

Earthquake Preparedness

Earthquakes are one of the most frightening and destructive disasters. Earthquakes are caused by the earth shifting and shaking. They strike without warning at any time of year, day or night. It is estimated that about 75 earthquakes occur throughout the world each year. Annual damages are over 200 billion dollars in the US. You can expect deaths, injuries and property damage.

Before An Earthquake

- Prepare an emergency kit of food, water and emergency supplies.
- Know the safe spots in each room. These would be under sturdy desks, tables, or against interior walls.
- Stay in bed, if there when the earthquake starts. Protect your head with a pillow.
- Use a doorway only if you know it is a bearing wall.
- Know the danger spots in each room. These would be near a window, mirror, hanging object, fireplace and unsecured furniture.
- Conduct a practice drill for your family.
- Know where you and your family would relocate if an earthquake were to occur.
- Learn how to shut off gas, water and electricity.
- Secure your water heater, and heavy furniture, picture frames or mirrors, especially those over beds.

During An Earthquake

- **Indoors** – take cover under a sturdy object, crouch and cover your head with your arms. Do not use elevators.
- **Outdoors** – get into an open area, away from trees or tall buildings.
- Stay away from windows and outside walls.
- **In Vehicles** – Stop as quickly as possible, avoid stopping by large buildings, trees, or overpasses. Proceed cautiously watching for road and bridge damage.
- **Trapped** – Do not light a match.
- Do not move or kick up dust, cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuer can locate you. Use a whistle if available. Shout only as a last resort, it can cause you to inhale dust.

After An Earthquake

- Open cabinets cautiously.
- Check for gas and water leaks, broken electrical and sewer lines.
- Check for cracks and damage in your home.
- Turn on your portable radio for reports.
- Do not use your vehicle; keep streets clear for emergency vehicles.
- Be prepared for aftershocks.
- If you evacuate, leave a note for family members.
- Stay calm and lend a helping hand to others.

*Where earthquakes have occurred before, they will happen again.

References

www.redcross.org
www.fema.gov
www.ready.gov