

SAFETY MATTERS

RISK
MANAGEMENT
NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

SEPT. 11, 2026

Preparing for Emergencies:

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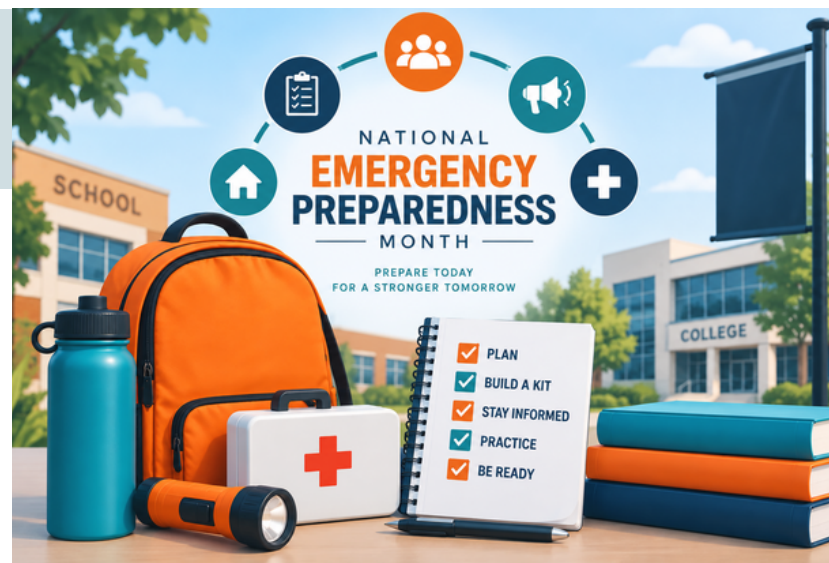
NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

OBJECTIVE To raise awareness about the importance of emergency preparedness and reduce the impact of disasters.

Emergencies such as earthquakes, wildfires, floods, or acts of terrorism require a unique and flexible approach to preparedness, especially in educational environments. As we begin September, we have an opportunity to recognize an essential national observance- National Preparedness Month. This observance serves as a meaningful reminder of practical steps schools and districts can take to help protect students, faculty, and staff during an emergency.

This week's edition will cover essential elements of both community and school preparedness.

Since 2017, we have experienced emergencies and disasters that have included droughts, floods, wildfires, mudslides, earthquakes, power shutoffs, and a worldwide pandemic. This year, we encourage our school communities to review their Emergency Operation Plans (EOP) and Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSP) to help ensure everyone understands their school's procedures. It is essential that every student, faculty, and staff member, regardless of their



location, receives education about disaster preparedness. By teaching individuals how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, we empower them to protect themselves, their families, and their communities. Incorporating disaster preparedness education into school curricula provides students and staff with potentially life-saving knowledge and skills. They learn how to create emergency plans, assemble disaster supply kits, and understand evacuation routes. These skills not only improve personal safety but also help build a more prepared, resilient, and connected community.



Community Preparedness

Preparedness 5 Ps

Below is a suggested list of some necessities you may need to have packed and ready to go. However, individual circumstances will vary:

- **People/Pet Supplies**
 - Kennel, cat carrier, litter box, leash, water, food, toys, and pet vaccination records.
- **Prescriptions**
 - For children, animals, seniors, and persons with access/functional needs (along with equipment for daily treatments, additional power cords and batteries), oxygen, and hearing aids.
- **Papers**
 - Titles, Medicare, Medicaid, homeowners' insurance, medical records, credit cards, cash, copies of identification cards, passports, powers of attorney, wills, birth certificates, and car registrations.
- **Personal Needs**
 - Clothes, sturdy shoes, cell phone chargers, laptop, glasses, contacts/solution, toothbrush, toiletries, hygiene products, wet wipes, wash clothes, towels, paper plates, cups, plastic utensils, flashlight with extra batteries, sleeping bag, first aid kit, infant formula, and diapers.

