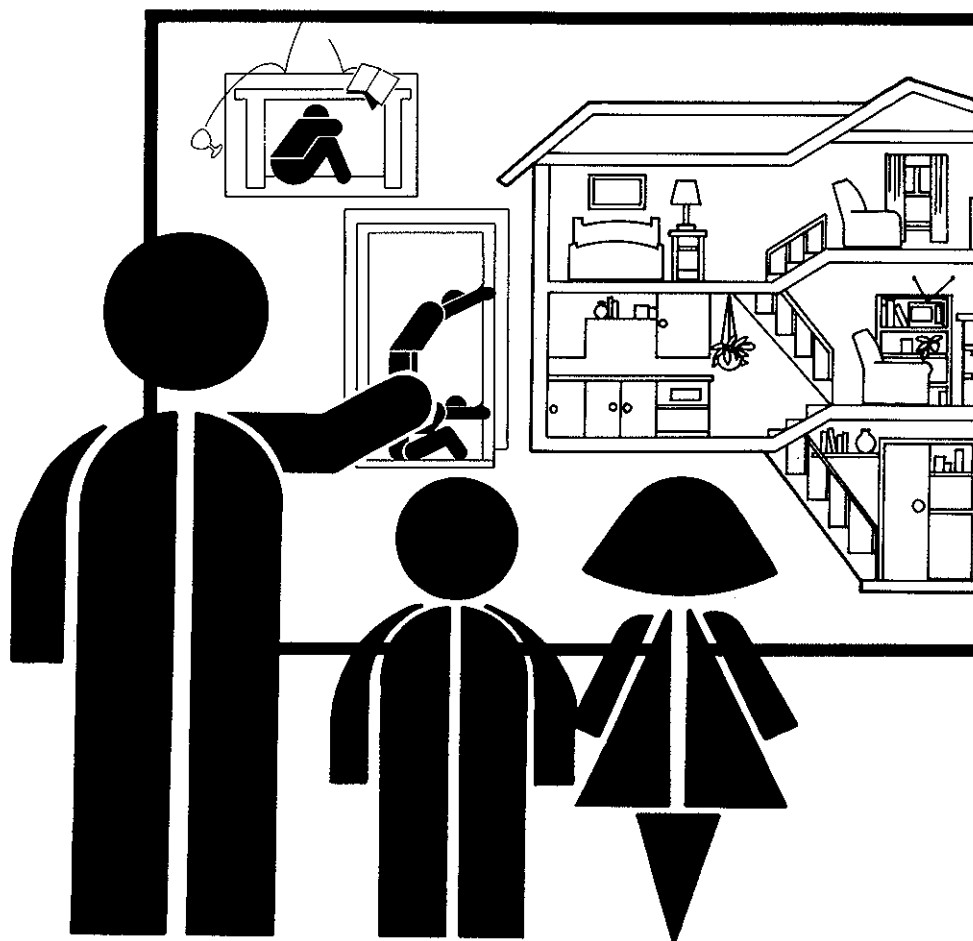


# FAMILY EARTHQUAKE SAFETY HOME HAZARD HUNT AND DRILL

American  
Red Cross 



If you've never experienced an earthquake, imagine the damage an earthquake could do. Although the United States has not recently experienced the devastation earthquakes have caused in other countries, scientists predict that it could happen here.

The lives and property of 70 million people in the United States and its territories are at risk from earthquakes. And the risk is not confined to those areas on fault lines; earthquakes can cause damage many miles away.

Earthquake deaths and injuries are seldom caused by the actual movement of the ground but from falling objects and debris. Most frequently, injuries at home are caused by building collapse; flying glass; overturned built-in appliances; and fires from broken chimneys and downed electrical lines.

This booklet is divided into two sections: one on identifying and correcting hazards in the home and another on what to do if an earthquake occurs.

**HAZARD HUNT** An important step to earthquake preparedness is to survey your home for possible hazards and take action to lessen those hazards. Once you identify the hazards to be corrected, it doesn't take much time to correct them, making your home a safer place to live every day.

**DRILLS** Another important step is to be prepared. You should know what to do if an earthquake occurs. Earthquake drills are an excellent way to help your family plan and practice what to do in a violent earthquake. You should learn where to take shelter and HOW to protect yourself.

# Hazard Hunt

*Your earthquake home hazard hunt should begin with all family members participating. Foresight, imagination, and common sense are all that are needed as you go from room to room, imagining what would happen if the earth and house started shaking.*

*Anything that can move, break, or fall when your house starts to shake is a potential hazard.*

## What would happen to heavy furniture, fixtures, and appliances?

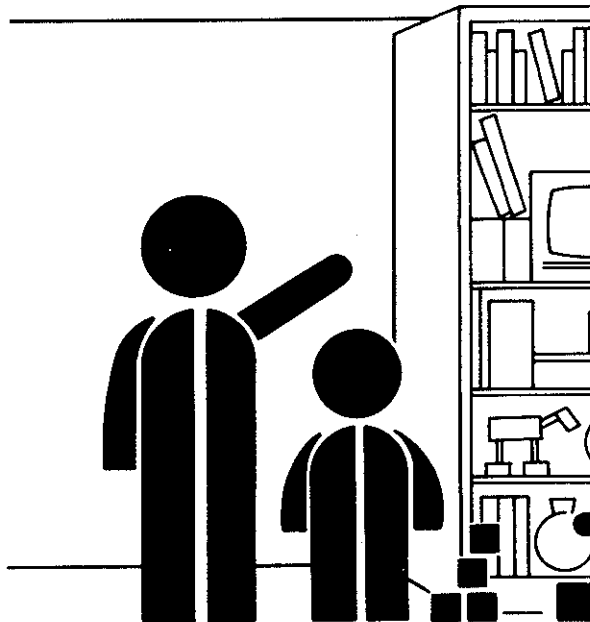
- Look at the floor-to-ceiling bookcase: How much would fall off the shelves? Will the whole bookcase topple, or is it anchored to the wall? Anchor bookcases and other top-heavy furniture to wall studs using metal angle braces ("L" brackets) and lag screws. Be sure shelves are fastened.
- Prevent refrigerators, washers, and other heavy appliances from moving by blocking the rollers.
- Add bracing to support air conditioners, particularly on rooftops.
- Do you have hanging plants or light fixtures? Could they swing and hit a window or swing off their hooks? As a minimum precaution, transfer hanging plants from heavy clay pots to lighter ones and use closed hooks on all hanging items.

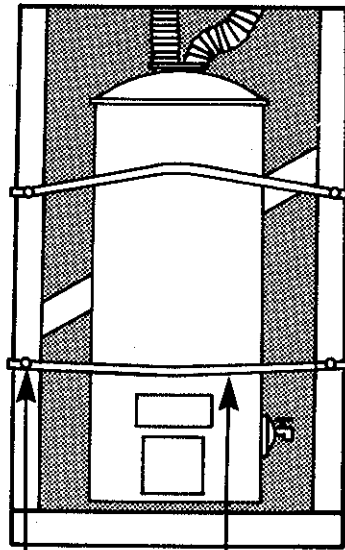
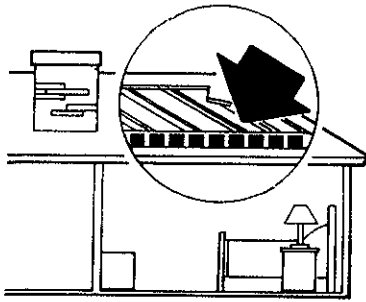
## Check for possible flying glass.

- Replace glass bottles from the medicine cabinet and from above or around the bathtub with plastic containers.
- What kind of latches are on your kitchen cabinets? Consider replacing magnetic "touch" latches with ones that will hold the

cabinet door shut during an earthquake. In some cases, a lip or low barrier across shelves may prevent breakables from sliding out.

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





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### Think about fire safety.

- Remove all flammable liquids, such as painting and cleaning products, to the garage or outside storage area. Be sure these items are stored away from heat sources and appliances, particularly your hot water heater and furnace.
- Secure gas lines by installing flexible connectors to appliances.
- Is your hot water heater secured? Thin metal straps, known as "plumbers tape," can be used to fasten your hot water heater to the wood studs of the nearest wall.

### What would happen to the house itself?

- Look at the outside of your home. What about your chimney? Where

# Earthquake Drills

Earthquakes are frightening; and not knowing what to do can make you more frightened. How can you turn the tendency to panic into life-saving action? By **PLANNING** and **PRACTICING** what to do before an earthquake occurs, you and your family can learn to react correctly and automatically when the first jolt or shaking begins.

