smart phone apps that alert you when responders are notified about events (WatchDuty; PulsePoint), and the COPE Leadership GroupMe. Also consider what type of local notification system is right for your community. Many communities are using GroupMe or One Call Now.*



WatchDuty was developed by a local COPE member. Their mission is to publish only the facts that provide true situational awareness in case of emergency, without editorialization or prediction. watchduty.org/how-it-works/overview



PulsePoint is a 911-connected app that can immediately inform you of emergencies occurring in your community and can request your help when CPR is needed nearby. PulsePoint Respond is not available in all areas. pulsepoint.org



GroupMe is an app that helps people connect simultaneously. COPE has a GroupMe for Leaders so important information can be shared quickly in an incident. Some local neighborhood groups have also established their own groups for this purpose. groupme.com/en-US



One Call Now is an app that delivers your messages to everybody on your designated contact list. Send messages as your choice of a phone call, SMS text message, email or push notification. Many COPE communities use this for internal communications. onsolve.com/platform-products/critical-communications/one-call-now/how-it-works

*Check out this video on different ways to communicate created by COPE Northern Sonoma County: [youtube.com/watch?v=2XLVg4ZVFUg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XLVg4ZVFUg)

Make a Plan

Safety: Your First Priority

- People and pets are the priority.
- If you will need help in an evacuation, make a plan with neighbors, family, or friends, now. Discuss how they can assist you, what you will need, and a back-up plan in case the primary help is not able to assist.
- Learn how to open your garage door manually.
- Always have an extra supply of prescribed medications on hand. Have paper or electronic copies of those prescriptions in your Go Bag or on your smart phone.
- First responders will be overloaded in a disaster, help yourself by planning in advance!
- Download a Personal Planning Guide: SoCoEmergency.org/home/prepare/make-a-plan
- Learn about planning for your pets: halterproject.org



**Neighbors working TOGETHER
make the difference.**

Be sure you and all your neighbors have an emergency plan. This will include working together to help those who might need assistance to create, and execute, their emergency plan.

Make a Plan

The 6 P's of Evacuation

Some circumstances require you to evacuate for your safety. Your evacuation plan should cover: Where will you go? How will you get there? Who will move you (if necessary)? What will you take (Go Bag)? Your first priority as a COPE leader is to make sure you and your family are safe. If you have time and the ability, then help others.

1. People and pets—have a plan

- Do you know at least two ways out of your community?
- Where will you meet family after evacuation?
- Where will you stay and how will you contact each other?
- Where will your pets stay?

2. Papers, phone numbers, and other important documents

- Deeds, birth certificates and other irreplaceable documents should be in one location so these can be grabbed at a moment's notice.

3. Prescriptions, eyeglasses, and vitamins

- You may be gone from your home for days, so be sure you have access to all your health-related items.

4. Pictures and irreplaceable memorabilia

- These are priceless and could be lost forever.

