

March 11, 2011

## Earthquake/Disaster Preparedness

I was asked recently what Village Property Management's preparedness plan is for a catastrophic earthquake or disaster. What is the level of responsibility to assist our clients with a disaster? It got me thinking about my personal preparedness as an individual and as it relates to my family as well as our preparedness at Village Property Management.

What would we do as a company if hundreds of our clients were to call for assistance with their property after a catastrophic disaster? Would the phone lines work? Will staff be able to get to the offices? What if the offices are not accessible? No matter how prepared we can be...do we even have the capacity as a company to support all of our clients property needs or emergencies after a catastrophic disaster? The answer is partly no. Individual preparedness is required.

It falls to each of us to be prepared and be as ready as we have the means to be; to protect ourselves and family. Our community emergency support personnel will be inundated to serve the ones that need assistance the most. You can help by being more personally prepared.

It is for this reason that I have sought to share with each of our residents and property owners alike the attached information. It is not meant to be concise but meant more as an introduction to preparedness. More information like this can be obtained by contacting your local Office of Emergency Service.

You will also see included "Michael's Top Ten" items list which I have in place at my home to better prepare me and my family for cases of an emergency. If you didn't consider any other document this one will get you more prepared for an emergency event or disaster.

Through the [VPMrents.com](http://VPMrents.com) website you can find more information about emergency preparedness and links to websites that provide emergency preparedness products.

I hope that you find this information helpful in your planning. Make a plan and be prepared.

Sincerely,



Michael E. Heath,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Village Property Management

## Michael's Top Ten

- **YOUR SAFETY:** first and foremost your safety and well being should be your top priority. Do not stay in any home that is unsafe or potentially unstable. If you can secure the home and lock the doors without compromising your safety than do so. When you can and are safely available to do so please contact our office to report any issues with your home.
- **NATURAL GAS SHUT OFF:** Know where to shut off the gas to your home. Keep a wrench close to or beside your gas shut off valve.
- **WATER SERVICE SHUT OFF:** Know where to shut off the water to your home. You may have a leak or flood that needs to be put under control quickly.
- **ELECTRIC:** There may be electrical outages or complete lack of service for hours, days or even weeks. **Have flashlights available.** It is recommended that if you store flashlights, you keep the batteries out of the flashlights but beside them until you need them. Batteries can deteriorate and bleed acid if stored for long periods of time.
- **FOOD:** Plan to store a lot of non-perishable food for easy access. How much you'll need depends on size of family. Have something ready in case you cannot get to supermarkets. Supermarkets may also have nothing in stock or are closed due to damage.
- **DRINKING WATER:** Have many gallons of water available to drink. You may have no water service in the house or it may be undrinkable. Make sure your water is safe to drink after a disaster.
- **RADIO:** Have a radio handy with working batteries. There are wind-up radios and solar-run radios available. This may be your only connection to the outside world and the only outlet for receiving local emergency updates and instructions.
- **CASH:** Have money available (in small denominations) for the use of purchasing emergency supplies after a disaster. There may be no way to access cash from ATMs.
- **COMFORTABLE SHOES and EXTRA CLOTHING:** Keep these items close to where you are at all times. Do you have an emergency kit with items such as these in the trunk of your car? Perhaps at the office? Or by the front door of your home? Eitherway you may need to access them quickly. They need to be where you are. The roads may be unpassable and you may need to walk home...for miles. Do it comfortably.
- **FIRST AID KIT/EARTHQUAKE KITS:** Many hardware stores have pre-packaged kits that are handy for travel. Make sure the supplies you need are enough to service your family members and of course don't forget your pets. What will they need to survive with you.

*Remember: You may have no phone service to reach your loved ones. Make a plan where to meet after a disaster. Pick a location that is most convenient for each family member to get to. Remember that the only way to get there may be on foot.*

Hang this up.  Follow these tips.

# 27 things to help you survive an earthquake

Californians are constantly aware of the potential of an earthquake creating damage and creating dangerous conditions. So if we don't properly prepare, the next quake may cause greater personal damage than necessary. Each item listed below won't stop the next earthquake but it may help you survive in a better way.

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## 4 basics to do during an earthquake

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1. STAY CALM
2. Inside: Stand in a doorway, or crouch under a desk or table, away from windows or glass dividers.
3. Outside: Stand away from buildings, trees, telephone and electric lines.
4. On the road: Drive away from underpasses/overpasses; stop in safe area; stay in vehicle.

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## 6 basics to do after an earthquake

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1. Check for injuries—provide first aid.
2. Check for safety—check for gas, water, sewage breaks; check for downed electric lines and shorts; turn off appropriate utilities; check for building damage and potential safety problems during after shocks such as cracks around chimney and foundation.
3. Clean up dangerous spills.
4. Wear shoes.
5. Turn on radio and listen for instructions from public safety agencies.
6. Don't use the telephone except for emergency use.

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## 14 survival items to keep on hand

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1. Portable radio with extra batteries

