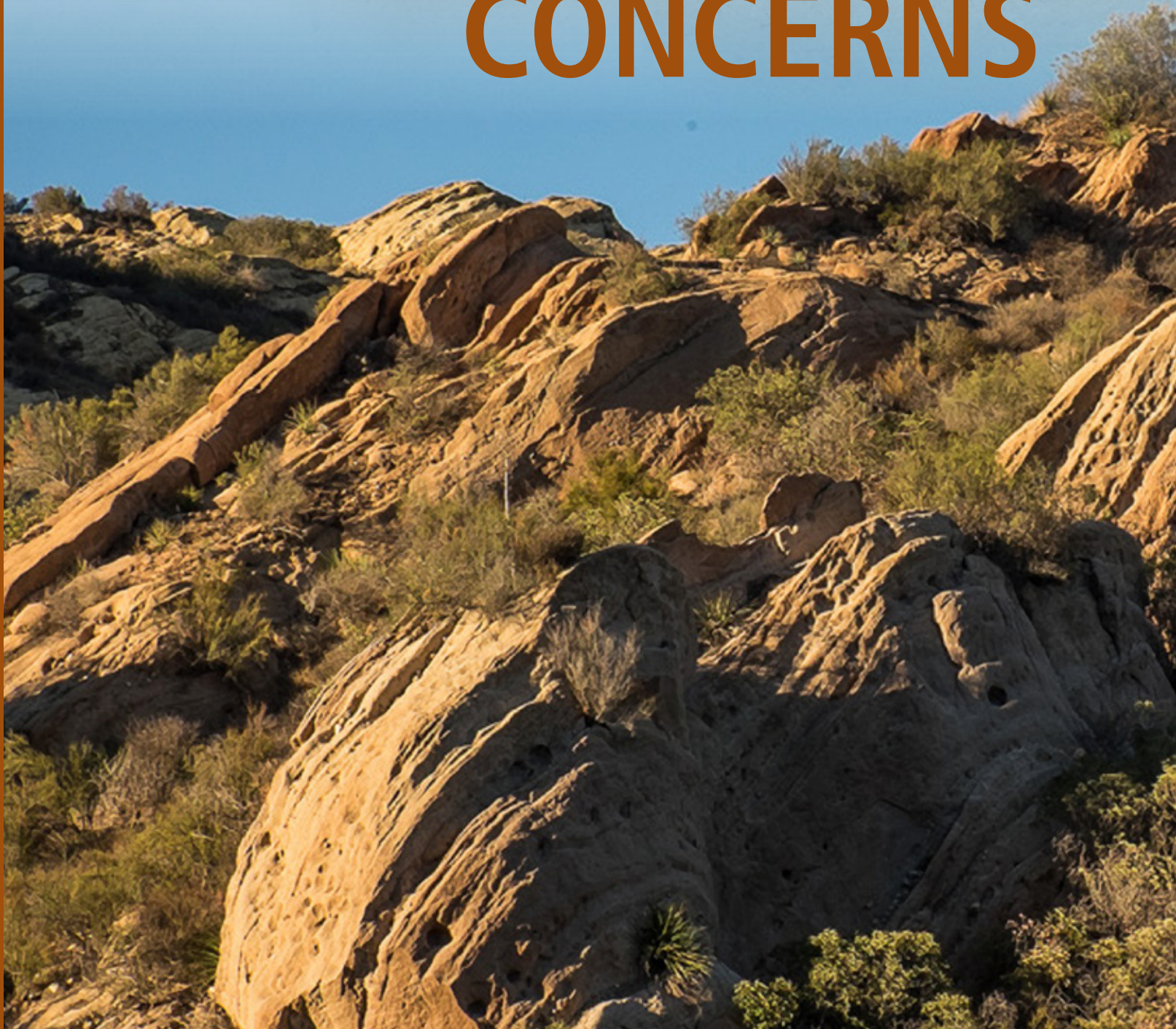
