



WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT
A Guide to Supporting
Well-Being During a
Wildfire or Earthquake

altadenafiresafe.org

Our Mission

The **Altadena Fire Safe Council** is working to reduce wildfire risk across our community through GIS-informed planning, science-based integrated vegetation management and regenerative land stewardship. We will pursue Firewise USA® neighborhood recognition by educating our community about home hardening, defensible space design, soil restoration and native plant landscaping.



Charity On Top (EIN #81-1198370) is a California-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation and is the official fiscal sponsor for the Altadena Fire Safe Council.

Equipment & Safety Disclaimer

The products featured on this site and pdf are provided for educational and informational purposes only. Altadena Fire Safe Council is not affiliated with or endorsed by any manufacturer listed unless explicitly stated. Product specifications, availability, and performance may change without notice. Users are responsible for reviewing manufacturer instructions, safety warnings, and regulatory requirements before purchase or use. Certain equipment — including generators, fuel-powered devices, respirators, and radio communication devices — may require training, proper ventilation, or licensing.

Some radios (e.g., Baofeng UV-5R) operate on licensed frequencies regulated by the FCC. Users are responsible for obtaining any required licenses and following all federal, state, and local regulations. Improper use can result in fines, interference with emergency communications, or other penalties.

Preparedness recommendations on this site and pdf are general in nature and are not a substitute for professional advice, official emergency guidance, or manufacturer instructions. In an emergency, always follow directions from local authorities.

For more information on FCC regulations for amateur radio, visit: **FCC – Amateur Radio Service** ([fcc.gov/licensing](https://www.fcc.gov/licensing))

Comfort During Sheltering in Place

Sheltering in place during a wildfire, smoke event, or earthquake isn't just about survival — it's about maintaining calm, stability, and emotional resilience for hours or even days. In Altadena and the greater Los Angeles area, sheltering often means extended indoor time during smoke advisories, aftershocks, or power shutoffs. Physical comfort, emotional regulation, and a sense of routine dramatically reduce stress hormones, improve decision-making, and help children and pets feel secure. When your body and nervous system feel steadier, you think more clearly and conserve energy for what matters.

Create a Calm, Livable Space	Temperature & Air Comfort
Designate one primary room. Ideally use your clean air room, if you've set one up, as your comfort hub. Comfort upgrades:	In wildfire smoke events common to the foothills near Altadena, indoor air quality can affect mood and physical comfort.
☐ Soft lighting (battery lanterns, warm LED lamps)	☐ Run HEPA air purifiers continuously
☐ Blankets, floor cushions, yoga mats	☐ Use box fans with MERV-13 filters if needed
☐ Extra phone charging cables and batteries	☐ Dress in layers
☐ A small table for snacks, games, or journaling	☐ If the power is out, use battery fans for airflow
Keep the space tidy. Visual clutter increases anxiety during stressful events.	Comfortable temperature regulation prevents irritability, headaches, and sleep disruption.
Food & Hydration for Morale	Emotional Comfort for Adults
Comfort foods matter. Familiar tastes lower stress. Stock:	Stress responses during wildfire smoke or aftershocks are normal. Grounding tools:
☐ Easy snacks (nuts, granola bars, crackers)	☐ 4-7-8 breathing
☐ Electrolyte drinks	☐ Light stretching
☐ Shelf-stable comfort meals (soups, rice bowls)	☐ Guided meditations downloaded in advance
☐ Tea, hot cocoa, or coffee alternatives	☐ Limiting doom-scrolling
Maintain regular meal timing — routine stabilizes both adults and children.	If sheltering due to wildfire smoke, follow updates from: CAL FIRE, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Ready LA County. Scheduled check-ins reduce constant background anxiety.

