

*Culver* CITY

2019

# Community Guide to Public Alerts and Warnings



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## **PREFACE**

The City of Culver City is nestled in the Los Angeles urban area. Culver City has a nighttime population of 40,061 and a daytime population of 77,634.<sup>1</sup> The City is prone to many natural disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, flooding, drought, liquefaction, and windstorms; also, accidental or human-caused incidents such as hazardous material release, transportation incidents and acts of terrorism are potential threats. Therefore, the City of Culver City identifies that the distribution of public warnings and notifications is essential to protect life and property before and during an emergency or disaster.

Do you live in, work in, visit, or pass through Culver City? This community guide is for you. It will inform you about the City's warning and notification systems and prepare you for what types of communication to expect in the event of an emergency or disaster. During a disaster, we will communicate with you in as many ways as possible and we want to be sure you see and hear our important messages.

## **WHAT ARE PUBLIC ALERTS AND PUBLIC WARNINGS?<sup>2</sup>**

A **public alert** is a type of communication that will make you aware of an unusual situation. These alerts are for your **information**, but we do not expect you to take a specific action. The test message below is an example of a public alert.

TEST MESSAGE- Mobile Alert

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is working to restore power in your area. You do not need to report the outage. Thank you for your support.

A **public warning** is a type of communication that will **guide** you to act to reduce losses or prevent harm. The test message below is an example of a public warning.

CULVER CITY: STORMS expected to continue through Thursday. Heavy rain can lead to flooding and debris flows. Be prepared for potential evacuation.

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<sup>1</sup> Culver City Fire Department, Standards of Cover & Community Risk Assessment 2019, pg. 22

<sup>2</sup> State of California Alert & Warning Guidelines March 2019, pg. 11

## TYPES OF PUBLIC ALERTS AND WARNINGS

When it comes to local emergencies, local government officials typically have the most accurate and timely understanding of the situation. It is our duty to inform you of risks and let you know what to do to be safe.<sup>3</sup> We will issue emergency alerts and warnings when there is an imminent threat to life, health, or property. These notifications may include advisories, precautionary protective actions, and mandatory orders.

An **advisory** is an official announcement that will inform you about conditions that have a likely chance of occurring. For example, we use advisories to announce police activity and significant weather conditions (e.g., heat advisory, flood advisory, wind advisory, etc.) Example advisories are referenced below.

URGENT - WEATHER MESSAGE

...HEAT ADVISORY REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 9 PM PDT THIS EVENING.

\* TEMPERATURES...will climb into the middle to upper 90s this afternoon. Heat indices will range from 103 to 107.

\* IMPACTS...of the high temperatures could cause heat stroke or heat exhaustion.

A heat advisory means that a period of hot temperatures is expected. The combination of hot temperatures and high humidity will combine to create a situation in which heat illnesses are possible. Drink plenty of fluids, stay in an air-conditioned room, stay out of the sun, and check up on relatives and neighbors.

ADVISORY - DRONE DEPLOYMENT

Drone deployment for search of a residential burglary suspect at XXXX (Street Name)

**Precautionary protective actions** are things you can do before and during the anticipated hazard. If you do not do these things, life and/or property could be at risk.

Some common protective action recommendations include:

- Shelter-in-place (with or without detailed instructions, such as sealing and/or locking doors and windows)
- Evacuate
- Prepare to evacuate (or to take some other specified action when advised)
- Avoid the area due to police activity
- Observe or be on the lookout

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<sup>3</sup>State of California Alert & Warning Guidelines March 2019, pg. 14

- Take health precautions (such as boiling water)
- Distribution instructions (for food, water, ice, building materials, medications, etc.)

Some protective actions include<sup>4</sup>:

- Avoid calling 9-1-1 unless you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency
- Evacuation locations, routes, road closures, shelter locations, etc.
- Reminders of things to bring with you when evacuating (e.g., medicines, pet safety, etc.)
- Instructions for sheltering in place or locking down

**Mandatory orders** are messages that originate from the City, often from the Culver City Police Department. Orders instruct you to take immediate action (i.e., do something or to stop doing something) to reduce loss or harm and to protect your safety.

