



What to Do Before an Earthquake

Earthquakes strike suddenly, violently and without warning. Identifying potential hazards ahead of time and advance planning can reduce the dangers of serious injury or loss of life from an earthquake. Repairing deep plaster cracks in ceilings and foundations, anchoring overhead lighting fixtures to the ceiling, and following local seismic building standards, will help reduce the impact of earthquakes.

Six Ways to Plan Ahead

1. Check for Hazards in the Home

- o Fasten shelves securely to walls.
- o Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- o Store breakable items such as bottled foods, glass, and china in low, closed cabinets with latches.
- o Hang heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from beds, couches, and anywhere people sit.
- o Brace overhead light fixtures.
- o Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. These are potential fire risks.
- o Secure a water heater by strapping it to the wall studs and bolting it to the floor.
- o Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations. Get expert advice if there are signs of structural defects.
- o Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products securely in closed cabinets with latches and on bottom shelves.

2. Identify Safe Places Indoors and Outdoors

- o Under sturdy furniture such as a heavy desk or table.
- o Against an inside wall.
- o Away from where glass could shatter around windows, mirrors, pictures, or where heavy bookcases or other heavy furniture could fall over.
- o In the open, away from buildings, trees, telephone and electrical lines, overpasses, or elevated expressways.

3. Educate Yourself and Family Members

- o Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter for more information on earthquakes. Also read the "How-To Series" for information on how to protect your property from earthquakes.
- o Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police, or fire department and which radio station to tune to for emergency information.
- o Teach all family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.

4. Have Disaster Supplies on Hand

- o Flashlight and extra batteries.
- o Portable battery-operated radio and extra batteries.
- o First aid kit and manual.
- o Emergency food and water.
- o Nonelectric can opener.
- o Essential medicines.
- o Cash and credit cards.
- o Sturdy shoes.

Fire Extinguisher

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