

Transcription of Podcast Episode 395: Emergency Preparedness Committee

SPEAKERS

Bob Firing, Linda Aasen

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Linda Aasen 00:00

Good morning, everybody. Well, after the hurricane last summer, emergency preparedness was on everybody's mind. It's gone away. But as it turns out, we have a very good Emergency Preparedness Committee here. And I had heard Linda Aasen give a presentation earlier. And so, I asked her to come back and give it for the entire community. And so, she's going to talk about that today. So please welcome Linda.

Linda Aasen 00:33

Bob I'd like to say one thing before we start, and that is to say thank you to you, for all you do all your podcasts. They're all so they're interesting, and they're informative for our community. And now we're even doing one that can save lives.

Bob Firing 00:48

Thank you.

Linda Aasen 00:51

Well, thank you, Bob. And as he said, my name is Linda Aasen. And I am a member of the EPC, Emergency Preparedness Committee. And this may be the most important video you have ever watched. Not because I'm preparing it, but because it could save your life. We live in paradise. I firmly believe that. But could there be a disaster? You bet there could. Of course, we're always focused on earthquakes. But there are other things that could happen. Like we learned in August with Hurricane Hilary, we could have floods. There are many, many trucks and trains that follow the I-10. And any one of them, you know, could have a rollover or derailment and be filled with hazardous material. So, we need to be aware of that. And then as we learned just a couple of weeks ago, wildfires can be an issue here, which I have to say really surprised me. But why are we here? As I said, I'm representing the APC Emergency Preparedness Committee. And what we want to do is to educate you on the possibility of a major disaster, show you how to prepare for one. And the most difficult part is to motivate you to do that. We have many earthquakes every day. I looked up the numbers on December 12. And we had 35. That day 167 In the previous week, in the last year, we've had almost 11,000. Now people say well, I didn't feel anything. Well, they have to be above a magnitude of two or more in order for us to feel it. But what scares me is 11,000 How do I know that the next one won't be the big one? That's my concern. And the scientists predict that if we do have a major earthquake, there will be three major breaks between the Salton Sea and Whitewater. And what does that mean to us? Well, widespread damage, electrical lines are down the eye 10 could be closed the bridges over the eye 10 could be you know down, which means to us on this side of the eye 10 that we have x we do not have access to any

medical facilities other than urgent cares. What you say? What do we have to worry about? That firemen and EMTs are right there on 40th Avenue right in our backyard. And they will be here to help us? Oh, no, they won't because they're going to head to the town of Indio. First were their older homes. People are many people and they're packed together. So here there could be significant damage and isolation, you know, for a couple of weeks, all the more reason for all of us to be self sufficient. But there is some good news when these homes were built by Pulte. Back starting 20 years ago, they did build them to very vigorous earthquake standards, which was news to me good news. For one thing, they have post tension for floor slabs, which means that in within the cement there are wire bars are very thick threads of very strong steel that connect all sides of the slab which means that hopefully if we have an earthquake, we'll be able to just kind of roll with it kind of like a raft in the river. We also have what's called All shear wall construction, that means that the roof is connected all the way to the slab and should, you know anchor it in and hold the house together. So our houses very well may stand, but there could be devastation everywhere. Now that you're all scared, I want to talk to you about the Emergency Preparedness Committee. And they were formed to do three things, number one, to educate our residents to be self sufficient, which is why I'm here today to show you how to prepare how to survive and how to recover from a major event. We also recruit and train volunteers, and we activate them if necessary. And finally we have an amazing EOC center emergency operation center right along Sun City Boulevard next to the Montecito tennis courts. fully stocked you wouldn't believe it with communications first aid, anything you can think of is packed into that building. And we also can set up sub command posts throughout the community. As I said the EOC is packed with emergency support and, and equipment. It is for the exclusive use of trained volunteers people on the E PC. And that is but it is a benefit to all Sun City Shadow Hills residents. The thing you need to know is that this Sun City, Shadow Hills and the HOA and trained volunteers assume no responsibility, but they promise to do their best. So let's get started. And you can get started sitting in your recliner in your great room. And here's how the first thing you need to do is to join the Revco alert, which is Riverside County. Here is the website. You can do it on landlines or cell phones or even email, but they will they will notify you have anything happens including law enforcement incidences. The second thing is to sign up for the app, my shake my shake app was a was developed between the University of California Berkeley and the US Geological Survey. It monitors the tectonic plates, and issues warning when earthquake occurs. Now it's not going to give you 10 minutes warning, it might just give you enough warning to drop to the ground. Or something else that is so important for everybody, particularly if you're single. And it's important all the time, not just in a disaster is called the vial of life. And you get that little sticker right there, to put on the front of your door, tape it on there so that if EMTs come they know you have the vial of life. And what that is you get a form. And you put in your personal information, your medical information, who to contact in an emergency, et cetera. And then you fold it and put it in a baggie and tape it to the inside of your refrigerator door. I know that sounds strange, but they know the EMTs know to go to your refrigerator and look for that information. Something else created by the EPC is are the red green cards. And you want if there's an emergency as soon as possible, place it on your front door on your window and your garage door on your gate. And you can indicate whether everybody's okay inside by using the green side. Or if you need help you show the red side and volunteers from the EPC will be in golf carts going on every street, they've got it all mapped out. And they will you know if you need help, they'll be there. Another important thing is to secure all of your important documents and you can scan them and photograph them and upload them to the cloud or put them on a thumb drive and give them to a friend or email them to somebody, not somebody who lives right here however, so

