



# NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

SEPTEMBER 1-30

**DISASTERS DON'T WAIT.  
MAKE YOUR PLAN TODAY!**



# National Preparedness Month At A Glance



Ready Upland

1

Week 1

## BUILD A KIT WITH EVERYONE IN MIND



Gather supplies that will last for several days after a disaster for everyone living in your home. Don't forget to consider the unique needs of each person or pet may have in case you have to evacuate quickly.

2

Week 2

## MAKE A PLAN TO PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

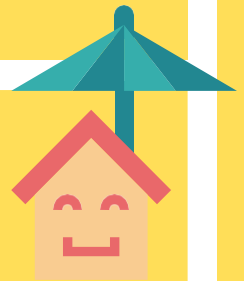


Talk to your friends and family about how you will communicate before, during, and after a disaster. Make sure to practice your plan with your family/household often.

3

Week 3

## PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR PROPERTY FROM DISASTERS



Limit the impacts that disasters have on you and your family. Know the disasters in your area and check your insurance coverage. Know basic preparedness skills to protect your family and home.

4

Week 4

## TEACH YOUTH ABOUT PREPAREDNESS



Talk to your kids about preparing for emergencies and what to do in case you are separated. Reassure them by providing information about how they can get involved.



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## Prepare Before An Earthquake (Continued):

- Make a supply kit that includes enough food and water for at least three days, a flashlight, a fire extinguisher, and a whistle.
- Consider obtaining an earthquake insurance policy. A standard homeowner's insurance policy does not cover earthquake damage.
- Consider making improvements to your building to fix structural issues that could cause your building to collapse during an earthquake.

## Stay Safe After An Earthquake:

If an earthquake has just happened, there can be serious hazards such as damage to the building, leaking gas and water lines, or downed power lines.

- Expect aftershocks to follow the main shock of an earthquake.
- Check yourself to see if you are hurt and help others if you have training. Learn how to help until help arrives.
- If you are in a damaged building, go outside and quickly move away from the building. Do not enter damaged buildings.
- If you are trapped, protect your mouth, nose, and eyes from dust. Send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting to help rescuers locate you.
- If you are in an area that may experience tsunamis, go inland or to higher ground immediately after the shaking stops.
- Text messages may be more reliable than phone calls.
- Once you are safe, listen to local news reports for emergency information and instructions via battery-operated radio, TV, social media, or from cell phone text alerts.
- Be careful during post-disaster cleanup of buildings and around debris. Do not attempt to remove heavy debris by yourself.
- Wear protective clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves, and sturdy, thick-soled shoes during clean-up.
- Register on the American Cross **"Safe and Well"** website so people will know you are ok.

### PDF Documents:

**How To Prepare For  
An Earthquake**

**Prepare Your  
Organization For An  
Earthquake**

**Earthquake  
Preparedness:  
What Every  
Childcare Provider  
Should Know**

## HOME FIRES

In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening. In five minutes, a residence can be engulfed in flames.

**WEEK 3  
(Continued)**



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## Learn About Fires:

- Fire is **FAST!** In less than 30 seconds, a small flame can turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house or for it to be engulfed in flames.
- **Fire is HOT!** Heat is more threatening than flames. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs and melt clothes to your skin.
- **Fire is DARK!** Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness.
- **Fire is DEADLY!** Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by a 3-to-1 ratio.

## Before A Fire

### Create and Practice A Fire Escape Plan:

In the event of a fire, remember that every second counts. Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly. Twice a year, practice your home fire escape plan. Some tips to consider when preparing this plan include:

- Find ways to get out of each room in the event the primary way is blocked by fire or smoke.
- A secondary route might be a window onto a neighboring roof or a collapsible ladder for escape from upper story windows.
- Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly, and that security bars can be properly opened.
- Practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters.

## Smoke Alarms:

- Install both ionizations AND photoelectric smoke alarms OR dual sensor alarms, which contain both ionization and photoelectric smoke sensors.
- Test batteries monthly.
- Replace batteries in battery-powered and hard-wired smoke alarms at least once a year (except non-replaceable 10-year lithium batteries.)
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement, both inside and outside of sleeping areas.

**WEEK 3**  
**(Continued)**



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## Smoke Alarms (Continued):

- Replace the entire smoke alarm unit every 8-10 years or according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Never disable a smoke alarm while cooking—it can be a deadly mistake.

## Smoke Alarm Safety for People with Access or Functional Needs:

- Audible alarms for visually impaired people should pause with a small window of silence between each successive cycle so that they can listen to the instructions or voices of others.
- Smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light are available for the hearing impaired. Contact your local fire department for information about obtaining a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm.
- Smoke alarms with a strobe light outside the home to catch the attention of neighbors and emergency call systems for summoning help are also available.

## More Fire Safety Tips:

- Make digital copies of valuable documents and records like birth certificates.
- Sleep with your door closed.
- Contact your local fire department for information on training on the proper use and maintenance of fire extinguishers.
- Consider installing an automatic fire sprinkler system in your residence.

## During A Fire:

- Crawl low under any smoke vent to your exit. Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling.
- Before opening a door, feel the doorknob and door. If either is hot, or if there is smoke coming around the door, leave the door closed and use your second way out.
- If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.
- If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call 9-1-1 or the fire department. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.
- If pets are trapped inside your home, tell firefighters right away.
- If you can't get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1 or your fire department. Say where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

**WEEK 3**  
**(Continued)**



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## During A Fire:

- If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop, and roll—immediately, drop to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out. If you or someone else cannot stop, drop, and roll, smother the flames with a blanket or towel. Use cool water to treat the burn immediately for three to five minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Get medical help right away by calling 9-1-1 or the fire department.

## Fire Escape Planning for Older Adults & People with Access or Functional Needs:

- Live near an exit. You'll be safest on the ground floor if you live in an apartment building. If you live in a multi-story home, arrange to sleep on the ground floor and near an exit.
- If you use a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to be sure you get through the doorways.
- Make any necessary accommodations—such as providing exit ramps and widening doorways—to facilitate an emergency escape.
- Speak to your family members, building manager, or neighbors about your fire safety plan and practice it with them.
- Contact your local fire department's non-emergency line and explain your special needs. Ask emergency providers to keep your special needs information on file.
- Keep a phone near your bed and be ready to call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number if a fire occurs.

## After A Fire:

The following checklist serves as a quick reference and guide for you to follow after a fire strikes:

- Contact your disaster relief service, such as The Red Cross, if you need temporary housing, food, and medicines.
- If you are insured, contact your insurance company for detailed instructions on protecting your property, conducting inventory, and contacting fire damage restoration companies. If you are not insured, try contacting private organizations for help.
- Check with the fire department to make sure your residence is safe to enter. Watch out for any structural damage caused by the fire.
- The fire department should make sure that utilities are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site. DO NOT attempt to reconnect utilities yourself.

**WEEK 3**  
**(Continued)**



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## After A Fire (Continued):

- Conduct an inventory of damaged property and items. Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made.
- Begin saving receipts for any money you spend related to fire loss. The receipts may be needed later by the insurance company and for verifying losses claimed on you income tax.
- Notify your mortgage company of the fire.

## Prevent Home Fires:

Home fires are preventable! The following are simple steps that each of us can take to prevent a tragedy.

### Cooking:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turnoff the stove.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking.
- Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet around the stove.
- Position barbecue grills at least ten feet away from sliding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

### Smoking:

- Smoke outside and completely stub-out butts in an ashtray or a can filled with sand.
- Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them away. Never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash can.
- Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used, even if it is turned off. Oxygen can be explosive and makes fire burn hotter and faster.
- Be alert-don't smoke in bed! If you are sleepy, have been drinking, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy, put your cigarette out first.

## Electrical and Appliance Safety:

- Frayed wires can cause fires. Replace all worn, old, or damaged appliance cords immediately and do not run cords under rugs or furniture.

# WEEK 3 (Continued)



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## Electrical and Appliance Safety (Continued):

- If an appliance has a three-prong plug, use it only in a three-slot outlet. Never force it to fit into a two-slot outlet or extension cord.
- Immediately shut off, then professionally replace, light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that flicker.

## Portable Space Heaters:

- Keep combustible objects at least three feet away from portable heating devices.
- Buy only heaters evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Check to make sure the portable heater has a thermostat control mechanism and will switch off automatically if the heater falls over.
- Only use crystal clear K-1 kerosene in kerosene heaters. Never overfill it. Use the heater in a well-ventilated room.