5. Personal computers, info stored on disks, hard drives

6. Plastic (credit cards, ATM cards) and cash



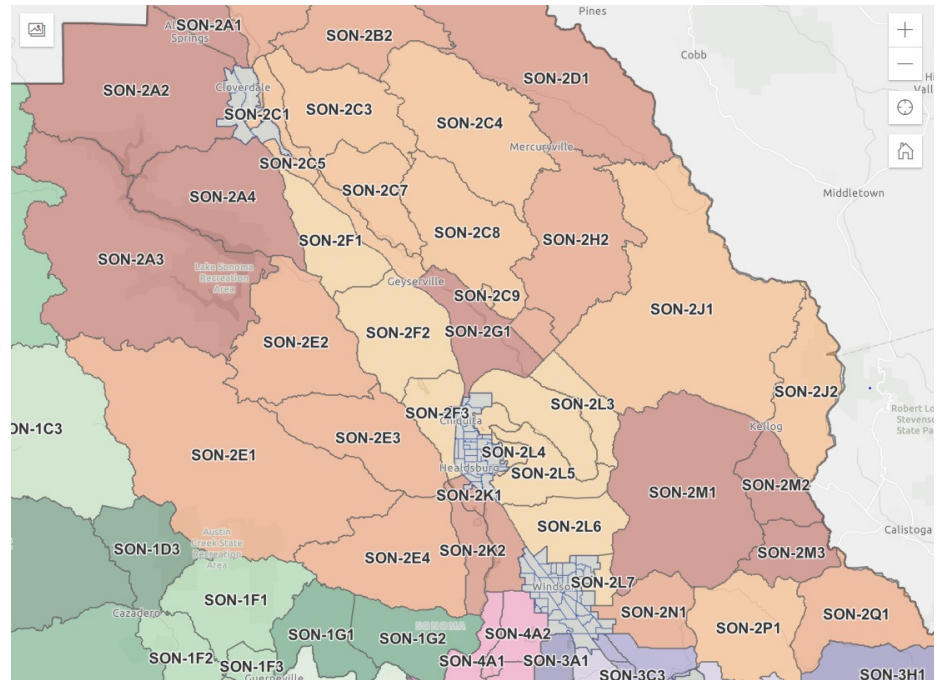
Make a Plan

Know Your Zone

Know your Zone and make sure your neighbors do too! Go to this site and look yours up and you can use the COPE resources card to write it down and distribute to your neighbors. Should situation warrant an evacuation warning or order these will be issued by Evacuation Zone. Learn more: SoCoEmergency.org/get-ready/evacuation-map

Evacuation Warning:
Area is in a zone where potential harm may be heading. Be prepared to leave quickly.

Evacuation Order:
Area is immediately threatened by danger and all residents should leave immediately.



Build a Kit (or Two)

You will need to gather supplies for two different types of kits. Many people gather these supplies over time, lots of these things are in your home already! All leaders and their families should have kits. Share what you know about building your kit with your neighbors.

- 1. Your Go Bag** contains essential supplies for 72 hours including emergency water, food, blankets, lights, dust masks, and other survival supplies that will help you through any situation. Everyone in your family should have their own Go Bag.
- 2. A Shelter-In-Place Kit** needs supplies for seven days minimum.



Go Bags

- Building Go Bags is a great community activity. Gather a group together to share their best ideas for contents.
- Your Go Bag contains essential supplies for 72 hours. Personalize these kits and keep them where they can be easily reached—at home, in the car, at work, or school. This is particularly important during fire season when a quick getaway may be needed.
- A backpack or other small bag is best for these kits so that they can be easily carried in an evacuation. Make sure the bag is big enough to hold everything you need for three days.
- **Customize** based on your needs! Do you have medications? Special dietary needs? Hearing aids?
- **Replace perishable items** like water, food, medications, and batteries on a yearly basis.
- **TIP:** Hold an annual replenishing party and eat and drink the replaced contents as refreshments.

Go Bag Basic Supply List

- Water: Six 8-ounce boxes, cans, or pouches
- Food: Minimum needed for 3 days
- Emergency blanket or poncho
- Change of clothes, sturdy shoes
- Medical consent forms
- Medical supplies: First aid kit, 3-day supply of life-saving medications
- Radio: AM/FM emergency radio with batteries
- Lighting: Flashlight with batteries or crank flashlight
- Support supplies: Whistle, work gloves, masks, trash bags
- Copies of important documents (ID, insurance cards, deeds, passport)
- Extra eyeglasses, batteries for hearing aids
- Cash
- Personal hygiene supplies: Wet wipes, pocket tissues, personal sanitation products
- List of emergency contact phone numbers including an out-of-state contact
- Comfort items: Book, game, etc.

Shelter-in-Place Kits

Sometimes the best action is to stay put. This is called “shelter in place.” For example, after a large earthquake it is usually best to stay home and off the roads. Have enough supplies to last for at least seven day, but preferably for two weeks. Call the people on your Emergency Contact List to let them know where you are and that you are sheltering in place. Contact your COPE neighborhood leaders and check on your neighbors if it is safe. Meet at your community or neighborhood refuge area if you have one.