Examples of mandatory orders include (but are not limited to):

- Boil Water Order
- Evacuation Order
- Direction to move to higher ground
- Lockdown
- Shelter-in-place

The responsibility for issuing alerts and warnings during an emergency rests with designated local officials known as **Alerting Authorities**. You may see messages from the following local Alerting Authorities:

- Fire Chief/Battalion Chief
- Police Chief/Police Watch Commander
- Incident Commander
- Emergency Management/Emergency Operations Center personnel

## **HOW WILL I KNOW TO TAKE ACTION?**

Deciding whether to evacuate or shelter-in-place (i.e., get away from a threat or hazard) is among the most important decisions that must be made during an emergency.

### **Evacuation Warning or Order**

An **evacuation warning** means that it is time to prepare to leave your home and the area, gather your family, pets, basic needs and important paperwork and listen for instructions from local officials.

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<sup>4</sup>State of California Alert & Warning Guidelines March 2019, pg.49-50

An **evacuation order** means you must leave your home or business immediately. Failure to follow an evacuation order may endanger your life and the lives of others and may result in injury or death. Once you have left the area, you will not be able to return until local authorities lift the evacuation order.

Natural disasters such as wildfires, earthquakes, floods, and landslides are among the most frequent causes of emergency evacuations. The City and the Culver City Unified School District note these hazards in the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Note, it is also important to be aware when a disaster affects our neighboring communities. For example, tsunamis may warrant an evacuation order to residents living in neighboring coastal communities. The City of Culver City, although on the very outskirts of the tsunami inundation zone, may experience an influx of people due to established evacuation routes. Culver City will alert you of possible impacts from the flow of traffic in this instance.

### **Shelter-in-Place**

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be released accidentally or intentionally into the environment; there may be police activity or an active shooter situation nearby. Should one of these scenarios occur, we will provide you with information about how to protect yourself and your family. We may give you instructions to shelter-in-place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe indoors; this is not the same as going to a shelter location. Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room with no or few windows and taking refuge there.<sup>5</sup> The above scenarios may cause us to send out an alert via one or more of our alerting tools, especially when there is a perceived vulnerability of secondary impacts from those hazards.<sup>6</sup> See Attachment III for additional shelter-in-place information.

## **STAY INFORMED**

In the event of a local emergency or disaster, the City has the following public alert and warning systems in place to relay important information to you:

1. Everbridge (i.e., Nixle)
2. Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
  - Emergency Alert System (EAS)
  - Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

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<sup>5</sup> American Red Cross, “Fact Sheet on Shelter-in-Place”, [https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF\\_s/Preparedness\\_\\_\\_Disaster\\_Recovery/Disaster\\_Preparedness/Terrorism/shelterinplace.pdf](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness___Disaster_Recovery/Disaster_Preparedness/Terrorism/shelterinplace.pdf)

For shelter-in-place instructions, see Attachment III: How to Shelter-in-Place

<sup>6</sup> According to the MJHMP Steering Committee, the probability of each hazard is based on the likelihood of occurrence from historical data. <https://www.culvercity.org/Services/Public-Safety/Hazard-Mitigation-Plan>

- National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio
- 3. Media Releases and Social Media
- 4. City Website
- 5. Culver City TV
- 6. AM 1690 Radio Station
- 7. Public Address (PA) System and Vehicle Siren
- 8. Electronic Changeable Message Signs (CMS)

### **Everbridge**

Everbridge (i.e., Nixle) is the City of Culver City’s official emergency notification system that we use to communicate urgent alerts, community events, and traffic-related information to the Culver City community. Everbridge allows us to send emergency alert notifications via voice messages, SMS/text messages and email messages. To receive messages, register by texting your zip code to 888-777. Or, visit the Culver City Member Portal at [www.culvercity.org/emergencyalerts](http://www.culvercity.org/emergencyalerts) to sign up to make sure you are notified in case of an emergency. We recommend that you use the City Member Portal, as you can choose what types of alerts you want to receive and how you want to receive them (e.g., voice message, text, email, etc.).