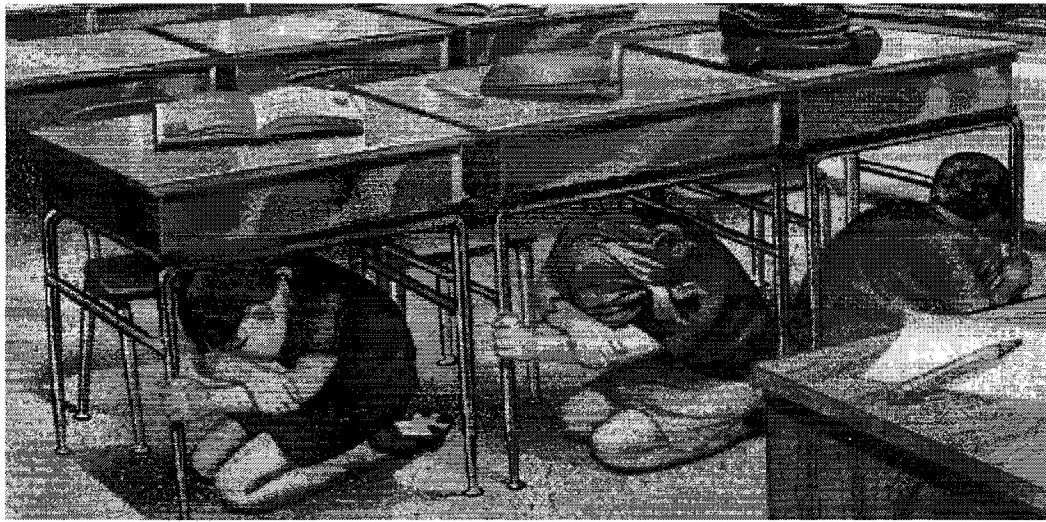
2. Flashlight with extra batteries
3. First Aid Kit—including specific medicines needed for members of your household.
4. First Aid book
5. Fire extinguisher
6. Adjustable wrench for turning off gas and water.
7. Smoke detector properly installed
8. Portable fire escape ladder for homes/apartments with multiple floors.
9. Bottled water—sufficient for the number of members in your household.
10. Canned and dried foods sufficient for a week for each member of your household. Note: Both water and food should be rotated into normal meals of household so as to keep freshness. Canned goods have a normal shelf-life of one year for maximum freshness.
11. Non-electric can opener.
12. Portable stove such as butane or charcoal. Note: Use of such stoves should not take place until it is determined that there is no gas leak in the area. Charcoal should be burned only out of doors. Use of charcoal indoors will lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.
13. Matches
14. Telephone numbers of police, fire and doctor

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## 3 things you need to know

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1. How to turn off gas, water and electricity
2. First Aid
3. Plan for reuniting your family



## Are You Ready for an Earthquake?

Here's what you can do to prepare for such an emergency

### Prepare a Home Earthquake Plan

- ✓ Choose a safe place in every room—under a sturdy table or desk or against an inside wall where nothing can fall on you.
- ✓ Practice DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON at least twice a year. Drop under a sturdy desk or table, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. If there's no table or desk nearby, sit on the floor against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases, or tall furniture that could fall on you. Teach children to DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON!
- ✓ Choose an out-of-town family contact.
- ✓ Consult a professional to find out additional ways you can protect your home, such as bolting the house to its foundation and other structural mitigation techniques.
- ✓ Take a first aid class from your local Red Cross chapter. Keep your training current.
- ✓ Get training in how to use a fire extinguisher from your local fire department.
- ✓ Inform babysitters and caregivers of your plan.

### Eliminate hazards, by—

- ✓ Bolting bookcases, china cabinets, and other tall furniture to wall studs.
- ✓ Installing strong latches on cupboards.
- ✓ Strapping the water heater to wall studs.

### Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit for home and car, including—

- ✓ First aid kit and essential medications.
- ✓ Canned food and can opener.
- ✓ At least three gallons of water per person.
- ✓ Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- ✓ Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- ✓ Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- ✓ Written instructions for how to turn off gas, electricity, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)
- ✓ Keeping essentials, such as a flashlight and sturdy shoes, by your bedside.

### Know what to do when the shaking begins

- ✓ DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON! Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit. Stay away from windows. In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off during a quake.
- ✓ If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow.

- ✓ If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground.
- ✓ If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place (as described above). Stay in the car until the shaking stops.

### Identify what to do after the shaking stops

- ✓ Check yourself for injuries. Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and work gloves.
- ✓ Check others for injuries. Give first aid for serious injuries.
- ✓ Look for and extinguish small fires. Eliminate fire hazards. Turn off the gas if you smell gas or think it's leaking. (Remember, only a professional should turn it back on.)
- ✓ Listen to the radio for instructions.
- ✓ Expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one, DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON!
- ✓ Inspect your home for damage. Get everyone out if your home is unsafe.
- ✓ Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies.

### Your local contact is:

# Are You Ready for an Earthquake?



Earthquakes can happen in most states . . . anytime . . . without warning. Reducing hazards and knowing what to do can make a big difference in how an earthquake affects your household. Adults and children in the household should talk about what you will do when an earthquake happens. This checklist will get you started in planning. Have various members of the household complete each of the items on the checklist below. Then get together to finalize your Home Earthquake Plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Pick one or more “safe places” in each room of your home. Practice DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON! in each place.**

Write the locations of safe places in each room of your home—

Bedroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Bedroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Living room: \_\_\_\_\_

Kitchen: \_\_\_\_\_

Other rooms: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Choose an out-of-town relative or friend to be a family contact person.**

Family contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Put together disaster supplies kits.**

Location of home kit: \_\_\_\_\_

Date assembled: \_\_\_\_\_

Shoes and flashlight put next to everyone’s bed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

Smaller kit put in car: \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Teach household members how to turn off utilities.**

Location of gas and water valves and electrical switches and turnoff tools: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Install strong latches or bolts on cabinets.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Secure water heater to wall studs with two steel straps.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Bolt bookcases, china cabinet, and tall furniture to wall studs.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Secure items that might fall (TV, books, computers, etc.).**

And remember . . . when an earthquake, tornado, flood, fire, or other emergency happens in your community, you can count on your local American Red Cross chapter to be there to help you and your family. Your Red Cross is not a government agency and depends on contributions of your time, money, and blood.

For more information, please contact your local American Red Cross chapter or emergency management office. You can also visit these Web sites:

American Red Cross: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Federal Emergency Management Agency: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

U.S. Geological Survey: [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov)