



# Marin County Sheriff Office of Emergency Services

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## *Where Will You Be?*

### **For Immediate Release**

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Will you be at work? School? Home? Running errands? On vacation? Where will you be when the next disaster strikes? And will you be ready?

According to a 2009 national survey by the Citizen Corps Council, only 36 percent of individuals believed there was a high likelihood that a natural disaster would happen in their community. This, despite the images (sometimes daily) of disasters elsewhere in the world: floods in Pakistan, earthquakes in Haiti and New Zealand and storm damaged Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. Locally we have experienced our own share of disasters: the San Anselmo floods, the Cosco Busan oil spill and the San Bruno pipeline explosion.

On September 14th, our County Board of Supervisors joined the President of the United States in proclaiming September National Preparedness Month. This was done to encourage residents and business owners to take active steps toward being ready for the next event in their community.

1. **Get a Kit** – Water, food, radio, first aid kit, etc.
2. **Make a Plan** – How to evacuate, identify a meeting location and create an out-of-town contact list.
3. **Be Informed** – Listen to the radio, sign up for notification services, and learn about hazards in your area.

Americans historically have believed in the virtue of self-reliance. In the event of a catastrophic emergency, many of us may need to rely on our own emergency kits, emergency plans, and the information that each one of us has learned about how to cope with different types of disasters.

You are going to need food, water, medicine, cots, sleeping bags, spare batteries, fuel, etc. in order to shelter in place for up to 72 hours while first responders take care of the worst-injured and most vulnerable individuals in our community. Don't have a kit? Not sure where to start? That's alright, there is no shortage of resources to help you prepare. Browse to any of the following websites for more information and guidance:

- [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) ([www.listo.gov](http://www.listo.gov) for Spanish)
- [www.getreadymarin.org](http://www.getreadymarin.org)
- [www.readysetgomarin.org](http://www.readysetgomarin.org)

– [www.redcrossbayarea.org](http://www.redcrossbayarea.org)

Denial is the enemy of preparedness. Marin is a fantastic place to live and work, and it is easy to overlook the importance of preparedness when we are pulled in different directions by multiple priorities. However, hazards do exist and we can not ignore them. September is viewed by Marin fire professionals as the height of the fire season. Then when the rain comes we have winter storms and flood season. Combine these hazards with unexpected events like an earthquake or disease outbreak, and it becomes obvious that we need to take steps to prepare ourselves. I urge you to become educated, trained, and prepared for the benefit of yourself, your family, your business and your community. If you have taken classes and have your emergency kit, I applaud you! However, I also issue you a new challenge - make sure your neighbors are prepared as well.

So where will you be when the next disaster strikes? Have a kit, know your plan, stay informed and be ready.

Bijan Karimi is the Emergency Services Manager for the Marin County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES).