

# Los Altos United Methodist Church Children's Center



## Disaster Information Booklet for Parents

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Purpose of this booklet is to inform you of the Los Altos United Methodist Church Children's Center Emergency plans and offer advice for preparing your home and family.

### **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS**

To prepare for the eventuality of a natural disaster, the Children's Center has taken the following steps to make our school and staff more disaster ready:

- Offered staff training in the standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).
- Scheduled school-wide fire, earthquake and lockdown drills throughout the year.
- Worked with the Los Altos Police Department to develop an emergency Operations Plan for the Children's Center.
- Equipped each room with a backpack for teachers containing emergency supplies.
- Prepared detailed maps of the school identifying evacuation routes and utility locations.
- Equipped each play yard with emergency supplies.

The city of Los Altos has also taken measures to become more prepared for a disaster. Headed by the Police Chief of the Los Altos Police Department, these efforts include:

- Having three officers trained to become certified Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) instructors.
- Offering CERT disaster volunteer training to residents of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills.
- Setting up a radio station (530 AM) to routinely broadcast disaster preparedness and crime prevention messages and to air critical information during a disaster.

- Establishing a uniform emergency plan for all Los Altos schools.
- Recruiting ham operators to work with the schools on a disaster communications plan.
- Updating the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

## **COMMUNICATIONS DURING A DISASTER**

After a major widespread disaster, you may not be able to get home right away due to blocked roads or other hazards. Phone service may be down and you may not be able to contact someone else to pick up your child from school. Out-of-area phone service is more likely to be available, so establish an out-of-state contact that your family members and friends can call to relay your condition and get information on other family members (*see below*). Here are a few tips for creating an effective communications plan:

1. Ask two or three people who are usually home during the day to be responsible for picking your child up from school if you will not be able to get home immediately. These people should be listed on your child's emergency card.
2. Develop a system of notifying your designees if you need someone to pick up your child. For example, ask them to call your out-of-state contact to find out if you have reported in yet and if they need to pick up the child.
3. Make certain that your designees know about the school's evacuation and student release procedures. Remind them that they will need to show ID in order for the child to be released.
4. Make sure your designees and the school has your out-of-state contact's phone number. Ensure that the person who picks up the child knows to call your out-of-state contact to tell them that s/he has the child. If your child is not picked up within twelve (12) hours, the school will attempt to call your out-of-state contact to determine your status.

## ESTABLISHING AN OUT-OF-STATE CONTACT

1. Call a friend or relative who lives outside the state and ask him/her to be your family's "out-of-state contact". Explain that after a disaster, s/he will be your best means of communicating with other family members.
2. Make sure s/he understands that they will be responsible to take calls immediately following a disaster in your area.
3. Agree to do the same for your contact in case disaster should strike in the contact's area.
4. Notify your friends and family members that this person will be the one to call if they need to get a message to you.

## EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In case of a major earthquake or other disaster, students may be evacuated from their classrooms. Depending on the magnitude of the incident, the school may be closed until further notice. Students will evacuate to the designated parking lot and wait to be released to a parent or authorized designee. Your cooperation is necessary during a disaster.

1. **Please do not call the school.** Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communication.
2. If you are within Los Altos city limits, turn your radio to 530 AM for emergency announcements, including school closures and other important information.
3. Help us protect your child during a disaster. Please be patient with the student release procedure.

## STUDENT RELEASE PROCEDURES

1. Parents should remain in their car. Please enter the school through the main entrance and place your child's laminated name card in the lower left corner of your windshield, in front of the driver. If you do not have your name card the student release team will create one while you are waiting in line in your car.

2. When you pull up, the student release team will check your driver's ID and notify your child's class via walkie-talkie. The class Student Release Teacher will match your name with the authorizations on your child's emergency card. If you are authorized, the teacher will bring your child to the release area and to your car (or bike or person if you are a "walk-in").
3. You will be asked to sign the student accountability form as well as the notice of first aid care (if applicable).
4. Please exit out the Foothill Expressway exit.
5. Students will not be released to an individual not listed on their Emergency Card, unless they know your family "password" (listed on the yellow emergency card).
6. After you or a designee has picked up your child, remember to call the out-of-state contact as soon as the child is in a safe location.

