

Issue 26, November 2004

The Three-Minute CARD Tip Sheet



Some Tips on Best Practices in Agency Preparedness

Thanks to our group of presenters who at the September Information Exchange shared their tips for developing an agency emergency plan. Here follows a much abbreviated tip list.

1. Form an emergency planning team.
2. Develop relationships with local police and fire – it really helps if they know a little about your agency!
3. Identify an alternate work site in case you need to evacuate.
4. Identify responsibilities for staff in a disaster.
5. Teach staff how to operate fire extinguishers.
6. Store a backup supply of food & water for staff and clients.
7. Maintain an offsite back up of vital records.
8. Use walkie-talkies (or Nextel system) for staff communications.
9. Work with neighboring agencies.



Test Your Ability to Respond in a Disaster!

Use the following tabletop exercise to help you to better prepare for managing events in an emergency. The events below describe the situation at your agency immediately following a major 7.0 magnitude earthquake that lasted for 35 seconds. *How will you respond?*

The Situation at Your Agency

- No electricity; there is an emergency generator, but no fuel
- Telephones are not working
- Light fixtures and ceiling tiles have fallen
- Water leak in the bathroom
- One client appears to be in cardiac distress
- There are no reports of serious injuries sustained by other clients although some clients are hysterical and are calling for help
- The glass door in the front lobby has shattered, strewn large shards of glass across the entrance
- Smell of gas in kitchen
- Some staff want to leave to check on children at home

Your Task

What are your priorities (what will you do 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc., & why)?

* See page 2 for the suggested response priorities & discussion



In Response

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A Publication of San Francisco Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disaster
made possible by support from the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the United Way

In Response is SFCARD's monthly newsletter for current information
on disaster preparedness in the San Francisco community.

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Suggested Response Priorities and Discussion To the Earthquake Tabletop Exercise

SF CARD suggests the following response priorities to the Earthquake Tabletop Exercise on page one.

1. Gas - Smell of gas in kitchen
Gas is flammable & explosive so it is very important that if you smell gas to open any windows and doors and shut off the gas, at the main valve if necessary.
2. First Aid - One client appears to be in cardiac distress
What if someone is seriously injured - how will you respond? Provide first aid and CPR training for staff, but do not give CPR to someone who has a pulse and is breathing.
3. Water leak in the bathroom
Turn off the water, at the main valve if necessary, to prevent leaking. Maintain an emergency supply of water for drinking and cooking (a gallon of stored emergency water a person per day). If you fear water is contaminated you can treat it by boiling it for up to 10 minute or adding a water purification tablet.
4. Some clients are hysterical
Maybe you want to gather everyone in a common area and calm and reassure them and let them know the situation is under control and tell them what you are doing.
5. Some staff want to leave
You probably need to expect that half the staff will want to leave. Encourage all staff to develop family disaster plans that include an "out-of-area" contact that staff can call to advise of their status and obtain assurance that other family members are okay.
6. No Electricity -- You have an emergency generator, but no fuel
Without power, how are you going to get news and information about the disaster? Obviously, you need a portable radio and extra batteries as part of your emergency supplies along with light sticks or flashlights. Generator -- In a power outage, gas pumps will not work. However, you could probably find someone in the neighborhood with extra gas, or you could simply siphon gas from your car.
7. Telephones are not working
Aside from using cell phones from different providers or cell phones in different area codes, plan to use a pay telephone which has a dedicated circuit.
8. Clean-up Debris - Large shards of glass & light fixtures/ceiling tiles
This will prevent people from getting minor cuts.

