Earthquake Preparedness Checklist

A calm, step-by-step list for your household. Do a few items each weekend, and check in with your neighbors after any quake.

Secure your home

- ☐ Strap the water heater to wall studs.
- ☐ Anchor bookcases, dressers, refrigerator and TVs to the wall.
- ☐ Move heavy and breakable items to low shelves.
- ☐ Keep mirrors and frames away from beds and couches.
- ☐ Learn where the gas, water and electric shutoffs are. Keep a wrench by the gas meter.
- ☐ Only shut off gas if you smell gas or hear a leak (the utility must turn it back on).
- ☐ Ask about a structural check or retrofit for older homes.
- ☐ Review your insurance (standard homeowner policies do not cover earthquake damage).

Make a plan

- ☐ Practice Drop, Cover and Hold On with everyone at home.
- ☐ Pick a safe spot in each room, under a sturdy table or against an interior wall.
- ☐ Sign up for earthquake alerts (in California, the free MyShake app).
- ☐ Fill out your Family Communication Plan with an out-of-area contact.
- ☐ Choose a meeting spot near home and one outside your neighborhood.

Gather supplies

- ☐ Water: 1 gallon per person per day for several days.
- ☐ Several days of non-perishable food and a manual can opener.
- ☐ Flashlight, extra batteries, and a whistle for each person.
- ☐ Sturdy shoes and a flashlight next to every bed.
- ☐ First aid kit, fire extinguisher, work gloves and dust masks.
- ☐ Pack a 72-hour go-bag (see the Go-Bag checklist).

During the shaking

- ☐ DROP to your hands and knees.
- ☐ COVER your head and neck, under a table if you can.
- ☐ HOLD ON until the shaking stops.
- ☐ Stay inside. Do not run outside and avoid doorways.
- ☐ In bed: turn face down and cover your head with a pillow.
- ☐ Driving: pull over, stop, and set the parking brake.
- ☐ Outside: move away from buildings, trees and power lines.

Right after

- ☐ Expect aftershocks. Drop, Cover and Hold On again if needed.
- ☐ Check yourself and others for injuries. Call 911 for emergencies.
- ☐ If your building is damaged, go outside and move away from it.
- ☐ Smell gas? Leave right away, and shut off the gas at the meter if it is safe.
- ☐ If trapped: text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.
- ☐ Near the coast? Move inland or to higher ground right away.
- ☐ Text instead of calling. Texts get through more often and save battery.

Check in with your neighbors

- ☐ Tap I'm OK, I need help, or I can help on the network, or text OK / HELP / CAN.
- ☐ Put your OK or HELP card in a front window.
- ☐ Check on neighbors who live alone, are older, or have young kids.
- ☐ Wear sturdy shoes, gloves and long sleeves for cleanup. Never enter damaged buildings.

In a life-threatening emergency, call 911 first. Adapted from Ready.gov (ready.gov/earthquakes, ready.gov/kit) and FEMA guidance. Not affiliated with or endorsed by FEMA, Ready.gov or the American Red Cross. Community Preparedness Network · Free to print and share.