Emergencies and Natural Disasters

When preparing for a possible emergency situation, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and warmth.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- **Water**, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- **Food**, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- **First aid kit**
- Whistle to signal for help
- **Dust mask**, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers

Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children
What to do during an Earthquake

Personal Safety (During Earthquake)

- **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.

Personal Safety (After Earthquake)

- Check yourself for injuries.
- Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and work gloves.
- Continue listening to local radio for information.
- Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them to the power company, police or fire department.
- Use flashlights to examine walls, floors, doors, staircases and windows.
- Inspect foundations for cracks and make sure the building is not in danger of collapsing.
- Inspect your home for damage.
- Check for gas leaks. Get everyone out if your home is unsafe.
- Help neighbors who may require special assistance.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, or other flammable liquids immediately.
- Expect aftershocks

Prepare Your House

- 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.
- Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. These are potential fire risks.
Secure a water heater by strapping it to the wall studs and bolting it to the floor.
Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations. Get expert advice if there are signs of structural defects.
Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products securely in closed cabinets with latches and on bottom shelves.
Identify Safe Places indoors and outdoors like under sturdy furniture or 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.

What to Do After an Earthquake (House)

- **Expect aftershocks.** These secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage to weakened structures and can occur in the first hours, days, weeks, or even months after the quake.
- **Listen to a battery-operated radio or television.** Listen for the latest emergency information.
- **Use the telephone only for emergency calls.**
- **Open cabinets cautiously.** Beware of objects that can fall off shelves.
- **Stay away from damaged areas.** Stay away unless your assistance has been specifically requested by police, fire, or relief organizations. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- **Help injured or trapped persons.** Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance such as infants, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Give first aid where appropriate. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.
- **Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately.** Leave the area if you smell gas or fumes from other chemicals.
- **Inspect the entire length of chimneys for damage.** Unnoticed damage could lead to a fire.
- **Inspect utilities.**
  - **Check 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.