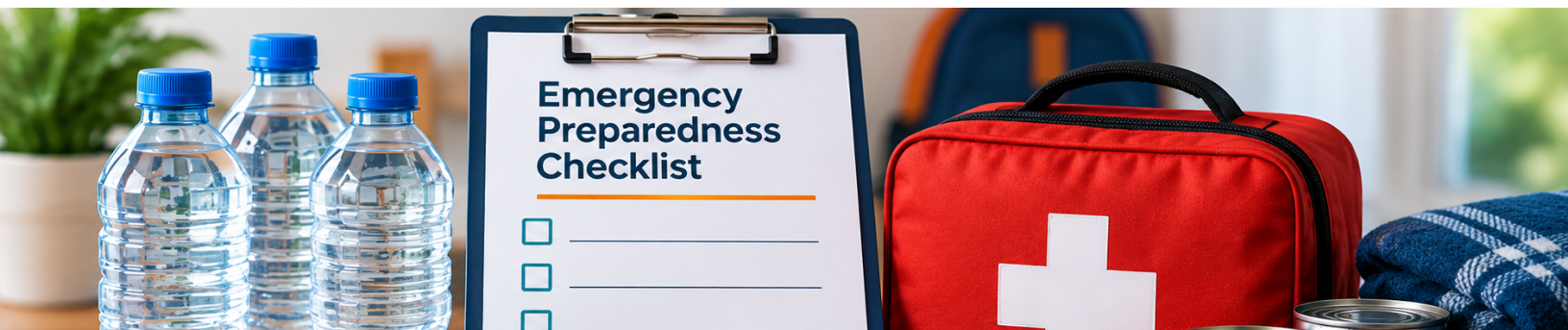
- **Priceless Items**

- Photos, heirlooms, jewelry, and other irreplaceable items.

Essential Survival Kit Items

According to [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov), a basic/essential kit should include:

- **Water:** one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation.
- **Food:** at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food.
- **Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert**
- **Flashlight**
- **First aid kit**
- **Extra batteries**
- **Whistle (to signal for help)**
- **Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)**
- **Plastic sheeting, scissors, and duct tape (to shelter in place).**
- **Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)**
- **Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities).**
- **Manual can opener (for food)**
- **Local maps**
- **Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery**





School Preparedness

Tips for Teachers and Staff

A disaster or emergency can happen at any time. As teachers prepare their classrooms for the new school year, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) encourages teachers, staff, parents, and guardians to think ahead about emergency preparedness.

Talk to your students about your school's disaster/emergency plan.

- Have a conversation with your students about what an emergency could be and how to be safe. Try introducing the topic to young students through pictures and activities.
- Be familiar with your school's emergency plan and learn where you can evacuate your students safely if needed.
- Teach your students how to properly shelter in place and how to take cover.
- Practice your plan before an emergency so everyone knows what to do if a disaster occurs.
- Talk to parents/guardians about your school's emergency preparedness plans and encourage at-home preparedness planning.
- Ensure your student's emergency contact information is up to date and that they know who their emergency contact person is.

Individual Emergency Planning for Students with Disabilities. Consider the following needs:

- Notification of an emergency and communication
- Accessible evacuation routes
- Personal care assistance and supervision
- Shelter
- Medication and medical protocols

Consider These Topics for Inclusion in Your Emergency Plan

- Communication plan that includes a process for alerting the school/district, first responders, families/guardians, and other identified stakeholders who need notification.
- Consider the use of social media in your plan.
- Campus ingress and egress points.
- Campus lockdown procedures.
- Active Intruder/Shooter Response.
- Shelter in place and evacuation plans.
- Transportation plan.
 - How are you incorporating school or district transportation resources into evacuating or relocating students and personnel?
- Reunification of students with their families/guardians.





