

Safety Note # 190

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS when WORKING OFF-SITE



UC ANR helps to engage Californians by providing expertise, resources and services directly to every county in the state. Working 'off-site' or in-the-field is ordinary for many ANR positions such as Community Education Specialists, Advisors, and volunteers. When visiting businesses, schools, farms, or other facilities in the communities you serve, it is important to consider personal safety, security, and how you will respond in an emergency. Communities and businesses make efforts to create safe, secure environments and to identify and manage threats. However, each facility's or location's level of preparedness will vary. Each member of our ANR community should take it upon themselves to improve their individual resilience and preparedness to respond to a crisis or unexpected situation, no matter the location. Consider the following safeguards and precautions before working off-site:

Preparations:

- Sign-up for the notification and emergency alert services that are used in the areas where you work, live, or commute—use your internet browser to search for your local City or County name and the word 'alerts' or 'emergency notifications'. Services such as Nixle allow you to set up multiple locations to be notified about. More information can be found at: <https://www.ready.gov/alerts>
- Inform your office/supervisor of your schedule and sites you are visiting—your expected whereabouts.
- Identify how the location you are visiting sends alerts, makes announcements, or otherwise notifies individuals of an emergency. Approaches may vary from text alerts, e-mails, audible signals to word of mouth. Larger organizations may have a website dedicated to safety and security, with status updates.
- Develop ways to communicate with employees/supervisors during work hours and during off-hours about pending emergencies and the workplace operating status. Plan for how you will contact a supervisor or your primary work location. A sample employee Contact List form is available at: <http://safety.ucanr.edu/Programs/emergency/>
- Inspect each remote worksite in advance, if possible, to assess potential hazards and protective actions.
- Be aware of the location's evacuation plans and routes; have at least two ways out. Buildings often post this information near doorways, hallways and stairwells; also review parking lot or facility site maps.
- School and workplace violence can be an unfortunate reality, preparedness resources are available on how to respond to an active shooter incident: <https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>
- Increase your disaster/emergency awareness—visit the Cal OES 'MyHazards' website to learn about the specific threats for the address/locations you provide: <http://myhazards.caloes.ca.gov/>
- Each emergency is unique and knowing the actions to take for each threat will impact the specific decisions and preparations you make. Prepare for likely hazards: <https://www.ready.gov/be-informed>

Upon Arrival and while Off-site:

- Check in at the main office or reception, let someone at the site know you are there and what your schedule is. Many locations have visitor policies, ask safety/security questions if concerned or unaware of the site procedures.
- Be prepared to show identification, wear identification badges if provided, and sign-in and out.
- Businesses of more than 10 employees must have an Injury & Illness Prevention Program and Emergency Action Plan; public schools must have a comprehensive School Safety Plan (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/vp/safeschlplanning.asp>). Review and make use of such resources, ask your host about site-specific hazards and plans or for information that visitors should know.
- During emergency incidents, listen for official notices, follow the site's emergency instructions and directions provided by local authorities/officials. Use your best personal judgement, act within the scope of prior training or attained knowledge.
- If an evacuation, lock-down, or shelter is called for, follow your host's direction and stay with the group you are visiting until the incident is stabilized. Know where assembly areas and safe meeting places are.
- If you see something, say something—report suspicious activity. Inform your host of any hazards you observe while at their facility and inform your supervisor of any incidents or safety concerns.
- ANR EHS staff can assist you in locating preparedness resources. Recommendations include your County's local Office of Emergency Services (OES), local American Red Cross chapter, the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), County Health Departments, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Review and share with your colleagues the Safety Notes series on Emergency Preparedness:
 - #166 [Office Preparedness](#)
 - #167 [Be Informed](#)
 - #168 [Make a Plan](#)
 - #169 [Build a Kit](#)
 - #185 [Situational Awareness](#)
 - #188 [Get Home Bag](#)
 - #189 [Emergency Preparedness for Supervisors](#)