**Bring picture ID or your child cannot be released to you.**

### **HELPFUL INFORMATION**

Please look over the following pages for helpful tips about getting your family and residence disaster ready.

### **FAMILY PREPAREDNESS**

The key to surviving disasters is good planning. Knowing what to do will reduce stress and eliminate confusion.

**Create a family communications plan.** Keep important phone numbers by the phone. Create a list of important numbers and make copies for you and your family to keep in their wallets.

**Designate Emergency Contacts for your children.** Designate people who are usually within 10 minutes of your children's schools to be responsible for picking up your children in case of an emergency. Create a communications plan with them so that they know if you are unable to pick up your child in an emergency they are responsible.

**Have escape routes planned.** Everyone should know of two ways to get out of a room in case of a fire.

**Consider keeping a flashlight and a pair of shoes under everyone's bed.** Place a pair of sturdy, closed-toe shoes and a flashlight (batteries separate) in a plastic bag. Then tie the bag to the leg of the bed so the bag will stay with the bed and glass will not fall into the shoes during an earthquake.

**Know where the utility shutoffs are.** Locate your gas, electrical, and water shutoffs and learn how to operate them. Paint them white or a reflective color so they are highly visible.

**Make your house easy to find.** Make your house numbers large and well-lit so that emergency personnel can find your home quickly.

**Plan how to take care of pets.** With the exception of guide dogs, shelters usually don't allow pets. So, compile a list of kennels and friends or relatives who can care for them if you must evacuate. If you do not, keep your dogs on leashes and your cats or other animals in carriers. Make sure your pets are micro chipped or are wearing up-to-date ID.

## **SAFETY SURVEY**

After deciding on a disaster plan, do a safety survey of your residence and workplace. To prevent injury and reduce damage, each room should be examined with "earthquake eyes". Take time to sit in each room and ask, "If a major quake hit right now, what would injure me?" Then fix the hazards. The next section has suggestions for correcting earthquake hazards in your home and workplace.

Cabinets: Install positive catching latches. Many variations are available at hardware stores. These will prevent cabinet doors from swinging open during an earthquake.

Tall furniture: Install metal "L" brackets between the furniture piece and the wall stud at top.

Hanging pictures: Screw close hooks into the wall stud or ceiling beam.

Open shelves: Install a guard across the shelf or install wood trim on the front of the shelf. Place heavy objects on the lower shelves.

Beds and cribs: Move these away from windows.

Furniture with wheels: Block the wheels to prevent rolling.

TVs and desktop computers: Strap down TV's and computers using industrial strength Velcro strips.

## REDUCING FIRE HAZARDS

Also important is identifying fire hazards in your home and work place. Unlike an earthquake, a fire is never an inevitable event. It can always be prevented. Most fire hazards fall into three categories:

- Electrical hazards
- Natural gas hazards
- Flammable or combustible liquids

Simple ways that common **electrical hazards** can be reduced or eliminated include:

- Avoid the “electrical octopus.” Eliminate tangles of electrical cords. Don't overload electrical outlets. Don't plug power strips into other power strips.
- Don't run electrical cords under carpets.

To reduce **natural gas hazards:**

- Install a natural gas detector near the furnace and hot water tank. Test the detector monthly to ensure that it works.
- Know how to shut off the gas and have the proper tool for shutting it off nearby.



To reduce hazards from ***flammable liquids***:

- Read labels to identify flammable products.
- Store them properly, using the L.I.E.S. method (**L**imit, **I**solate, **E**liminate, **S**eparate)

#### FIRE EXTINGUISHER OPERATION

The acronym for operating a fire extinguisher is **P.A.S.S.:**

- **P**ull the Pin.
- **A**im at the fire.
- **S**queeze the handle.
- **S**weep at the base of the fire.

#### DECIDING TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

There are a series of questions that you should ask yourself before attempting to fight a fire. If you answer “NO” to *any* of these questions, you should leave the building *immediately* and shut all doors as you leave to slow the spread of the fire. If all of the answers to the questions are “YES” you may attempt to extinguish the fire. Even if you answer “YES” to all of the questions, but feel unable to extinguish the fire, you should leave *immediately* and contact the fire department. As a general rule, never fight a fire larger than the size of a trash can.

- Can I escape quickly and safely from the area?
- Do I have the right type of extinguisher?
- Is the extinguisher large enough for the fire?
- Is the area free from other dangers such as hazardous materials and falling debris?

