

# Earthquake Protocol

## Preparation

- Secure your water heater using strong straps (like tow straps). Wrap the straps around the body of the water heater and screw them into studs in the wall.
- Secure large furniture like a tall heavy hutch by screwing it into the studs in your walls.
- Have a sanitation system. Most likely a major earthquake will prevent the ability to use the sewer system. It's important to dispose of waste properly during the recovery time.
- Have a food storage. I have a few 72 hour kits in which I have nonperishable foods that don't need to be cooked. I've read stories of bad earthquakes and most report that roads are ruined (or closed) and most stores don't stay open or stocked.
- Have a water storage. Often the water will not be running if your area has been severely hit.
- Try to store flammable products in cupboards or doors that latch.
- Learn how to turn off the gas, electricity, and water in your home. Leave a wrench or tool by the shut off valves (if one is necessary to turn it off). A lot of people I know tie the wrench to the pipe so no one can come along and remove it from its intended spot.
- Get Earthquake insurance on your home. When we were insuring our home the agent asked if we wanted earthquake insurance on it. I laughed and said, 'Of course. We live on a major fault line!'. What he said really shocked me. He said, "Well, you are one of the smart ones. Because less than 50% of people who live on this fault line have earthquake insurance". I found out why when he gave me the figures! We pay about \$500 a year for earthquake insurance. But \$40 a month is worth it to me for the peace of mind and for a new home if mine is destroyed during an earthquake.
- Get together with those who live with you and locate a safe spot in each room to get under during an earthquake. Not all door jams are alike. Some are flimsier than others. If you don't know, ask an informed person to tell you where the best places to go in each room would be.
- Pack an emergency kit with several of the following items. If you are in a high earthquake zone (i.e. California) keep a kit in your car and in your home.
- Portable Stove- Most likely the utilities will be turned off in harder hit areas as well. Having a charcoal or wood burning stove is a great idea.
- If you are building a home or are remodeling, there are flexible pipefittings that are great for earthquakes, which help prevent pipes from breaking.
- Practice with family, especially children on how to stop drop and hold on. Prepare an earthquake evacuation plan and a meeting point. Ours growing up was to meet at the mailbox out front as soon as the shaking stopped and we could get there safely.
- Use Quake Hold putty for your valuables. You can use it on your valuables

that you don't want moving around, falling, and breaking.

### **Reaction**

- When an earthquake begins...
- If inside: get under strong structures and hold on to those structures until after the shaking has stopped. Do not attempt to leave a structure while the shaking is going on.
- If in bed: cover your head with a pillow and hold on to the mattress until the shaking stops. If your bed is by a window, under a large chandelier, or if you have something large above the head of the bed then get under a sturdy structure or the bed (away from the window) if you can.
- If outside: stay outside but move away from tall structures, trees, etc.
- If driving: stop as soon as safely possible. Try to stop away from street lights, trees, over passes etc.
- After the earthquake expect aftershocks.
- If you think you can easily get to safety or join another family member before an aftershock hits then do that. If you are pinned then do your best to get into the safest possible position and wait out the aftershocks or for help to arrive.

### **Recovering**

- After the earthquake...
- Look for and extinguish any fires. If there are gas leaks etc. and they are not controlled (and cannot be easily controlled) get everyone away from them.
- Check your utilities. If there is a break in the gas line, turn off the gas and electricity. If your sewer line is broken, do not use the toilet. etc.
- Stabilize those who are in shock or need immediate assistance.
- Gather earthquake supplies or grab earthquake bucket and 72 hour kits. Dress in long sleeves, pants, boots, and gloves (if possible). Once you and your family or roommates are safe, begin helping neighbors and others who may be trapped or need assistance. Be careful to stay away from dangerous areas and situations.
- Listen to a battery operated radio or other forms of communication.
- If your home has been damaged go to a designated public shelter. Text **SHELTER** + your ZIP code to **43362** (4FEMA) to find the nearest shelter in your area (example: **shelter 12345**). If you cannot get to a designated public shelter do all you can to create a safe and warm shelter for the night. Relief usually comes within 24-72 hours.
- Stay together with family and friends if at all possible.
- And only use your cell phone for emergencies.