what kinds of documents well identification, your driver's license, birth certificate, medical information, legal documents, insurance information, and it's not just on your house. It's on your car. And sadly, you need your life insurance documents in there too. And then all of your financial stuff.

Linda Aasen 10:09

Also, a family communication plan is a really good idea. If you're not at home, but someplace else in Sun City, Shadow Hills, like somebody's on the golf course and someone's in a fitness class, and there's an emergency and you can't get home, have a designated place to meet it in, it's even more important if you're not in our community, if somebody's at the outlet, and somebody else is out for lunch, and you need a place to meet. And it wouldn't hurt to have one on both sides of the I-10. Because we may not be able to, to cross it. Another really good idea is to select an out of state contact, or at least far away in this state and give them a list of names to contact in case there is an emergency so they can inform the other people. Another really good one you should have all the time is called in case of emergency ice. So you create a contact in your cell phone. It's called Ice. And then you put in the people who should be contacted if something happens. The good thing is that even if your phone is off, or you've got a you have to put some numbers in our password EMTs can get into your phone by accessing ice. So that's a good thing. Another really important thing is that if we have an emergency, it's way better to text because phone lines may be down or they may be overloaded. And texting is your best opportunity to get a hold of somebody. Money. That is something I never thought about at least in relationship to an emergency. Because if there's no electricity, there's no ATMs, what would we do without that no cash registers, how would we buy something or a gas station, so you need small bills, that in case there is something at the store to buy, you can buy it with your cash of stet stash of cash. Another important thing for your house are fire extinguishers and you really should have two of them, at least in different parts of the house fully charged. And remember if you have to use it, then it needs to be recharged.

Linda Aasen 12:44

Another important thing, and very interesting is to attend the emergency preparedness 101 seminar. And that Jeff Kirkpatrick is the person who conducts this seminar. He's also the person who is chair of the EPC. He is the person who created our emergency operation centers and stack them. He is so knowledgeable and had a lot of experience before he came here. And now he's even sharing that experience with other communities because ours is one of the very premier e OCS in the valley. So he's helping other people do the same and it's free and it's very informative. Okay, now it's time to prepare your home. No more sitting on a recliner. This now you have to get up, walk around, look in every room, look up and notice what's there. What's in there. If you've got cupboards, which everybody does, you may need to put the childproof latches on those because otherwise glassware and dishes and everything will come flying out in an earthquake. Need to attach your heavy furniture to the wall like entertainment centers and TVs and artwork. And if you have bookcases and things like that, please move the heavy things to the bottom shelves to give it more stability. A very interesting statistic and scary also is that in the Northridge earthquake 55% of all injuries were due to flying objects in your own home. And while we're talking about flying objects, think about glass, glass and porcelain from your cabinets hitting the stone countertops or tile floors. You know what's going to happen. It's gonna shatter and people and floors and everything will be covered in glass