## Fireplaces and Woodstoves:

- Inspect and clean woodstove pipes and chimneys annually and check monthly for damage or obstructions.
- Use a fireplace screen heavy enough to stop rolling logs and big enough to cover the entire opening of the fireplace to catch flying sparks.
- Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the house or going to bed.

## Children:

- Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy.
- Store matches and lights out of children's reach and sight, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children unattended near operating stoves or burning candles even for a short time.

## More Prevention Tips:

- Never use a stove range or oven to heat your home.
- Keep combustible and flammable liquids away from heat sources.
- Portable generators should NEVER be used indoors and should only be refueled outdoors or in well ventilated areas.

**WEEK 3**  
**(Continued)**



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## PANDEMIC

### Before A Pandemic:

- Store additional supplies of food and water.
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- Have any non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records from doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, and other sources and store them for personal reference. Get help accessing electronic health records.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.

### During A Pandemic:

- Limit the spread of germs and infection.
- Americans can continue to use and drink tap water as usual during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please be sure to follow public health guidance as the situation develops.
- **Avoid close eye contact** with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, **keep your distance** from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- **Washing your hands** often will help protect you from germs.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.**
- **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

## EXTREME HEAT SAFETY

### What You Should Know About Extreme Heat:

- Know what to do before, during, and after extreme heat.
- Create a communications plan with your family before extreme heat hits.
- Have emergency supplies in place at home, at work, and in the car.
- Listen to local officials.

**WEEK 3**  
**(Continued)**



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## Heat Safety & Risk:

- Follow @NWS for heat advisories and excessive heat warnings so you can beat the heat this summer.
- Do you know the difference between Heat Outlook, Watch, and Warning? Learn them today!
- Stay safe from the heat by drinking a lot of water, staying indoors, and calling 9-1-1 if you see someone suffering from a heat emergency.
- When a child's temperature reaches 107 degrees, they die. Call 9-1-1 and act fast if you see a child in danger.
- Heat Wave: Prolonged periods of excessive heat, often with excessive humidity.
- Listen to local weather forecasts to prepare for extreme heat.
- Extreme heat makes the body work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. Know the facts and prepare.
- Each year, approximately 175 Americans die from extreme heat. Get the 4-1-1 on heat safety.
- Did you know that urban residences are at greater risk of the effects of prolonged heat than rural and suburban residences?

## Stay Indoors:

- Roughly 40% of unwanted heat buildup in our homes is through windows. Use awnings or curtains to keep the heat out!
- Beat the heat by staying indoors and in the shade.
- **Tip:** Check the weather stripping on doors and windows to keep the cool air in.
- Fans alone aren't enough in the high heat + humidity. Get inside in A/C or go to a public place like the library, museum, or shopping mall.
- During extreme heat, stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun.
- To find a cooling center, visit [www.211.org](http://www.211.org) and enter your zip code.
- Contact your local Office of Emergency Management to find a cooling center near you.

## Reduce Heat Impact:

- In extreme heat, dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- Check on your pets frequently to ensure they are safe during extreme heat.

**WEEK 3**  
**(Continued)**



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

#BeatTheHeat

#HeatStrokeKills

#SummerSafety

#PetPreparedness

## Reduce Heat Impact (Continued):

- Keep strenuous activity to a minimum during the hottest parts of the day (11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) and use the buddy system.
- **Beat The Heat Tip:** Check on seniors, people who are ill, or may need extra help frequently.
- Make sure you drink LOTS of water to stay hydrated and prevent dehydration, heat stroke, and more.
- During extreme heat, drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Got heat cramps? Rest in a cool place and drink a beverage containing electrolytes and sodium, like a sports drink.
- Recognize when someone is suffering from dehydration or heat stroke and act quickly. Learn the signs: [www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html).
- **Here's A Sizzling Summer Tip:** Get trained in first aid to learn how to treat heat-related emergencies!
- Have you ever experienced the "urban heat island effect"? Learn more and how to prepare at [www.ready.gov/heat](http://www.ready.gov/heat).
- Beat The Heat by making water your beverage of choice during extreme heat over soda to prevent dehydration.
- During extreme heat, check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning and who spend much of their time alone.
- High heat and humidity cause the body to work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. Stay indoors with air conditioning. More tips at: [www.ready.gov/heat](http://www.ready.gov/heat).
- Too hot to play outside? [www.ready.gov/kids](http://www.ready.gov/kids) offers plenty of games and activities that will help children learn and prepare for emergencies as they play.
- Don't forget about your pets. Share these tips from the Humane Society to keep pets safe in the heat: [www.humanesociety.org/resources/keep-pets-safe-heat](http://www.humanesociety.org/resources/keep-pets-safe-heat).

## Car Safety:

- NEVER leave children or pets alone in hot vehicles. Heat can rise in a car, up to 20 degrees in just 10 minutes!
- Even with the windows rolled down, only minutes in a hot car can be deadly for your pet! NEVER leave your pets in the car!
- If you see a kid in a hot car-act fast! You could save a life!
- Heat related deaths ARE preventable! Look before you lock!  
<https://www.weather.gov/heat>.

# WEEK 3 (Continued)



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## Additional Resources:

### Emergency Alerts:

[www.ready.gov/alerts](http://www.ready.gov/alerts)

### Make A Supply Kit:

[www.ready.gov/kit](http://www.ready.gov/kit)

### Learn How To Be The Help Until Help Arrives:

<https://community.fema.gov/until-help-arrives>

### Red Cross "Safe and Well:

<https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>

### When The Earth Shakes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKILThTPxQs&feature=youtu.be>

### The Great ShakeOut: Earthquake Drills:

[www.shakeout.org](http://www.shakeout.org)

### U.S. Fire Administration (USFA):

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/>

### American Red Cross:

<https://www.redcross.org/>

### Sparky The Fire Dog:

<http://www.sparky.org/>

### Learn The Signs Of Dehydration Or Heat Stroke

[www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html)

### Heat Safety Information In American Sign Language

<https://youtu.be/0DZFOJowvb8>

### National Weather Service Summer Safety Weather Ready Nation Outreach

[www.weather.gov/wrn/summer-safety](http://www.weather.gov/wrn/summer-safety)

### How To Prepare For Blackouts:

[www.ready.gov/power-outage](http://www.ready.gov/power-outage)

### Find A Cooling Center Near You:

[www.211.org](http://www.211.org)

# WEEK 3 (Continued)



# PREPARE FOR DISASTERS

## Additional Resources:

### **Coronavirus (FEMA):**

<https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus>

### **Coronavirus (Federal Government Response):**

<https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

### **Coronavirus (CDC):**

<https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

### **Coronavirus (EPA):**

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

### **Flu (CDC):**

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

### **Emergency Preparedness & Response:**

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/index.asp>

## WEEK 3 (Continued)

# BE PREPARED FOR AN EARTHQUAKE



Earthquakes can collapse buildings and cause heavy items to fall, resulting in injuries and property damage.



**FEMA**

FEMA V-1003/May 2018

Earthquakes are the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of underground rock.



Can happen anywhere. Higher risk areas are California, Alaska, and the Mississippi Valley



Give no warning



Cause fires and damage roads



Cause tsunamis, landslides, and avalanches

## IF AN EARTHQUAKE HAPPENS, PROTECT YOURSELF RIGHT AWAY



**DROP**



**COVER**



**HOLD ON**



If in a vehicle, pull over and stop.



If in bed, stay there.



If outdoors, stay outdoors.



Do not get in a doorway.



Do not run outside.

# HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE THREATENS

## Prepare NOW

**Secure items such as televisions and objects that hang on walls.** Store heavy and breakable objects on low shelves.

**Practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On** with family and coworkers. Drop to your hands and knees. Cover your head and neck with your arms. Crawl only as far as needed to reach cover from falling materials. Hold on to any sturdy furniture until the shaking stops.

**Create a family emergency communication plan** that has an out-of-state contact. Plan where to meet if you get separated.

**Make a supply kit that includes enough** food and water for at least three days, a flashlight, a fire extinguisher, and a whistle. Consider each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries and charging devices for phones and other critical equipment.

**Consider earthquake insurance policies.** Standard homeowner's insurance does not cover earthquake damage.

**Consider a retrofit of your building if it has structural issues** that make it vulnerable to collapse during an earthquake.

## Survive DURING

**Drop, Cover, and Hold On like you practiced.** Drop to your hands and knees. Cover your head and neck with your arms. Hold on to any sturdy furniture until the shaking stops. Crawl only if you can reach better cover without going through an area with more debris.

**If in bed, stay there** and cover your head and neck with a pillow.

**If inside, stay there until the shaking stops.** DO NOT run outside.

**If in a vehicle, stop in a clear area** that is away from buildings, trees, overpasses, underpasses, or utility wires.

**If you are in a high-rise building,** expect fire alarms and sprinklers to go off. Do not use elevators.

**If near slopes, cliffs, or mountains,** be alert for falling rocks and landslides.

## Be Safe AFTER

**Expect aftershocks** to follow the largest shock of an earthquake sequence.

**Check yourself for injury.**

**If in a damaged building, go outside** and quickly move away from the building.

**Do not enter damaged buildings.**

**If you are trapped, send a text or bang on a pipe or wall.** Cover your mouth for protection and instead of shouting, use a whistle.

**If you are in an area that may experience tsunamis,** go inland or to higher ground immediately after the shaking stops.

**Save phone calls for emergencies.**

**Wear sturdy shoes and work gloves.**


## Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to **Ready.gov** and search for **earthquake**. Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for an **earthquake**.



**FEMA**

FEMA V-1003  
Catalog No. 17233-4



# PREPARE

YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR  
AN EARTHQUAKE

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# PLAYBOOK

AMERICA'S  
**PrepareAthon!**<sup>SM</sup>  
BE SMART. TAKE PART. PREPARE.

**Shake**  
**Out**<sup>TM</sup>

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# America's PrepareAthon! An Introduction

America's PrepareAthon! is a grassroots campaign for action to increase community preparedness and resilience for disasters. The campaign offers free resources for households and organizations to discuss and practice plans and safety measures to improve resilience for specific disasters.

Planning and preparing can make a big difference in being safe and keeping your doors open after a disaster. The ability to maintain or quickly reestablish business operations or organization processes requires a focus on preparedness, advance planning, and relationships with external partners and community leaders.

This *Prepare Your Organization for an Earthquake Playbook* provides you, as a community leader or employer, with tools and resources to support your preparedness efforts and to help you conduct an America's PrepareAthon! Day of Action. Visit [www.ShakeOut.org](http://www.ShakeOut.org) for additional resources for earthquake preparedness and information on The Great ShakeOut, the world's largest earthquake drill.

Everyone has a role to play to prepare for a disaster. All employers and organizations—from local businesses and municipalities to schools, universities, and faith- and community-based organizations—are essential components of the community and can help people and groups to be more prepared.

## GOALS

America's PrepareAthon! has four primary goals. The campaign aims to increase the number of people who:



1. Understand which disasters can happen in their community;



2. Know what to do to be safe and mitigate damage;



3. Take action to increase their preparedness; and



4. Participate in community resilience planning.



# Introduction: Participate in America's PrepareAthon!

## WHY PARTICIPATE

America's PrepareAthon! enables individuals and organizations to prepare for specific hazards through informative presentations, group discussions and activities, and tabletop exercises. Organizations have tremendous influence on their members and constituents when it comes to preparing for a disaster. For example, when employers encourage employees to prepare for disasters, employees are 75 percent<sup>1</sup> more likely to take action. With more than 63 percent<sup>2</sup> of the U.S. population aged 16 or older in the labor force, the workplace is one of the most effective environments for educating and encouraging people to take steps to be ready for disasters. Participating in America's PrepareAthon! will benefit your workplace or community organization by helping you to:

- Increase knowledge of safety policies and procedures;
- Build morale and trust by demonstrating a commitment to safety and well-being;
- Enhance organizational coordination and communication on preparedness and continuity of operations;
- Reduce a disaster's effects, including injury and loss of life, property or inventory damage, and financial loss from business disruption; and
- Strengthen relationships with local emergency responders and community leaders to reach a common understanding of community risks, needs, and capabilities.

1. Preparedness in America, August 2014. [www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/94717](http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/94717).

2. U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, 2013, [www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat03.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat03.pdf).

## REGISTER YOUR EVENT AND BE COUNTED

Register your participation to prepare for an earthquake on [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare) and join other organizations across the country in an effort to improve our nation's preparedness and resiliency. Registration is quick and easy. Simply select your state, earthquake, your type of participation, and the estimated number of people participating. You can also choose to have your organization's name listed on the America's PrepareAthon! website in recognition of your commitment.



## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Participating in America's PrepareAthon! is easy and inexpensive. This *Prepare Your Organization for an Earthquake Playbook* provides some simple steps you can take to increase the preparedness of your organization by holding an America's PrepareAthon! Day of Action. Your organization can participate in several ways:

- Hold discussions and drills to explain workplace plans and policies and to motivate your employees, students, congregants, and volunteers to be better prepared at home.
- Conduct a tabletop exercise with leaders and managers to take steps as an organization to increase your readiness.

# Prepare Your People: Hold a Preparedness Discussion

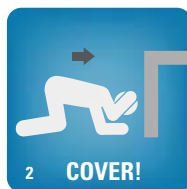
1

One of the most effective ways to share information and motivate people to take steps for personal preparedness is to talk to your people. Add a preparedness discussion to the agenda of your next staff or organizational meeting or arrange a brown bag lunch session. Many individuals within an organization can lead a preparedness discussion, including a manager, employee, teacher, or volunteer. You can cover the basics in 15 minutes; 30 minutes provides time for more discussion. **Get the conversation started!**

## PREPAREDNESS DISCUSSION GOALS

As you prepare for your talk, keep the following goals in mind to ensure you facilitate a productive and informative discussion.

- Share the potential impact of earthquakes—most injuries are caused by people falling while trying to walk or run during the shaking or being hit by falling, sliding, or flying household items and/or debris. Earthquakes occur without warning and can cause buildings to collapse, creating dangerous conditions and debris.
- Identify items that should be secured and provide techniques about how to secure them.



- Learn how to Drop, Cover, and Hold On.
- Outline your organization's emergency communications plans and policies.
- Sign up for community notifications.



# 1 | Prepare Your People: Hold a Preparedness Discussion

## BEFORE YOUR PREPAREDNESS DISCUSSION

1. Ensure management and organizational leadership are on board by sharing the benefits of participating and the minimal time needed.
2. Download and review the *How to Prepare for an Earthquake* guide and other resources and be sure discussion leaders are familiar with the content.
3. Learn how to sign up for local text alerts and warnings available in your community.
4. Register your event at [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare) to be counted. You can also download Certificates of Participation for discussion participants.
5. Promote your America's PrepareAthon! Day of Action preparedness discussion. Use your organization's communications platforms, including websites, listservs, newsletters, and social media to invite and remind participants of the discussion and to demonstrate your commitment to safety.

## RESOURCES



In addition to this Playbook, you will need to download the following America's PrepareAthon! resources, all available at [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare):

- *How to Prepare for an Earthquake*
- *Be Smart: Know Your Alerts and Warnings*

- *Be Smart: Protect Your Critical Documents and Valuables*
- *Ready's Family Communication Plan for Parents and Kids*

There are also two short videos that can help you set the stage for your discussions:

- *It Started Like Any Other Day*, a four-minute video that focuses on three survivors from three recent disasters
- *When the Earth Shakes*, an animated how-to video on earthquake preparedness

## FOLLOW-UP

Ask follow-up questions in future meetings to ensure everyone has learned the important steps to protect themselves before an earthquake and knows the organization's communications plan for earthquakes.



## TEST YOUR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

Consider testing your employee notification plan with employees and volunteers to ensure you will be able to communicate with them effectively in case of emergency—both during and outside of business operating hours. This could be as simple as sending an email, a text alert, or testing a public address system to ensure leadership can provide critical emergency guidance when needed. Be sure to identify these communications by starting with "THIS IS A TEST" to avoid any confusion.

# 1 | Prepare Your People: Hold a Preparedness Discussion

## SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR DISCUSSION

Talking about disasters and helping others prepare makes everyone safer. In your discussion, note how earthquakes can immobilize your entire region. Earthquakes can knock out heat, power, and communications services, sometimes for days at a time, leaving people stuck without utilities or other services. Your goal for protection is to learn to Drop, Cover, and Hold On during an earthquake. The following discussion guide is intended to help you share important information and facts about earthquakes during your discussion.

### AGENDA

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

**SHOW:** *It Started Like Any Other Day* (survivor stories video).

*It Started Like Any Other Day* is a four-minute video that communicates the importance of disaster preparedness. It shows survivors from three American communities talking about three different types of disasters: hurricane, tornado, and wildfire.