### **Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) <sup>7</sup>**

IPAWS is an internet-based notification system run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities can use it to issue critical public alerts and warnings via television broadcast, radio and mobile phones. The three core components of IPAWS are the Emergency Alert System (EAS), the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) System and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio.

#### *Emergency Alert System (EAS)*

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a national public warning system that requires TV and radio broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio service providers, direct broadcast satellite service providers, and wire line video service providers to offer the President of the United States the communications capability to address the American public during a national emergency. EAS can also be used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information such as AMBER Alerts (for missing children), SILVER Alerts (for missing seniors) and emergency weather information targeted to specific areas.

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<sup>7</sup> State of California Alert & Warning Guidelines March 2019, pg. 37-38

### *Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA)*

WEA gives authorized government alerting authorities the ability to send emergency messages through major mobile carriers. Alerting Authorities can send WEA alerts to people in specific areas. Everyone in the target area will receive the message on his or her mobile device (i.e., cell phone). WEA alerts look different from a typical text alert to differentiate them from regular notifications. They cause a unique alert tone and vibration, accompanied by a brief text notification displayed on the recipient's mobile device. The public does not need to register for this service. WEA is an opt-out system. Mobile device users will receive the WEA notification unless they choose to deactivate the service on their mobile device.

### *National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio*

NOAA Weather Radio uses technology similar to old-fashioned portable radio pagers and desktop radio receivers. Alerting Authorities can reach these devices by sending a particular tone and data signal, followed by audio information. The National Weather Radio Network, operated by the NOAA, is the best known and most widely deployed example of this technology. Tone-alert radios can provide both alerting and warning detail quickly over a wide area, but require an investment in the receiving equipment that many members of the public decline to make. Some NOAA Radios have Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) capability allowing Alerting Authorities to limit warnings to specific areas.

## **Media Releases and Social Media**

The City of Culver City's Alerting Authorities will take the lead in issuing both media releases and social media posts during significant events and emergencies. Media releases, Everbridge notifications, and social media posts can help the media amplify the message and provide a verified information source to the public. Many people who receive an emergency text message or phone call will seek to verify the message in the media before taking action. These announcements may also reach people who do not have mobile phones, may reach caregivers outside the impacted area, and may generate news coverage in languages other than English.

We may also use social media sites (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, etc.) to quickly inform you. Keep in mind that our social media sites are not monitored 24/7, but posts coming from the below City social media sites are verified information sources. Please follow and like these sites now, so you can receive messages in case of an emergency.

### *Twitter*

[@CityCulverGov](#) [@CulverCityFD](#) [@Culver CityPD](#)

### *Facebook*

[@CityofCulverCity](#) [@CulverCityFD](#) [@CulverCityPoliceDepartment](#)

### *Instagram*

[@culvercitygov](#) [@culvercityfd](#) [@culvercitypd](#)

(Note: ONLY Culver City Residents can find us on Nextdoor: <https://nextdoor.com/agency-city/ca/culver-city> Visit the City website’s “Stay Connected” page to view all City social media sites and stay current on City news, events and notifications. <https://www.culvercity.org/connect>)

### **City Website: [www.culvercity.org](http://www.culvercity.org)**

City departments regularly post relevant information and news about Culver City on the City’s website. In case of an emergency, we will post important information on the “Current Disaster Information” page. Examples of information we will post on the website include maps with evacuation routes, directions to shelter locations, and links to more information on the crisis at hand.

