

Southern California Trade Contractors Association, Inc.

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

In This Issue

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Earthquakes!

SUPERVISORY TRAINING



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Earthquakes!

Earthquakes strike suddenly, violently and without warning. Identifying potential hazards ahead of time and advance planning can reduce the dangers of serious injury or loss of life from an earthquake.

What to Do Before an Earthquake

1. Check for Hazards in the Home

- 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.
- Secure a water heater by strapping it to the wall studs and bolting it to the floor.

2. Identify Safe Places Indoors and Outdoors

- Under sturdy furniture such as a heavy desk or table.
- Against an inside wall.
- Away from where glass could shatter around windows, mirrors, pictures, or where heavy bookcases or other heavy furniture could fall over.
- In the open, away from: buildings, trees, telephone and electrical lines, overpasses, or elevated expressways.

3. Educate Yourself and Family Members

- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police, or fire department and which radio

station to tune to for emergency information.

- Teach all family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.

4. **Have Disaster Supplies on Hand**

- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Portable battery-operated radio and extra batteries.
- First aid kit and manual.
- Emergency food and water.
- Nonelectric can opener.
- Essential medicines.
- Cash and credit cards.
- Sturdy shoes.

5. **Develop an Emergency Communication Plan**

- In case family members are separated from one another during an earthquake, develop a plan for reuniting after the disaster.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

6. **Protect Your Property from an Earthquake**

- Anchor Large Equipment Properly
- Anchor Tall Bookcases and File Cabinets
- Anchor and Brace Propane Tanks and Gas Cylinders
- Bolt Sill Plates to Foundation
- Brace Cripple Walls
- Install Latches on Drawers and Cabinet Doors
- Mount Framed Pictures and Mirrors Securely
- Restrain Desktop Computers and Appliances

- Use Flexible Connections on Gas and Water Lines

What to Do During an Earthquake

Stay as safe as possible during an earthquake. Be aware that some earthquakes are actually foreshocks and a larger earthquake might occur. Minimize your movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place and if you are indoors, stay there until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.

If indoors



- **DROP** to the ground; take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, loadbearing doorway.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave.

- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- DO NOT use the elevators.

If outdoors

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits and alongside exterior walls. Many of the 120 fatalities from the 1933 Long Beach earthquake occurred when people ran outside of buildings only to be killed by falling debris from collapsing walls. Ground movement during an earthquake is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most earthquake-related casualties result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.

If in a moving vehicle

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

If trapped under debris

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

What to Do After an Earthquake

- Expect aftershocks.

- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls (Texting and emailing takes less bandwidth).
- Stay away from damaged areas, unless your assistance has been specifically requested by police, fire, or relief organizations. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Be aware of possible tsunamis if you live in coastal areas.
- Help injured or trapped persons.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately. **Leave the area if you smell gas or fumes from other chemicals.**
- Inspect utilities.
 - Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
 - Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.
 - Check for sewage and water lines damage. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid

using water from the tap. You can obtain safe water by melting ice cubes.

Adapted from

http://www.fema.gov/hazard/earthquake/eq_during.shtm

For a list of supplies (Home, Office and Car), see:

<http://www.farmers.com/pdf/EarthquakeSafetyChecklist.pdf>