



Community Guide
to
Earthquake Preparedness



Earthquakes, a part of life in BC, are generally caused by the movement of continental plates. British Columbia is along one of these plate boundaries. These plate movements, over many thousands of years, raise mountains and deepen valleys. They're partly responsible for shaping the landscape.

Living with earthquakes requires preparation - taking simple steps before an earthquake to minimize the potential for injury.

HOW OFTEN DO THEY HAPPEN?



A few earthquakes happen every day, but mostly they are too small to be felt. Once or twice a year large earthquakes will shake certain areas, damaging property and threatening lives. According to scientists, the possibility exists for a major earthquake to happen anytime - like the San Francisco quake of 1906.

WHAT HAPPENS IN AN EARTHQUAKE?

You'll feel the ground shake beneath you. You may see hanging plants swing and hear buildings creak, things may begin to fall. Cupboards may open. Furniture can move or topple. Masonry may be damaged. In tall buildings, lower floors will shake rapidly, much like smaller buildings. Unsecured books, plants, and material will fall from shelves. Tall, unanchored furnishings will fall over. Unsecured light fixtures and ceiling panels may fall over. On upper floors, movement will be slower, but the building will move farther from side to side. Unsecured furniture will slide across the floor. Objects will topple from shelves. Windows will break. You might be unable to walk, and feel dizzy. Sound bad? Well, there are steps you can take to lessen the threat of a major earthquake.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR A DISASTER?

The most important thing you can do is give the matter some thought now, before the fact. Forethought prevents the panic and confusion that can lead to loss of life in a disaster. What are you going to do if you're suddenly trapped with a severely bleeding or unconscious person? Or caught in a burning building? What if you come across a downed power line? Or wake up and smell gas?

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE:

- Know what the dangers are.
- Identify hazards in places where you spend most of your time: heavy objects on high shelves, tall bookcases, etc. Know the danger spots such as windows, skylights, brick walls, and unsecured furniture.
- Select safe areas in each room - under tables or desks, or against inside walls and supported doorways.
- Move objects from above your bed. They might fall on you in an earthquake. Keep sturdy shoes under bed.
- Know location of emergency exits.
- Know the location of stairways. Elevators should not be used after an earthquake.
- Keep a battery-powered radio and a flashlight in your room. Have extra batteries for both. Be sure there are fire extinguishers and you know how to operate them. Install smoke alarms at home.
- Know the emergency procedure for your building.
- Have extra food and water available; if you take medicines regularly, have extra supplies on hand. - Learn First Aid and CPR!
- Anchor tall furniture and water heaters.
- Move heavy objects to lower shelves.



DURING AN EARTHQUAKE:

Your behavior is critically important. Protect yourself.



- Get under heavy furniture, such as a desk or table, or... crouch in an interior hall or corner, or...
- Brace yourself in an interior doorway.
- Don't exit or enter a building. There's danger of falling debris.
- Beware of objects that might fall on you; move away from them.

If you are outdoors:

- Move away from buildings, falling objects, and power lines.

If you are in a crowded place:

- Stay calm, and urge others to stay calm.
- Don't move to the exits; instead seek shelter under tables, chairs, or other heavy furnitures
- In an auditorium, crouch on the floor between chairs and cover head and neck.

EARTHQUAKE...STAY IN THE CAR

Bring the car to a halt as soon as safely possible, then remain in the car until the shaking has stopped. Set parking brake and turn off motor. The car's suspension system will make the car shake violently during the quake, but it is still a safe place to be. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, overpasses, and utility wires. When the quaking has stopped, proceed cautiously, avoiding bridges, and other elevated structures which might have been damaged by the quake and could be damaged further by aftershocks.

If a power line falls across your car, stay in the car. If possible, drive away; otherwise, wait to be rescued - do not get out.



AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

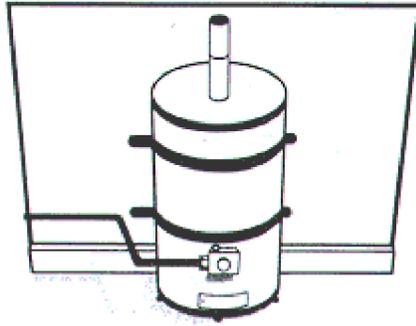
- Check for injuries. Do not move seriously injured persons unless there are in danger of further injury. Give first aid for serious injuries.
- Wear shoes and gloves.
- Check for fires and fire hazards.
- Watch for downed power lines. Check for broken utility lines.
- Do not use matches, lighters, electric switcher, or any source of ignition until you are certain that there are no gas leaks.
- Report serious casualties, spilled chemicals, or other potentially harmful materials by calling emergency number (or 911 - check availability in your area).
- Check shelves and closets for objects that could fall.
- Do not eat or drink from containers that were open during the quake. They might contain shattered glass.
- Double check drinking water.
- Before flushing toilets, check with authorities to see if sewage lines are intact.

BE PREPARED FOR AFTERSHOCKS

Repeat safety checks after each one.



- Do not make telephone calls unless there are lifesaving. An overloaded telephone system becomes worthless in a disaster.
- Do not use elevators.
- Do not smoke inside of buildings.
- Listen to the radio for important instructions and emergency shelter information.
- Check for structural damages and relocate outside, if necessary.
- Restrain and calm pets.
- Secure water heater and appliances which could move enough to rupture gas or electrical lines.



WATER

It is recommended that you store at least one gallon of water per person per day. Store water in clean plastic containers with tight fitting lids. To prepare your water for storage:

1. Wash the container thoroughly with dish soap and water.
2. Refill with water and add household bleach (5% sodiumhypochlorite, as indicated on the table below).
3. Clearly label.

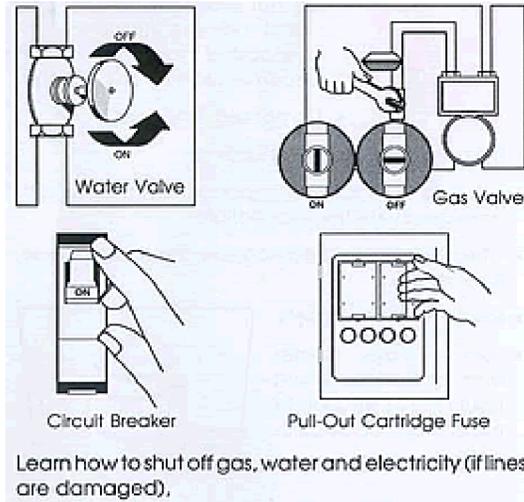
WATER PURIFICATION

Water can be purified by the following methods:

1. Boil vigorously for 5 minutes
2. Add household bleach to the water as indicated on the table below, shake vigorously and let stand for 30 minutes.

Water	Bleach (5.25% Sodium Hypochlorite)	
	Clear Water	Cloudy Water
1 quart	2 drops	4 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	16 drops
5 gallons	1/2 teaspoon	1 teaspoon

LEARN HOW TO SHUT OFF GAS, WATER AND ELECTRICITY (if lines are damaged).



IN CASE OF FIRE:

- If possible, pull a fire alarm.



- Call emergency number (or 911 - check availability in your area).
- Give the location of the fire, your location, and your name and phone number. Remain on the line for confirmation.
- Use a fire extinguisher with caution. Stay between the fire and the exit. When the fire is too large to extinguish, close the door and leave the building.
- When the smoke or heat is overwhelming, crawl to avoid fumes.
- When a fire alarm sounds, feel the doorknob of your room before exiting. If the doorknob is hot, or if excessive smoke prevents your exit, keep the door closed and wait for the rescue squad to arrive or choose an alternate escape route.
- Once you are out of the building, proceed to your designated assembly area.
- Do not re-enter until the fire or police declare the building safe.



EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Keep in The Car

Cars should be equipped with supplies which could be useful in any emergency. Depending on location, climate of the area, personal requirements and other variables, the supplies in the kit might include (but are not limited to) the following:



- Baggies, tissue towelettes
- Small change
- Keep gas tank at least 1/4 full
- Never carry gasoline in containers other than the car's gas tank!