**SHOW:** *When the Earth Shakes* (animated video).

*When the Earth Shakes* is a 90-second animated video for an earthquake. The video summarizes what you should do before, during, and after an earthquake strikes.

Hold a short group discussion, asking participants to share any experiences they have had with earthquakes, including surprises and lessons learned.

**DISTRIBUTE:** *How to Prepare for an Earthquake* guide.

Explain that the session will go over the key parts of the guide. Discuss the potential impacts of an earthquake, the causes of death and injury, and any relevant experiences in your community.

**DISCUSS: SECURING ITEMS**  
Write the items that you should secure.

It is important to know the items you should secure at home, how to secure them, and what your organization has done to make the workplace environment safer.

**EXPLAIN AND PRACTICE:**  
**Drop, Cover, and Hold On.**

Demonstrate actions.

Casualties and injuries occur when people fall while trying to walk or run during the shaking; and they are hit by falling, flying, or sliding items in the room (e.g., TVs, lamps, glass, bookcases), and/or when they are struck or trapped by collapsing walls.

There is one simple action to keep in mind. **Drop, Cover, and Hold On.**

**DROP** to your hands and knees to avoid falling.

**COVER** your head and neck with your arms to protect yourself from falling debris. If you can move safely, crawl for additional cover under a sturdy desk or table. If there is low furniture, or an interior wall or corner nearby and the path is clear, these may also provide some additional cover. Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.

**HOLD ON** to any sturdy shelter until the shaking stops. **STAY** where you are until the shaking stops.

When the shaking stops, look around. If there is a clear path to safety, leave the building and go to an open space, away from damaged areas.

# 1 | Prepare Your People: Hold a Preparedness Discussion

## AGENDA

### EXPLAIN AND PRACTICE: (cont.)

Show the group how to download the FEMA app and to sign up for local alerts.

**HANDOUT:** *Be Smart, Know Your Alerts and Warnings.*

### DISCUSS: EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

Review the plan for your organization if you have one.

**HANDOUT:** *Ready's Family Communication Plan for Parents and Kids.*

### EXPLAIN: IMPORTANCE OF STORING CRITICAL DOCUMENTS

**HANDOUT:** *Be Smart, Protect Your Critical Documents and Valuables.*

## DISCUSSION GUIDE (continued)

Although there is no advance notice of an earthquake, emergency information will be provided through radio and TV broadcasts and through text alerts to cell phones.

Sign up and participate in the Great Shakeout, the world's largest earthquake drill at [www.shakeout.org](http://www.shakeout.org).

Every family should have a plan for how to communicate with each other during and after an earthquake.

Encourage people to identify an out-of-state contact, such as a friend or relative, to notify when they are safe. In some cases it may be easiest to use social media and post an "I'm OK" message to many friends at once.

Text, do not talk. Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.

Explain that you should have access to insurance policies, financial records, medication information, and other household records so that after the disaster you can begin the recovery process.

Encourage everyone to take the time now to gather and protect their critical information and documents.

## EMERGENCY SUPPLIES HANDOUT

Distribute *Building a Home Emergency Supply Kit* checklist from the *How to Prepare for an Earthquake* guide (or ask the group to turn to this page). If possible, have basic supply kit contents on a table for people to see or to use as visual aids during your discussion.



Emphasize the necessity for everyone to have some basic supplies on hand to survive for at least three days if an emergency occurs.



Show how building a supply kit is easy and inexpensive, noting that many items may already be in the home or can be found at your local grocery store, pharmacy, or hardware store.



Highlight that kits should include items such as non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights, and batteries.



Be sure to consider if there are specialty items you need, such as prescription medications, extra pair of glasses, infant formula and diapers, and pet food.



Discuss the need to consider storing supplies in several locations, including your workplace, vehicle, and other places you regularly spend time.

# Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

A tabletop exercise is a facilitated discussion about what your organization would do in response to a disaster. The exercise leads participants through a simulated disaster scenario and prompts them to examine their plans, policies, and procedures without disrupting the work environment. It allows for a facilitated discussion of roles, procedures, and responsibilities in the context of a simulated emergency scenario.

The goals for the exercise are as follows:

1. To assess your organization's ability to respond using your current plans, policies, capabilities, and resources; and
2. To help identify improvements that could make the difference in keeping your people safe and doors open after a disaster.

For organizations that do not currently do this type of planning, conducting this exercise as part of your America's PrepareAthon! Day of Action can be an important next step in improving your organization's preparedness and resiliency.

This Playbook provides guidance on how to hold a tabletop exercise to help your organization assess and improve its ability to maintain or reestablish operations when affected by an earthquake. Many individuals within your organization can lead this effort: a senior leader, an employee, a facility manager, a human resources manager, or a program manager. Use this Playbook, *How to Prepare for an Earthquake*, and the companion slidedeck available on [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare) to help you.



## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### EXERCISE OVERVIEW

To simulate an actual event, the *Prepare Your Organization* tabletop exercise begins with an initial scenario description and proceeds with two scenario updates. Each phase of the scenario includes discussion questions to allow participants to focus on problem solving as a leadership team in a low-stress, consequence-free environment. This exercise is not meant to assess individual performance, but rather, it is an opportunity to identify and resolve problems, improve workplace safety, and bolster your organization's continuity of operations.

### EXERCISE OBJECTIVES

These tabletop exercises are designed to help your organization identify strengths and weaknesses in the following areas:

**FACILITIES:** Structural maintenance considerations; earthquake resistant construction; non-structural mitigation; back-up power supplies; supplies for staying on-site; accessibility considerations; and emergency repairs.

#### HUMAN RESOURCES

**POLICIES:** Employee notification and alerts; early release/telework

policies; flexible work schedules; payroll and insurance policies; employee insurance policies; employee/family reunification procedures; employees trained in first-aid with access to medical supplies; and capacity to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities or access and functional needs.

#### CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANS:

Plans to operate at an alternate location; access to important data; roles and responsibilities; insurance policies; supplier and customer relationship management; and plans and processes to resume operations.

#### EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

**PLANS:** Ability to provide critical information and updates during the emergency through multiple notification systems; guidance on how to protect critical assets; plans to provide first aid; and protocols for communicating with local first responders and critical infrastructure providers.



#### TIME COMMITMENT

The tabletop exercise should last approximately 2–3 hours, depending on the amount of discussion and needed breaks. This includes time for introductions, an overview of the process, the exercise, and a debriefing. While this may seem like a lot of time, especially for busy managers, the investment will pay dividends both in a real emergency or disaster and in improving day-to-day operations.

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### GETTING STARTED

Once your organization's leadership agrees to hold a tabletop exercise, the following steps will lead you through the planning process and help your organization get the most value from the exercise.

#### SELECT A LEAD PLANNER

1

The lead planner has primary responsibility for executing the exercise, to include working with leadership to select participants, customizing the scenario description and questions to fit your community and your organization, and planning logistics. The lead planner serves as the primary point of contact for participants who have questions about the exercise and materials.

#### SELECT THE FACILITATOR

2

The facilitator leads the exercise discussion, provides scenario updates, and prompts participants to interact. A facilitator who understands the scope of your organization's operations may have greater success in stimulating a productive discussion.

#### IDENTIFY WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

3

To examine your organization's operations during the tabletop exercise, you need to include representatives from across your enterprise. Consider key decision makers and subject matter experts from all departments, including senior leadership, facilities management, communications and public affairs, information technology (IT) services, corporate security, human resources, and legal. You also may wish to include third-party vendors such as phone, IT, data back-up, food, and other critical services.

For the exercise discussion to be as spontaneous and realistic as possible, it is important not to share the scenario or discussion questions with invited participants or observers in advance of the exercise.

#### DETERMINE ROLES

4

There are different roles for "players" in an exercise as outlined below. The lead planner decides who should attend and to which role he or she is assigned.

**PARTICIPANT:** Someone with decision-making authority (or a designated proxy), who has authority over a component of operations (e.g., Human Resources Manager). Participants should sit at the table, answer questions, and make decisions during the exercise.

**OBSERVER:** Someone who benefits from attending the exercise because his or her role in the organization may include implementing identified recommendations. To keep the number of speakers manageable, observers do not participate in the exercise, but are encouraged to take notes and provide feedback at the end.

**NOTE-TAKER:** Someone who can record the discussion during the exercise and summarize the main points as a follow-up report. You may even want to have the main points recorded on a white board. Encourage participants and observers to take notes during the exercise for the debriefing following the end of the exercise.

