

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY EVACUATION TERMINOLOGY

The Law

California law authorizes officers to restrict access to any area where a menace to public health or safety exists due to a calamity such as flood, storm, fire, earthquake, explosion, accident or other disaster. Any unauthorized person who willfully or knowingly enters an area closed... and who willfully remains within the area after receiving notice to evacuate or leave shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. (Penal Code 409.5 a, b and c)

- In CA, residents can legally remain in their home following an *Evacuation Warning or Order*.
- Authorities can prohibit the public from *entering* an Evacuated or Closed Area, including to reach their home.
- Authorities can enforce a closure of an area or road.
- Media is exempt from these regulations

Evacuation Warning:

Definition: Alerting of community members in a defined area of a potential threat to life and property from an emergency incident.

Usage: Generally issued when the potential or actual threat is more than 2 hours away. Subgroups such as special needs individuals may be issued an Evacuation Order at this level.

Evacuation Order:

Definition: Movement of community members out of a defined area due to an immediate threat to life and property from an emergency incident.

Usage: Issued when there is a potential or actual threat to civilian population within 1 to 2 hours or when it is necessary to protect civilians due to an immediate threat.

Shelter In Place:

Definition: Directing community members to stay secured inside their current location.

Usage: If a situation does not allow for evacuation or when evacuation could cause a higher potential for loss of life.

Safe Point: (i.e. Tsunami Safe Point)

Definition: Temporary area to hold or stage evacuees until emergency passes or until a shelter can be established.

Usage: To be designated OUTSIDE of affected area. Not intended to be a location for obtain shelter. Typically used in the interim while shelters are established or threat passes.

Safe Refuge Area:

Definition: A temporary safe location to hold emergency workers, or possibly evacuees until evacuation is possible.

Usage: Normally a safe refuge area is WITHIN the affected area/inundation zone. For instance a multi-story building in a tsunami inundation area.

Closure:

Definition: Prohibiting usage or occupancy of a defined area such as a park, beach, or road due to a potential or actual threat to public health and/or safety.

Usage: When an incident affects a defined area and large scale evacuation is not necessary. When public officials want to limit recreating public in the case of a potential emergency.

Levels of Closure *Closures can be broken into subcategories depending on the threat:*

Level 1- Closed to all traffic except residents. May require escorts

Level 2- Closed to all traffic except critical incident resources

Level 3- Closed to all traffic except FD and LE

Level 4- Closed to all traffic including FD and LE

Repopulation:

Definition: The return of community members to a previously evacuated area for unrestricted use. Only after threat has been mitigated, infrastructure and utilities are secured, and emergency services have approved of the return.

Reentry:

Definition: The *temporary* reentry of community members for a designated time to an evacuated area. i.e. to feed livestock in a potentially contaminated or at risk area.

Relocation:

Definition: The long-term or permanent relocation of community members who previously lived in an affected area.

Tips To Ensure a Successful Evacuation

- Use common terminology.
- Keep affected jurisdictions and agencies informed.
- Ensure prompt and succinct public notifications and information.
- Create an evacuation and repopulation plan early.
- Ensure all emergency workers are informed on any evacuation decisions; Evacuation Order, Warning, Level of Closure, and what they have the right to enforce.
- Ensure a coordinated repopulation, keeping in mind the public and emergency response needs.