

This month, focus on disaster preparedness

What is the one thing that all disasters have in common? They all have the ability to disrupt and damage our quality of life without warning, and in an instant our lives can be turned upside down.



MIKE ROSE
GUEST
COLUMNIST

The recent magnitude 5.1 earthquake that shook up Orange County and Los Angeles on

March 28 serves as our latest reminder – we need to get ready! April is Earthquake Preparedness Month, and there is no better time than the present to get prepared. For this reason, whenever I talk to the public about disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires and others, I make it a point to emphasize the importance of an emergency kit and its essential supplies.

Some basic emergency kit essentials include food and water (a gallon per person, per day) for three to five days, flashlights and batteries (stored separately), a radio and first aid items. Additionally, prepare the important personal items that your family will need after a tragedy.

If anyone in your household takes medication or has special needs or allergies, include those in your kit as well as documentation. If you can, have your physician prescribe an extra month's worth of any medication needed and store it safely in your kit. Don't underestimate the importance of having basic pain relief/fever-reducing medications like aspirin,



COURTESY PHOTO

Families should put together emergency kits to ensure they are prepared for an earthquake or other disaster.

Tylenol or Advil either.

For those without perfect vision, some extra contact lenses or a spare pair of glasses can be invaluable following an emergency. And while it may not be glamorous to think about, basic toiletries such as toilet paper, feminine supplies and other personal hygiene items are essential when the need arises.

For families with babies and small children it is crucial to prepare items such as baby formula, baby food, diapers, and a few toys or books to keep children distracted during this difficult time. Of course, pet lovers will want to remember to pack pet food, treats, a toy and enough water for them as well.

Here are a few more

Get prepared

ReadyOC is a public service campaign aimed at educating and empowering Orange County residents, businesses and the community to better prepare for emergency situations. For more information and resources, visit readyoc.org or contact your local jurisdiction.

practical ideas to consider:

- Keep copies of important documents in a waterproof bag or container (driver's licenses, birth certificates, Social Security cards, insurance cards, passports, etc.).
- Cash – Expect that

stores may not accept credit/debit cards after a disaster.

- Include a change of clothes for each person – even something as simple as clean socks and underwear can be enough to make you feel more at ease!

- Pack work gloves and masks – the world can be a dusty place post-disaster, and you may need gloves to move debris.

Remember to gather your emergency kit items throughout the month of April to get a jump-start on your preparedness efforts. You'll be grateful you did!

– Mike Rose is the director of disaster preparedness and facilities for Dana Point Emergency Services and serves as a ReadyOC steering committee member.