

EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS

The Emergency Supplies Kit

The earthquake kit provides the basic equipment and provisions needed to meet most of the initial challenges of a dangerous earthquake. Keep one at home, in your car, and another at work, unless your car is always directly accessible when you are at work.

It is impossible to include everything you might need for survival in one compact kit, but these suggestions cover the most basic survival supplies. If you must evacuate, you may have time to grab only one thing as you leave – make it your kit. If you are away from home, and the only way to get around is on foot, this kit may help you walk home safely.

The Container

A backpack is best, but small suitcase, duffel bag, or even a heavy cardboard box can serve as a container for the earthquake kit. It should be large enough to hold the equipment, but small enough for you to carry without difficulty.

Items

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| Flashlight | High quality with spare batteries. |
| Water | Store enough water for cooking and sanitary needs. One half gallon (or two litres) per person will provide drinking water for one day. Replace the bottles of water every three to six months. |
| Food | Pack one day's supply of high energy, ready to-eat food such as Supligen. Replace the food every three to six months depending on their exposure to heat and light. |
| First Aid Kit | A well stocked first aid kit, complete with first aid manual should be in your kit. The small commercial first-aid kits usually consist of not much more than a few bandages so it might be best to put together your own. Include: band aids, sterile gauze pads, soap, antibiotic ointment, antiseptic solution, chemical cold compress, small container of table |

salt, aspirin tablets, anti-diarrhea medication, scissors, safety pins, tweezers, thermometer, tissues, matches, pocket knife, three-day supply of prescription medicine required and extra contact lens solutions if needed.

All liquids should be in plastic containers. Check annually or more often and replace as necessary. A smaller kit can be kept in your car and at work.

**Portable
Radio and
Batteries**

After a disaster, radio stations will broadcasts emergency information as well as other facts that become available.

**Walking
Shoes and
Socks**

Comfortable, thick-soled walking shoes should be included in your kits especially in the car and at work. If the roads are blocked, the only transportation maybe on foot. Be sure that your shoes are suitable for long distances and for walking over piles of broken glass.

**Local Map
and Directions
to Community
Services**

Be sure that you know the best walking route between your home and work, and if applicable, to your child's school. Also know the location and telephone number for your nearest police station, fire station and hospital.

A blanket

Severe injury can cause shock, but the fright of an earthquake experience might make a shock reaction even more likely. Blankets help prevent the loss of body heat, a factor that must be considered when treating shock victims.

**Sanitation
supplies**

Include small and medium zip-lock plastic bags for human waste disposal, tissues, soap and sanitary napkins, bleach, disinfectant, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, comb and other personal hygiene supplies.

Other provisions

In addition to the provisions stored in your earthquake kits, the following items should be available in your home and at work to be ready in case of an earthquake:

Fire Extinguisher

Check with the fire department about which ones are appropriate for your situation.

Extra Flashlights

At least one working flashlight per person should be kept in the home and work place. Keep one at each bedside. Each should be kept in a location known to all, and in such a way that in an earthquake is not difficult to find.

To simplify battery replacement, all or most of the flashlight should use the same size battery.

Open flames, such as candles, matches, and kerosene lamps, should not be used following an earthquake because of the danger of gas leaks and other fire hazards. Aftershocks can also cause candles and kerosene lamps to topple over, increasing the risk of fire and other burns.

Tools for Turning off Utilities

All adults in the household should know the location of all the main turn-off valves for electricity and water for the home and how to operate them.

HAZARD HUNT

Especially in small earthquakes, which make up the vast majority of all earthquakes, most injuries and fatalities occur because the ground shaking dislodges loose objects in and on buildings.

Conduct a Hazard Hunt of your environment and eliminate objects that have the potential to cause injuries.

1. Store heaviest items on lower shelves of cabinets. Heavy things might break through a cupboard door, but they probably will not hurt anyone if they are at floor level. Store lightweight, non-breakable items on higher levels.
2. What-nots, wardrobes, freestanding closets, dressers and bookcases could topple over during an earthquake unless they are securely anchored to the wall. Either bolt directly through the back of the furniture into the wall or use steel angle brackets. Fallen furnishings could block your escape route, besides causing injury and damage. Free standing bookshelves, especially in an office setting, should be bolted to the floor and to ceiling posts.

