

Frequently Asked Questions on Earthquake/Disaster Preparedness

For more than 10 years, Michael Essrig and Safe-T-Proof, have been protecting our children and helping others prepare for a safer future by sharing their collective disaster preparedness experience with individuals and corporations alike.

Michael Essrig takes a few minutes to answer some of the most frequently asked questions on how to plan, and be prepared for, an unpredictable yet inevitable disaster.

Q: What emergency supplies do I need?

A: It is always a good idea to have an emergency family/office kit already packed with:

- Fire extinguisher
- Adequate supply of each medication that you or a family member is/are taking
- Crescent and pipe wrenches to turn off gas and water supplies
- 4-in-1 hammer
- First-aid kit and handbook
- Flashlights with extra bulbs and batteries
- Portable AM/FM radio with extra batteries
- Water for each member of the family for at least 3 days (allow at least 1 gallon per person per day) and purification tablets or chlorine bleach to purify drinking water from other sources
- Canned and package foods, enough for several days and a mechanical (not electrical) can opener
- Extra food for pets if necessary
- Camp stove or barbecue to cook on outdoors (store fuel out of the reach of children)
- Waterproof, heavy-duty plastic bags for waste disposal

Q: How can I plan ahead for an EQ?

- A:**
1. Make sure each member of your family knows what to do no matter where they are when disaster strikes:
 - Establish a meeting place where you can all reunite afterward.
 - Find out about preparedness plans developed by children's school or day care.
 - Remember transportation may be disrupted; keep some emergency supplies— food, liquids, and comfortable shoes, for example—at work.
 2. Know where your gas, electric and water main shutoffs are and how to turn them off if in case of a leak or electrical short. Make sure older members of the family can shut off utilities as well.
 3. Locate your nearest fire and police stations, and emergency medical facility.
 4. Talk to your neighbors about how they could help you, or you them, after a disaster.
 5. Take first aid and CPR Training courses.

Q: During an EQ should I head for the doorway?

A: Only if you live in an old, unreinforced adobe house. In modern homes doorways are no stronger than any other parts of the house and usually have doors that will swing and can injure you. You are safe practicing the “duck, cover and hold” under a sturdy piece of furniture.

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Q: What should I do during an EQ?

A: Always remember:

1. If you are indoors – stay there! (Get under a desk or table and hang on to it, or move into a hallway or get against an inside wall. Stay clear of windows, fireplaces, and heavy furniture or appliances. Get out of the kitchen, which is a dangerous place (things can fall on you). Don't run downstairs or rush outside while the building is shaking or while there is danger of falling and hurting yourself or being hit by falling glass or debris.
2. If you are outside— get into the open, away from buildings, power lines, chimneys, and anything else that might fall on you.
3. If you are driving—stop, but carefully. Move your car as far out of traffic as possible. Do not stop on or under a bridge or overpass or under trees, light posts, power lines, or signs. Stay inside your car until the shaking stops. When you resume driving watch for breaks in the pavement, fallen rocks, and bumps in the road at bridge approaches.
4. If you are in a mountainous area—watch out for falling rock, landslides, trees, and other debris that could be loosened by quakes.

Q: What shouldn't I do during an EQ?

A: To keep you and your family safe after a disaster has occurred, remember **NOT** to:

1. Turn on the gas again if you turned it off; let the gas company do it.
2. Use matches, lighters, camp stoves or barbecues, electrical equipment or appliances until you are sure there are no gas leaks. They may create a spark that could ignite leaking gas and cause an explosion and/or fire.
3. Use your telephone, except for a medical or fire emergency. You could tie up the lines needed for emergency response. If the phone doesn't work send someone for help.
4. Expect firefighters, police or paramedics to help you. They may not be available.

Q: What can I expect in my house when an EQ occurs?

A: The contents of your home may be damaged and can be dangerous, so proceed with caution and remember:

1. To look around your house and identify the things that could fall or move. Shaking can make light fixtures fall. Refrigerators and other large items may move across the floor, and bookcases and TVs can topple over.
2. To ask yourself — did your cupboard doors fly open? If so, dishes may be shatter on the floor, so be careful and watch for broken glass.

Q: What do I do after an earthquake?

- A:**
1. Wear sturdy shoes to avoid injury from broken glass and debris.
 2. Expect aftershocks.
 3. Check for injuries:
 - If a person is bleeding, put direct pressure on the wound, use clean gauze or cloth if available.
 - If a person is not breathing administer CPR.
 - Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in further danger of injury.
 - Cover injured persons with blankets to keep them warm.

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- Seek medical help for all serious injuries.
- 4. Check for hazards:
 - Fire hazards: Put out fires in your home or neighborhood immediately. Call for help.
 - Gas leaks: Shut off main gas valve only if you suspect a leak because of broken pipes or odor.
 - Damaged electrical wiring: Shut off power at the control box if there is any danger to house wiring.
 - Downed or damaged utility lines: Do not touch downed power lines or any objects in contact with them.
 - Spills: Clean up any spilled medicines, drugs, or other harmful materials such as bleach, lye or gas.
 - Downed or damaged chimneys: Approach with caution and do not use damaged chimney (it could start fire or let poisonous gases into your house).
 - Fallen items: Beware of items tumbling off shelves when you open closets doors or cupboards.
- 5. Check for food and water supplies:
 - Do not eat or drink anything from open containers near shattered glass.
 - If the power is off, plan to use up frozen foods or food that spoils quickly (food in the freezer should be good for at least a couple of days).
 - Don't light your kitchen stove if you suspect a gas leak.
 - Use a BBQ or camp stove, outdoors only for emergency cooking.
 - If your water is off, you can drink from water heaters, melted ice cubes or canned vegetables (avoid drinking water from swimming pools and especially spas—it may have too many chemicals in it to be safe).

Q: What can I do to be prepared?

A. You can install door latches, braces and fasteners to fix most of these hazards yourself, as well as purchase an emergency disaster kit complete with food and water, a first aid kit, flashlight, blankets and AM/FM radio. Fasten shelves securely to walls. Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves. Store breakable items such as bottled foods, glass and china in low, closed cabinets with latches. Hang heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from beds, couches and anywhere people sit. Brace overhead light fixtures. Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. Secure a water heater by strapping it to the wall studs and bolting it to the floor. Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations. Get expert advice if there are signs of structural defects. Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products securely in closed cabinets with latches and bottom shelves.

Established in 1992, Safe-T-Proof is the leader in commercial, institutional and governmental disaster preparedness services. Partnering with companies worldwide to minimize the impact of disasters in the workplace and reduce injury, property loss and company downtime, Safe-T-Proof offers hazard mitigation and construction/TI services, seismic anchorage and retrofitting systems, architectural and engineering planning, preparedness products and safety training services, emergency/terrorism awareness training services, and construction and tenant improvement services. 800.377.8888 or www.safe-t-proof.com