



Shared Ground

*San Mateo County
Emergency Management*

Civics 101

September 2026





What do you think emergency management is?

What do we actually do?



My journey.

An emergency response is a lot like an ICU.



ICU Analogy for Disaster Response



- Coordinate

Get people and resources to where they are needed, in the moment.

- Triage

Prioritize the highest needs first when you cannot do everything at once.

- Bring in experts

Pull in specialists and partner agencies as the case demands.

- Escalate

Call for mutual aid, engage state or federal partners.

The right help, the right place, at the right time.

What We Do & How We Operate

Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)





WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO



Blue skies. Grey skies. Dark skies.

PREPARE

Blue Skies

Plan, train, exercise, 24/7 tracking & situational awareness; build relationships and trust across op area

TRACK

Grey Skies

Track and share signals as a threat builds. Warn ahead of impact. Engage & coordinate across op area.

LEAD

Dark Skies

Activate the EOC and coordinate the countywide response and recovery.





What You Can Do Today

- Sign up for SMC Alert

Official warnings for where you live & work.

<https://www.smcgov.org/dem/smc-alert>

- Have the conversation

Talk with family, neighbors, roommates today about where you would meet.

- Pack a small go bag

One at home, a small one at work.

Water, meds, charger, snacks.

- Include your pets

Food, water, a carrier, a plan.

The best time to plan is a calm day. Today.