

THREATS & HAZARDS In California

FOREWARD

By Elizabeth Hall

In my efforts to bring to you preparedness information that is both informative, helpful to the area in which we live and yet interesting without being repeated and overdone to death can be difficult at times. In my search to bring you something different, I came across preparedness information just for Californians. It comes from the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) website. In the next 12 weeks, I'd like to touch on 12 topics we as Californians face. The information is basic and will have added informational links and downloadable materials for your convenience. With so much information packed in each subject, you may want to save or add to your "Favorites".

Statement from the California Emergency Management Agency

Emergency preparedness means being prepared for all kinds of emergencies, able to respond in time of crisis to save lives and property, to help a community or even the nation return to normal life after a disaster, and ensuring that the environment is protected. The potential for a catastrophic event impacting California, the most populous state in the nation with an estimated population of 38 million in 2008, is something that requires this all hazards approach.

The information available within the "Threats and Hazards" portion of the Planning and Preparedness Division web site is intended to provide preliminary information on potential hazards that may impact the citizenry. The information provided will include preparedness tips and or guidance on how to be ready for these hazards and vulnerabilities should they impact the State.

FREEZE EMERGENCIES

Part 1 of 12



California may experience freeze conditions at any time during the winter. The most recent severe experience was in January 2007 and affected several areas of California. There were areas receiving snow that rarely experience this weather pattern such as the cities of San Bernardino, Malibu and West Los Angeles. The snow level dropped

close to sea level during this cold weather period. In addition to this rare snowfall, there were periods without precipitation and temperature records were set throughout California with lows of 36 in downtown Los Angeles, 35 in San Diego, and 21 in the central valley city of Los Banos.

The San Joaquin Valley is the largest citrus producing region in the United States, and the production of these fruits was adversely affected by the freezing weather. The cold-sensitive agriculture that grow in this area such as oranges, lemons, avocados, and flowers were greatly damaged due to the cold and an estimated 75% of the nation's citrus crop had been destroyed during this freeze event.

A comprehensive contingency plan is important in protecting life and property. The California Emergency Management Agency Freeze Contingency Plan is available for review.

Emergency Management Agency Freeze Contingency Plan is available for review. ["California Freeze Plan"](#) (Ctrl + click to open link)

Preparedness Tips: Winterize Your Home

Download these ["Winterize Your Home"](#) tips. (Pdf download – Ctrl + click to open).

Take the time now to get your home ready for the winter season by following these tips:

1. Have your heating system checked by a professional annually. This will ensure that your system is working safely and efficiently which, in turn, will save you money. If you heat by wood, clean your fireplace or stove. Have your chimney flue checked for any buildup of creosote and then cleaned to lessen the risk of fire.
2. Make sure your home is properly insulated. If necessary, insulate walls and attic. This will help you to conserve energy and reduce your home's power demands for heat.
3. Caulk and weather-strip doors and windowsills to keep cold air out.
4. Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic from the inside. This will provide an extra layer of insulation, keeping more cold air out.
5. Inspect and flush your water heater.
6. Clean gutters. Leaves and other debris will hamper drainage.

7. Replace batteries of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors. If you did not do it when you set the clocks back, do it now.

8. To keep pipes from freezing:

- o Wrap pipes in insulation or layers of old newspapers
- o Cover the newspapers with plastic to keep out moisture
- o Let faucets drip a little to avoid freezing
- o Know how to shut off water valves

Protecting Water Pipes

To prevent the mess and aggravation of frozen water pipes, protect your home, apartment or business by following the simple steps below.

Before Cold Weather

1. Locate and insulate pipes most susceptible to freezing, typically those near outer walls, in crawl spaces or in the attic.
2. Wrap pipes with heat tape (UL approved).
3. Seal any leaks that allow cold air inside where pipes are located.
4. Disconnect garden hoses and shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house.

When It's Cold

1. Let hot and cold water trickle at night from a faucet on an outside wall.
2. Open cabinet doors to allow more heat to get to un-insulated pipes under a sink or appliance near an outer wall.
3. Make sure heat is left on and set no lower than 55 degrees.
4. If you plan to be away: (1) Have someone check your house daily to make sure the heat is still on to prevent freezing, or (2) drain and shut off the water system (except indoor sprinkler systems).

If Pipes Freeze

1. Make sure you and your family knows how to shut off the water, in case pipes burst. Stopping the water flow minimize the damage to your home. Call a plumber and contact your insurance agent.
2. Never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch.

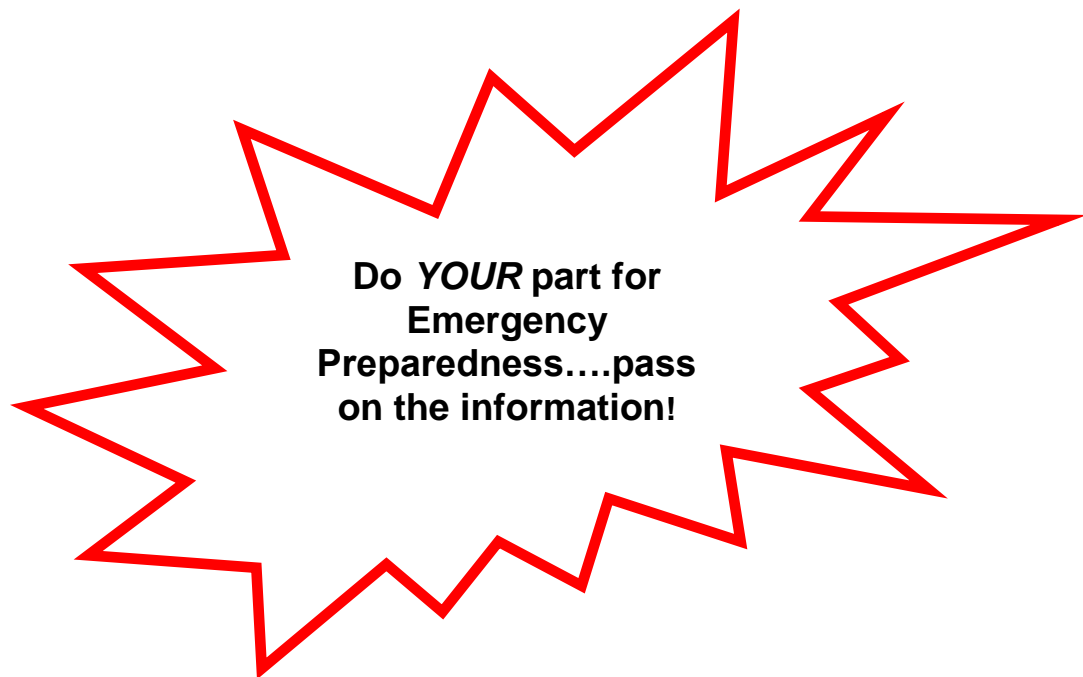
3. Always be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water.

Additional Resources:

[FEMA Winter Hazards](#)

[National Weather Service Cold Weather Tips](#)

For more quick links, related websites and additional resources go to http://cms.calema.ca.gov/prep_freeze.aspx. You will see all the additional links to the far right of this page.



Resources:

California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA)

<http://cms.calema.ca.gov/preparednesshome.aspx>