Earthquake Home Hazard Hunt

Recommendations for reducing earthquake hazards in your home are presented on the other side of this poster.

- Strap down computers
- Securely fasten or relocate heavy pictures and mirrors over beds
- Strap bookcases and shelves to walls to prevent tipping
- Brace or replace masonry chimneys
- Secure ceiling fans and hanging light fixtures
- Know how and when to shut off utilities
- Strap down televisions and other expensive or hazardous electrical components
- Upgrade unbraced crawlspace walls (or other foundation problems)
- Ensure that gas appliances have flexible connections
- Brace water heaters
- Prevent rolling or tilting of refrigerators
- Know how and when to shut off utilities
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 family members during an earthquake. Information is also provided on planning for an earthquake so you will know what to do before and after an earthquake.

Your earthquake home hazard hunt should begin with all family members participating. Foresight, 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 problem.

What would happen to heavy furniture, fixtures, and appliances?
- Look at tall bookcases and shelves. How much weight 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 wall studs using flexible fasteners (e.g., nylon straps) and lag screws.
- Present refrigerators, washers, and other heavy appliances from moving by blocking the blocking the rollers.
- Adhere using. First review. Your Family From Earthquakes

Secure mirrors, pictures, plants, and other objects on closed hooks.

Caution: Do not move or shift gas unless an emergency exists. If gas is ever turned off, a professional must restore service. Contact your local utilities for more information.

Label the water shut-off valve, found where water enters the house. Also label the main water shut-off valve, found with the meter in a concrete box in the sidewalk or yard.

Weak Crawlspace Walls

Wooden floors and end walls are sometimes built up from an exterior foundation to support a house and create a crawl space. These walls carry the weight of the house. During an earth-quake, these walls can collapse if they are not braced to control torsional movement. If the walls fail, the house may shift or fall.

You can look under your house in the crawlspace to see whether there are wood end walls supporting the first floor. Check to see if the wood studs are braced with plywood panels or diagonal wood shoring. If your house has neither of these, the wood crawlspace walls are probably insufficiently braced or are not specifically designed for earthquakes. If you find that the walls are not secured, you should have them strengthened.

Remember, it is very expensive to lift a house, repair the foundation and walls, and put it back on its foundation, while upgrading before an earthquake will be much cheaper.

Garages With Living Spaces Above

The large opening over a garage door and the weight of the second floor room built above the garage can result in the garage walls being too weak to withstand earthquakes. By building a garage wall as part of a regular earthquake retrofit, the garage will be safer and the home will be protected from the movement of the floor above it.

Check foundation for loose or cracked plaster.

Sheath crawlspace walls with plywood to prevent collapse.

Strengthen connections between piers and beams with bracing.

Water Heaters

Water heaters should be bolted to the wall and braced. There are many solutions – all relatively inexpensive.

Purchase and install a strap kit or bracing kit from your local hardware store.

Other options include:
- Have a licensed plumber install flexible connectors to the heater to the wood studs of the nearest wall.
- Secure the water heater to the wall studs with straps.
- Fasten the water heater securely to the floor studs with lag screws.
- Have a licensed plumber install flexible connectors to the heater to the wall studs.

Furniture

Follow these important guidelines:
- Secure all tall, top-heavy furniture such as bookcases, tall units, and entertainment centers.
- Anchor them securely to the wall studs with straps.
- Secure the top, both the right and left sides of the unit into wall studs, not just into the drywall.
- Use flexible mounting fasteners such as nylon straps to allow furniture independent movement from the wall, reducing the strain on studs.
- Secure loose shelving by attaching earthquake-gripping straps to each corner bracket.
- Secure heavy items and breakables on lower shelves.

Practicing Drop, Cover, and Hold

It’s important to know where you should go for protection when your house starts to shake. By planning and practicing what to do before an earthquake occurs, you can condition yourself and your family to react correctly and spontaneously when the first jolt or shaking is felt. An earthquake drill can be an exercise you do during a practice run.

Furniture

- Have a licensed plumber install flexible connectors to the heater to the wall studs.
- Secure the wood sill and wall framing to the foundation using anchor bolts.
- Sheath crawlspace walls with plywood to prevent collapse.
- Secure the wall sill and framing to the foundation using anchor bolts.

Electronics are heavy objects and costly to replace. Secure TV sets, stereo equipment, computers, and microwave ovens with earthquake straps and brackets for easy removal and relocation (see Figure D).

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Food and Water in an Emergency

There are many solutions – all relatively inexpensive. Purchase and install a strap kit or bracing kit from your local hardware store.

Other options include:
- Have a licensed plumber install flexible connectors to the heater to the wall studs.
- Secure the wood sill and wall framing to the foundation using anchor bolts.
- Sheath crawlspace walls with plywood to prevent collapse.
- Secure the wall sill and framing to the foundation using anchor bolts.

Water Heaters

Water heaters should be bolted to the wall and braced. There are many solutions – all relatively inexpensive.

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