



**GROUP 6**  
CALIFORNIA WING - CIVIL AIR PATROL

## **60-Second Safety Advisor**

### **Disaster Preparedness, Part III**

*Over the next few weeks, the 60-second safety advisor will concentrate on disaster preparedness. You can't plan on when a disaster will strike or what kind you will confront, but you can take general steps to prepare for many kinds of disasters. The key is forethought.*

In any major disaster, the likelihood is that you or some family member or friend will be trapped in a building. In a public building there will be posted evacuation plans, fire extinguishers, sprinklers or fire hoses, first-aid kits, and probably emergency lighting.

But it is possible that in a private home where disaster preparedness has not been thought about, there may be none of these. That should not be the case in *your* home:

- Inexpensive home smoke detectors are plentiful and required by code in hallways and rooms that could be used as sleeping areas.
- Inexpensive home fire extinguishers are readily available.
- Sit down with your family and plan an escape. Be especially aware that in an earthquake a building could rack, in effect locking doors. Point out sliding glass doors as possible escape routes (some can even be removed entirely from their tracks from the inside), but be sure to demonstrate how to unlock them; show how egress can be made from a garage, even if the door is closed and power is off; have a home escape ladder easily available for evacuation through a window from a second story if all other exits are unavailable.
- Show the location of emergency utility shut-offs, both inside and outside the home, and how to use them. Interior electrical sub-panels may have a master shut-off, or you may have to turn off each circuit breaker manually, but master panels

will have a single-lever shut-off. Similarly, individual gas lines to water heaters, stoves and the like may have individual shut-offs, but they may be inaccessible, so know where the master cut-off is.

- Have an emergency break-out tool kit handy. It should have a hammer or small sledge; crowbars; a Yankee or other *manual* drill with various sizes and types of bits; and a saw – preferably a multi-purpose one, but a hacksaw if nothing else. Such a kit can be small.
- Know where alert warning radios and broadcast radios are. Equally important are batteries and flashlights. Have them in multiple locations.
- If there is a resident who is an invalid or who has serious mobility problems, contact the fire department. Some departments keep computerized record of such locations that can be downloaded to rescue personnel. Others issue special decals homeowners can put on exterior doors to alert rescuers.

*(Note to all Group 6 personnel: Neither the Aircrew Safety Briefing nor the 60-Second Safety Advisor are meant to be top-down only. Comments, criticisms, suggestions and contributions are welcome and may be incorporated into future issues. Send comments to [cbagdikian@suddenlink.net](mailto:cbagdikian@suddenlink.net)).*

