

PREPARING FOR DISASTERS

Earthquakes

BEFORE

- Be aware of fire evacuation and earthquake safety plans for all of the buildings you occupy regularly.
- Pick earthquake safe places in each room of your home, work and/or school. A safe place could be under a piece of furniture or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture.
- Keep a flashlight and sturdy shoes by each person's bed.
- Bolt and brace water heaters, gas appliances, bookcases, and other tall furniture to wall studs. Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Hang heavy items, such as pictures and mirrors, away from beds, couches and anywhere people sleep or sit.
- Install strong latches or bolts on cabinets. Large or heavy items should be closest to the floor.
- Learn how to shut off the gas valves in your home.
- Keep an emergency supplies kit in an easy-to-access location.

DURING

- **Drop, cover and hold on. Move as little as possible.**
- If you are in bed, curl up and hold on. Protect your head with a pillow.
- Stay away from windows to avoid being injured by shattered glass.
- Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you are sure it is safe to exit. When it is, use stairs rather than the elevator.
- If you are outside, find a clear spot (away from buildings, power lines, trees, streetlights) and drop to the ground. Stay there until the shaking stops.
- If you are in a vehicle, pull over and stop. Avoid bridges, overpasses and power lines if possible. Stay inside with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking stops.

AFTER

- Stay alert and be prepared for potential aftershocks, landslides or even a tsunami. Each time you feel an aftershock, drop, cover and hold on.
- Look quickly for damage in and around your home and get everyone out if your home is unsafe.
- Look for and extinguish small fires. Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake.
- Clean up spilled medications, bleach, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately.
- Listen to a portable, battery-operated or hand-crank radio for updated emergency information and instructions.
- If you were away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe to do so.

Power Outages

DURING

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold for about 4 hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours if the door remains closed.
- Turn off and unplug all unnecessary electrical equipment and appliances (like stoves). When power comes back on, surges or spikes can damage equipment.
- Leave one light turned on so you'll know when the power comes back on.

Home Fires

BEFORE

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms. Change batteries every six months.
- Keep flammable items at least three feet away from anything that gets hot, such as space heaters or stoves.
- Ensure that all household members know two ways to escape from every room of your home, and where to meet outside in case of fire.

DURING

- During a home fire, remember to **get out, stay out and call 911**.
- If doors or handles are warm, use your second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch.
- Crawl low under smoke.
- Go to your outside meeting place and then call for help.
- If smoke, heat or flames block your exit, stay in the room with doors closed. Place a wet towel under the door and call 911. Open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight to signal for help.

Landslides

DURING

- If you suspect imminent danger, evacuate immediately.
- Listen for unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together.
- If you are near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and notice whether the water changes from clear to muddy. Such changes may mean there is debris flow activity upstream so be prepared to move quickly.
- Be especially alert when driving.

Wildfires

BEFORE

- Identify and maintain an adequate water source outside your home, such as a small pond, cistern, well or swimming pool.
- Set aside household items that can be used as fire tools: a rake, axe, hand saw or chain saw, bucket and shovel.
- Regularly clean roofs and gutters.

DURING

- Be ready to leave at a moment's notice. Listen to local radio and TV stations for updated emergency information.
- Always back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape.
- Confine pets to one room so that you can find them if you need to evacuate quickly.
- Arrange for temporary housing at a friend or relative's home.
- Keep indoor air clean by closing windows and doors.
- Do not return home until local authorities declare it safe.

Tsunamis

DURING

- When the earthquake stops, gather members of your household and move quickly to higher ground away from the coast. A tsunami may be coming within minutes.
- Avoid downed power lines and stay away from buildings and bridges from which heavy objects might fall during an aftershock.