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### GETTING STARTED (continued)

#### PLAN THE LOGISTICS

5

The lead planner should address the logistics ahead of time to make sure the exercise goes smoothly.

**LOCATION:** The room should be large enough for all participants and observers. Set up the room so that everyone can see and hear each other. If participants do not know one another, consider having table tents or name badges with names and departments identified.

**INVITATIONS:** Send invitations to participants with an explanation of what a tabletop exercise is and what role they will play. You should consider sending a save-the-date as soon as the exercise date is determined, followed by a more detailed invitation once the lead planner establishes the objectives, agenda, and logistics (e.g., event location).

**EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS:** Print enough copies of any materials (e.g., agenda, PowerPoint presentation, and an evaluation form) in advance for all attendees. Collect any other materials you would like to have in the room for easy reference during the exercise, such as existing policies or other manuals. If you are using white boards, make sure you have the easels and markers on hand.



## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise



### EARTHQUAKE EXERCISE: INITIAL SCENARIO

**Read the Scenario aloud.**

Tuesday, 10:30 a.m.: Residents in **[your community]** and the surrounding area experience a magnitude 6.5 earthquake along the **[insert name of fault line]**. Initial reports estimate the quake to have been felt for a 60-mile radius around the epicenter. The quake causes several ruptures of major highways and numerous bridges, and overpasses suffer damage. The strong shaking also sends landslides across rails and along roads, stranding motorists. Upwards of 60 percent of local residents are without power, and a water main break near the center of town causes localized flooding.

Several residents report serious injuries, mostly from car accidents, and crush or puncture wounds from falling debris. Homes, schools, hospitals, and other buildings sustain structural damage across the area with some people trapped in the debris. At 11:28 am, an aftershock occurs 7 miles north of **[your community]** causing additional transportation infrastructure damage and panic among residents. Our facility(ies) appear to have suffered structural damage and at least five **[employees/student/volunteers/congregants]** are reported missing.

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### EARTHQUAKE INITIAL SCENARIO QUESTIONS

(suggested time: 20–25 minutes)

<p><b>1</b> What are your immediate actions and priorities in the first 10-15 minutes?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> Who is in charge? How are leaders communicating with each other and with <b>[employees/parents/students/volunteers/congregants]</b>? Do you have an alternate plan for communications if traditional systems are damaged or the power is out? Has anyone been trained in the National Incident Management System<sup>1</sup> or the Incident Command System?</p>
<p><b>2</b> Do you have an identified place to evacuate to in the immediate aftermath of a disaster like an earthquake? How do you communicate this evacuation plan to your <b>[employees/students/volunteers/congregants]</b>?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> Do they know the location of this site? How will you keep <b>[employees/students/volunteers/congregants]</b> safe as they leave? Can you assist anyone with disabilities or access and functional needs?</p>
<p><b>3</b> Do you have a process in place to account for all of your <b>[employees/students/volunteers/congregants]</b>? If people cannot be located or contacted, what—if any—processes do you have to account for them?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> How do you know who is on-site at any given time? How is that information communicated to those who need it?</p>
<p><b>4</b> Who is responsible for identifying and notifying family members about injured <b>[employees/parents/students/volunteers/congregants]</b> and potential fatalities?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> Do you have emergency contact information for all <b>[employees/parents/students/volunteers/congregants]</b>? Where is it stored?</p>
<p><b>5</b> What information are you sharing with <b>[employees/parents/students/volunteers/congregants]</b>? How are you communicating about the status of your operations?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> Are your on-site communications systems redundant? Do you have a back-up system?</p>
<p><b>6</b> If safe to do so, what critical operations/functions must be shut down before you leave the facility(ies)? Who knows how to do this?</p>	

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### EARTHQUAKE EXERCISE: SCENARIO UPDATE #1

Read the Scenario Update aloud.

Wednesday, 8:00 a.m.: Search and rescue efforts are ongoing as reports of people trapped in the debris continue. Utility companies are working around the clock to restore services, but most people lack electricity, natural gas, and water. American Red Cross shelters open at public schools and undamaged recreation centers, where food, water, and personal items are available. The Department of Public Works is clearing main roadways.

Law enforcement is managing checkpoints at the most heavily damaged areas. The fire chief is asking people to leave heavily affected areas and stay out of all buildings within a 5-mile radius of the epicenter until structural engineers can assess the damage and clear the buildings for occupancy.

### EARTHQUAKE SCENARIO UPDATE #1 QUESTIONS

(suggested time: 20–25 minutes)

<p><b>1</b> What are your organization's priorities over the next 12 to 24 hours?</p>	
<p><b>2</b> Is your organization continuing to operate in any capacity?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> How long could you operate without access to your primary location? Are there services like power, water, and road access that you need in order to resume operations?</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> If the organization has multiple locations, allow participants to assume that at least some locations are functional at some level. Ask them to discuss what portion of their operations can continue.</p>
<p><b>3</b> Is your organization prepared to manage extensive earthquake damage? What steps would you take at this time to address the damage?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> What resources do you need beyond those available at your facility(ies)? Would you reach out for additional help or guidance? What organizations would you reach out to?</p> <p><b>PROMPT:</b> How would you manage [volunteers/donations] to your organization? How would you match volunteers/donations to [employees/parents/students/volunteers/congregants] with the greatest needs?</p>

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### EARTHQUAKE SCENARIO UPDATE #2

Read the Scenario Update aloud.

Monday, 8:00 a.m.: More than 6,500 homes and businesses suffered moderate to major damage. Parts of major highways and roadways, and dozens of bridges and overpasses require major repairs and debris removal. Many households are still without potable water and power. Approximately 5,000 families are displaced from households and shelter. Most schools and public buildings remain closed at this time. You are able to access your facility(ies) for an initial damage assessment.

There is significant damage to the structure of the building(s) and based on the initial inspection, your facility will not be operational in any capacity for at least 3 months.

**NOTE:** For the purposes of this exercise, if you have more than one facility, it is the primary center of operations that will be down for three or more months.

### EARTHQUAKE SCENARIO UPDATE #2 QUESTIONS

(suggested time: 20–25 minutes)

1

Now that you know the extent of the damage to your facility(ies), do you have options that allow you to continue operations?

**PROMPT:** How long can you continue to operate without access to your primary facility? Are your employees prepared to work remotely for an extended period of time?

**K-12 AND HIGHER ED PROMPT:** What decisions are being made about the continuation or completion of the school year? What information is being communicated to students and faculty at this time? What short- and long-term actions will be needed to support those students and faculty residing on campus?

**HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROMPT:** What decisions are being made about resuming the worship schedule? What information is being communicated to congregants at this time?

2

Can you access copies of your vital documents, such as insurance papers, financial information, and key business documents and records?

**PROMPT:** Do you have the resources/coverage in place to cover disaster related expenses?

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### EARTHQUAKE SCENARIO UPDATE #2 QUESTIONS (continued)

<p><b>3</b> How are you communicating with <b>[employees/volunteers]</b> regarding their work status? What are your expectations for <b>[employees/volunteers]</b> who cannot work, either because your organization is not operational or because they have suffered personal losses?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> How are these expectations communicated? Will employees be paid for time they cannot work due to the earthquake? How will employees be paid?</p>
<p><b>4</b> What critical services do your <b>[employees/volunteers]</b> rely upon to be at work (e.g., power, transit, schools/day care)?</p>	<p><b>PROMPT:</b> What can you do if these critical services are not restored for some time, even if your facility(ies) is/are operational? Do you have contact information for critical infrastructure providers in your area, such as communications and utilities? Do you know how to find out when these services will be restored?</p>
<p><b>5</b> Experiencing disasters can be upsetting, so it is important to pay attention to the emotional reactions of your <b>[employees/volunteers/students/congregants]</b>. How is your organization prepared to support individuals who express anxiety or stress?</p>	
<p><b>6</b> What is the long-term impact of this earthquake on your <b>[facility/organization]</b>? Are there any steps you can take now that may lessen the impact of any event like this in the future?</p>	
<p><b>7</b> What can you do to support the community as it recovers? How can you improve your network and relationships to be better connected to the community to prepare for future events?</p>	

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### FACILITATOR GUIDE - EXERCISE STRUCTURE

#### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

(suggested time: 10 minutes)

1

Begin the exercise by introducing yourself and provide a short overview of the exercise objectives and process. Emphasize that the purpose of the exercise is to identify strengths and weaknesses of current plans, policies, and procedures to strengthen the organization's resilience to disruptive events. Explain the roles of the facilitator, participants, observers, and note-takers.

