

Earthquake Preparation Guide

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Earthquakes

One of the most frightening and destructive phenomena of nature is a severe earthquake and its terrible aftereffects. An earthquake is a sudden movement of the earth, caused by the abrupt release of strain that has accumulated over a long time.

For hundreds of millions of years, the forces of plate tectonics have shaped the earth, as the huge plates that form the earth's surface slowly move over, under, and past each other. Sometimes, the movement is gradual. At other times, the plates are locked together, unable to release the accumulating energy. When the accumulated energy grows strong enough, the plates break free. If the earthquake occurs in a populated area, it may cause many deaths and injuries and extensive property damage.

October 17, 1989 in San Francisco, California (Marina District Earthquake Area)

Take Protective Measures

Before an Earthquake

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your property in the event of an earthquake:

- Repair defective electrical wiring, leaky gas lines, and inflexible utility connections. Get appropriate professional help. Do not work with gas or electrical lines yourself.
- Bolt down and secure to the wall studs your water heater, refrigerator, furnace, and gas appliances. If recommended by your gas company, have an automatic gas shut-off valve installed that is triggered by strong vibrations.

- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves. Fasten shelves, mirrors, and large picture frames to walls. Brace high and top-heavy objects.
- Store bottled foods, glass, china, and other breakables on low shelves or in cabinets that fasten shut.
- Anchor overhead lighting fixtures.
- Be sure the residence is firmly anchored to its foundation.
- Install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks. Flexible fittings are more resistant to breakage.
- Locate safe spots in each room under a sturdy table or against an inside wall. Reinforce this information by moving to these places during each drill.
- Hold earthquake drills with your family members: Drop, cover, and hold on!
- Have a home survival kit to last you 72 hours.
- Download this free “official guide” produced by the Los Angeles Fire Department: Emergency Preparedness Manual (<http://lafd.org/eqbook.pdf>)

Remember, planning today saves lives!

Regards,

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