



CITY OF SAUSALITO

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS – EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PROGRAM

“Preparing and Protecting our Community”

IDENTIFYING THE RISK OF DISASTER

Most people have never lived through a disaster. Many people don't even know anyone personally who has been through a disaster. However, the statistics make it plainly obvious; every person is vulnerable to becoming a victim of a disaster.

The Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA) lists seventeen (17) kinds or types of hazards that can result in a person or group of persons experiencing and suffering from a disaster:

1. Dam Safety
2. Earthquakes
3. Extreme Heat
4. Fires
5. Floods
6. Hazardous materials
7. Hurricanes
8. Landslides
9. Multi-Hazard
10. Nuclear
11. Terrorism
12. Thunderstorms
13. Tornados
14. Tsunamis
15. Volcanoes
16. Wild Fires
17. Winter Storms

To these, we can also include global pandemics such as the bird, avian, or swine flu, power grid failures, as well as personal disasters, such as sudden illnesses and accidents. The list of possible disasters is daunting. Based on where a person lives or works, not everyone is subject to every hazard which may lead to a disaster. However, all of us are subject to disasters that involve fire, water, hazardous materials, terrorism, pandemics, and weather related incidents.

Four Levels of Risk

Disasters, to some extent, are location specific. But, for a more realistic assessment of the actual risks you, your family, and your friends may face in your location you must be aware of the Four Levels of Risk.

Level 1 – National Zone- This encompasses the entire nation. There are few disasters of this magnitude, but a global pandemic is one of the disasters that would meet this criteria.



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Level 2 – Regional Zone – This zone encompasses your town, city, county, or depending on the disaster and your location this zone can even include your state. Anywhere within a 20 mile radius of your home. If you have a long commute, anticipate a second regional zone for your place of employment.

Level 3 – Neighborhood Zone – This zone encompasses the approximate 3 mile radius of your home, your work place, and your children’s schools.

Level 4 – Home Zone – This zone is your actual home, work place, or your children’s school.

Level 1 – The National Zone

The quickest way to get an overview of major natural hazards that may lead to a disaster is to look at the maps provided by FEMA. These maps are large-scale and regional in scope therefore they are not in great detail. These maps are meant to provide general risk-assessment information and guidance only. FEMA has produced a booklet titled *Are You Ready? An In Depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness* and the City of Sausalito has created *Disaster Preparedness: A Citizen’s Guide*. These books will help you determine local risks in the context of the of the following hazards: floods, tornados, hurricanes, thunderstorms, lightening, extreme storms, cold, extreme heat, earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, debris flow, mud slides, tsunamis or tidal waves, fires, and wild land fires.

You can obtain FEMA’s *Are You Ready? An In Depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness* by one of two ways:

- 1) Call 1-800-480-2520 to order a free single copy. This will take several weeks to arrive.
- 2) The booklet can be downloaded from <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>. There is a Spanish version available at http://fema.gov/spanish/areyouready/index_spa.shtm.

You can obtain the City of Sausalito’s *Disaster Preparedness: A Citizen’s Guide* online at <http://www.ci.sausalito.ca.us/Index.aspx?page=667>.

You should mark on the map the hazards that it indicates. Look at every map FEMA has available for your location. You may think that your location is not susceptible to an earthquake, volcanoes, or wild land fire, but with one look at the map you could be in for a real surprise, particularly with respect to the hazard of flood.

Level 2- Regional Zone

One of the best methods of determining the risks within your region is to ask yourself, “What are the hazards that everybody knows about this area?” Chances are that you may have insight into highways, manufacturing plants, dams, and rivers which could be of use or cause problems during a disaster. In addition to utilizing your own knowledge, ask those around you for what they know about regional risks, you may learn about a hazard that was unknown to you.



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Get a good map of your city or town. These can be located at Triple A or any chain convenience store. With a pencil and a piece of string, use the map’s scale to mark off a 20 mile radius from your home, work, etc. Holding one end of the string at your address, and the pencil at the appropriate distance, draw a circle around your address.

A good resource for printable maps is Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>). You can also download the Google Earth Program for free at <http://earth.google.com/>. These maps will allow you to see your address and neighborhood in much greater detail. These maps will help you understand the physical lay of the land: geography and topography.

Note on your map the locations of major highways and railroads (sources of possible hazardous waste spills and explosions) military installations, major airports, historic buildings (potential terrorist targets), rivers (floods) and any other features that catch your eye as a potential source of problems.

Level 3 – Neighborhood Zone

To discover the specific risks in your neighborhood, walk it. Walk the neighborhood more than once in order to get a better sense of the neighborhood and the associated hazards. In addition to walking the neighborhood, drive it as well, this will give you a different perspective of the neighborhood and will help you identify additional hazards. During these trips around the neighborhood, take you maps with you. Note the distance you are from major highways, railroad tracks, warehouse, power plants, airports of any size, while you are surveying the neighborhood. Note important aspects as such as if your location is commonly upwind or down wind. Keep track of the wind over time so you are aware of which way it typically shifts and at what time.

Is there a lake or a body of water around you? If so is it above or below you? Be aware of rivers or even a dry streambeds, these areas may be subject to flooding in severe weather. Know the locations of major water, gas and power lines.

Level 4 – Home Zone

Know the distance to the nearest police and fire stations as well to the nearest hospital. Know the possible causes of roadway obstructions that may delays or block your paths of escape or help.

Be aware of your surroundings and know what the possible hazards are associated with those surroundings. If you live next door to business know what type of business they do and what type of chemicals or hazards are associated with their business. Beware of the roadway facing you house, place of business, etc. Know what type of traffic travels that roadway and the hazards associated with it.



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Know where the gas and power lines are on and near your property. Beware of the potential fire hazards in and surrounding your home as well as any other hazards that you may face. Keep emergency supplies on hand as well as plans regarding how to react when an emergency or disaster occurs.