Linda Aasen 15:00

and something people sometimes forget is your garage. Again, there's a lot of hazardous chemicals in there, whether it's you know, paint or bug killers or weed killers. In cabinets, you need to secure the cabinets and if you have workbenches to the, to the walls, because otherwise, they may fall over not only damaging your car, but maybe keeping you from getting your car out of the garage, when if there's an evacuation order, you're going to have to take your golf cart. Okay, now we're preparing to live and the first thing we need is water. And you need water for at least 14 days. And that is one gallon per person per day. And if you have sick people, or animals or it's the summertime, or you're using it to hydrate food, you're going to need more water. And one interesting tip that I learned was that if you have a tank water heater, you can, you can get that water out and, and drink that doesn't sound good, but we could do it. The other thing we need is food. And we need again for 14 days, there's a couple of options ways you can do that. The first would be to stock your pantry for an emergency, have canned or dried meats, dry cereal, of course, if your milk has gone bad, might not be quite as tasty, canned fruits and vegetables and high energy items like granola bars and stuff like that. Another option is freeze dried food and you can pick that up almost anywhere. And it's good for I know minds that good for 15 years, some of it's good for 25 years, it may be somewhat expensive, but if you really need food, it's worth it. And maybe the best option is to kind of stock your pantry. Use that food first and then use the dried food if you need it. And one question that has been asked by many people is my food safe if the electricity goes out, and obviously my freezer and my refrigerator are off. And here's the official note on that is that if your refrigerator is above 41 degrees for more than four hours, some perishables may not be safe and of course my mind goes to Oh dear, there goes my milk freezer. If above 41 degrees for one or two days, it may not be safe. But if you see ice crystals on it, it's probably okay and I'm like well there goes my ice cream. There's nothing left. Let's talk about basic first aid kit. That's another thing you really need in your house. It should contain bandages compresses pressure pads, and you can make a pressure pad just by taking like a bath towel and folding it really tightly and that can be used sterile dressings and adhesive tape of course sterile water, antiseptics, aspirins, pain medication, scissors and tweezers especially if you've got shards of glass in your skin. You might even need a magnifying glass to get it out but you're going to need those tweezers and then latex gloves and hand sanitizer. Some additions to your first aid kit would be your medications. I mean, especially if they're life saving medications, you've got to have them in there. Other supplies like insulin, and those things we all need glasses, canes, walkers, etc. Need to keep those close. You can buy the official first aid kit, which is very extensive and pretty expensive but worth it. Now let's talk about emergency survival kits. We just need a lot of things put together where we can get to it easily in case there is an emergency things like personal hygiene supplies. You can figure that one out yourself. The other one is trash bags, ties and a bucket. And that is your new bathroom. Leather gloves, flashlights and batteries, of course UV protection, especially here and plastic sheeting and duct tape. And you may be asking, Why do I need that for a hurricane? Well, if your windows were broken, you could use it there. But even more importantly, if we have an hazardous gas leak, and we're in the area the wind is blowing our way you need to cover your doors and your windows and secure it with tape. Got a few other things to include will be matches a whistle. And that's because if you get a hoarse voice from calling for help, you can use a whistle. And people understand that that's kind of a universal signal for send help. And a manual can opener. Because if you're trying to open those cans of tuna or whatever that's in your pantry, and you have an electric can opener, not gonna work. Then, of course, some rain gear, blankets, and pet food and water. And something that's really good to know is that the EPC and security have chip

