

EMERGENCY EARTHQUAKE PROCEDURES

BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

Seismic experts say we can expect a major destructive earthquake in British Columbia. We don't know when this will happen. But we do live in a region where some of the largest earthquakes in the world occur.

When an earthquake occurs, your first warning may be a swaying sensation if you're in a building, or a sudden noise or roar. Next will come the vibrations, quickly followed by rolling up, down, or a sideways rotation. It will be scary! It may last a few seconds or go on for a few minutes. The earth won't open up and swallow you, but you could be hurt by breaking glass, falling objects and heavy things bouncing around. Be prepared for aftershocks.

You can't prevent an earthquake, but you can:

1. be prepared to avoid injury
2. be prepared to minimize damage to your home
3. be prepared to survive afterwards for at least 72 hours without help

YOUR FAMILY PREPARATION

Plan your needs. Delegate tasks. Write down and exercise your plan. If you have no family, make your individual plan with neighbors and friends.

1. Know the safe and dangerous places in your home.

SAFE – under heavy tables or desks – inside hallways – corners of rooms or archways

DANGEROUS – near windows or mirrors – under any objects that can fall – the kitchen, where the stove, refrigerator or contents of cupboards may move violently – doorways, because the shaking may slam the door on you. Practice taking cover.
2. Train members of your family to use fire extinguishers.
3. Sign up now for a first-aid course, including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
4. Make an appointment now with your insurance broker to talk about your earthquake insurance. Check your insurance coverage as it will affect your loss and financial ability to recover after an earthquake.

5. Plan and practice evacuation.
6. Talk to your children about what to do if they're at home or at school and the quake separates them from the other family members. Become familiar with the school's earthquake plan.
7. Arrange an out-of-town contact. Each family member should carry the contact phone number and address. Have an alternative family rendezvous location if you can't get home.
8. Remind your family to rely on emergency authorities for guidance. Broadcast reports on radio and television will have instructions.
9. Also remind your family members that emergency phone numbers are in the inside cover of the telephone book. But use them only in an extreme emergency. Your telephone may not work after an earthquake or it may take a while to get a dial tone.
10. Make sure each family member knows how to shut off your electricity and water supply. In the event of an earthquake, the gas feed to our building is automatically shut off. Prior to the main gas feed being turned back on by a gas technician, the gas feed to your own unit will have to be turned off.
11. Your plan should include a list of where emergency supplies and equipment are stored.
12. Share your emergency plans with your neighbors.

YOUR EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Be prepared to be on your own without help for 72 hours or more (some say up to 5 days) --- at home, in your car or at work. Assemble these emergency supplies and keep them in your emergency kit stored in a secure place, ideally accessible from outside.

1. First aid kit and instruction booklet
2. Shelter – a plastic tarp, a small tent, emergency “space” blankets or even some large garbage bags.
3. Water – at least four liters of water per person per day, in tight-lidded non-breakable containers. That's at least 12 liters per person for a three-day supply.

4. Keep a supply of water purification tablets in your emergency kit. Water also can be made safe to drink by using four drops of liquid household bleach in 4 ½ liters of clear water or 10 drops in 4 ½ liters of cloudy water. Replace stored tap water at least every six months.
5. If the water is still running, fill your bathtub and other containers. Remember, there's water available in your refrigerator's ice cube container and toilet reservoir.
6. Food – keep a supply of non-perishable food handy, such as canned and dehydrated food, dried fruit and canned juices. Rotate periodically to keep them fresh. Remember a manual can opener.
7. Flashlight and spare batteries. Keep the flashlight near your bed. Batteries should be separate in your emergency kit.
8. Battery AM/FM radio and spare batteries, stored separately in waterproof bags.
9. Essential medication and supplies for infants, elderly persons and those with special needs. Keep at least a one-week supply in your emergency kit. Include copies of prescriptions for your medicine and glasses.
10. Personal toiletry items – toilet tissue, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.
11. Class ABC fire extinguisher. Keep it in a handy location in your home, after testing according to directions.
12. Shoes – heavy enough to protect you from broken glass and other debris. Keep them handy, wherever you are.
13. Keep a pry bar on hand in your unit in case you have to force the entry door open to escape. In an earthquake, shifts in the building may jam your door.
14. If you have a pet, it may become vicious due to fright. Determine how you will respond to that situation.