- **Remember to customize** based on your needs! Do you have medications? Special dietary needs? Hearing aids?
- **Replace perishable items** like water, food, medications, and batteries on a yearly basis.

Basic Shelter-in-Place Supply List

- Water: One gallon of water per person per day for at least 7 days
- Food: Minimum 7-day supply of non-perishable food; a 2-week supply is better if you live in an isolated area
- Battery-powered, solar, or hand-crank radio
- NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Moist towelettes, trash bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Manual can opener
- Warm clothes, extra blankets
- Food and extra water for your pets or assistance animal
- Important items for you, such as spare eyeglasses, hearing aid batteries, medications



Special Issues, Special Solutions

Got all your basic supplies and plans ready? Different hazards—wildfires, earthquakes, floods—require some additional preparation. Here are some tips on how to prepare for any hazard. Share this information with your neighbors and work together to be ready.

This is not a comprehensive list of potential hazards and risks in Sonoma County, but does include the most likely threats in the area.



TIP: Share different info at different times of year to not overwhelm your neighbors. Scan the QR code to check out the COPE planning calendar.

Be Ready Together for Wildfire

Let's face it, wildfire risk is real in Sonoma County. There is a lot you can do to get ready, limit disruption, and stay safe should a wildfire occur. The following recommendations are for all communities in Sonoma County from May through November.

- Learn about hardening your home and creating defensible space to mitigate your risk of wildfire. readyforwildfire.org/Prepare-For-Wildfire
- Have a family plan for evacuation and two meet-up locations predetermined.
- Have a Go Bag for each member of the family—including pets—in an accessible place, such as near the exit door, in your car.
- Make sure your gas tank is always at least half full.
- Keep your phone on and charged to allow for emergency alerts to reach you anytime.
- Reach out to neighbors who may need help with this list and offer assistance.
- **If you see a fire, call 911.**
- **If asked to evacuate, do so immediately. If you will need more time, leave sooner.**
- To understand where events are happening go to SoCoEmergency.org for local emergency updates and maps.

Check out these COPE videos:

- Prescribed Burns: youtube.com/watch?v=_pe7jo9jpoc
- Wildfire Insurance Initiatives: youtube.com/watch?v=F4WFXimHp-s
- How to become a Fire Adapted Community: youtube.com/watch?v=edv-pf8NChM

Wildfire

A Red Flag Warning means that there is an increased risk for fire danger due to warm temperatures, very low humidity and stronger winds. As COPE leaders you will want to send a message out to your community when there is a red flag warning. If you have a COPE Fire Awareness sign, you will want to put up your red flags. Some of your most vulnerable neighbors may want to leave the area and stay with friends or relatives.

Get Ready:

- **Keep your emergency plan ready** and up to date. (tinyurl.com/46m4mxyb)
- **Get your Go Bag out** and make it accessible. Make sure your **phone is charged**. Leave it on and near you to be sure you can receive alerts. (tinyurl.com/3zaceu7h)
- **Leave your car out of the garage** and make sure you have plenty of gas.
- **Contact neighbors** to ensure awareness of the Red Flag Warning. Offer assistance if you are able.
- Let your **out-of-town emergency contacts** know what is happening.
- **Learn More:**
 - SoCoEmergency.org/get-ready/local-hazards/wildfire
 - sonomacountyfd.org/open-burning
 - readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/ready-set-go
 - readyforwildfire.org/Prevent-Wildfire

Red Flag Warning

Remind your neighbors of what NOT to do during a Red Flag Warning:

- Don't build a campfire in a forested area.
- Thoroughly extinguish all cigarettes and smoking materials.
- Don't pull your vehicle over onto grass as it can spark a fire. If necessary, pull over on a paved road.
- Use spark arrestors on portable gasoline-powered equipment.
- Ensure trailer chains don't drag on the ground as they may spark.



