

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY?

Each month we suggest something you and your family can do to get ready for an emergency.

THIS MONTH'S CHALLENGE:

Earthquake Preparedness - Identify Potential Hazards

Many people think that all injuries in earthquakes are caused by collapsing buildings. Actually, most injuries in quakes are from objects that break or fall on people. *For example, in the 1994 magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake, 55 percent of quake-related injuries were caused by falling objects, such as televisions, pictures and mirrors, and heavy light fixtures.*

Look around your home and identify all unsecured objects that might fall during shaking. Move heavy furniture, such as bookcases, away from beds, couches, and other places where people sit or sleep. Also make sure that exit paths are clear of clutter.

BEFORE A QUAKE—IDENTIFY POTENTIAL HAZARDS IN YOUR HOME:

HANGING OBJECTS

Art and other heavy objects hung on walls may fall, and glass in pictures and mirrors may shatter.

- Place only soft art, such as unframed posters or rugs and tapestries, above beds or sofas.
- Hang mirrors, pictures and other hanging objects on closed hooks.

OBJECTS ON OPEN SHELVES AND TABLETOPS

Collectibles and other loose objects can become dangerous projectiles.

- Hold collectibles, pottery, and lamps in place by using removable earthquake putty, museum wax, or quake gel.

FURNITURE

Tall, top-heavy furniture, such as bookcases and entertainment centers, may fall and injure you.

- Store heavy items and breakables on lower shelves.
- Secure both top corners of tall furniture into a wall stud, not just to the drywall.
- Flexible-mount fastener, such as nylon straps, allow furniture independent movement from the wall, reducing strain on studs.

WATER AND GAS PIPES

Water or gas pipes anywhere in your home can break. Water leaks can cause extensive damage, and gas leaks are a major fire hazard.

- Have a plumber evaluate, replace, and properly secure rusted or worn water and gas pipes.
- If not already done, have a plumber replace rigid gas connections to water heaters, stoves, drers, and other gas appliances with flexible (corrugated) stainless-steel gas connectors.
- Excess-flow gas-shutoff valves for individual appliances, which stop gas flow in case of a catastrophic leak, are also now available for use with flexible connectors.

WATER HEATERS

Unsecured water heaters may fall over, rupturing rigid water and gas connections.

- Water heaters should be anchored to wall studs or masonry with metal straps and lag screws. Kits are available at hardware stores and home centers.
- If not already done, have a plumber install flexible (corrugated) copper water connectors.

IN THE KITCHEN

Glassware and china may crash to the floor if cabinet doors are unsecured. Gas appliances can shift, rupturing their gas connections.

- Secure all cabinet doors, especially those overhead, to help prevent contents from falling out during quakes. Use latches designed for child-proofing or earthquake or boat safety.
- Secure refrigerators and other major appliances to walls using earthquake appliance straps.

IN THE GARAGE OR UTILITY ROOM

Items stored in garages and utility rooms can fall, causing injuries damage, and hazardous spills or leaks.

- Move flammable or hazardous materials to low areas that are secure.
- Ensure that items stored above or beside vehicles cannot fall, damaging or blocking them.

HOME ELECTRONICS

Large electronic devices may fall, causing injuries and damage. They are also costly to replace.

- Secure TVs, stereos, computers, and microwave ovens with flexible nylon straps and buckles for easy removal and relocation.



PREPARE YOUR HOME & FAMILY

- Identify potential hazards in your home and begin to fix them.
- Create a disaster preparedness plan.
- Prepare disaster supply kits.
- Identify your building's potential weaknesses and begin to fix them.
- Protect yourself during earthquake shaking—**DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON.**
- After the earthquake, check for injuries and damage.
- When safe, continue to follow your disaster-preparedness plan.

More information online at:

www.bereadyutah.gov
www.earthquake.usgs.gov
www.geology.utah.gov
www.seau.org/
www.publicsafety.utah.gov/homelandsecurity
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