Comfort During Sheltering in Place

Comfort for Children	Comfort for Pets
Children read adult energy first. Your calm is their safety signal. Create predictability:	Pets are highly sensitive to environmental changes and stress hormones. Preparation tips:
☐ Keep a schedule (meals, quiet time, play, movie)	☐ Keep leashes, carriers, and ID tags accessible
☐ Pack a “comfort kit” in advance	☐ Maintain feeding schedules
☐ Explain events in age-appropriate language	☐ Provide a familiar blanket or crate space
☐ Let them help (handing out snacks)	☐ Use calming pheromone diffusers
Avoid overexposure to news coverage. Keep media off when possible. For earthquake aftershocks, reassure them that feeling scared is normal and that your home has been checked for safety.	Ensure fresh water at all times. If air quality is poor, limit outdoor time and wipe paws and fur after brief trips outside. For cats and dogs anxious during aftershocks, stay physically near them and avoid sudden movements.
Sleep & Nighttime Comfort	Maintain Connection
Disasters often feel more intense at night.	Isolation increases stress
☐ Keep a flashlight within reach	☐ Check in with neighbors by text
☐ Use nightlights or soft lanterns	☐ Participate in your neighborhood comms tree
☐ Pre-set shoes and glasses by your bed	☐ Share updates calmly
☐ Keep go-bags accessible	☐ Offer reassurance — and accept it
Protecting sleep is one of the most important resilience tools.	Community regulation strengthens individual regulation.
Comfort Checklist for Sheltering in Place	
Physical	Children
☐ Clean air room ready	☐ Comfort kit packed
☐ Layers & blankets	☐ Simple daily schedule
☐ Hydration & easy snacks	☐ Limited news exposure
☐ Lighting & backup power	
Physical	Emotional
☐ Food & water stocked	☐ Grounding routine
☐ Leashes/carriers ready	☐ Scheduled alert checks
☐ Safe indoor rest area	☐ Neighbor check-in

Personal Hygiene Checklist

Power outages disrupt more than just lighting and appliances — they interrupt the systems we rely on to stay clean, healthy, and comfortable. Running water may be limited, hot showers unavailable, refrigeration compromised, and ventilation reduced. In these conditions, maintaining hygiene becomes both more challenging and more important. Germs spread more easily when handwashing is inconsistent. Waste disposal can become a problem if plumbing systems fail. Food contamination becomes more likely when refrigeration stops. Even small hygiene lapses — unwashed hands, improper food handling, or inadequate waste management — can lead to preventable infections. Preparedness makes hygiene manageable.

Having the right supplies — soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, bottled water, trash bags, and masks if air quality is poor — allows you to maintain safe living conditions even when utilities are disrupted. A simple hygiene plan can prevent a short-term inconvenience from becoming a health emergency. By planning ahead and focusing on the fundamentals, households can stay safe, sanitary, and resilient throughout a power outage, whether it lasts hours or several days.

Emergency Hygiene Checklist (Limited Water / Power)	
Daily Hygiene Essentials	Hand Hygiene
☐ Wash hands with soap (20 seconds minimum)	☐ Wash hands before eating
☐ Brush teeth (2x per day)	☐ Wash after restroom use
☐ Floss daily	☐ Use hand sanitizer (60%+ alcohol)
☐ Shower or sponge bathe	☐ Keep antibacterial wipes accessible
☐ Change into clean clothes	☐ Keep liquid soap accessible
☐ Use deodorant	☐ Keep hand sanitizer accessible
☐ Keep nails trimmed and clean	☐ Keep disinfecting wipes and paper towels
Oral Care	Body Hygiene
☐ Brush teeth twice daily	☐ Sponge bathe if showers unavailable
☐ Use bottled water if tap water is unsafe	☐ Clean face, armpits, groin, feet daily
☐ Dispose of waste water safely	☐ Change undergarments daily
☐ Supplies: Toothbrush	☐ Air out clothing
☐ Supplies: Toothpaste	☐ Supplies: Baby wipes or body wipes
☐ Supplies: Dental Floss	☐ Supplies: Washcloths
☐ Supplies: Travel cup	☐ Supplies: No-rinse body wash
☐ Supplies: Bottled water	☐ Supplies: Extra underwear and socks

