



California Department of Developmental Services

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BULLETIN

WINTER REMINDERS • JANUARY 2026

## Text, Voicemail and Email Scams

Online scams are tricks people use to make you trust them, so they can steal your money or personal information. These scams can happen by phone, text, email, or when you are on a website.

Scammers can be very convincing. They can sound real, use photos or messages that look official, or even use AI (artificial intelligence) to copy someone's voice or write messages that sound just like a friend or family member.

### Two common types of scams:

- **Impersonation scams:** Someone pretends to be a helper and asks for money.
- **Romance scams:** Someone pretends to like you, then asks for money.



### How to stay safe:

**STOP.** Pause before sharing money or personal information.

**THINK.** Could it be fake? Don't let anyone rush you.



### If someone contacts you and says they are from a company or organization:

- **Do not share information right away.**
- **Go online or ask someone you trust to help you find the real website or phone number.**
- **Call back using the official number**, never the one that contacted you.
- **Never click links** in emails or text messages that involve money, prizes, or personal information — they could lead to a fake or dangerous site.
- **Scammers can make fake numbers or emails look real.** So it's always safer to double-check before you respond.
- **Protect yourself by telling someone you trust and report it to your bank or local police.**

Learn more on the [Take Five to Stop Fraud](#) website.



This Emergency Preparedness Bulletin is produced by the Department of Developmental Services. The bulletin aims to inform individuals and direct service providers to specific risks affecting our community.

# Be Ready for Power Outages This Winter

The power in your home can go out any time of year. In the winter, storms, wind, and heavy rain can knock out power and make it harder for crews to fix it quickly.



## Be prepared:

- Keep flashlights and extra batteries.
- Charge phones and medical devices before storms.
- Have warm clothing and blankets ready.
- Check in with a friend, family, or neighbor.

If you use medical equipment that needs power, you may qualify for a free backup battery. Ask your regional center or emergency coordinator for more information.

# Be Ready in Case You Get Stuck in Your Car

Winter storms can make driving dangerous. Roads can flood, trees can fall, and cars can break down. If you get stuck or stranded, it helps to have a car emergency kit ready. Following these tips can help you stay safe on car trips!

## Keep these items in your car:

- Warm blanket and extra clothes
- Flashlight and batteries
- Snacks and water
- Phone charger
- First-aid kit
- Map
- Jumper cables in case the battery dies
- Ice scraper to help clear car windows
- Cat litter or sand (for traction)
- Reflective plastic triangle or flares (a device producing a bright flame)
- If you have medical needs, pack extra medicine and batteries.



## Important tips:

- Avoid driving during storms if you can.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- Stay in your car if the area is unsafe.

# Be Ready for Big Storms and High Tides

Winter storms and seasonal “king tides” can bring heavy rain and flooding.

## How to stay safe:

- Do not walk or drive through floodwater. Flood water can be really cold, or deeper than it looks. It can move really fast and knock you off your feet.
- Stay away from damaged power lines or fallen trees.
- The gutters and drains of your home should be clear of leaves and other things that can block the flow of water.
- Move important items off the floor.
- Watch for mudslides near hills or areas that had a fire recently.

## Make a plan:

- Check in with a friend or family member.
- Have an emergency kit with food, water, flashlights, and medicines.
- Sign up for local emergency alerts on your cell phone.

## Resources

- [Listos California – Storm Season Safety](#)
- [California King Tides Project](#)
- [Red Cross – Flood Safety Tips](#)
- [Red Cross – Car Emergency Kit Guide](#)
- [CHP – Roadside Emergency Kit](#)
- [American Red Cross – Power Outage Safety](#)
- [CDC – Power Outage Safety](#)