



10-step Earthquake Action Plan

The following instructions reflect our own informed considerations, based on guidelines issued by city, state, and regional authorities and other written materials. They are subject to change and may not be ideal or suitable for every individual or family. They should not be considered rules to follow, but merely our guidelines subject to your agreement and common sense.

Earthquake hits.

- Drop, cover, and hold on. Protect your head from falling objects and move as little as possible.

Earthquake stops.

- If in bed, put on shoes and be careful of stepping on glass.
- Get flashlight or headlamp and clothes from your bedroom bag and call out to family members.
- Quickly check and see if you have power. If you have power, do not turn anything on until you have checked for gas leaks.

Assuming total loss of services:

Step 1: Attend to serious injuries

- Check with family members or people around you for any serious injuries.
- Access your Trauma Kit if necessary.

Step 2: Check for gas

- Get your Gas Shut-Off Tool and check the house for gas leaks, including around the exterior.
- **See or hear gas?**
 - If you see or suspect open flames, **get out**.
 - If you smell gas or hear gas escaping and there are no open flames, turn off the gas by following the instructions on the Shut-Off Tool.
- **No gas but see flames?**
 - Put out any minor fires with your extinguisher or blankets.
 - Preserve water if possible.
- **No flames and no gas?**
 - Take your fire extinguisher and Shut-Off Tool and check your immediate neighbors' homes for fires/gas.
 - Leave your fire extinguisher on the sidewalk in front of your house in case someone else needs it. Fires can spread quickly.

Step 3: Attend to minor injuries

- Take your Trauma Kit and attend to minor injuries.
- Check on your neighbors for injuries. Listen for any shouts for help or whistles. Provide community aid where necessary.

Step 4: Set up bucket toilets

- If no running water, get out your Essentials Kit and remove bucket toilets and toilet bags and put them in a ground floor bathroom, outdoor location, or another safe place so that they can be used when necessary. Remember that there could be aftershocks.
- If you are worried that the toilets won't hold your weight, they can be nested for greater strength.
- Turn off the water to your toilet and place something on the seat cover to ensure that nobody uses the toilet. **Do not waste the water in the back of your toilet by flushing one last time.**
- Turn off the supply of water to your house. Emergency water shut-off valves are often located in basements, garages, or outside the house next to the foundation. If you have an appropriate tool, you can turn off the water to your home at the street register (optional).
- Read the **Emergency Toilet Guidebook** included with your kit before disposing of your toilet bags (later).

Step 5: Turn off water to water heater

- Check your water heater and turn off the valve that brings water into your home to prevent any contamination to the water inside from broken pipes outside. Follow the instructions provided in the document **Post-Earthquake Information**.

- Also make sure the gas or electricity that heats your water is turned off, even if you don't have services or have already turned off your gas.
 - Heated by gas: look for on/off switch on the heater.
 - Heated by electricity: find the appropriate circuit breaker and turn off power to the heater.
- You can use the drinking water hose from your kit to drain drinkable water from your heater later. Remember it will be hot for several hours.

Step 6: Assess your house

- **Be aware that there could be aftershocks.** Assess the status of your building.
- If you feel your building has been structurally compromised and should be evacuated, quickly gather together any essential items and leave the building. Establish a temporary safe shelter.
- Check your entire house for cracks, holes, broken windows, etc. If necessary, seal any areas with the plastic sheeting and duct tape. You can cut pieces to fit your windows, but be sure to check the entire house before taking any action.

Step 7: Communications

- Turn on emergency radio for any announcements. Check local radio stations and weather radio. The radio can also be used to charge devices, including using the crank.

- Remove LED dimmer lights, put in batteries, and place in central locations such a kitchen or where needed such as a bathroom. Dimmer lights can be set on low and placed on top of a refrigerator or shelf to provide ambient light.
- You should have established a contact person outside the earthquake zone in advance. Text this person and inform them of your situation. Texts are more likely to go through than phone calls.

Step 8: Set up water station

- Get one of your water containers to use as a dispenser. Establish a water station on a table in a safe, central location. Place the dispenser with the spigot over the edge of the table and place a bucket or pan under the spigot to collect any waste water.
- Do not put any water down the sink, as city piping is more quickly and easily repaired when dry. Cover the sink.
- If using water for washing hands etc., open the spigot only as much as you need to generate a small stream of water. Water should be conserved to the most extreme degree possible. Any waste water can be re-used for washing dirty plates or clothes, etc. **Remember that you will need 1 gallon per person per day for drinking water.**
- If it is raining, place any available containers outside to collect rain water.

Step 9: Food

- Assess the food you have on hand.
- Leave food in your refrigerator, if standing, and do not open it except to quickly check or remove food. If your fridge is unusable as cold storage, consider loading food into a cooler.
- Determine how much food you have that can be eaten without cooking or adding water.
- Food consumption should be prioritized based on how fast it will become inedible:
 - Perishable food inside and outside fridge first.
 - Food from freezer, after 12 hours, starting with fish and meat if you can cook it. In the event of having too much food to consume within that time period, offer it to your neighbors. Cook together to conserve fuel.
 - Canned food, heated or cold, preserves, packaged foods such as snack foods that can last several months.
 - Dry foods like pasta and rice that require water should be consumed last and only if there is sufficient water. Rice can be soaked cold.
- Create a cooking station if you can. If you have a camp stove or grill, assess how much white gas and/or propane you have. You may not be able to get more for some time, in which case it should be saved for foods that need to be cooked rather than heated (meat, fish, etc.)

- If you do not have a propane stove but have propane for your grill, you can convert your range to propane by following the instructions provided in the document **Post-Earthquake Information**.

Step 10: Community

- Connect with your neighbors and do a neighborhood assessment. Bring your Trauma Kit. Set up a clean place to attend to any injured people, in their homes, or together if more convenient.
- Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) volunteers will be deployed in the area, identified by helmets and vests, who will be coordinating any immediate aid/relief efforts. If you see them, please follow any instructions they give and offer help if necessary.
- Considerable fuel can be saved by planning shared meals or barbecues, and some people will have too much perishable food to eat while others have very little. Share water and other essentials to the extent that you can.
- Locate your BEECN site in the document **BASIC EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION NODES** included with your kit, where volunteers can provide some assistance and information.
- Remember, you will all likely survive, and your neighbors will all still be there after it is over. Compassion, greed, and irresponsible lack of preparation will all be remembered long after this is over.