

Golden Valley High School

“Safe School” News

Are you prepared for a major disaster? Does your family have a “Home Earthquake Plan”? Are you aware that Golden Valley has a Disaster Preparedness Plan?

Earthquakes are natural events that occur ‘unannounced’ on a daily basis throughout the world, including our own Santa Clarita Valley. Most of us are aware of the recent temblors that occurred just south of the Santa Clarita Valley. If anything, they are a reminder that we all need to be prepared.

Imagine that it is midmorning Thursday. You are working or shopping in the San Fernando Valley or Los Angeles, and your son or daughter is at school. **“The Big One” erupts!** You are uninjured, but you are unable to return home because the roads are blocked by debris and several bridges are down. You are told by authorities that if you want to return home, you will have to walk. You are worried about your children, your home and other family members.

Meanwhile, Golden Valley has initiated the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), aka – our Disaster Plan Procedures. Teachers have issued a “Duck, Cover, and Hold On” order, and following the initial quake, your child has been evacuated from his/her classroom. The teachers and staff, following the school’s Disaster Plan, move the students to the Emergency Assembly Area (EAA). The Emergency Response Team has set up a Command Post and a First Aid Station while Search and Rescue teams are systematically checking all buildings for damage and injured students/staff. A Student Release Station has been established to begin the process by which students can be released to their families.

What will your student do? Will he/she leave the school grounds without permission to return to a possible empty and unsafe home? If for some reason he/she can’t stay home, where will he/she go? Where would you find him/her?

Will he/she cooperate with school authorities and remain in the care and safe supervision of school personnel? What do you want him/her to do? Today is the day to sit down with your family and discuss this. Tell your son/daughter that you want him/her to stay at school until you or your designated representative can reach him/her and release him/her from school. If you are unable to get home for days, you’ll at least be assured your child is protected and safe. Foods, water, and supplies will be provided for your student.

How are students released during/after a major disaster?

The school is authorized only to release your child to you or any adult you have specified on the “Emergency Card”. Does that neighbor or friend reside in your area? Has the phone number been changed? Has your work site or work phone number changed?

Students will be released to an authorized adult at the **Student Release Station** (which will be located at the double gates leading onto the Track/Football Field facility). Students and staff will be assembled in the Emergency Assembly Area (EAA) which is located on our multi-fields (Softball and Baseball outfield areas) and our Football Field. Parents or their designated representative are expected to identify themselves at the Student Release Station, and wait patiently and calmly while school officials locate their son/daughter and bring them to this location. Please be aware that Golden Valley has a detailed and organized plan that will insure the prompt and orderly release of students. Parents and/or their designated representatives, as well as non-school personnel, **will not be allowed on campus** throughout the duration of the disaster/evacuation period.

What can you and your family do to prepare for a disaster?

The American Red Cross recommends that all persons take reasonable precautions to prepare themselves, their families and co-workers for the possibility of a major disaster. In Santa Clarita, we should be prepared to cope with the effects of an earthquake, flood, brush fire or winter storm.

Are you ready for a major disaster? Here’s what you can do to prepare for such an emergency. **Prepare a “Home Earthquake Plan”.** Select a place the family will meet. Designate an out-of-state contact person, so that each of you can call him or her to say you’re safe or relay messages. Safety proof your home -- strap water heater to the wall, bolt bookcases and other tall furniture to the wall, latch cabinet doors. **Take a First Aid/CPR course.** Write instructions and teach all able family members how to turn off utilities -- electricity, gas and water. **Prepare an “Earthquake Safety Kit”.** Review your Home Earthquake Plan now and then. **Discuss how and when you will pick up your child from school** following a major disaster and the importance of following school emergency plan procedures. Today is the day to place walking shoes and comfortable clothes in the trunk of your car, so you can manage the long trek home.

Remember that the planning you and your family does now will be of benefit when and if any disaster strikes without warning.

Upcoming Disaster Drills:

Earthquake Drill – Nov. 13, 2008

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