Earthquake

Earthquake Safety

An earthquake is a sudden, rapid shaking of the earth caused by the shifting of rock beneath the earth's surface. They can strike without warning, at any time of year, day or night. Everyone needs a plan that includes how to prepare, what to do when the ground starts to shake, and how to respond and help neighbors, families, and friends in the time immediately following a shake.

Learn more:

Shaking Together:

An Earthquake Ready Webinar

[youtube.com/watch?v=d5ufyfwXJmo&t=63s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5ufyfwXJmo&t=63s)

SoCoEmergency.org/get-ready/local-hazards/earthquake

earthquakecountry.org/sevensteps

ssc.ca.gov

pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2008/3027

Prepare NOW

1. Practice makes perfect!

Practice the Drop, Cover, Hold On earthquake drill with family and neighbors. Hold on to any sturdy furniture until the shaking stops.

2. What could fall on you, your family, or pets in an earthquake? Secure items, such as televisions, and objects that hang on walls. Store heavy and breakable objects on low shelves.

3. Consider obtaining an earthquake insurance policy whether you own or rent your residence.

4. Make sure you have supplies for the whole family for at least 7 days in your Shelter-in-Place Kit in case getting on the road is challenging.

5. If you live near or visit the coast, be sure to learn more about Tsunami: SoCoEmergency.org/get-ready/local-hazards/tsunami

TIP: Practice Drop, Cover, Hold On annually with your neighbors.

During and After an Earthquake

- **Drop, Cover, Hold On.** Crawl only if you can reach better cover without going through an area with more debris.
- **If indoors,** stay there until the shaking stops. DO NOT run outside.
- **If in a high-rise building,** expect fire alarms and sprinklers to go off. Do not use elevators.
- **If near slopes, cliffs, or mountains,** be alert for falling rocks and landslides.
- **Expect aftershocks** to follow the largest shock of an earthquake.
- **If you are trapped,** cover your mouth. Send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting so that rescuers can locate you.



Tsunami

The word “tsunami” comprises the Japanese words “tsu” (meaning harbor) and “nami” (meaning wave). Tsunami are a series of waves created by an underwater disturbance, usually associated with earthquakes occurring below or near the ocean. Large landslides or volcanic activity can also trigger a Tsunami.

These rare events can be extremely deadly—in the past 100 years, 58 of them have claimed more than 260,000 lives, or an average of 4,600 per disaster, surpassing any other natural hazard.

Even if you don’t live at the coast you may visit. Time will be critical, so learn about Tsunami risk , warning signs of a Tsunami, and what to do if you are under a Tsunami Warning.



Tsunami

In some cases, an earthquake can be felt before the Tsunami occurs. If you feel a large (strong and long) earthquake and are near the coast this is your warning—get to higher ground and inland as quick as possible. **Long, Strong, Get Gone!**

Do not wait for official notification. Some earthquakes may be farther away and do not cause ground shaking, but do result in elevated Tsunami risk. If told to evacuate, do so immediately. If you have time, check on your neighbors to ensure they are aware and can evacuate quickly.

When you are given a Tsunami Warning:

- Get to high ground as far inland as possible. **Evacuate, Don't wait!**
- Be alert to signs of a tsunami, such as a sudden rise or draining of ocean waters.
- Listen to emergency information and alerts.
- Check with [SoCoEmergency.org](https://www.socoemergency.org) for additional details and information, such as shelters opening.
- Make plans to shelter with friends and family, if possible.
- If you are in a boat, go out to sea.

Learn more:

- [SoCoEmergency.org/get-ready/local-hazards/tsunami](https://www.socoemergency.org/get-ready/local-hazards/tsunami)
- [tsunami.gov](https://www.tsunami.gov)
- [kamome.humboldt.edu](https://www.kamome.humboldt.edu)
- [ready.gov/tsunamis](https://www.ready.gov/tsunamis)

Winter Storm & Flood

Floods are the most common natural hazard in the United States. Recent fires in Sonoma County make storm seasons of particular risk for landslides and debris flows. Storms, floods and slides can cause property damage, loss of utilities, and loss of life, so plan now to be prepared to act. Review your emergency supplies, make a plan for the whole family, help your neighbors get ready, and make sure you can stay informed and be alerted to hazards in your area.



