



The week after the big one.

What actually stops working after a major Southern California earthquake, and for how long.

1 Aftershocks, for days



- Strong ones come in the first hours and keep coming for a week
- Drop, cover and hold on every time
- Sleep away from windows and tall furniture

2 Water goes first



- Broken mains mean low pressure or none for days
- When it returns, a boil notice can last a week
- Stored water, the heater tank, then treated water

3 Power, in patches



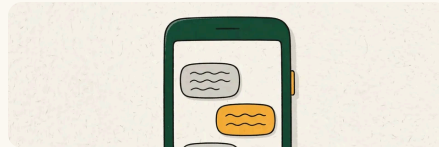
- Some streets back in hours, others in days
- Fridge four hours, full freezer two days, then the cooler
- Phones on low power; charge from the car outside

4 Gas, off until checked



- Shut it only if you smell it or hear it
- Once off, the utility turns it back on, not you
- That can take days; plan to cook outside or cold

5 Phones: text, do not call



- Voice lines jam; texts squeeze through
- One out-of-area contact for the whole family
- Towers on backup batteries fade after a day

6 Stores: closed, then cash only



- No power means no registers, no card readers, no ATMs
- Water and batteries gone in the first hour they open
- Small bills in the kit

7 Roads and the drive home



- Overpasses closed for inspection, canyons blocked
- Expect to walk the last part; shoes in the car
- A quarter tank is the minimum, always

8 Schools and work



- Schools hold kids until an authorized adult comes
- Expect a day or two closed for inspection
- Work from home for most, if home has power

9 Sanitation becomes the job



- No water means no flushing; bag-line the bowl
- Hand washing station at the door
- Trash bagged and away from where you sleep

10 The house itself



- Cracks, doors that stick, a tilt: stay out until checked
- Chimneys are the common failure in older homes
- Photos of everything before you clean up

11 Insurance and help



- Call the claims line early; it gets busier, not quieter
- Keep every receipt from the week
- County disaster assistance opens within days; bring the folder

12 The neighbors are the first responders



- Help arrives in days, not hours; the street covers the first ones
- Check the older people and anyone alone, twice a day
- Trade water, ice, a charger, a ride

Water, power, stores and roads come back in that order, over days. The kit is for the gap.

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