

EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS TIPS



An earthquake may strike anywhere at any time. It is important to prepare NOW to avoid injury or property loss when the big quake strikes. The Kentucky Division of Emergency Management has developed some preparedness tips to assist you.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE:

- Prepare an Emergency Supply Kit: store food, water and emergency supplies for at least five days. Be sure to include a flashlight, extra batteries, portable radio, tools, blankets, sturdy shoes and sanitary items.
- Check your home for potential hazards. Know where and how to shut off electricity, gas and water at main switches and valves. Is your water heater securely fastened to wall studs with straps or plumbers tape? Make sure all appliances are connected to their fuel source with flexible lines.
- Check your chimney and roof for loose tiles and bricks. Replace or repair.
- Secure tall/heavy furniture, such as china cabinets and bookcases, to wall studs. Secure hanging objects by closing the opening in the hook. Anchor pictures and mirrors to wall studs. Attach a wooden or metal guardrail on open shelves to keep items from slipping or falling off. Velcro fastenings may be used to secure items to their displays or work surfaces. Velcro may also be used to fasten small appliances to their surfaces. Consider removing heavy-framed pictures and mirrors from above beds, couches and chairs. Determine whether the full swing of your hanging plants and lamps will strike a window, and if they will, consider moving them.
- Identify poisons, toxic chemicals or solvents in breakable containers which are located in high or dangerous locations. Move these containers to a well-ventilated storage area.
- Do not store certain chemicals such as ammonia and chlorine together. These chemicals, when mixed, create deadly hazards. Check labels on containers for other hazardous combinations.
- Establish an Out of State Phone Contact. Disasters, such as earthquakes, have a good chance of occurring when your family is not together. Children may be at school, you at work or caught in commuter traffic. Take a few minutes with your family and develop a reunion plan. Choose a relative who lives at least 100 miles away, or better yet, in another state. Make sure every family member carries this number with them! This plan will help you and your family to get back together, or if that is not possible, to let each other know where you are and that you are all right.

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DURING THE EARTHQUAKE:

- Stay calm, don't panic and remember to Duck, Cover and Hold.
- If you are inside, stay inside and take cover under a sturdy desk, table or along an inside wall. Stay away from glass and heavy objects. NOTE: It is no longer considered safe to stand in a doorway as you can be injured by having fingers crushed in the door if you are not positioned properly.
- If you are outdoors, remain there. In earthquakes, most injuries occur as people are entering or leaving buildings. Move away from trees, buildings and utility wires. The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside doorways and close to outer walls. Once in the open, remain there until the shaking stops.
- If you are driving, pull over to the side of the road as quickly and safely as possible, avoiding bridges, over/under passes and utility poles. Remain in the vehicle. Set the parking brake and turn on the radio for emergency information. The car may shake violently, but it is a good place to stay until the quake stops. When you drive on, watch for hazards created by the earthquake. Limit vehicular traffic to essential travel until the initial disaster is over and keep roadways clear for emergency vehicle access.
- If in a high-rise building, get under a desk or heavy furniture. Do not run for exits since stairways may be broken or jammed with people. NEVER use elevators.
- If in a public place, such as a stadium or movie theater, remain calm and don't panic! Don't rush for the exits, duck and cover your head under the seats. Exit the building when the shaking stops.

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AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE:

- Be prepared for aftershocks! Although most of these are smaller than the main tremor, some may be large enough to cause additional damage or cause weakened structures to collapse. In our area we often have stronger earthquakes occur days or weeks after the initial shock.
- Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. If you are trapped, do anything to attract attention to your location.
- Turn on your battery powered radio or television and listen for important information such as road closures, damage and evacuation centers.
- Check your utilities. The earthquake may have broken gas, electrical, and water lines. If you smell gas, shut off the main gas valve and open windows. If in doubt, turn off all the utilities!
- If water pipes are damaged, shut off the supply at the main valve. Additional emergency drinking water may be obtained from toilet tanks that are not treated with sanitizers or deodorizers, hot water heaters, and melted ice cubes.
- Carefully inspect chimneys for cracks and damage. Do not use the fireplace if the chimney has sustained damage.
- Check to see that sewage lines are intact before using sanitary facilities.
- Stay off the telephone except to report an emergency. Replace telephone receivers back on their cradles which may have been knocked off by the shaking to help reduce service disruption.
- Be prepared to deal with the emotional needs of family members. Discuss what happened and encourage children and other family members to talk about their feelings.

The key to surviving a disaster such as an earthquake lies in planning, preparing and practicing what you and your family will do when it happens.