

Twenty Earthquake Tips That Could Save Your Life

1. Keep about a week's worth of supplies in both your home and your car. Ideally, your workplace is prepared as well, but have supplies there, just in case. The American Red Cross suggests these supplies:

- First-aid kit and important medications.
- Canned food and can opener. Include food for pets.
- At least three gallons of water for every person in the house.
- Protective clothing, including rain gear, and sturdy shoes by the bed.
- Bedding or sleeping bags.
- Fire extinguisher, flashlight, radio and extra batteries.
- Instructions and tools for turning off gas, electricity and water.

2. In the house, secure all heavy objects that can fall.

3. Brace water heaters to prevent gas leaks. Strap and firmly anchor heaters to the wall.

4. Install automatic gas shut-off valves or keep a wrench handy to shut off valves manually. Make sure family members know how to do this.

5. Windows made from safety glass or covered with a multi-layered Mylar film are less likely to shatter.

6. Secure your kitchen cabinets with child-proof, hook or eye latches to keep them from flying open.

7. Secure large appliances, such as TVs, stereos and computers to tabletops with safety straps or buckles.

8. Test the batteries of all smoke alarms.

9. Move bookshelves to safer locations and heavy objects to lower shelves.

10. Talk to your children about what to do in the event of an earthquake.

11. Find and know your home's safe spots, typically under sturdy desks and tables.

12. If you are in a building when the shaking begins, get under a desk or interior doorway.

13. If you are outdoors, stay there, but move away from tall buildings.

14. Do not call 911 unless you have a serious medical emergency.

15. Keep cribs away from windows and bookcases. Install pads in cribs.

16. Show children what's safe if a quake hits. Use tables for "duck and cover" drills.

17. Update children's emergency cards.

18. Keep in mind alternate cooking sources such as barbecues.

19. Make a family plan. Designate someone out of state as a contact person. Local telephone lines are often down longer than long-distance lines. Decide where to meet if you are separated.

20. Use a flashlight at night. Never use candles. Candles can be knocked over by an aftershock.