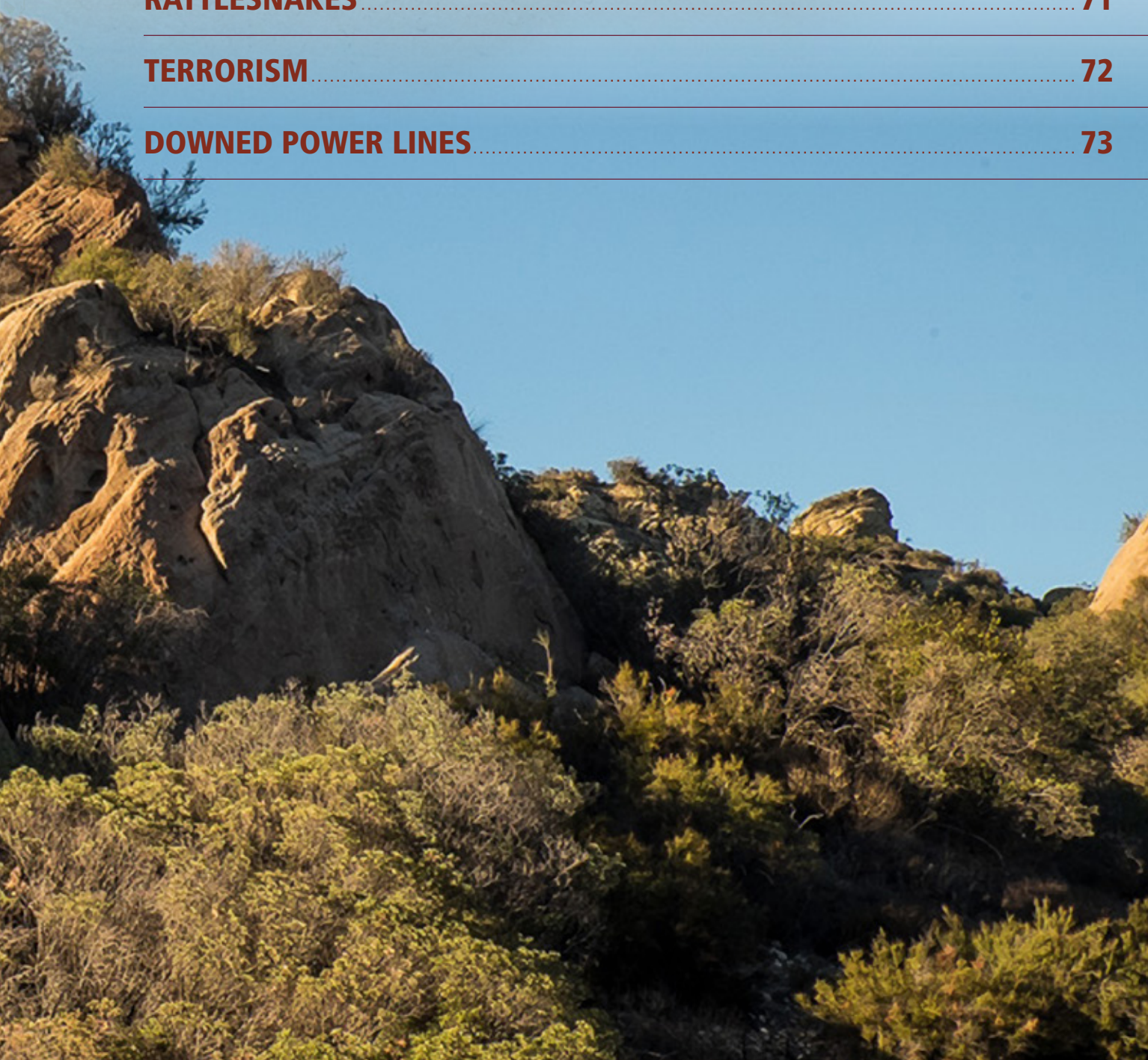


