Earthquake Home Hazard Hunt

Recommendations for reducing earthquake hazards in your home are presented on the other side of this poster.
This poster has information for you and your family to help you find and fix areas of your home that might be damaged in an earthquake and that might injure your family or cause further damage to your property. Your earthquake home hazard hunt should begin with all family members participating. Forethought, imagination, and common sense are all that are needed as you go from room to room imagining what would happen if the earth and house started shaking. Anything that can move, break, or fall when your house starts to shake is a potential hazard.

What would happen to heavy furniture, fixtures, and appliances?

- Look at tall bookcases and shelves.
- How much would fall off the shelves? Would the whole bookcase topple, or is it anchored to the wall? Anchor bookcases and other top-heavy furniture to walls using flexible fasteners (e.g., metal straps and lag screws).
- Prevent refrigerators, washers, and other heavy appliances from moving by blocking the blocking the rollers.
- Add bearers to heavy conditions, particularly on rooftops.
- Do you have hanging light fixtures or plants? Could they swing and hit a window or mirror, or off their hooks? Use a minimum precaution, transfer hanging plants from heavy glass to paper pots tied to rugs or other areas on high or heavy hanging items.

Check for possible flying glass.

- Replace glass bottles in the medicine cabinet and around the bathtub and shower with plastic containers.

What kind of拉丁文 langua在 your kitchen cabinets? Consider replacing magnetic “touch” latches with ones that will hold the cabinet doors shut during an earthquake. A big low bar across shelves may prevent breakables from sliding out.

Where do you sit or sleep? Anchor heavy mirrors and pictures over beds, chairs, and couches. Do not sleep under a heavy window screen. Move heavy objects close to where you sleep.

How about fire safety?

- Secure all flammable liquids, such as paint canisters and cleaning products, to the garage or outside storage area. Be sure these items are secured on their shelves or stored away from heat sources and appliances, particularly your water heater and furnace.
- Secure gas lines by installing flexible connectors to appliances.
- Is your water heater secured? Metal straps can be used to fasten your water heater to the wood studs of the nearest wall.
- Secure the wood sill and wall framing to the foundation using anchor bolts.
- Shear plate crawlspaces with plywood to prevent collapse.
- Strengthens connections between piers and beams with bracing.
- With your powers of perception more finely tuned, you may wish to extend these suggestions to your workplace. Check to determine whether your company has an earthquake safety plan.

Children can share their new awareness in the classroom. Determine whether their school has a practical earthquake plan, whether earthquake drills are held, and what the policy is if an earthquake occurs while school is in session.

Correcting Problems

1. **Utilities**

- Teach responsible members of your family how to turn off electricity, gas, and water at main switches if you plan to shut them off during an earthquake.

2. **Cabinets, doors, and draws**

- Secure all cabinets above and below sinks securely to the wall studs. Use latches designed for earthquake-child-proofing, or boat safety to keep cabinet doors from flying open and contents falling (see Figure D).

3. **Figure A. Strengthening weak crawlspaces walls.**

- Wooden floors and end walls are sometimes built up to form an exterior foundation to support the home and create a basement. These walls carry the weight of the house. During an earthquake, these walls can collapse if they are not braced to control horizontal or vertical movement. If the walls fail, the house may shift or fall.

4. **Figure B. Strengthening garage walls below living space.**

- Check for possible flying glass. If your roof doesn’t have solid sheathing, shingling or tile may be holding your roof on. In order to strengthen if you think your roof might be held with steel straps or wood sheathing, first check the ceiling joists. Have the ceiling inspected professional to determine whether the ceiling should be upgraded or replaced.

5. **Figure C. Bracing masonry chimneys.**

- Hung objects should not be within 6 feet of the fireplace, chimney, or roof edge. There are many solutions: all relatively inexpensive.

- Purchase and install a strap kit or bracing kit from your local Building Department before starting work.

6. **Figure D. Securing home electronics.**

- Electronics are heavy objects and could cause serious injury if they fall. Use rigid pipes during an earthquake.

- Home Electronics

Electronics are heavy objects and could cause serious injury if they fall. Use rigid pipes during an earthquake.

- Home Electronics

7. **Figure E. Securing top-heavy furniture.**

- Furniture

Follow these important guidelines:

- Secure all tall, top-heavy furniture, such as bookcases, wall units, and entertainment centers using rigid pipes (see Figure E).
- Attach securely to the wall stud with straps.
- Secure the top, on either side of the unit, into wall studs, not just into the drywall.
- Use flexible mounts for such items as television sets or lamps.
- Use flexible straps to allow furniture enough movement in the earthquake to prevent报送 damage.

- Figure F. Securing top-heavy furniture.

- Water Heaters

Water heaters should be braced and anchored rigidly to avoid damage. There are many solutions: all relatively inexpensive.

- Purchase and install a strap kit or bracing kit from your local Building Department before starting work.

- Other options include:

- Have a licensed plumber inspect your individual water heater according to code.
- Use magnetic “touch” latches and screws to secure the water heater to the wall studs.

- The gas and water lines should have flexible connector pipes. These are safer than rigid pipes during an earthquake. Be sure to check the straps once a year. They may corrode and need to be replaced.

8. **Figure G. Securing water heaters.**

- Water Heaters

By taking steps to protect your home and yourself when your house starts to shake, you will save yourself and your family a great deal of physical and emotional trauma that might otherwise occur.

Further Information

For more information about earthquake preparedness and safety, refer to the following publications of the FEMA Distribution Facility at 1-800-480-2520. As noted, some are available for download from the FEMA website.

After Disaster Strikes: How to recover financially from a natural disaster. FEMA 292, August 2002. Available in both English and Spanish.


Visit the FEMA website at http://www.fema.gov/hazards/earthquake/ for information about the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) and more ways to address earthquake risks.