Earthquake Home Hazard Hunt

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

- Securely fasten or relocate heavy pictures and mirrors over beds
- Brace or replace masonry chimneys
- Strap down computers
- Strengthen garages that have living space above them
- Secure ceiling fans and hanging light fixtures
- Strap bookcases and shelves to walls to prevent tipping
- Brace water heaters
- Know how and when to shut off utilities
- Upgrade unbraced crawl space walls (or other foundation problems)
- Ensure that gas appliances have flexible connections
- Secure cabinets to wall studs; use latches to keep cabinet doors from flying open during an earthquake
- Prevent rolling or tilting of refrigerators
- Strap down televisions and other expensive or hazardous electrical components
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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, what you should do during and after an earthquake.

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, saw-tooth anchors). See Figure A. Secure wall units, and entertain-

ment centers using flexible fasteners. See Figure A.

• Prevent refrigerators, washers, and other heavy appliances from moving by blocking the rollers.

• Secure loose shelving by inserting wood or metal straps and angle bracing through eye screws into studs. Locate beds away from heavy doors or windows. See Figure A.

• Add bracing to knee walls, particularly on rooflines.

• Do you have hanging light fixtures or plants? Could they snap and hit a window or break their hanger? A minimum precaution, transfer hanging plants from heavy glass to clay pots if possible. See Figure A.

• Check for possible flying glass.

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

• What kind of latches are your kitchen cabinets? Consider replacing magnetic "towel" latches with ones that will hold the cabinet doors shut during an earthquake. Don't use a pull-down shade or low bar across shelves may prevent breakable from sliding out.

• Where do you sit or sleep? Anchor heavy mirrors and pictures over beds, chairs, and couches with wire through eye screws into studs. Locate beds away from heavy doors or windows. See Figure A.

• Think about fire safety.

• Spill all flammable liquids, such as painting 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.

• In your water heater secured? Metal straps can be used to fasten your water heater to the wood studs of the nearest wall.

• What would happen to the house itself?

• Look at the outside of your home. What about your chimneys? Masonry chimneys may be damaged in an earthquake, especially the masonry section above the roof line, as this may fall into the house.

• Check your roof. Make sure all tiles are secured – loose tiles could fall. See Figure A.

• Secure the wood sill and wall framing to the foundation using anchor bolts.

• Sheath crawl space walls with plywood to prevent collapse.

• Strengthen 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

Utilities

Teach responsible members of your family how to turn off electricity, gas, and water at main switches. Caution: Do not shut off 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 the main water shut-off valve, found with the meter in a concrete box in the sidewalk or yard.

Hanging Objects

Prevent soil hangings from bouncing off walls.

Secure mirrors, picture frames, and other objects on closed hooks.

Secure the bottom corners with earthquake party or adhesive pads.

Place only soil art such as tapestries over beds and sofas.

Home Electronics

Electronics are heavy objects and costly to replace. Secure TVs, stereos, computers, and microwave with earthquake straps and brackets for easy removal and relocation (see Figure D).

Furniture

Follow these important guidelines:

• Secure all tall, top-heavy furniture to the wall – entertainment centers, wall units, and entertainment centers using flexible fasteners. See Figure A.

• Attach them securely to the wall studs with straps and lag screws.

• Prevent refrigerators, washers, and other heavy appliances from moving by blocking the rollers.

• If your roof doesn't have solid shingling, consider adding plywood panels above the ceiling joists. Have the chimney inspected periodically to determine whether the chimney should be upgraded or replaced.

• Prevent the chimney from breaking away from the house, you should have it framed in the framing of the roof with steel metal straps as shown in Figure E. If your roof doesn't have solid shingling, consider adding plywood panels above the ceiling joists. Have the chimney inspected periodically to determine whether the chimney should be upgraded or replaced.

In the Kitchen

Cabinet doors, refrigerators, and gas appliances should be secured so that they will not move or fall over during an earthquake.

First, secure all cabinets above waist height securely to the wall studs.

Use latches designed for earthquake-proofing, or boat safety to keep cabinet doors from flying open and contents falling (see Figure A).

Have a plunger install flexible connectors on gas appliances.

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Figure D. Securing home electronics.

Figure E. Securing cabinet doors and drawers.

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Water Heaters

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

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

Figure B. Stabilizing grab bars on walls.

Figure C. Stabilizing grab bars on walls.

Figure A. Stabilizing weak crawl space walls.

Figure C. Bracing masonry chimneys.

Figure B. Stabilizing grab bars on walls.