# 5 OTHER HAZARDS AND CONCERNS



# 5 - OTHER HAZARDS AND CONCERNS

<b>FIRE STATION RESPONSE TIME AND PARKING HAZARDS</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<b>POISON OAK</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>RATTLESNAKES</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>TERRORISM</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>DOWNED POWER LINES</b> .....	<b>73</b>



## FIRE STATION RESPONSE TIME AND PARKING HAZARDS

On average, Fire Station 69 responds to 400 service calls every year. These calls include structure and brush fires, emergency medical services, snake removal, and other public assistance.

For every service call, response time is critical. In Topanga, rapid response is a challenge because of our narrow, winding roads. But those challenges can be magnified, and response time delayed, due to improperly or illegally parked cars blocking the roads.

### PARKING REGULATIONS

Imagine a house at the end of your road catches fire, but firefighters can't reach it because cars are parked illegally. Think that might endanger your own home? Make sure everyone in your neighborhood, including visitors and temporary workers, follows these parking rules:

- Vehicles may park in one spot on a street for up to 72 consecutive hours. After that, the car can be ticketed and towed.
- LA County fire engines are wide and firefighters work off the sides of the engines, so they generally need 15 feet of roadway clearance. Also, there must be 15 feet of clearance, in both directions, from fire hydrants and intersections. If parked cars restrict this clearance, firefighters may not be able to reach that burning house or that heart attack victim in time.
- Cul-de-sacs need to be kept clear of vehicles and other hindrances to leave enough room for emergency vehicles to turn around.
- Vehicles must park within 18 inches of the side of the road. That means as close as possible on the passenger side. Vehicles parked facing the wrong direction may be ticketed and towed.
- On roads with solid white "fog lines," all four wheels of parked cars must be inside the fog line.
- Large trash bins create a hazard for emergency personnel because they have to maneuver around them in situations where seconds count. There is a 27-hour window for trash bins to be left on a street, starting no earlier than 5:00 P.M. the day before trash day, and no later than 8:00 P.M. the day of trash pickup. The rest of the time trash bins have to be off the street.
- County zoning codes state that all residents must provide off-street parking for any vehicles connected to their homes, including those of renters, and anyone living on the property. Street parking should be reserved for visitors, not residents.
- Cars that block emergency access can be ticketed or towed by the CHP or sheriff's department.

Cars parked properly within the fog line:



