Prior disasters, such as the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the 1991 East Bay firestorm, and the 2005 New Year's Day floods in Marin have taught us that critical services may be unavailable for days or weeks following a disaster. For example:

- Police, paramedics and fire departments will be overwhelmed. It is unlikely that mutual aid from surrounding communities would be available if all of Marin County is affected, and state mutual aid may be delayed.
- Utilities may be out for several days, possibly for several weeks.
- Sewage disposal may be inoperative for a month or longer
- After a major earthquake, Highway 101 and surface streets may be impassable due to downed overpasses and bridges,slides, or gridlock. If that were to happen, portions of Marin would be cut off.
- Liquefaction is likely to occur along Highway 101 from Marin City to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge
- Many of the freeway overpasses may collapse.
- Damaged bridges will be closed and it may take days for people at work in San Francisco or the East Bay to be reunited with their families in Marin.
- Health facilities may be overwhelmed, damaged or destroyed.
- Marin General Hospital may be inaccessible due to freeway closures and gridlock on surface streets.

On a personal level, we must each recognize and expect that:

- We may not be able to get home for several days.
- Children and others needing help may be home alone.
- Our homes may be seriously damaged or destroyed.
- We, or someone in our families, may experience serious injury or death.