### **Culver City TV**

Culver City TV provides video for local AT&T, Time Warner Cable, and Frontier FiOS subscribers. It airs 24 hours each day, 7 days each week. We can post important messages on Culver City TV in the event of an emergency. View Culver City TV on the following cable channels:

- Spectrum – Channel 35
- Frontier FiOS – Channel 37
- AT&T U-verse – Channel 99

### **AM 1690 Radio Station**

The City’s Emergency Advisory Radio System allows you to receive up-to-the-minute Culver City-specific reports. During non-emergency times, City officials may use the system to inform motorists of street repairs, traffic constraints, travel advisories, City history, and visitor information. Be sure to pre-set AM 1690 on your car radio and any other listening devices.

### **Public Address System (PA) & Vehicle Siren**

The Culver City Police and Fire Departments can issue warnings through the use of loudspeakers and sirens on their vehicles.

Examples where this may be appropriate include:

- Widespread evacuation

- Hazardous materials incident
- Civil disturbance
- Crowd control

This method is effective in reaching many people, except those with hearing impairments, and we may use this method in addition to other mass notification systems including WEA, Everbridge, etc.

### **Changeable Message Signs (CMS)**

The City of Culver City has three portable Changeable Message Signs (CMS) that can be deployed throughout the City to warn motorists of hazards or special events. These message signs are effective in warning approaching travelers. The CMS may be used in addition to other mass notification systems including WEA, Everbridge, etc.

## **ADDITIONAL ALERT AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS AND TOOLS**

We have mentioned several tools that we may use to get our messages out to you. Keep in mind that other cities, schools, employers, the County and State may have notification systems as well. When you sign up for public alerts, keep in mind where elderly family members live and/or work, as well as where your children go to school. Although you may not live or work in the City of Los Angeles, you may want to consider signing up for the following tools to keep apprised of emergencies in Los Angeles.

### **GovDelivery**

The City of Culver City uses an e-mail subscription management system called GovDelivery that allows you to subscribe to news, events, and information on the City website. To sign-up, visit <https://www.culvercity.org/notifications>.

### **NotifyLA<sup>8</sup>**

NotifyLA is a mass notification system owned by the City of Los Angeles that can make phone calls to landlines and cell phones and to send text messages, faxes, and emails. NotifyLA has the capability to send you messages through the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system. If you own a mobile device, this system will send you text-like messages to alert you of imminent

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<sup>8</sup> City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Plan, *Early Warnings and Notifications Functional Support Annex* January 2018, pg. 13

threats to safety in your area. Examples of emergency notifications include evacuation notices, shelter-in-place notices, and imminent threat to life or property notifications.

This tool will be used during any emergency in which large segments of the City of Los Angeles are affected. Examples of events when you may receive a NotifyLA alert include (but are not limited to):

- Catastrophic earthquakes
- Wildfires
- Evacuations
- Early warning of disaster
- Public health notice
- Notice of imminent or perceived threats to life or property

NotifyLA is authorized for use only when there is a need to disseminate critical, safety-related information to individuals within a short timeframe. Alerting Authorities will use the system to direct you to take action in the event of an emergency.

Visit <https://emergency.lacity.org/notifyla> to sign up for alerts from the City of Los Angeles - Emergency Management Department via NotifyLA.

### **Alert LA County<sup>9</sup>**

Alert LA County is a free mass notification system for Los Angeles County residents and businesses. If the area where you live or have your business is impacted by an emergency or disaster, the Sheriff's Department uses Alert LA County to contact you. You will receive a recorded notification with specific directions on what to do. The system sends shelter-in-place instructions, evacuation information, and other emergency messages. It has accessibility features for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. You can also select your preferred language for notifications.

The Alert LA County database automatically includes listed and unlisted landline telephone numbers. You may self-register other telephone numbers and choose your preferred delivery methods (e.g., text, voice message, etc.) by visiting <https://emergency.lacity.org/alerts/notifyla> or call (323) 980-2260 for more information.