Personal Hygiene Checklist

Emergency Hygiene Checklist (Limited Water / Power)			
Bathroom and Sanitation		Menstrual Hygiene	
☐ Use toilet normally if plumbing works		☐ Maintain adequate supply	
☐ If water is off: use emergency toilet method		☐ Dispose of products properly	
☐ Seal and dispose of waste properly		☐ Wash hands before and after handling	
☐ Wash or sanitize hands after every use		☐ Supplies: Pads/tampons/menstrual cups	
☐ Supplies: Heavy-duty trash bags		☐ Supplies: Disposal bags	
☐ Supplies: Portable toilet or bucket with lid		☐ Supplies: Extra underwear	
☐ Supplies: Cat litter or waste solidifier		☐ Supplies: Toilet paper	
☐ Supplies: Toilet paper			
☐ Supplies: Gloves			
☐ Supplies: Disinfectant spray			
Respiratory Hygiene (Especially During Fires)		Illness Prevention	
☐ Wear N95 mask outdoors in smoke		☐ Avoid sharing personal items	
☐ Avoid touching face		☐ Disinfect high-touch surfaces daily	
☐ Wash hands after removing mask		☐ Separate sick individuals if possible	
☐ Replace dirty or wet masks		☐ Increase ventilation when safe	
☐ Supplies: N95 or P100 masks		☐ Supplies: Disinfecting wipes/spray	
☐ Supplies: Sealable bag for clean masks		☐ Supplies: Thermometer	
		☐ Supplies: Disposable gloves	
Hygiene Kit Shopping List			
☐ Toothbrush	☐ Washcloth	☐ Toilet paper	☐ Gloves
☐ Toothpaste	☐ Towel	☐ Trash bags	☐ N95 masks
☐ Soap (bar or liquid)	☐ Nail clippers	☐ Bucket with lid	☐ Tissues
☐ Hand sanitizer	☐ Razor	☐ Cat litter	☐ Thermometer
☐ Deodorant	☐ Comb/brush	☐ Disinfectant spray	
☐ Body wipes	☐ Lip balm	☐ Paper towels	

Nervous System Regulation Tools

Weighted Blankets	Portable White Noise Machines
Deep pressure stimulation lowers cortisol and can reduce panic symptoms.	White noise benefits include improved sleep quality by masking disruptive noises.
☐ 10% of body weight rule	☐ Reduce anxiety from sirens and helicopters
☐ Breathable cotton	☐ Disruption from wind during red flag events
☐ Machine washable	☐ Sleep disturbance after earthquakes
Best for: Adults and older children during aftershocks or prolonged smoke advisories.	Look for: Rechargeable USB, 8–12 hour battery life, and a compact size for go-bag inclusion.
bareearthlife.com	babeliobaby.com
Guided Meditation Apps	Air and Sensory Comfort
☐ Download in advance: Headspace or Calm.	HEPA Air Purifiers
☐ Anxiety relief	☐ Blueair
☐ Children’s sleep stories	☐ Coway
☐ Short breathing resets	☐ Increase ventilation when safe
Essential Oil Roll-Ons	Lighting for Emotional Stability
During power outages, diffusers may not be practical. Roll-ons are:	Harsh white light increases stress. Look for warm-tone rechargeable lanterns.
☐ Portable	☐ Adjustable warmth (2700K–3000K range).
☐ Low fire risk	☐ 8–20 hour battery life
☐ Safe in clean air rooms	Soft lighting dramatically improves nighttime calm during outages.
Look for: lavender (sleep), peppermint (headache), and eucalyptus (respiratory comfort).	
thistlefarms.org	coastportland.com

Nervous System Regulation Tools

Wellness for Pets	
Calming Pet Wraps	Pheromone Calming Sprays or Collars
These apply gentle compression and help:	These help to:
☐ During aftershocks	☐ Reduce stress behaviors
☐ During high winds	☐ Ease anxiety in confined indoor settings
☐ During siren noise	
thundershirt.com	thundershirt.com
Wellness for Children	Air and Sensory Comfort
☐ Download in advance: Headspace or Calm.	HEPA Air Purifiers
☐ Anxiety relief.	☐ Blueair
☐ Children's sleep stories.	☐ Coway
☐ Short breathing resets.	☐ Increase ventilation when safe.
Essential Oil Roll-Ons	Sleep Support (Non-Medical)
Comfort Kits. Not a single product — but a pre-packed pouch including:	Avoid new supplements during active medical conditions. Always check with your provider.
☐ Favorite stuffed animal	Magnesium Glycinate (For Adults) Can support:
☐ Headphones	☐ Muscle relaxation
☐ Coloring supplies	☐ Stress reduction
☐ Downloaded movie on tablet	☐ Sleep quality
☐ Nightlight	
Noise-canceling headphones are especially helpful during chaotic evacuations or helicopter activity.	