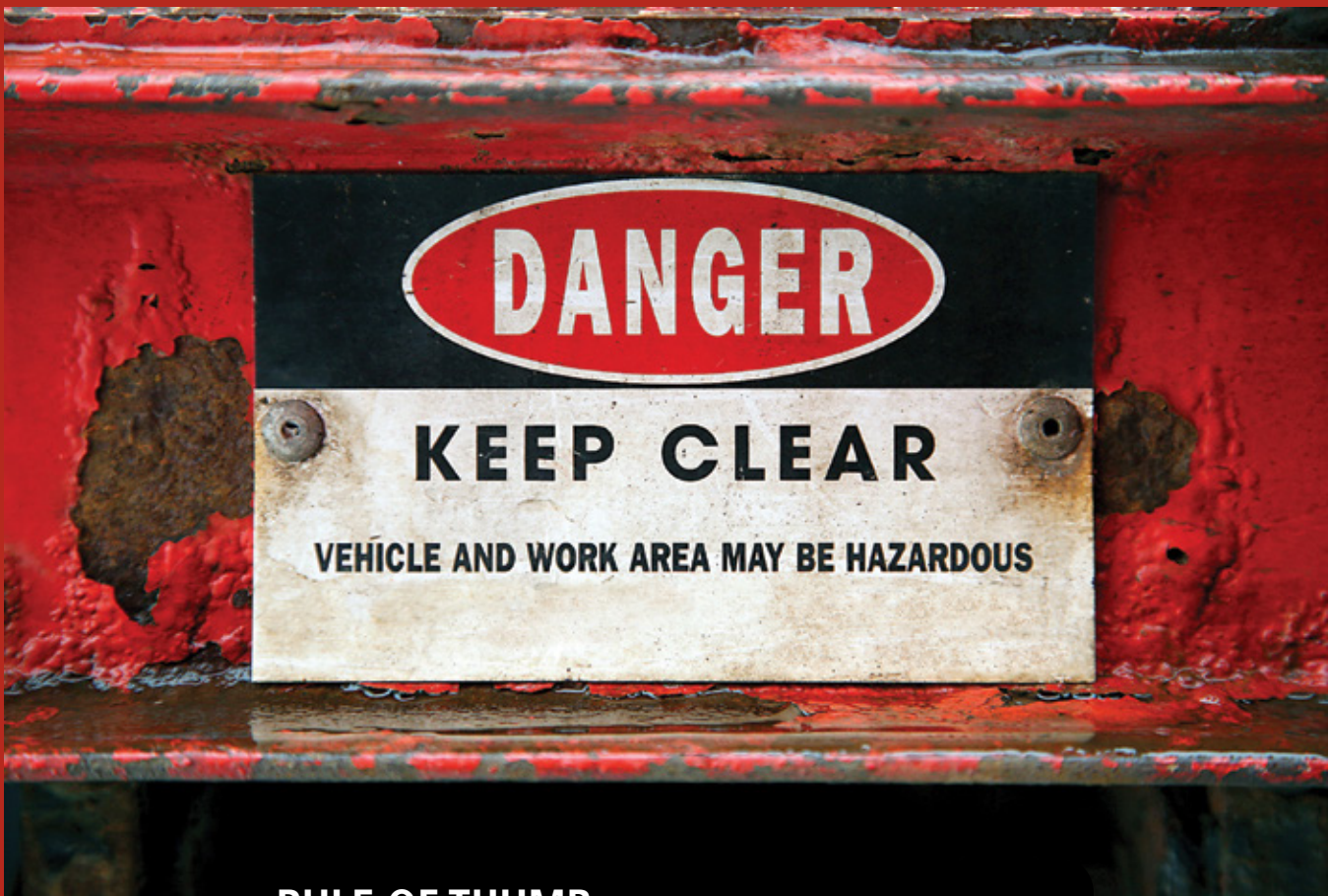
## Keep Your Roads Clear and Safe

Work with your neighbors to voluntarily limit parking to one side of the road, especially on the narrowest streets, to allow for 15 feet of clearance and eliminate the need for emergency vehicles to “slalom” down a street, which slows them down. If access remains a problem, contact the LA County Department of Public Works, Traffic & Lighting Division, at (626) 300-4769 to request appropriate parking restrictions. The California Highway Patrol, sheriff’s department, and fire department will also request that Public Works install parking restrictions, as appropriate.

Mindful and considerate parking practices may save the lives of your family and your neighbors by allowing emergency personnel to respond as fast as possible.



Illegally parked vehicle



### **RULE OF THUMB**

To estimate a safe distance from a hazardous materials incident, look toward the incident, hold your thumb out in front of you at arm's length and close one eye. Alternate your thumb angle both vertically and horizontally. If you can still see the incident (such as an overturned tanker truck) on either side of your thumb, then you are too close. Back away from the incident until your thumb covers the entire width of the scene.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Chemicals can play a positive role in our lives, however they can be hazardous to humans or the environment if used or released improperly. Problems happen during production, storage, transportation, use, or disposal. Any local chemical accident is bad news for you and the community.

The two most common causes of widespread improper chemical exposure are transportation accidents and accidents at processing plants. However, you can be at risk if a couple of bottles of caustic chemicals under your sink break during an earthquake.

### REMEMBER RAIN

If you think you've got a problem with spilled hazardous materials, large or small, remember the mnemonic **R-A-I-N**: Recognize the danger. Avoid the area. Isolate the area to keep others away, and...Notify authorities by calling 911.

If you find yourself in the vicinity of a toxic chemical spill, you want to be UP—uphill, upwind, and upstream—from the suspected hazard. Here are a few additional tips:

IF YOU ARE...	DO THIS...
<b>Asked to Evacuate</b>	<p>Leave at once and take your Family Emergency Plan and Disaster Supply Kit with you, just as with any evacuation.</p> <p>Follow the routes recommended by the authorities—your normal shortcuts may not be safe.</p> <p>Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance, including infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Monitor radio, TV, and social media for information on evacuation routes, temporary shelters, and procedures.</p>
<b>Caught Outside</b>	<p>In general, try to move yourself at least one-half mile (usually 8-10 city blocks) from the danger area; use the "Rule of Thumb" (see page 68).</p> <p>Do not walk into or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists, or condensed solid chemical deposits. Try not to inhale gases, fumes and smoke. If possible, cover your mouth with a cloth while leaving the area.</p> <p>Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified.</p>
<b>In a Motor Vehicle</b>	<p>Stop and seek shelter in a permanent building. If you must remain in your car, keep car windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner and heater so the car's ventilation system is not pulling in outside air.</p>
<b>Ordered by Authorities to Stay Indoors</b>	<p>Bring pets inside.</p> <p>Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close vents, fireplace dampers, and as many interior doors as possible.</p> <p>Turn off air conditioners and ventilation systems.</p> <p>Go into a room above ground that has the fewest openings to the outside.</p> <p>Depending on the severity of the event, and directions of authorities, once inside the room, seal gaps under and around doorways, windows, exhaust fans, and vents. Use wet towels, plastic sheeting, duct tape, wax paper, or aluminum foil.</p> <p>If you suspect gas or vapors could have entered the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or a towel. Avoid eating or drinking any food or water that may be contaminated.</p>



**LEAVES OF THREE,  
LET THEM BE!**

## **POISON OAK**

Poison oak can be found throughout Topanga, in backyards and in parklands. Learn how to spot it from several feet away. It has a distinctive three-leaf pattern.

People allergic to poison oak may require medical attention if exposed. If you have trouble breathing or swallowing, experience swelling, or if a rash appears on your face, get to an emergency room right away.

Most people can safely treat a poison oak rash at home. If you come into contact with these plants, here are some immediate first aid tips:

- Rinse the affected area of your body with lots of lukewarm, soapy water as soon as possible. Since the oily resin does not wash off easily, it is critical that you rinse with a lot of water. Using just a small amount of water will only spread the poison.
- Use anti-itch cream. Consider using pre-exposure lotion, which creates a barrier against poison oak and sumac oils. Additionally, poison cleansers are available that can be used up to 8 hours after exposure.
- Wash your clothing.
- DO NOT scratch the rash or blisters as this can cause infection.

**RESOURCE:** Visit the American Academy of Dermatology website at [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org), and search for "poison oak."



## TRAIN YOUR DOGS

Dogs are naturally curious and don't understand the difference between a harmless snake and a dangerous rattler. Rattlesnake aversion training will teach your dog to respect rattlesnakes and help prevent a painful, costly, and potentially deadly snakebite. If a snake bites your cat or dog, keep the animal calm and immediately take it to a veterinarian who keeps antivenin in stock for treatment. (Know this before your dogs go outside where they might encounter a snake.)

## RATTLESNAKES

Rattlesnakes are the only reptiles in Southern California considered dangerous to humans. They are particularly active during the spring and summer months, and play a very important role in our ecosystems. You sometimes find them hiding in warm areas, such as underneath rocks, in trash piles, or inside animal burrows. Since trash and woodpiles are favorite hiding places, never work in these areas with bare hands or feet; use a stick or tool to make some noise and vibration before moving items around. This will likely scare away any snakes.

Many people are afraid of snakes, but rattlers are shy creatures and they don't like people (not even really nice people!). They are quite reasonable in how they defend themselves. First, they simply lie motionless. If you cut off their retreat, they offer an audible warning—the telltale rattling sound. If you move closer, they are likely to head for cover. Their venom is intended for prey (humans don't count) so they are reluctant to bite. In fact, anywhere from 25% to 50% of rattler bites are dry, with no venom injected.

There are many other species of snakes in our parts, and they can often be found sunning themselves during the daytime. Learn to recognize the difference between these harmless snakes and the potentially dangerous rattlers, so you don't freak out unnecessarily when you see a slithery serpent.

## IF YOU SEE A RATTLESNAKE...

- Leave it alone and give it plenty of room to escape. Believe it or not, the snake is more afraid of you than you are of it.
- If the snake is on your property and in a place that makes it impossible to avoid, such as coiled up by your front door, and you can't wait for it to move away on its own, you can:
  - **CALL 911.** Firefighters will be dispatched, but official department policy states they must kill the snake. Consider this a last resort, because as much as you may dislike snakes, they are just trying to survive in their natural habitat and don't deserve to die just because you think they are icky.

## IF BITTEN BY A RATTLESNAKE...

- Immediately move away from the snake.
- **Call 911** as soon as possible. If you can't use a phone immediately, get to the nearest emergency room or clinic.
- Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the victim's heart. If the bite is on a hand or arm, remove all jewelry or tight clothing. Keep the victim as still as possible.

### DO NOT:

- Apply a tourniquet
- Suck out the venom
- Give the victim caffeine, alcohol, or any medication
- Apply heat or ice to the bite
- Cut into the bite area

**RESOURCE:** For more on California reptiles and amphibians, visit the California Herps website at [www.californiaherps.com](http://www.californiaherps.com).

## TERRORISM

Since 9/11, the threat of terrorism within our borders has kept many on edge. Other than being vigilant about reporting any suspicious activity you see to the police, you can't do much to stop terrorist events from happening. But you can prepare in much the same way as you do for any disaster:

- Have a Family Emergency Plan, including an evacuation plan, and a family meeting place outside of the area.
- Establish emergency communications options for getting timely updates.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit.

