

# What To Do Before An Earthquake

Most casualties result from partial building collapse, falling objects, and debris, like toppling chimneys, falling bricks, ceiling plaster, and light fixtures. Taking a few steps now to prepare can prevent many of these conditions. A brief survey of your home and office will indicate what hazard exits.

- 1. Secure Fixtures** such as lights, cabinets, bookcases, and top-heavy objects to resist moving, coming loose, or falling during shaking. Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves and securely fasten shelves to walls. Special care should be taken to remove hazardous objects from sleeping areas. Do not hang plants in heavy pots that could swing free of hooks.
- 2. Store Breakables** - bottled goods, glass, vases, and china - in low or closed cabinets. Use nonskid padded matting, hold-fast putty, or Velcro whenever possible.
- 3. Check the Electrical Wiring** and connections to gas appliances. Defective electrical wiring, leaking gas, or inflexible connections are very dangerous in the event of an earthquake.
- 4. Develop a Family Plan** that addresses what to do if the earthquake occurs while family members are at home, school, or work. This plan should include a possible central meeting location for family members after the earthquake and an out of area contact person so other family members can find out information concerning loved ones in the disaster area. It is usually easier to call out of a disaster area than it is to call into one.
- 5. Hold Drills** so each member of your family knows what to do in an earthquake.
- 6. Locate Master Switch & Shutoff Valves** for all utilities and teach all responsible family members how to turn them off. Your local utility company can show you how.
- 7. Prepare an Office Emergency Kit**
- 8. Keep Extra Food On Hand.** Students are not encouraged to store food or have 72-hour kits, but having food on hand is prudent.
- 9. Ensure Your Home Is Prepared.** Securely fasten the home to the foundation and secure your water heater to wall studs or floor. Use flexible gas lines to connect stoves, water heaters, etc.
- 10. Always Keep a Pair of Shoes By Your Bed** when retiring.