SEMS IN SCHOOLS

The list below suggests ways that you can divide various emergency responsibilities among your site and district personnel and explains how the SEMS (Standardized Emergency Management System) and ICS (Incident Command System) can be adapted for schools. Everyone will have responsibilities based on their role, and some individuals will have additional responsibilities during an emergency.

Major Concepts/Components:

- Every emergency, regardless of its size, requires certain tasks, specifically management planning, operations, logistics, and finance/administration.
- The system can be expanded or contracted, depending on the situation and immediate needs. One person may perform more than one function.
- Every incident needs a person in charge. This person is called the Incident Commander at the site level, or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Director at the district level.
- No individual should directly oversee more than five to seven people. [Note: this does not apply to Student Supervision.]
- Common terminology - All faculty and staff in the school/district should use the same words to refer to the same actions. This terminology should be understood and practiced before an emergency occurs.

Schools and SEMS: Where do schools fit into this model?

Depending on location and circumstances, the mutual aid process may differ among operational areas, schools, school districts, and other jurisdictions.

The variation is due to a few issues at the city and county levels:

- Many school districts cover several cities, municipalities, and/or tribal jurisdictions.
- Several school districts are in unincorporated areas.
- Some school districts are in small cities that have insufficient resources even for their own needs.
- The role of each County Office of Education differs; therefore, schools and districts will need to know how their county will support them.

In the SEMS model, school sites and districts are considered special districts within the SEMS hierarchy of mutual aid support. Special Districts are below the local level and generally under the city or county jurisdiction. School sites and districts need to work with their County Office of Education to determine the types of support available during an emergency response. The figure below better illustrates schools and their mutual support during a disaster.





The Four Phases of Emergency Management

Emergency plans should include the four phases of emergency management, which are prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. For example, if a county is developing plans to address a wildfire, then logically, it would plan for how to prevent or mitigate its risk from wildfires, prepare for a wildfire, respond to the wildfire, and lastly, how to recover from the wildfire.

Prevention-Mitigation

- Defined as any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural or human-caused hazards and their effects. This definition distinguishes actions that have a long-term impact from those more closely associated with immediate preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

Preparedness

- Involves activities undertaken in advance of an emergency to develop and enhance operational capacity to respond to and recover from an emergency. As part of a comprehensive preparedness program, the emergency management community (districts, counties, etc.) should develop plans and procedures, maintain prevention programs, manage resources, establish mutual aid agreements, train personnel, and educate the schools.

Response

- Activities are comprised of the immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and the environment, and meet basic human needs. An example is evacuating schoolchildren to higher ground during a tsunami emergency. It is important to have points of contact from the following partners: local law enforcement, fire departments, local Office of Emergency Services, County Department of Education, the American Red Cross, and other local resources that can assist.

Recovery

- Recovery refers to actions to restore the learning environment for schools affected by an event. Recovery is an extended period that blends into the “before” timeframe of the next hazard event for a community. It should include steps to build back better so that future natural hazards have less impact.

National Disaster Preparedness Month in September offers a unique opportunity to integrate crucial life skills into school curricula. By equipping students, faculty, and staff with knowledge, skills, and a sense of responsibility, we can contribute to the creation of a more disaster-resilient society. Schools play a pivotal role in shaping the preparedness mindset of future generations. By embracing this responsibility, educators and communities can work together to ensure that no one is caught unprepared in the face of adversity.

References for Additional Resources

[Ready.gov – National Preparedness Month](#)

[Weather.gov – September](#)

[Redcross.org – 30 Days of Preparedness](#)

[CalOES – CA Emergency Management for Schools: A Guide for Districts and Sites](#)

[CalOES – Tips for Teachers](#)

[FEMA- Hazard Mitigation Planning](#)

[FEMA - Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools](#)

[NFPA Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities](#)

[The “I Love U Guys” Foundation – Standard Response Model](#)

This California Schools JPA Safety Matters is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.





SIGN-IN SHEET

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Facilitator: _____ Facilitator's Signature: _____

Date: _____ Organization: _____ Department: _____

Participants:

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