## WHAT COULD HAPPEN

- There can be significant human casualties and damage to buildings and infrastructure.
- Massive local, state, federal law enforcement, and media response follows a terrorist attack due to the event's criminal nature.
- Workplaces and schools may be closed, and there may be restrictions on domestic and international travel.
- You may have to evacuate an area, avoiding roads blocked for your safety.

## FOLLOW THE DIRECTIVES OF AUTHORITIES

Monitor radio, TV, and social media to keep up with the latest information as the event unfolds. If the police ask you to leave your home, assume they have a good reason, and do what they say. Similarly, if you are advised by local officials to "shelter in place," there may be suspected biological or chemical toxins in the air. Follow the guidelines in the Hazardous Materials section on page 78.

## POSITIVE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

Young children watching televised reports may not realize that they are watching multiple airings of the same video footage. They may think the event is happening again and again, which can ratchet up the stress level. Shield them from disturbing visuals.

## ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS

Incidents of armed people entering schools, office buildings, and malls—so called "active shooter incidents"—are not uncommon. The Department of Homeland Security offers online training, including Webinars and downloadable materials to help the public prepare for, and respond to, active shooter crisis situations. A few of the suggested actions include:

- If you have a safe evacuation route, get out of the building or area as fast as possible, leaving belongings behind. Help others escape, if possible, but do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Once outside, **call 911** and provide as much detail about the shooter and location as possible. Keep others from entering the building.
- Follow the instructions of police officers. As you evacuate, keep your hands visible to officers at all times. Arriving police are very tense and won't immediately be able to identify the victims from the shooters.
- If you can't get out, find a place to hide that does not trap or restrict your options for movement. Lock or block doors and close, cover and move away from windows. Remain quiet and silence your cell phone.
- If you are out in the open and can't conceal yourself from the shooter, work with others to overpower the shooter using whatever items you can quickly find, such as fire extinguishers, scissors, or other heavy blunt objects.

Visit [www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness](http://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness) for links to training resources.

## DOWNED POWER LINES

Southern California Edison distributes electricity over 50,000 square miles of territory through both overhead and underground lines. The electricity running through these lines is inherently dangerous, and coming into contact with it can cause serious injury or death. Many people think all power lines have a protective covering on them, but they don't.

Overhead power lines connected by poles can topple over from storms or when hit by vehicles. If you see a downed power line, Edison recommends that you:

- **Call 911.** Tell the operator it is an electrical emergency and provide location information.
- **Stay away.** Never approach or touch any downed line or any person or object in contact with it. This includes a car in contact with a downed line, even if an injured person is inside the car. Always assume lines are live and that there are energized objects around them. Electricity always searches for ground, and any object that can conduct electricity can serve as a pathway to ground.

## IF YOU SEE SOMEONE IN CONTACT WITH A POWER LINE

If you see someone injured, your instinct is to help them. However, if they are in contact with or near a power line, or if there is water around them, never approach the scene. Don't even try to use an object to free them. Call 911 and wait for professional help.

## IF YOU'RE IN A CAR ACCIDENT

If you're in an accident and a power line is on or near your car, unless you are in immediate danger from a spreading car fire, do not leave the vehicle until a qualified Edison worker tells you it's clear. You can safely use your cell phone to call 911 for help. Lower your windows and warn others not to approach your car and ask them to call 911. If it's absolutely critical to leave the vehicle due to impending danger, follow these steps:

- Before opening the car door, make sure it is not in contact with any object touching the ground, such as trees or a fire hydrant.
- With the door fully open, position yourself facing out with both feet on the doorsill and both hands on the door frame. Take a moment to get your body balanced equally on both feet.
- In one swift motion, jump clear of the vehicle, landing on both feet without touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time, while avoiding any wires on the ground. Maintain your balance so you don't fall back against the car, or fall down on the ground.
- Walk carefully and slowly away from the vehicle by shuffling your feet in small movements. This minimizes the difference between electrical voltages between your steps. Keep shuffling until you are a significant distance away from the car and downed lines.

**RESOURCE:** Find more information about electrical safety at home, outside, and at work on Edison's website at [www.sce.com](http://www.sce.com) and search for "power lines and trees."