3. Bookshelves – in addition to bolting the item to the wall, put guard rails or ‘fences’ on open shelves so that item can not slide off.
4. Tall, heavy lamps, vases, figurines – if you display fragile items on open shelves or tables use industrial Velcro to attach items to stands.
5. Hanging Plants and Mobiles – these tend to swing widely during earthquakes. Hang planters on hooks that can be curved over to form a circle so that the wire or cord cannot jump free. Use lightweight, plastic containers or baskets instead of heavy, ceramic ones that may cause serious injuries if they strike someone in the head.
6. Mirror on Wall – make sure that mirrors are securely bolted to walls.
7. Heavy objects on wall shelves - ensure shelves are securely bolted to walls. Adjustable shelves, the board of which rest on wall brackets, can be stabilized with clips or wire to connect the board to the bracket. Remember to use guard rails on shelves and do not place chairs, desks, beds etc. beneath shelves where items can fall on people.
8. Window Air Conditioners – make sure they are securely fastened and bolted into their spaces, so they do not fall out.
9. Hanging Lamp or Chandeliers – make sure they are securely fastened to the ceiling. Put a mesh or plastic guard around fluorescent bulbs to catch any splinters.
10. Unsecured TV, computer or cart with wheels – attach TVs and computers to their stands with industrial Velcro or bolt the items to the stand. Cart wheels must be able to be locked so cart will not roll around wildly.
11. Bed by window, heavy object on shelves above bed - locate bed near an interior wall, away from windows and hanging light fixtures or any item that may fall on you while in bed.

If the bed must be next to a glass window, install shatter-resistant plastic film, some what like the material used to tint windshields, over the glass which will hold shattered glass in place and prevent it from flying around the room. Another alternative is tempered glass, which breaks into tiny rounded pieces, but this is more expensive than the film.

Be sure that the bed is not on rollers, and if it is on bare floor, use plastic non-skid coasters to reduce sliding.

12. Heavy picture above bed – should be hung from fixtures that can adequately bear their weight. Items such as hanging pictures and items on shelves will weigh twice as much when they fall. For example, if it weighs 2 lbs. on the wall, it weighs 4 lbs. when it hits, so do not place over beds, desks or chairs.
13. Cabinet doors not fastened – install proper latches on cupboard doors that will not open if the object tilts over or is shaken. Heavy objects inside your cupboards can lean or fall against the inside of the doors, and the latches must be strong enough to withstand this pushing. Be careful not to stand directly in front of cupboards as items lying against the doors can come crashing out on you.
14. Medicine cabinet doors not fastened – the primary hazard in the bathroom during an earthquake is broken glass. Mirrors, toiletries, and medicines can fall and break. Most personal care products are being packaged in plastic now, but liquid medicines, perfumes and colognes are sometimes supplied in glass containers. Select products in unbreakable containers where possible and make sure the doors of your medicine cabinet can be secured with a latch.
15. Unattached Water Heaters – are very vulnerable to earthquake damage. They are likely to ‘walk’ or even topple over disconnecting the utility lines, causing gas or water leakage, or electrical shorts, fires or explosions. To prevent the water heater from moving or toppling over, wrap it with two metal straps or chains, near the top and bottom and bolt the ends to the wall.
16. Gas Stove with Rigid Feed Line – use flexible gas lines that will not break during an earthquake releasing gas. Anchor the gas cylinder to the wall with chains and if you are cooking, turn off the stove before taking cover.
17. House not bolted to foundation – ensure that houses/ buildings are properly attached to their foundations.

WHAT TO DO AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

At Home

1. Wear heavy soled shoes. If you are bare footed, put on shoes before you walk anywhere after an earthquake.
2. Check for injuries. Check yourself and other family members for injuries and seek medical attention for serious conditions.
3. Do not use the telephones unless there is a serious injury. Rescue workers will need all available lines. If the receiver is off the hook, replace it. If you do not get a dial tone, DO NOT jiggle the hook; that could further jam the wires.

4. Check for fire. If possible one person or group should check for injuries while another immediately checks for fires. Don't light matches or candles. Leaking gas and spilled flammable products can be ignited by flames, pilot light or electrical shorts.

If you smell gas or have reason to suspect that lines might be broken, immediately disconnect the cylinder.

5. Stairs may have weakened after an earthquake. When evacuating check these carefully before placing your full weight on them.
6. Check the building. Carefully inspect the interior and exterior of the building. Look for cracks in the walls, shifted posts or pillars and cracks in porches and sidewalks. If you see anything other than minor cracks, evacuate the building immediately and do not re-enter the building until it has been checked for safety by a professional.
7. Once your home is secure, check with your neighbours to see if they need assistance.
8. Listen to your radio for evacuation orders and other information.

Away From Home

If you are in your car, at a movie or store, or some place where you do not feel safe, you will probably try to go home. Stay where you are for a while and wait for aftershocks and information on the radio. Remember that aftershocks, particularly those following a big earthquake can cause a lot of damage. Overpasses, bridges and some buildings might survive the main shock, but fall during an aftershock.

After an earthquake that causes damage, drive only if you are away from tall building and bridges, and then your driving should only be to safety or to render assistance. The roads should be kept open for emergency vehicles.

When you arrive home, do not rush in. Look at the building from a distance for damage; if it looks okay make a closer inspection. If it still looks undamaged, open the door and smell for gas. If you don't smell gas, enter and check for other fire hazards.

In the Darkness

If you find yourself alone in the dark after an earthquake, take a few minutes to recall the location of exits and the layout of the building. Plan your escape route and then move slowly, using your hands to guide you. If you heard the sound of breaking glass during the earthquake, wrap your hands in a jacket or other material to protect them. Carefully exit the building, take cover if there are any aftershocks and be alert for the smell of leaking gas.

