Be Ready for an Earthquake

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Safety Talk

What's at Stake

Many places where we live and work are in high risk earthquake zones.

What's the Danger

Serious injury and death can be caused by falling debris, fires, floods, heart attacks and other events related to a quake.

Example

While the Pacific Coast is well-known for earthquakes, the danger exists in countless locations.

How to Protect Yourself

Follow these tips for earthquake preparedness at home:

- Go through your house, imagining what would happen to each appliance, piece of furniture and section of the structure in case of a quake. Check chimneys, fireplaces and foundations. Note danger zones and items to be removed, repaired or secured.
- Secure the hot water heater and other appliances so they will not move enough to break natural gas or electrical lines.
- Rearrange rooms so beds and couches are away from windows, heavy pictures, mirrors and hanging planters.
- Move items on shelves so heavy items are near the floor.
- Secure tall furniture so it won't topple over.
- Keep flammable liquids and other hazardous materials such as pesticides

outside the house, in a garage or shed.

- Have regular quake drills with your family. Practice going to safer places in each room – under tables or against inside walls. Also point out the danger spots – near windows, hanging items such as mirrors or paintings, fireplaces and high furniture or shelves.
- Establish a contact telephone number of a reliable relative or friend outside your state or province. If family members are separated by a disaster, they will call this telephone number when phone service is restored.
- Place a flashlight at each bedside and throughout the house to help you find your way if the earthquake puts out the power.
- Get in the habit of keeping a pair of shoes beside the bed. This will help you make your way to safety if there is broken glass and other debris.
- Teach all responsible family members how to shut off the utilities in your home – natural gas, electricity and water.
- Set up an emergency survival kit and store it someplace easy to find. A clean plastic garbage can with a tight-fitting lid is a good container for your emergency kit. It should include a three-day supply of bottled water, canned food, a can opener, a flashlight, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, a first aid kit and manual, warm clothing, sturdy shoes, cash including coins, photos of family and friends, three days' of prescription medicines and extra eyeglasses. Sanitation supplies and special items needed to care for infant, disabled or elderly family members should be included.

Final Word

If you live in an earthquake risk area, or occasionally visit such a region, be prepared. A little time and effort spent on preparation now could save your life.