

IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The County of Santa Cruz is subject to various destructive emergencies, including earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, wildfires, landslides, drought, coastal erosion, pandemics, hazardous material releases, terrorism, and civil unrest. Natural hazards that have affected Santa Cruz in the past and those that may affect it in the future can be identified with a high degree of probability. Flooding, earthquakes, and cliff retreat have all occurred in the county within the past thirty-five years. The county is prone to reoccurring droughts and will periodically witness flood conditions. Until 1989, flooding on the San Lorenzo River had caused the most severe damage in the City of Santa Cruz. However, the Loma Prieta earthquake changed that history.

On October 17, 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake, the largest earthquake to hit an urban area in California since the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, struck the County of Santa Cruz. The earthquake destroyed 674 dwellings, 32 mobile homes and 310 businesses within the county and the State Office of Emergency Services estimated monetary damages to residential buildings at \$176 million and \$98 million to commercial structures. Experts believe that an earthquake equal to or larger than the Loma Prieta earthquake will occur within the next 100 years.

While we cannot predict or protect ourselves against every possible hazard that may strike the community, we can anticipate many impacts and take steps to avoid or reduce the harm they will cause. Emergency situations become disasters when they overwhelm the resources here to protect our community. In a disaster, County departments will do everything possible to provide assistance to residents. However, large disasters may completely overwhelm our responders with multiple incidents and competing public safety needs.

This Guide is intended to help you and your family to survive and recover after a major disaster. Become familiar with the tips and the resources provided in this Guide and take steps to keep your family safe.