Ask participants to introduce themselves, state their role within the organization and in the tabletop exercise. After introductions, remind everyone to share responsibility for making the exercise useful and productive. Review the agenda, ground rules, and logistics information.

#### EXERCISE AND DISCUSSION

(suggested time: 1.5 - 2 hours)

2

Once you have provided the overview, play begins by introducing the scenario and answering the questions. Read the scenario aloud, and provide a handout of the scenario, if desired. To simulate a real event, the scenario unfolds through updates. Each update includes an additional set of questions for participants.

It is important to take the hypothetical scenario seriously and for each participant to imagine as realistically as possible what he or she would be thinking, feeling, and doing from both a professional and a personal perspective. The discussion should address the specifics of your organization—your workforce, your facilities, and your policies. To provide context, reference actual events that have occurred in your area or in your state.

#### DEBRIEFING AND NEXT STEPS

(suggested time: 20 minutes)

3

Once you have concluded the exercise, it is critical to debrief and establish follow-up plans. A debriefing is simply a review of the exercise and an opportunity to identify next steps. Keep this summary simple by asking for input to create a list of the areas identified as major strengths and areas for improvement. Suggested prompts:

- What weaknesses in your organization's emergency plans did this exercise expose?
- What unanticipated issues arose during the exercise?
- What gaps were identified?
- What are the high-priority issues that should be addressed?
- What are new ideas and recommendations for improvement?
- Were the exercise objectives met?

End the session by thanking everyone for their participation and their honest feedback. Explain leadership's commitment to using the exercise as a building block to greater organizational safety and resilience in ongoing management planning and in meetings with staff.

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### FACILITATOR GUIDE – TIPS FOR FACILITATING A PRODUCTIVE TABLETOP EXERCISE








This guide is designed to help you facilitate a discussion about what your organization would do in response to an earthquake. The facilitator should review all the materials in the Playbook and all the referenced materials, including the links for additional resources, in advance of the exercise. Adequate preparation by the facilitator is the best way to ensure a successful and productive exercise. After reviewing the materials:

	Review the objectives and ensure exercise discussions will meet all objectives.
	Customize the scenario and/or questions so that they are specific to your organization, your facilities, and the services you provide. If the days or times provided affect how your organization would respond to the event, consider different times and days as you discuss the scenario. Review the scenario and follow-up questions and add any additional questions or issues specific to your organization’s workforce, organizational structure, or facilities.
	Review the information at <a href="http://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs">www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs</a> and consider the needs of individuals in your organization with disabilities or access and functional needs.
	Review the list of participants and make sure you know their role in the organization.
	Ensure all logistics are taken care of, including: seating for all participants and observers, nametags or table tents, and handouts.
	Discuss the exercise with the note-taker(s) so that they are prepared for the topics to be addressed in the discussion.
	Ensure the room has been properly set up so that all participants, observers, and note-takers have adequate visibility of the screen and can hear the discussions.
	Ask open-ended questions, using the words “what,” “when,” “where,” “how,” and “why.” If necessary, direct questions to specific participants or areas of the organization.
	Encourage conversation and give extra encouragement to those who may be hesitant to participate in the conversation.

## 2 | Prepare Your Organization: Hold a Tabletop Exercise

### FACILITATOR GUIDE – TIPS FOR FACILITATING A PRODUCTIVE TABLETOP EXERCISE

(continued)

	Elicit suggestions for how to improve issues that arise during the exercise discussion.
	Involve all participants. Do not let one or two participants monopolize the discussions.
	Assist the group by summarizing a point, restating a key discussion point, and asking specific individuals to comment.
	Avoid the temptation to jump in with the solutions when participants are struggling and, instead, try to draw out the answers from them. Participants are more likely to contribute if they feel that people are listening intently and sympathetically.
	Watch for signs of frustration or conflict. Remember that the exercise is not a test, but an opportunity to identify areas for improvement. If you see mounting frustration or conflict, pause the exercise and suggest a break.
	Ensure you complete all the scenario updates to meet the exercise objectives. Monitor the time per module. If the discussion is relevant and meaningful, consider continuing the discussion past the agenda time, and make up time in the next module. Moving too quickly may not allow solutions to come forward. Conversely, moving along so slowly that nothing of substance is decided defeats the purpose of the exercise.
	Ensure that discussions remain within the scope of the given discussion area. Sometimes the conversation may begin to drift to topics more appropriate for discussion in later periods of the exercise, or the conversation may get stuck on a problem area that will need to be resolved later. To keep the discussion moving, use a “parking lot” technique to record difficult issues that can be discussed more fully later.

### FOLLOW-UP IS CRITICAL

After the exercise, be sure to follow through with addressing the gaps and recommended improvements identified by participants in a timely fashion. Your organization’s leadership should create a plan that lists what items need to be addressed, who is responsible for executing those tasks, and when resolution is expected. Develop or update your organization’s emergency operations plan and test it at least annually. The investment to prepare and to routinely review policies, plans, and communications will strengthen your organization and build resilience to the challenges and events that may lie ahead.

# Maintain Momentum Year-Round: More Ways to Prepare

In addition to holding a preparedness discussion or a tabletop exercise for an earthquake, prepare and plan for other hazards you might face. Visit [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare) for risk information and preparedness resources on other hazards. The following resources can help keep your preparedness momentum moving all year long.

- The Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication training program draws from lessons learned during public health emergencies and incorporates best practices from the fields of risk and crisis communication. For course materials, visit <http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/>.
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) are used by emergency managers to provide a standard vocabulary and process to manage emergencies. It is a valuable organizing and management tool for any organization. Free training is available online at <https://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.aspx>.
- Practice the Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan of your business or organization, or visit [www.fema.gov/continuity-operations](http://www.fema.gov/continuity-operations) to learn about the importance of having a continuity of operations plan.
- The American Red Cross Ready Rating program is a free, self-guided program designed to help businesses, organizations, and schools become better prepared for emergencies. Members complete a three-point self-assessment of their level of preparedness and have access to tools, tips, and best practices to help improve their level of preparedness. Visit [www.readyrating.org](http://www.readyrating.org).
- A Workplace Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program can help prepare employees to help others before professional responders arrive. For more information on Workplace CERT, visit [www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams](http://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams).



## 3 | Maintain Momentum Year-Round: More Ways to Prepare

### RESOURCES TO ASSIST WITH FOLLOW-UP PLANNING

- To find out more about how to improve your structure, visit [www.fema.gov/earthquake/earthquake-safety-home](http://www.fema.gov/earthquake/earthquake-safety-home).
- The American Red Cross can provide on-site first aid trainings. For more information, go to [www.redcross.org/take-a-class](http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class).
- To learn about Federal financial assistance after a disaster, visit [www.fema.gov/help-after-disaster](http://www.fema.gov/help-after-disaster).
- To help individuals who may express discomfort or anxiety dealing with disasters, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Technical Assistance Center provides a host of relevant materials available at [www.samhsa.gov/dtac/](http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/).
- The disaster distress helpline is a resource for people who want help coping with overwhelming stress from a disaster. It's free. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or TTY for Deaf/Hearing Impaired: 1-800-846-8517.
- For Institutions of Higher Education, download the Action Guide for Emergency Management at Institutions of Higher Education at [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS\\_ActionGuide.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_ActionGuide.pdf).
- Visit the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education for information on emergency operations plans (EOPs) and emergency management planning efforts at [www.rems.ed.gov](http://www.rems.ed.gov).

### OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

In addition to preparing your organization, it is important to understand your local and tribal community emergency operations plans and to work with other organizations in your community or tribe. Opportunities to participate in whole community planning include the following:

- Contact your State, Local and/or Tribal Emergency Manager to identify emergency management resources in your area. For contact information, visit: [www.fema.gov/state-offices-and-agencies-emergency-management](http://www.fema.gov/state-offices-and-agencies-emergency-management) or [www.fema.gov/fema-tribal-affairs](http://www.fema.gov/fema-tribal-affairs).
- Learn about Public-Private Partnerships: [www.fema.gov/public-private-partnerships](http://www.fema.gov/public-private-partnerships).
- Participate in local or tribal organizations that make your community a safer and more prepared place to live and do business, such as your local Citizen Corps Council, hazard mitigation planning team, or local and tribal Community Emergency Management Team (CERT). Citizen Corps Councils include representatives from all sectors of the community. This whole community membership helps to ensure the community perspective is reflected in local emergency management practices: [www.ready.gov/citizen-corps](http://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps).



