

Earthquake

According to the Southern California Earthquake Center, there is a 60 percent chance of a 6.7 or greater earthquake occurring in Southern California. Yet an American Red Cross survey conducted in 2004 shows only one in four households in the Western United States is prepared to face such an emergency.

Some facts about earthquakes

- About 35 earthquakes are reported every day. That's 12,000 to 14,000 earthquakes per year!
- Forty-five states and U.S. territories are at high to moderate risk for earthquakes.

What to do before an earthquake

- Identify safe spots at home and work:
 1. Sturdy tables and desks
 2. Small rooms and hallways
- Establish an out-of-area contact who can coordinate family members' locations and information in case you become separated.
- Make sure everyone in the home knows phone numbers and addresses.
- Prepare a family disaster supplies kit and keep one in your home and one in your car:
 1. Flashlight
 2. Batteries
 3. Radio
 4. Water
 5. Three-day supply of non-perishable food
 6. Medicine
 7. An extra set of keys
 8. Extra clothes
- Take a first aid class from your local Red Cross chapter. Keep your training current.
- Eliminate hazards in your home
 1. Bolt bookcases, china cabinets and other tall furniture to wall studs.
 2. Remove any unsecured items hanging over beds. Don't hang a mirror over your bed.
 3. Install strong latches on cupboards.
 4. Strap the water heater to wall studs.

What to do during an earthquake

- If you are indoors, use the Drop, Cover and Hold technique: *Drop* to the ground under a table or desk for protection. *Cover* your head and neck with your arm to protect from flying debris. *Hold* on to a leg of the table or desk so it won't slide away from you.
- Avoid taking cover by windows or heavy furniture that can tip over.
- Don't take cover in doorways.
- If you are outside, stay away from buildings, trees, streetlights and power lines.
- Crouch down and cover your head.
- If you are in a vehicle, park away from these same objects and be especially sure not to be on or under a bridge. Stay in the vehicle with your seatbelt fastened until the earthquake is over.

What to do after an earthquake

- Stay indoors until authorities say the event has ended.
- Check your home for damages and report any problems to the appropriate authorities.
- Look for and extinguish small fires and eliminate fire hazards.
- Turn off the gas if you smell gas or think it's leaking (remember, only a professional should turn it back on).
- If your home is unsafe, get everyone outside.
- Monitor radio news reports for updates about emergency information.
- Check yourself and others for injuries.
- Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and work gloves.
- Only use the phone to report life-threatening emergencies.
- Expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one use the drop, cover and hold technique!