



FOCUS: WORK GLOVES AND STURDY SHOES



JANUARY

This action sheet is produced as part of the Southern California Earthquake Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an effort to increase the level of individual and family preparedness in this region. It is coordinated by eight southern California counties and the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project.

WHY

In Oakland, dozens of people living near the Cypress Street section of the Nimitz Freeway formed makeshift rescue teams, dragging ladders and ropes to the elevated freeway to aid motorists trapped in the collapsed structure:

"We got her out. We had a job to do and we did it."—Tim Binder, Oakland resident who scrambled up a ladder, squeezed into a foot high crawl space and found a woman trapped inside her car.

"I led her down and laid her on the sidewalk."
—Truck driver Carlos Linares saw a dazed woman trying to climb down from the elevated roadway on a crumbling pillar and he climbed the shaky pillar and grabbed hold of the woman.

"All around you could hear voices saying 'I'm hurt, I'm hurt, help me.'"—Darius Brewer, an Oakland cook who, using a rope brought by neighborhood residents, climbed to the freeway and aided in the rescue efforts.

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In the Marina District of San Francisco, residents went into apartment buildings to rescue neighbors they had never met:

John Rampalla looked out his window at the four-story apartment building on North Point and Scott Streets and "just saw it collapse." Suddenly the fourth floor was at street level. "I walked over and helped a woman out of her window," he said.

Deanne Delbridge, another neighbor crawled through the rubble on her knees, looking for survivors.

John Canepa was riding home on his motorcycle when he saw the building in front of him fall down. He helped police pull people out.

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According to Captain Mike Burns, City of Los Angeles Fire Department, bystanders account for 90% of the immediate rescues in a disaster such as the Loma Prieta Earthquake. On October 17, 1989 hundreds of citizens were thrust into situations for which they were not prepared; yet, they met the challenge.

Whether the event is an earthquake or another disaster, we could be called upon to respond to an emergency at any time. Basic items such as work gloves and sturdy-comfortable shoes could have made each of the heroic acts recounted here easier. Take time now to do the things which can make differences later.

HOW

Work gloves and sturdy shoes can protect hands and feet from injuries and hazards such as:

- Puncture wounds
- Abrasions
- Some types of burns
- Splinters
- Most household chemicals
- Broken glass
- Nails
- Broken concrete

Having sturdy shoes and gloves can reduce the chances that the one giving aid will sustain an injury and become an additional victim.

Having a pair of gloves handy can be an advantage in situations such as repairing flat tires and broken windows. Keep a pair of gloves available at work, at home and in the car; keep a pair of sturdy-comfortable shoes with you at all times.

EXPERIENCE SAYS...

Citizens are the first responders.

Use of caution and common sense can prevent a rescuer from becoming a victim.

Source: Captain Mike Burns, City of Los Angeles Fire Department, Disaster Preparedness Division

"SIZE-UP"

There is a heavy dependence on volunteers following a disaster. As the excerpts from the San Francisco Chronicle illustrate, volunteers could be anyone from next-door neighbors to passing motorists. Most individuals who find themselves faced with such situations want to do anything they can to help. In an emergency it is essential that those giving aid provide assistance, but avoid becoming part of the problem. People must move quickly, but take time to assess conditions.

When faced with an emergency do a quick visual check and "size-up" the situation, considering the following: Determine:

1. What has occurred.
2. The immediate problem and whether it could get worse.
3. Whether it is a true emergency.
4. Whether help is needed.
5. What is available to me.
6. What can endanger me and make it worse for the victim.
7. Whether the victim will be better off if I wait for help.

In any emergency it is important to contact emergency response agencies immediately.



California Earthquake Preparedness



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