# Earthquake Preparedness

What Every Child Care Provider Needs to Know

FEMA 240 / April 2006



FEMA

This publication provides an introduction to earthquake safety for child care providers based in their homes and those based in larger facilities.

If you provide child care in a facility such as a school, church, or daycare center, you should consult your building's owner, landlord, building administrator, or school administrator about the standards, guidelines, and procedures that are already in place for seismic safety.

Cover photograph by Lloyd Wolf for the U.S. Census Bureau, Public Information Office (PIO).

# Earthquake Preparedness

## What Every Child Care Provider Needs to Know

You can never tell when there will be an earthquake, but you can take steps to reduce or avoid damage, injuries, or loss of life for the children in your care, your staff, and yourself. Preparing for an earthquake includes things you already do to protect the children's safety and health, such as having a fire extinguisher handy and maintaining your certifications for first aid and CPR. With additional planning and preparation, the children in your care will have a better chance at surviving an earthquake unharmed.

### What You Can Do Before an Earthquake

Make your building more earthquake-proof, include earthquake preparedness in your emergency plans, teach children and staff what to do if an earthquake happens, and keep emergency supplies on hand.

In an earthquake, most injuries and deaths are caused by loose objects in and on buildings. During the shaking, cabinets and bookcases topple, objects fall out of cabinets, and hanging or large plants fall. Door frames and window jams may be bent when walls move. Doors may slam or jam shut, and window glass can shatter, sending broken glass into the room. Light fixtures, sprinkler heads, and other ceiling components may pop out and fall. Objects mounted on the walls (such as clocks, maps, and art work) may shake loose and fly across the room. The electricity may go out, and the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.

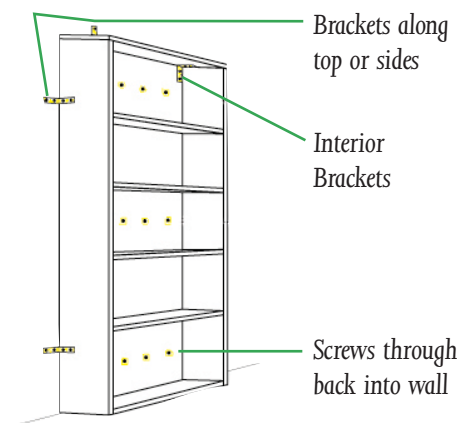
**It's not the Earth's shaking itself that causes the most injury and harm. Instead, it's the things that the earthquake puts into motion: the shaking of buildings, structures, and even ordinary household items. Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire can be an earthquake hazard.**

### Conduct a "hazard hunt"

Go through your home or facility, room by room, looking for objects or situations that might cause damage or injury. Make an inventory of all items that require attention. Walk the halls and classrooms. Stand in the center of each room and look all around you: imagine which objects or pieces of furniture might fall over or fly through the air.

### Make your facility more earthquake-proof

Remove, move, fasten, or latch items that are likely to break, fall over, cause a fire, or hurt people. Work with the building's owner or manager and other building tenants if you rent or share space. If you are housed in a school, coordinate with your school administrator.

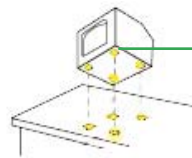


Securing a bookcase to the wall.

You or the building's owner may be able to correct most of these hazards.

Bolt down and secure to the wall studs:

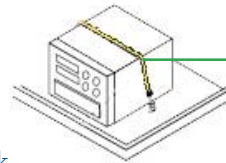
- water heater
- furnace
- gas appliances
- refrigerator



Adhesive-backed hook-and-loop material

Fasten to wall studs:

- bookcases
- shelves
- tall cabinets



Elastic bungee cord attached to top of desk

Attaching a television to a desk.

Move heavy objects to lower shelves.

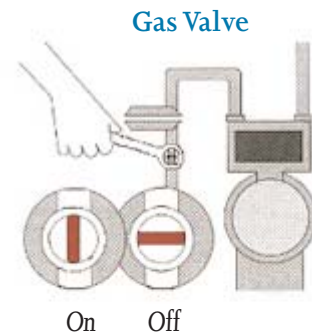
If heavy objects can't be moved, attach them to the desk or table they are sitting on with a heavy-duty hook-and-loop fastener, such as Velcro. If necessary, add lips to shelves to keep items from sliding off.

- Make sure hallways and exits are clear of objects that might fall and make it difficult to get out of the building.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Install latches on cabinet doors.
- Move beds and cribs away from windows, and lock their wheels if possible.
- Move heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from sleeping and sitting areas.
- Lock wheels on rolling carts, such as a TV cart.

Have a professional help you with the following:

Bolt the building to the foundation if necessary.

Wood frame buildings that are bolted to the foundation are less likely to be damaged than those that aren't. Buildings built after 1960 typically are secured to their foundations. (You can call your local building department or county assessor's office to find out when your home or facility was built.)

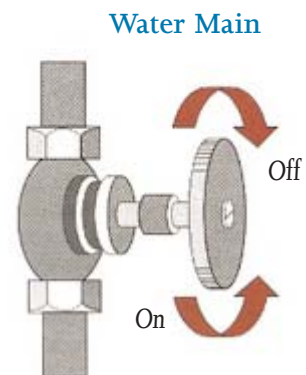


- Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations.
- Repair or replace defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections.\*
- Replace inflexible utility connections with flexible ones.\*

\* Do not repair gas or electrical lines yourself.

## Know how to shut off electricity, gas, and water

You may need to turn off the electricity, gas, or water after an earthquake because of broken or exposed electrical wiring, a gas leak, or flooding from leaking pipes or sprinklers. Locate the gas and water "shut-off" valves and master electrical switch. Learn how to turn these off and train your staff to do so. Make sure you have a crescent or pipe wrench near the gas and water valves and in your emergency supplies.



## Prepare an emergency kit

After a large earthquake, you may be on your own with the children for two or three days. In addition to the safety equipment you already have on hand such as a fire extinguisher, you need an emergency kit. This kit should include:

- Flashlight with extra bulbs and extra batteries
- Portable battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Roster of children with addresses and their parents' emergency contact information
- Crescent and pipe wrenches to turn off gas and water supplies
- Emergency food and water

**Water**—A supply of bottled water and cups (one gallon per person per day). Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers (for example, plastic). Identify the storage date and replace every three to six months. Include purification tablets or chlorine bleach in your kit to purify drinking water from other sources.

**Food**—A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food.

- Waterproof plastic bags (for protection from rain, ground cloths, removal of waste, etc.)
- Nonelectric can opener
- Essential medicines and medical supplies
- Diapers and wipes
- Blankets
- Work gloves
- Sturdy boots or shoes

Other items in the emergency kit might include:

- Paper and pens
- Permanent marker
- Games and toys
- Hard candy



## Have a communication plan for disasters and keep parents informed

Parents need to know what you plan to do in an earthquake or any other type of emergency.

Develop a plan for reuniting families after an earthquake or any other disaster. Maintain up-to-date rosters of students with contact information for parents and emergency contacts.

Encourage parents to identify an out-of-state contact for large-scale emergencies like an earthquake. After an earthquake, it may be easier to make out-of-state and long-distance calls as in-state and local calls may be blocked due to emergency calls.

Ask parents to make an earthquake plan for their homes and to talk to their children about earthquake safety.

## Conduct earthquake drills

Just as you conduct drills for other types of emergencies (fires or tornadoes), you should conduct earthquake drills. (Ask your local office of emergency services or your Red Cross office for a recommendation on how frequently you should conduct earthquake drills in your area.)

### Identify a safe gathering place outside.

Find a safe spot outside. This spot should be away from the building, trees, playground structures, fences, utility wires, or anything else that might fall on you. Make this your designated gathering place in case of an earthquake or other disaster. Ensure that all children and staff know where to go if you need to leave the building in an emergency.

### Teach the children to Drop, Cover, and Hold.

During an earthquake, the most important thing for any child or adult to remember is to **Drop, Cover, and Hold**.

#### At the first sign of shaking

**Drop** to the ground.

Take **Cover** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture.

**Hold** on until the shaking stops.

### Practice Drop, Cover, and Hold in earthquake drills.

Tell the children that during an earthquake, the Earth might move beneath their feet like a boat in the waves. Explain that earthquakes may be noisy, with loud banging, crashing, or rumbling sounds and ringing alarm bells.

