

ESP FOCUS

Plan for Shelter



You May Need a Place to Stay

The magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake on January 17, 1994 damaged more than 11,300 residential buildings, forcing almost 44,000 people into shelters set up by the American Red Cross and Salvation Army.

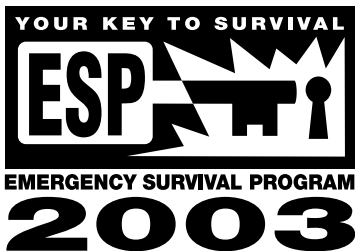
A large flood, fire or other emergency in a populated area could severely damage even more residential buildings.

What would residents of your neighborhood do for housing if their homes were uninhabitable?

What would you do if an earthquake or another emergency forced you and the people you know to remain at work or school for several hours or days?

This ESP Focus sheet provides information that will help you find other shelter options. Planning for emergency shelter is the next step in getting ready for future emergencies.

Future ESP Focus sheets will show other aspects of developing your emergency plan and response program.



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Flyer funded in part by a contribution from:

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N O V E M B E R

Select a Shelter Team

The Planning Committee and the Block Captain should identify members of the Shelter Team.

The Shelter Team will be responsible for finding alternate shelter for those who are unable to remain in their homes, businesses or schools.

Before the next flood, fire, earthquake or other emergency, the Shelter Team should develop a strategy that identifies:

- A post-earthquake meeting place
- Potential Red Cross shelters
- Alternate modes of shelter
- Transportation sources

Post-Emergency Meeting Places

The Shelter Team should identify a place where displaced people can meet after an emergency. The location can serve as a pickup point for those needing transportation to Red Cross shelters, relatives' homes or other housing sites. Possible meeting places include large open areas and large buildings that are unlikely to suffer damage.

Red Cross Shelters

Congress has given the Red Cross the responsibility for establishing and operating shelters after disasters. It is important to note, however, that although the Red Cross has listings of designated sites for shelters, all of them might not be useable. After an earthquake, building inspections are necessary to ensure the structural integrity of each site prior to use. This process could take up to 72 hours. Once potential sites are selected by the Red Cross, communities will be notified through the media. Before the next emergency, your shelter coordinator should meet with your local emergency agency and Red Cross chapter.

What to Expect at an ARC Shelter

The Red Cross provides mass shelter for disaster victims in such facilities as schools, churches and auditoriums. Resources provided by the Red Cross include:

- Meals
- Physical and mental health services
- Information
- Personal hygiene items
- Bottled water

Persons deciding to stay at a Red Cross shelter should be prepared to bring bedding, personal medications and other special needs items.

Alternate Shelter Sites

Not everyone who is displaced will stay in a shelter setting. The Shelter Team should identify alternatives. Other possible housing sites might include:

- Homes of relatives
- Unoccupied rooms in undamaged buildings
- Parking lots
- Playgrounds

Facilities for Pets

Pets are prohibited from staying in Red Cross shelters. The Shelter Team should work with representatives of your local emergency agency, Department of Animal Regulation, Humane Society or Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to identify pet shelters.

Transportation Sources

The Shelter Team should identify those who might not be able to transport themselves to a shelter. The team also should develop and maintain a list of persons who can provide transportation.



This action sheet is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase emergency preparedness at home, in the community, at work and at school. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and representatives from Southern California cities and counties assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.