

Home preparedness

Teach responsible members of your family how to turn off furnace, electricity, gas and water at main switch valves. **Caution:** Do not shut off gas unless an emergency exists. If gas valve is ever turned off, remember that it should be turned back on only by authorized personnel.

Label water shut-off valve where water enters the house. The main water shut-off valve, found with meter in a concrete box in the sidewalk, should also be shut off if possible.

Have on hand for emergency



Flashlights with spare batteries. Keep a flashlight beside your bed. Do not use matches or candles after an earthquake until you are certain no gas leaks exist.



Portable radio with spare batteries. Most telephones will be out of order or used for emergency purposes so radios will be your best source of information.



First aid kit, first aid knowledge. Have a first aid book such as the *Standard First Aid & Personal Safety* by the Red Cross. Have members of your household take basic Red Cross first aid and CPR courses.



Fires extinguishers. Keep a fire extinguisher handy for small fires. Some extinguishers are only good for certain types of fires — electrical, grease or gas. A multipurpose extinguisher labelled “ABC” puts out most types of fires. Your fire department can demonstrate proper use.



Food. It's always a practical idea to keep a supply of non-perishable food on hand which can be rotated into your diet and replenished on a regular basis. Have a sufficient supply of canned and dehydrated food, powdered milk and canned juices for at least 72 hours. Dried cereals and fruits and non-salted nuts are a good source of nutrition.



Water. Use water sparingly from your hot water heater drain valve for drinking. Have purification tablets such as Halazone and Globaline but read label on bottle before using **tablets if you use water from any questionable source.**



Special Items. Have at least a week's supply of medications and special foods needed for infants or those on limited diets.



Tools. Pipe wrench and crescent wrench — for turning off gas and water mains. Ensure all family members know where shut-offs are located.

Earthquake hazard hunt

Earthquake hazard hunt

You can identify potential dangers in your home by conducting an earthquake hazard hunt. Foresight and common sense are all that are needed as you go from room to room and imagine what would happen in an earthquake.

Some possible hazards are:

- Tall heavy furniture which could topple, such as bookcases, china cabinets, stereo cabinets or modular wall units.
- Hot water heaters which can fall over, rupture pipes and short electrical connections.
- Appliances which could move enough to rupture gas or electrical lines.
- Hanging plants in heavy pots that could swing free of hooks.
- Heavy picture frames or mirrors over the bed that are not adequately secured to wall studs.
- Breakables, heavy objects or dangerous goods that are kept on high or open shelves.
- A masonry chimney that could crumble and fall through an unreinforced roof.
- A free standing fireplace or insert not properly secured.

Take steps to correct these hazards — secure or relocate heavy items as appropriate.

Family earthquake drill

It's important to know where you should go for protection when your house starts to shake. By planning and practising what to do before an earthquake occurs, you can condition yourself and your family to react correctly and spontaneously where the first jolt or shaking is felt.

An earthquake drill can teach your family what to do in an earthquake.

- Each family member should know safe spots in each room.
- Safe spots: The best places are under supported archways, against inside walls and under heavy pieces of furniture like a desk or sturdy table.
- Danger spots: Stay away from windows, hanging objects, mirrors, fireplaces and tall, unsecured furniture.
- Discuss strategies to cope with physical and emotional problems which you may experience after the earthquake.

To reduce emotional impact (especially with children) always tell others exactly what happened during and after the quake. The sooner you verbalize your experiences and fears, the quicker you will recover from the emotional trauma.

How to ride out the earthquake

During a major earthquake, you may experience a shaking that starts out to be gentle and within a second or two grows violent and knocks you off your feet.



If you are indoors, stay there. Get under a desk or table or stand in a doorway or corner as you practised in your drills. Remember, stay clear of windows, bookcases, china cabinets, mirrors and fireplaces until the shaking stops.



If you happen to be in the kitchen, turn off the stove at the first sign of shaking and quickly take cover under a counter or table, or in a doorway.



If you are outside, get into the open away from buildings, trees, walls and power lines. Roll into a ball for protection from flying objects.



If in a crowded, public place, do not rush for the doorway. Move away from display shelves containing objects that may fall and do the duck and cover drill.



If you are in a car, pull to the side of the road and stop the car. Do not park on or under bridges, overpasses or power lines. Stay in your car until the earthquake is over. If the earthquake has been severe, do not attempt to cross bridges or overpasses. Ensure no powerlines are on your car if you wish to exit. Listen to your radio for further information.

When the ground stops shaking

Wait 60 seconds then evacuate the living and walking wounded immediately.



If anyone has stopped breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Stop any bleeding injury by applying direct pressure to the wound.

Re-enter the building to rescue trapped or seriously injured people. Remove them only if in immediate danger of further injury. Cover the injured to keep them warm.



Do not use the telephone unless there is a severe injury. For more detailed emergency procedures, consult your first aid book.



Wear shoes in areas near fallen debris and broken glass. Always keep an old pair of sturdy shoes and some warm clothes under your bed for emergency use.

After the earthquake

Check for hazards

If possible, put out small fires; if not, alert your neighbors for assistance.



Check gas, oil and water lines before re-occupying. Check appliances for damage before use. Do not switch on the gas again until the power company has first checked your home.

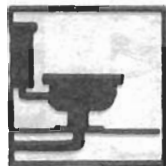
Do not use electrical switches, open flames or appliances if gas leaks are suspected. Do not switch on electrical power if there is damage to your house electrical wiring.



Do not touch downed lines or broken appliances. Mark them dangerous to stop others touching them.

Wait until the first aftershock has passed before re-occupying the building. This will sometimes happen within 10 minutes of the initial quake. Always ensure the building is safe before re-entry.

Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids or dangerous goods.



Check to see that sewage lines are intact before using the toilet. Plug bathtub and sink drains to prevent sewage backup.

Check food and water supplies. If water is cut off, use emergency water supplies found in toilet tanks (not the bowl), water heaters, melted ice cubes. Ensure there are no chemicals in toilet tank water.



Check the building for cracks and damage, particularly the chimneys or masonry walls. Do not use fireplaces or furnace unless chimney is undamaged and without cracks.

Check closets and cupboards. Open doors cautiously. Beware of objects tumbling off shelves.

Use charcoal broilers for emergency cooking, only outdoors. Propane barbecues, heating and cooking appliances can be used indoors only if adequate ventilation and fire protection is available.



Do not use your vehicle. Do not go sightseeing through badly damaged areas. You will only hamper relief efforts. Keep streets clear for the passage of emergency vehicles.