Identify the safe places in each room:

- under sturdy furniture like a heavy desk or table
- against an inside wall, away from windows, mirrors, pictures, bookcases, or other heavy objects that might fall.

Spend time explaining the Drop, Cover, and Hold drill and demonstrate what you want them to do. Get the children's attention and give clear and distinct commands. Speak in a calm voice. At the command of "earthquake," you and the children should immediately: Drop, Cover, and Hold.

Because earthquakes and aftershocks come without warning, practice drop, cover, and hold drills outside, in your play area, and in various parts of your facility.

**Plan several routes for getting out of the building after an earthquake and practice evacuation drills regularly.**

**Drop**



**Cover**



**Hold**



## Safety Chant

**"If inside, drop, cover, and hold. That's where you'll be safe. If outside, stay outside, and find an open space."**

# What You Can Do *During* an Earthquake

## At the first sign of shaking

- Drop to the ground
- Take Cover by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture.
- Hold on until the shaking stops.

Sometimes smaller tremors come before or after a larger earthquake. Because we never know until the shaking has stopped which quake is the main event, it is essential to Drop, Cover, and Hold at the first sign of shaking.

## If you are inside

- Kneel down under a desk, table, or bench. If there aren't enough sturdy pieces of furniture to get under, kneel next to an interior wall but away from windows, overhead light fixtures, and tall pieces of furniture that might fall over.
- Stay under cover until the shaking stops (at least one minute). Face away from windows, and bend your head close to your knees.
- Hold on to the table leg or desk (a few inches above the ground to avoid pinching fingers). Cover your eyes with your other hand. If your "shelter" moves, move with it. If you don't have a "shelter" to hang on to, clasp your hands on the back of your neck to protect your face.

## If you are outside

- Move into the open, away from buildings, fences, trees, tall playground equipment, utility wires, and street lights.
- Kneel or sit on the ground and cover your head and face with your hands.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops.

## If you are in a car

Pull over to the side of the road—away from overhead power lines, trees, and overpasses. Stay in the car until the shaking stops.



- Don't try to take cover in a doorway during an earthquake. The door may slam on you.
- Don't run outside during the shaking or use the stairways or elevators. Many people are killed just outside of buildings by falling bricks and other debris.
- Don't turn on the gas again if you turned it off; let the gas company do it.
- Don't use your telephone for the first 90 minutes after an earthquake, except for a medical or fire emergency. You could tie up the lines needed for emergency response.

## What You Can Do *After* an Earthquake

1. Once the shaking has stopped, look around for possible hazards to determine if it is safe for you to move before getting up and helping others. If time permits and there is a small fire that can be put out with the fire extinguisher, do that.
2. If you are inside, decide whether to evacuate or stay put.
  - Any of the following require immediate evacuation: fire, damage to structure, a gas leak, or hazardous materials spill. In some situations, you may choose not to evacuate or to delay evacuation. For example, if there is a slight shaking with no apparent damage and another hazard such as severe weather, it may be more dangerous to move children outside.
  - If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and then quickly leave with the children, and shut the gas off at the outside main meter.
  - Unless you must evacuate immediately (fire, severe damage to structure, gas leak, or hazardous materials spill), check all children and adults for injuries and give first aid for injuries before evacuating.
    - Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury (fire and flooding). Instead, cover them with a sturdy table or whatever is available and send someone for medical help after the earthquake shaking stops.

If you shut off the gas for any reason, a professional must turn it back on. It may take days or weeks before they are able to do so.

As time permits, you may need to turn off utilities such as gas, electricity, and water.

If electrical wires are crackling inside, shut off the gas first, then turn off the master electrical switch.

If you must evacuate, get out of the building and to your designated safe gathering place, taking the emergency kit along with your list of children and their emergency contacts.

When possible, to reduce the chances of both physical and emotional harm, move children who are able to walk away from danger, away from collapsed buildings, and away from severely injured survivors. If you must leave the area, place a note for the parents outside the door, telling them where you are going.

3. Call 9-1-1 if there is a fire or medical emergency. If the phone doesn't work, send someone for help.
4. Treat minor injuries.
5. Reassure the children. Tell them that their parents will come for them as soon as they can, that their parents know everyone will be safe with you, and that you are all together.
6. Listen to a battery-operated radio for instructions and the latest emergency information.



## Be prepared for aftershocks

Aftershocks are follow-up earthquakes that are usually smaller than the first one. They are dangerous because they can cause things that were weakened in the first earthquake to fall down. You may need to Drop, Cover, and Hold again.

## Reenter with caution

After a minor earthquake or after you are informed by emergency responders that it is safe to reenter the building, open cabinets cautiously and beware of objects that might fall off shelves.

## Children's reactions to earthquakes



Earthquakes can be terrifying, and it is natural for children and adults to be afraid. According to the National Association of School Psychologists, earthquakes are especially difficult to cope with because they come without warning and are followed by aftershocks. With continued shaking, survivors do not experience a clear end to the crisis. Some children and adults may have reactions very soon after the event, while others may experience problems weeks or months later. The following tips from the National Institute of Mental Health and other organizations will help you help the children in your care.

### During an earthquake

During (and after) an earthquake, children will usually become tearful and clinging. They will want their parent(s). Even toilet-trained children may have accidents or experience nausea and vomiting.

**Deal with the situation as calmly as you can.** In a disaster, the children will look to you and other adults for help. How you react to an emergency gives them clues on how to act.

After a disaster, children are most afraid that:

- the event will happen again
- someone will be injured or killed
- they will be separated from the family
- they will be left alone

### As soon as you are sure the danger has passed

Let the children know that you understand why they are scared. Comfort them with a hug or reassuring words. Reassure them that their parents know where they are or where they may go. Their parents will come to get them as soon as they can. They are safe with you. You will look after them.

### After an earthquake

- Return to routine as soon as possible.
- Express your own concerns openly, and let students know that it's normal to be afraid.



- Encourage the children to talk about their fears. Help them sort out what is real from what is unreal. Encourage them to draw or write about their feelings. Children are less afraid of things that they understand.

- Be aware that children begin to suck their thumbs, have difficulty eating or sleeping, wet their beds, or report mysterious aches or pains. It is common for children to “regress” or act younger when stressed. Do not criticize the children or call such behavior “babyish.”

- Parents frequently look to you for advice, so help them understand their children’s behavior and be aware that they also may be suffering. Parents may be afraid to leave their children after a disaster. Some parents may be angry or upset because their children are frightened. Reassure them that with support most children will recover without any lasting problems.

- Watch children for ongoing signs of emotional distress (avoiding things that remind them of the event, appearing numb or withdrawn, having nightmares). If a child continues to be disturbed for more than a few weeks, the family may need to seek professional counseling. While most children recover completely after a disaster, others may have more long-term problems that require treatment, including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

- Understand that you also may have emotional difficulties after a traumatic event and take care of yourself.



## To Learn More

### Community resources

Contact your local emergency management office or the American Red Cross chapter.

### Disaster and safety requirements for child care providers

Contact your state’s day care or child care licensing office.

### Disaster planning and emergency preparedness

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

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

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

- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities  
[www.edfacilities.org](http://www.edfacilities.org)



## Understanding emotional reactions to disasters

- National Institute of Mental Health  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
[www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov)
- American Red Cross  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- National Association of School Psychologists  
[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)



## Helpful publications

- *The Head Start Disaster Preparedness Workbook*, UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters.  
[www.cphd.ucla.edu/headstartwb.html](http://www.cphd.ucla.edu/headstartwb.html)
- *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*, U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.  
[www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf)

## Earthquake and disaster information for kids

- FEMA for Kids  
[www.fema.gov/kids](http://www.fema.gov/kids)
- U.S. Geological Survey, Earthquakes for Kids  
[www.earthquake.usgs.gov/4kids](http://www.earthquake.usgs.gov/4kids)

## Curriculum materials

- Tremor Troop: Earthquakes: A Teacher's Packet for K-6, FEMA  
[www.fema.gov/hazards/earthquakes/nehrr/fema-159.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazards/earthquakes/nehrr/fema-159.shtm)
- Be Ready 1-2-3, Red Cross  
[www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/tchrschl.html](http://www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/tchrschl.html)
- Masters of Disaster Curriculum, Red Cross  
[www.redcross.org/disaster/masters](http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters)