readers for your animals. So if they get lost, they can connect them with you. And in the meantime, there will be like the dog pound at the Montecito tennis courts, court number four, and they have it all set up, they've got a shed there with pet food and pet supplies and anything you could need. So you can rest easy knowing your dogs or cats will be taken care of. Now we have all those emergency supplies, but we need to get some of them into a small container in case we get the call from Riverside County telling us that we have to leave we have to vacate you're not going to have time to run around the house looking for you know your medicines or flashlights or whatever. So you need to have that those things packed in a small container, a backpack or a small suitcase. And if we have an earthquake, when the shot when the same shaking stops, you just grab and go. Now this might sound like a personal question, what's in your nightstand? Well, what should be there are hard soled shoes. So if there's a earthquake in the middle of the night, and you've got broken glass all over the bedroom floor, you're going to need hard soled shoes to get anywhere. So I have a pair in my drawer, heavy gloves, in case you have to move some of that glass or anything else, a crow or a pry bar, in case furniture has shifted, and you need to move it or in an emergency to break the window and get out flashlights and batteries and your cell phone and charger. And I have to say very important to secure everything over and around your bed. We have artwork all the way across our bed. And I don't want that falling on my head if we have an earthquake in the middle of the night. What is also very important are generators if you rely on electricity for life saving medical devices. So they have a lot of generators. We have information in the rounder at the Santa Rosa and the Montecito on that or you could get solar panels but you have something that will provide electricity if it all goes down. And this might be a little obvious but transportation. If you have a golf cart or an electric car, please make sure it's charged at least halfway. Probably better than that would be a good idea. If you have a car with an internal combustion engine, you need to make sure you have gas in there at least half full and carry some emergency supplies in there have a grown grab and go back there. In case you have to really grab and go okay, now the earthquake hits. Preparation time is over. Now what do you have to do? You drop immediately drop on your hands and knees and crawl to safety. You don't run over under the table because you're going to be thrown down and you can get down far more gently yourself then the earthquake will send you down and then you cover and that can be you know under sturdy furniture you know a dining room table and interior wall or low lying heavy furniture like your

Linda Aasen 24:26

sofa not in the doorway and that was the prevailing theory years ago they said stand in the doorway there's more structure they're not a good idea because you'll just be thrown around. You need to be on the floor as soon as possible. Cover your head and neck and shelter and hold on. No that aftershocks there will be aftershocks and some of them could be more severe than the actual earthquake and you stay there until the shaking stops. Now that applies To you, and the earthquake. When that happens, the first thing you need to do is assess your personal situation, what's the condition of the people in the house or the house itself, tend to injuries, etc. And then check out the exterior of your home. Check for gas leaks, for sure, water leaks, you know, big cracks. And then check out the perimeter of your yard. Now we're right near the canal. So I mean, that could be an interesting need to check that out. Secondly, open your garage door right away and get your cars your vehicles out of there. Then display your red green card. So the people coming around know you're okay or not, move your disaster supplies to a more handy location because you'll be using them. And then if possible, check out your neighbors, especially you know if they're not here, or they're elderly. And make sure they don't have

gas leaks or water, because that's going to affect your house as well. And then render aid if it's if it's at all possible. A few tips for earthquake number one is please don't call 911 Unless it's really a life and death situation. As I said, they're not heading here first, stay in your home if it's structurally sound, and do not leave Sun City Shadow Hills unless it's severely damaged. Or we get you know the note from Riverside County that it's time to leave. And what about our community? Well, if we have an earthquake or a flood or anything, you'd have to know that spontaneous volunteers are not covered by HOA liability insurance. If you are a member of EPC or other committees, you are covered by that liability. Another thing is California does have the Good Samaritan Law, as long as you're not performing things that are above your paygrade, so to speak. I mean, you won't find me out there doing a tracheotomy. A word about the Emergency Preparedness Committee we have about 60 to 75 members, which Whoa, you say that sounds like a lot. But is it a lot for 6000 residents 30 450 homes, I do not think so. So the goals again for the EPC are to teach the community to be self sufficient. That's why I'm here today to provide a well trained team for Sun City Shadow Hills. You know, everybody has taken emergency prep, one on one the two day cert course first aid stop the bleed active shooter. And then we have others who are minimally trained, they've done them emergency prep, some FEMA online training courses and first aid, we need to recruit new members in in disaster, we just 60 people and then the problem is that of those, if we have 60 people 10 of them might be out of town, you know, another 20 might, they might have damage and can't leave their homes, or in some people just won't be able to rise to the occasion. So we really need a lot more people. So as I said, people want to help. It's good for you and for your community because I know so much more now about preparing for disaster. And I've done so much more than I did before I was an EPC. And you can join in whatever capacity just to let you know that all EPC meetings are the first Thursday of the month at right here at 13. Oh, you don't know where I am? Santa Rosa. At 1300 hours, which is one o'clock. One last thought is remember if disaster does strike, try to be as calm as possible. You know, assess the situation, think clearly and act as device decisively because it's very important and your life depends on it. Thank you.

Bob Firing 29:50

Thank you, Linda, that was very informative. And for the audience. if you're listening to this, be sure and watch the video which is available on the website. And so thank you for your attention and until next time bye-bye.