Preparing Before a Flood

- Know the type of flood risk in your area. Visit FEMA's Flood Map Service Center: msc.fema.gov/portal/home
- Sign up for SoCo Alert: SoCoEmergency.org/get-ready/stay-informed/#signup
- If flash flooding is a risk in your location, monitor potential signs, such as heavy rain.
- Learn and practice evacuation routes, shelter in place plans, and flash flood response.
- Make sure your Go Bag is ready in case you have to leave immediately, or if services are cut off. Include warm clothes for dressing in layers.
- Purchase or renew a flood insurance policy. It typically takes up to 30 days for a policy to go into effect and can protect the life you've built. Homeowner's policies do not cover flooding. Get flood coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)
- Protect your property. Move valuables to higher levels. Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves. Consider a sump pump with a battery.
- Check in with neighbors who may need assistance getting ready and evacuating.

Learn more:

SoCoEmergency.org/get-ready/local-hazards

Winter Storm & Flood

If you're under a flood warning, find safe shelter right away.

- Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters.
Turn Around, Don't Drown!
 - Just six inches of moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.
- Determine how best to protect yourself based on the type of flooding.
 - Evacuate if told to do so.
 - Move to higher ground or a higher floor.
 - Stay where you are.



Check out this COPE Webinar:
**Wading Through Flood Information-
A Flood Ready Webinar**
youtube.com/watch?v=8CY0qWpmmUk

Public Safety Power Shutoff

When certain conditions occur PG&E may shut power off to certain lines (de-energize) to avoid potential for lines to fail and spark a fire.

This is known as a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS).

We are usually given warning of an impending power shutoff based on predicted wind speeds, humidity, fuel load, and observable conditions.

PSPSs most often coincide with National Weather Service Red Flag Warnings.



Public Safety Power Shutoff

Eight things you can do to get ready for a power shutoff:

1. If you have lifesaving medical equipment:
 - Verify that PG&E has you registered with their [Medical Baseline Allowance](https://www.pge.com/medical-baseline-allowance) program. (tinyurl.com/8sxnvs7)
 - Have a back-up power sources for all critical medical needs, including refrigerated lifesaving medications.
 - Have pre-established connections with nearby family or neighbors to assist if needed.
 - Talk to your medical provider about a power-outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medicines.
2. Have a back-up charging system for cell phones and keep devices fully charged at all times. Keep them on and with you during Red Flag Warnings.
3. Consider alternate power generation choices for your home or critical business systems. Be sure to follow all safety instructions for stand-alone power generators. See [Portable Generator Safety Tips](https://www.pge.com/portable-generator-safety-tips) for more information. (tinyurl.com/bd4je945)
4. Keep vehicle gas tanks full (pumps may lose power) and electric vehicles fully charged.
5. Identify a place you can go to cool off, if necessary.
6. Keep some cash on hand. Credit/debit stations and ATMs may be without power.
7. Check and update your emergency kit and supplies, including hard copies of critical information and life-saving prescriptions. Review the [supplies needed](#) in case of a power outage, including flashlights, extra batteries, and food and water for every household member. (tinyurl.com/2mjs9jac)
8. Sign up for PSPS notifications* and learn more about [PG&E Power Shutoffs](#) in your area and work with your neighbors to make sure everyone is safe and ready. (tinyurl.com/2xx4rtps)

*If you get notice of a PSPS be sure to share the information with your neighbors to make sure everyone gets the news.

Now What?

Knowledge is indeed power where emergency preparedness is concerned. The information you learn in this digest and the actions you take will affect your outcome should disaster strike. Being prepared means lowering your chance of being caught off guard. It also means you are ready to act quickly when minutes count.

As a COPE Leader you should:

1. Review and understand the information in this digest.
2. Make a plan to share this information with your neighbors.
3. Plan your meetings to include ways to improve and sustain your neighborhoods readiness.