## PURIFYING WATER

The City's water supply is vulnerable in a large earthquake. If the purity of your water is questionable, use commercial purification tablets or the following methods to make it safe to drink:

**BEST:** Add liquid chlorine bleach to the water. Eight drops per gallon of water. Double this dose if the water is cloudy.

**GOOD:** Add 2% tincture of iodine to the water. Twelve drops per gallon of water. Double this dose if the water is cloudy.

**ACCEPTABLE:** Boil the water vigorously for ten minutes.

## DISASTER SUPPLIES

Families should be prepared to be on their own for at least three days following a major disaster. Keep a supply kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Store the items in airtight bags or containers. Include six basic items:

- Water (at least one gallon per person per day for 7 days)
- Food
- First Aid Kit
- Tools and supplies
- Clothing and bedding
- Special items (i.e. medication, important documents, etc.)

You should also make rotating supplies part of your normal habits. The easiest way to remember is when you ROTATE YOUR CLOCKS, ROTATE YOUR SUPPLIES. (Also, change your smoke detector batteries.) Your supplies rotation should include, but is not limited to: batteries, food, water, and medications (prescribed and over the counter). Check and shake your fire extinguishers, too.

- It may be easier to store emergency supplies in one location. Choose a place in your home that is relatively safe (i.e. under a bed or in a closet).

- One method for storing supplies is to layer them in a large, covered trash container. **Note:** It is best to keep plastic water containers on top rather than on the bottom where they could crack and leak.

### **HELPING CHILDREN COPE AFTER A DISASTER**

Children may be especially upset and exhibit exaggerated emotions following the disaster. These reactions are normal and usually should not last long. Listed below are some problems you might see in children:

- Excessive fear of darkness, separation, or being alone.
- Clinging to parents, fear of strangers
- Worry
- Increase in immature behaviors
- Not wanting to go to school
- Changes in eating/sleeping behaviors
- Increase in aggressive behavior or shyness
- Bed-wetting or thumb-sucking
- Persistent nightmares
- Headaches or other physical complaints

#### **Some things that will help your child:**

- Talk with your child about his/her feelings about the disaster. Share your feelings, too.
- Talk about what happened and give your child information he/she can understand.
- Reassure your child that you are safe and together. You may need to repeat this reassurance often.
- Allow your children the time and frequency of staying close to you.
- Spend extra time with your child at bedtime.

- Allow your child to mourn or grieve over the lost toy, a lost blanket, or a lost home.
- If you feel your child is having problems at school, talk to his/her teachers so you can work together to help your child.

Usually a child's emotional response to a disaster will not last long. But some problems may be present or recur many months afterward. Your community mental health center is staffed by counselors skilled in talking with people experiencing disaster-related problems.

### **Emergency Phone Numbers and Information**

- 911 Call ONLY in case of life-threatening emergency or fire. Do NOT call for information or for non-life-threatening emergency situation.
- Fire:  
Non-Emergency –
- Police:  
Non-Emergency-
- Doctor:
- Dentist:
- Public Works:
- Electric:
- Phone Co.:
- Poison:
- Gas:
- Relatives or friends in case of emergency:
  
- Relatives or friends who I've authorized to pick up my child/ren:

Name: Phone #:

Name: Phone #:

## **Alternative Emergency Numbers for Cell Phone Use**

### **Land Line: Dial 911**

**Cell phone:** Dial one of the following numbers (and program it into your cell phone). If you are in an emergency situation and only have a cell phone, you should use the appropriate number, listed below, for the most expeditious assistance.

Campbell: (408)378-8161

Los Altos: (650)947-2779

Los Altos Hills: (408)299-3233

Los Gatos: (408)354-8600

Mountain View: (650)903-6922

Palo Alto: (650)321-4433

Redwood City: (650)369-3333

San Carlos: (650)592-2222

San Jose: (408)277-8911

Santa Clara: (408)296-2236

Santa Clara County: (408)299-2311

Santa Cruz: (831)471-1131

The 24 hour phone number for the CHP is (510)286-6923.

***Information provided by the Los Angeles Fire Department, the Los Altos Police Department and the California Office of Emergency Services.***

This booklet was initially created through a partnership with the Los Altos Police Department.

*Latest Edition: 2017*