### **ShakeAlert<sup>10</sup>**

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is a scientific agency of the United States government. Scientists of the USGS, along with its partner organizations, use earthquake science

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<sup>9</sup> Alert LA County, <https://www.lacounty.gov/emergency/alert-la/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.shakealert.org/>

and technology to detect significant earthquakes quickly. The USGS developed an earthquake early warning system called ShakeAlert to alert you before shaking arrives so you may take appropriate protective actions. Depending on your distance from the earthquake, you may receive the alerts before, during, or after the arrival of strong shaking.

Self-register for ShakeAlert by downloading the free ShakeAlertLA mobile app for Android and Apple devices through the Google Play Store and Apple App Store. The app is available in both English and Spanish. Once you download the app, enable notifications. ShakeAlert warnings are issued for all quakes, including aftershocks, of magnitude-4.5 or greater. The alert includes a sound and message that indicates the anticipated intensity level. The early warning function only works in Los Angeles County. The app does not need to be open, but you must set your phone's location services to "Always On."

ShakeAlertLA also has resources to help prepare for an earthquake, get details on recent earthquakes, and find help after an earthquake.

### **Red Cross Emergency App**

The American Red Cross App is where you can get real-time updates during disasters, as well as plenty of tips on how to be prepared and stay safe.

The Red Cross Emergency app combines more than 35 different types of severe weather and emergency alerts. You can choose the alerts that are important to your location or the location of your loved ones. The "Family Safe" feature allows you to notify loved ones that an alert has been issued in their area and check to see if they are safe. The app also offers information on what to do before, during, and after severe weather hits and how to find open Red Cross Shelters. All content is also available in Spanish. You can download the mobile app for Android and Apple devices through the Google Play Store and Apple App Store or text:

"GETEMERGENCY" to 90999.<sup>11</sup> You can also follow the official Twitter account for the Red Cross Greater Los Angeles region<sup>12</sup> at [@RedCrossLA](https://twitter.com/RedCrossLA)

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/connect-with-us.html>

## **ATTACHMENT I: ALERT AND WARNING SAMPLE MESSAGES**

In the event an emergency warrants protective action (i.e., evacuate, lockdown, shelter-in-place, etc.) the following sample messages resemble a notification for such an alert and/or warning. (Note: the hazards for such alerts are listed next to the course of action)

### **Area Evacuation | Flood, Wildfire, Earthquake, etc.**

#### Long Message:

This is [Agency] reporting mandatory evacuation order for [location] due to [reason]. Take the following protective actions and leave immediately: 1. Gather all family members or other individuals. 2. Gather all pets 3. Gather only essential items. 4. Be sure to bring essential medications with you. 5. Turn off all appliances and lights in your home. 6. Lock your home. The evacuation route is: [Evacuation Route]. An Evacuation Center is open at [Name and Location of Evacuation Center]. For more information, please tune to local radio and television stations, visit [url], or call [###-###-####].

#### Short Message:

EVACUATION ORDERED. Residents in [location] should evacuate immediately. Remain calm. Bring all family members and pets. Leave gates open and unlocked. Follow instructions of first responders. Ready, Set, Go!

#### Short Message:

There has been a [event/incident] at [location/intersection]. If you are in the vicinity, prepare for possible evacuation. All others should avoid the area. More information may be found at [culvercity.org](http://culvercity.org).

### **Lockdown | Active Shooter, Person at Large**

This is the Culver City [Department]. Authorities are responding to a [name crime or incident] that is [occurring/occurred] at [location]. Stay away from the area, go/stay inside, lock all doors, and report suspicious activity to 9-1-1. You will be notified when it is safe to come out of your home or place of business.

### **Shelter-in-Place | Hazardous Material Release**

Culver City—The Fire Department is on the scene of a natural gas leak at [location]. As a precaution, firefighters are requesting that all persons [# of blocks or miles] from [specific address]. Stay indoors. Reduce ignition sources by:

- Not turning on your stove or oven.
- Not starting a vehicle.
- Not smoking, not using matches or lighters.