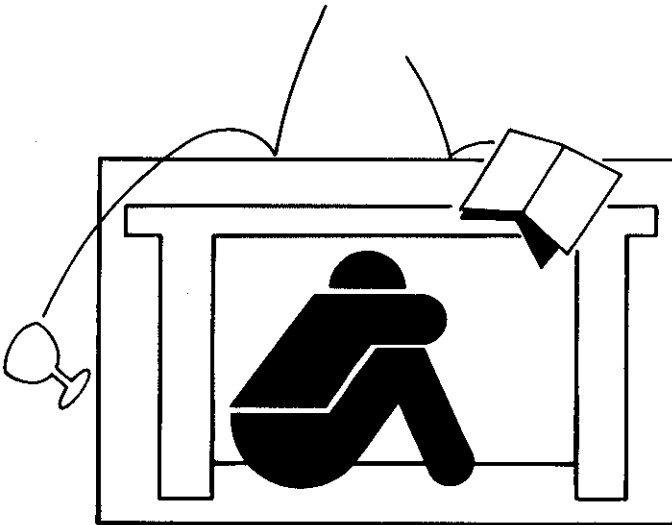
The greatest hazard in an earthquake is falling objects. First, **STAY CALM**. If you are inside, **STAY INSIDE**; don't run outside.

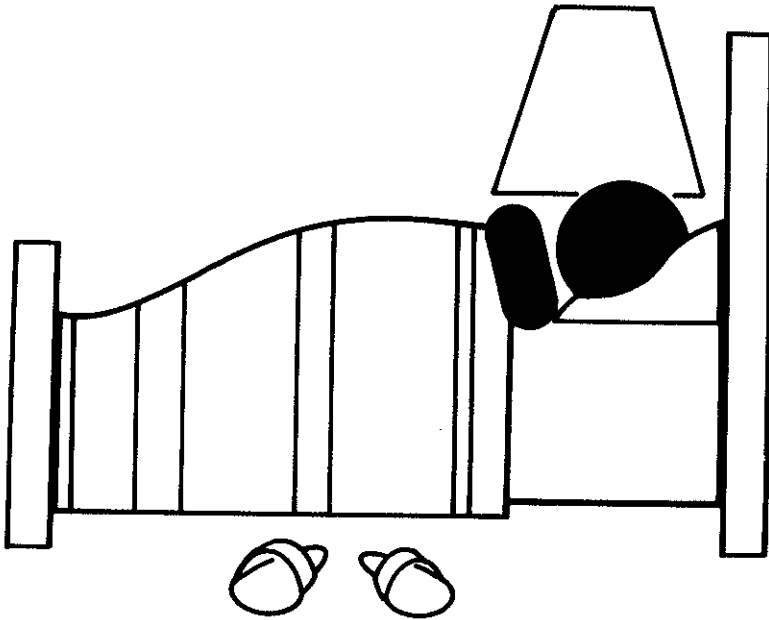
The first step is to have each family member learn the safe spots in each room. Then reinforce this knowledge by physically placing yourselves in these locations. This is a very important step for your children. Acting out what they are taught will help them remember what to do in case

you're not beside them at the critical time.

## WHAT TO DO

- Stand or crouch in a strong supported doorway, or
- Get under a sturdy table or desk, or
- Brace yourself in an inside corner of the house.





**Next, identify each room. In the event of an earthquake, each person should know the safest possible location.**

- Stay away from windows and other glass.
- Stay clear of tall cabinets, as they may topple.
- Stay away from stoves, fireplaces, and chimneys where bricks may fall.
- Stay clear of doorways if they are blocked by furniture.

**In the days following the drill, hold surprise "earthquake" drills wherever you are. Encourage each family member to participate by moving to the safest location.**

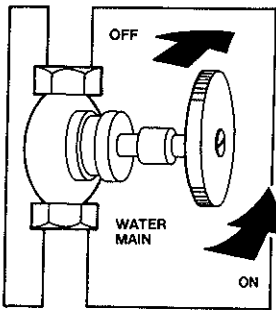
- At night, keep your bed tucked up to the headboard to prevent broken glass from falling on you.
- Anyone in the room should remember to participate if possible.

Once a month, hold a surprise earthquake drill. Test each other on your choice of the safest location. Pick a place that is not blocked or cluttered.

**Finally, imagine what you may experience after a major earthquake and what your first actions should be. You may be on your own for several days after an earthquake because emergency personnel cannot get to you.**

- Be prepared for aftershocks. These may be nearly as strong as the initial earthquake. Take cover quickly if shaking begins again.
- If you smell gas, get to the gas and water mains and turn them off. Don't light matches or candles to look for damage.

- Be prepared to deal with the emotional needs of family members. Stay close enough to touch and comfort each other. Talk about what happened and be sure to encourage your children to talk about their feelings.



People who live in areas where small earthquakes frequently occur become complacent to the threat of a major earthquake. Areas at risk to earthquakes may have never experienced one, and nearly 70 million people in this country are at risk from earthquakes in your area, and take action now to prevent loss of life and property. Other publications are available on earthquake safety. Contact your local emergency services office for more information.

