



Guide to Earthquake Safety

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Earthquake Safety Tips

In the United States, earthquakes occur most often in the western and southwestern states, as well as Alaska. However, earthquakes that occur in one state can easily have an impact in other states, so it's a good idea to be prepared for an earthquake, no matter where you live.

First, put together an emergency kit and make an earthquake emergency plan with your family. You should clearly lay out the best places to brace yourself in the home, should an earthquake occur. As a family, you should hold earthquake drills and practice going to safe spots in the home, away from heavy objects like bookcases, cabinets, and heating units.

Make sure you and your children also understand your local school's emergency procedures. Many schools located in earthquake-heavy areas hold earthquake drills and require that your child keep an emergency preparedness kit at school. Ask your children about their school earthquake procedures, so that you can make sure you know where to meet up with your child if an earthquake happens.

During an earthquake, you should move away from heavy objects, drop to the floor, and cover your head and neck. It's important to sit tight and wait until the earthquake is over before assessing the damage to your home. Once the earthquake has ended, then you should check on your family, home, and neighbors.

How to Prepare Your Home

Earthquakes can occur at any moment and without warning, and you can't anticipate when they will sneak up on you. However, there are steps you can take to help secure your home against earthquakes before one happens. Here are some ways to help fortify your home against earthquakes:

Bookcase

Make sure bookcases and shelves are securely fastened to the wall, so they don't topple over during an earthquake. Place heavy objects on lower shelves, so they don't fall and hurt anyone.

Latched Cabinet

Store breakable items, such as glasses, china, or bottled foods in cabinets with a latch. That way, the cabinets can't open during an earthquake, and you'll be less likely to break fragile items or cut yourself on broken glass.

Overhead Lighting

Secure overhead light fixtures and fans with braces to better keep them in place. In the event of an earthquake, try to move away from objects that could fall.

Pipes

Install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks. Flexible pipes will bend in the event of an earthquake, as opposed to

metal pipes, which can break. With flexible pipes, you decrease the risk of pipes breaking, therefore preventing structural damage, fire, and injuries.

Ceiling

Repair any deep cracks in the ceiling or foundation. If you have any large cracks in your home (that you could slip a coin into), it might be symptomatic of a foundational problem, which could be devastating in an earthquake. If you have any such cracks in your home, you should contact a repair contractor as soon as possible.

Refrigerator

Secure large appliances, such as the water heater, refrigerator, or furnace. Strap them to the wall with studs or bolt them to the floor, so they won't slide around during an earthquake. Strapping down large appliances may prevent damages and save you money.

Shed

Store weed killer, pesticides, and flammable products in securely closed cabinets with latches. An outdoor shed would be a perfect place to keep these kinds of materials. You don't want any of these chemicals to spill and risk a fire during an earthquake.

Large Furniture

Locate safe spots in your home, usually under a sturdy table or against an interior bracing wall in your home. Your safe spots should be away from heavy objects, windows, or shelves.

Because earthquakes are short and you never know when they will occur, you should find safe spots throughout your home.

If you live in an area with frequent earthquakes, you should definitely take time to prepare your home for the natural disaster. Taking steps to help ensure the safety of your home and loved ones will give you greater peace of mind. Don't be caught off guard—have a plan and safety measures in place in case an earthquake affects your home.

Conclusion

Before an earthquake occurs, you should make a plan for your family, keep an emergency kit handy, and fortify your home in any way you can. We hope you'll use the emergency checklists in this guide to aid in your natural disaster preparation. For more information on preparing for natural disaster and for additional safety resources for your family and community, visit www.yourlocalsecurity.com.

Recommended Resources

About Earthquakes and Preparedness:

<http://www.ready.gov/earthquakes>

How to Prepare and Recover from an Earthquake:

http://www.epa.gov/naturalevents/earthquakes.html#after_earthquake

Being Prepared for an Earthquake:

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes/prepared.asp>

How to Brace Lighting Fixtures:

<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/install-brace-heavy-ceiling-light-fixtures-49914.html>

Info on Flexible Pipes:

http://www.flash.org/peril_inside.php?id=16

Emergency Kit Checklist

Every household should have an emergency kit, and you should customize it to your family's individual needs, but here are the essentials you should include:

Food and Water

- Water (three gallons per person, per day)
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- Water purification tablets

Communication and Tools

- Battery-powered radio
- Waterproof matches
- Flashlight with batteries
- Wrench or pliers
- Pocket knife
- Whistle

First Aid and Hygiene

- First aid kit
- Moist sanitary wipes
- Medications

Other

- Photocopies of important documents in a waterproof bag or container
- Cash
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- Cell phone charger, inverter, or solar charger

Once you've gathered all the supplies for your emergency kit, you should put it in an easy-to-grab carrying case, such as a backpack. Keep your emergency kit in a place where it's easily accessible, and make sure the entire family knows where it's kept. You'll feel better prepared for any emergency or disasters that come your way.

Visit www.yourlocalsecurity.com for more disaster preparedness information.

Emergency Communication Plans

Emergency Contact Info

Fill out the information on this page and post it in your home or write it down on a cards for each family member to carry in their wallet, purse, briefcase, or backpack.

Home Address:

Home Phone:

() -

Parent/Guardian phone numbers

Parent 1: _____ Parent 2: _____

Cell: () - Cell: () -

Work: () - Work: () -

Child contact info

List child names followed by the school they attend and cell-phone #'s, if available:

Other Emergency Contacts

Name: _____ Phone: () -

Name: _____ Phone: () -

Meeting Plan in the Event of an Emergency

When disaster strikes, know where you are and where you're supposed to be to meet up with your family members.

IF you're in the house or the immediate neighborhood (backyard, front yard, garage, next door neighbor, driveway, etc).

THEN everyone will meet at:

(ex: in front of the light post outside, fire hydrant, etc.)

IF you're far away from home, get in contact with your family ASAP using the *numbers on the Emergency Contact Info page*.

IF you're at school, follow the emergency plan that your school has in place.

School Emergency Plan: _____

Emergency Pet Plan

What will you do with your pets in the event of a natural disaster?

Important Considerations:

- Keep a current photo of your pet in case you lose them.
- Make sure ID tags are up-to-date and securely fastened to your pet's collar.
- Have a secure pet carrier, leash, or harness for your pet in case he/she panics.
- Take pet food, bottled water, meds, vet records, cat litter/pan, can opener, food dish, first aid kit, and other supplies you might need for your pet in an emergency situation.

Plan:

Emergency Plan for Seniors and Disabled Family Members

Important Considerations

- Make sure that you've assigned someone to check on seniors or disabled neighbors.
- Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.
- Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices they require.
- Make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.
- Make arrangements for any assistance to get to a shelter.

Plan:

**For more information on this
and other natural disaster
safety information, visit:
www.yourlocalsecurity.com**