Once [Gas Provider] arrives and can shut off the gas, you will be allowed back into your home.

**ATTACHMENT II: PRESS RELEASE SAMPLE**

**Press Release: Evacuation Warning**

[Date]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE [#]

**Subject:** Potential Evacuation Order

**Contact:** [PIO Name & Contact Information]

The [Agency] has issued an Evacuation Warning for specific areas of Culver City. Effective immediately the following areas are under Evacuation Warning:

**[Provide specific locations with detail, including maps]**

Evacuation Warning means that there is a potential threat to life and property. People and their pets in the Potential Evacuation Order area need to make preparations should an Immediate Evacuation Order be issued. Individuals with disabilities and access or functional needs should consider leaving now. Consider evacuating large animals now.

**Temporary Evacuation Point or Evacuation Shelter:** A [Temporary Evacuation Point or Evacuation Shelter] is open at [location] or will open at [time] a.m. /p.m.

**Animal Evacuations:** For assistance with the evacuation of large animals, livestock or small pets, please contact the Humane Society at [###-###-####].

### **ATTACHMENT III: HOW TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE<sup>13</sup>**

*Note: The important thing is for you to follow instructions of local officials and know what to do if they advise you to shelter-in-place.*

#### *Get Inside, Stay Inside*

If local officials tell you to “stay put,” act quickly. Listen carefully to local radio or television stations for instructions, because the exact directions will depend on the emergency. In general, you should:

- **Get inside.** Bring your loved ones, your emergency supplies, and when possible, your pets.
- **Find a safe spot** in this location. The exact spot will depend on the type of emergency.
- **Stay put** in this location until officials say that it is safe to leave.

#### *Stay in Touch*

Once you and your family are in place, let your emergency contacts know what’s happening, and listen carefully for new information.

- **Call or text your emergency contacts.** Let them know where you are, if any family members are missing, and how you are doing.
- **Use your phone only as necessary.** Keep the phone handy in case you need to report a life-threatening emergency. Otherwise, do not use the phone, so that the lines will be available for emergency responders.
- **Keep listening to your radio, television, or phone for updates.** Do not leave your shelter unless authorities tell you it is safe to do so. If officials tell you to evacuate the area, follow their instructions.

#### *Sheltering with pets*

- Prepare a spot for your pets to poop and pee while inside the shelter. You will need plenty of plastic bags, newspapers, containers, and cleaning supplies to deal with pet waste.
- **Do not allow pets to go outside the shelter until the danger has passed.**

#### *Sealing a Room*

- In some types of emergencies, you will need to stop outside air from coming in. If officials tell you to “seal the room,” you need to:
  - Turn off things that move air, like fans and air conditioners.
  - Get yourself and your loved ones inside the room.
    - Bring your emergency supplies if they are clean and easy to get to.
  - Block air from entering the room.
  - Listen to officials for further instructions.

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<sup>13</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Shelter In Place,” <https://www.emergency.cdc.gov/shelterinplace.asp>

Once officials say the emergency is over, turn on fans and other things that circulate air. Everyone should go outside until the building's air has been exchanged with the now clean outdoor air.

### *Staying Put in Your Vehicle*

In some emergencies, it is safer to pull over and stay in your car than to keep driving. If you are very close to home, your workplace, or a public building, go there immediately and go inside. Follow the "shelter-in-place" recommendations for that location. If you cannot get indoors quickly and safely:

- **Pull over** to the side of the road.
  - Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible and turn off the engine.
  - If it is warm outside, it is better to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot so you don't get overheated.
- **Stay where you are** until officials say it is safe to get back on the road.
- **Listen to the radio for updates** and additional instructions.
  - Modern car radios do not use much battery power, so listening to the radio for an hour or two should not cause your car battery to die.
  - Even after it is safe to get back on the road, keep listening to the radio and follow directions of law enforcement officials.