



Let's look at some things you can do to prepare for an emergency:

At home:

Home is where you can do the most to be prepared. But remember that you are only home for about 1/2 of the hours in a day. You must also be prepared at work, and have additional supplies in your car.

- Strap gas appliances to walls or floor, especially the water heater. Remember your water heater is a large source of water, and weighs several hundred pounds when full. A four hundred pound water heater will break gas lines on its way to the floor. Gas appliances are a real danger in an earthquake, and are the cause of most fires after a quake.
- Verify your house is bolted to its foundation.
- Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. These are potential fire risks.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Replace solid gas lines with flexible lines on stoves, water heaters, and dryers.
- Nail plywood on top of ceiling joists inside the attic to protect people from chimney bricks that could fall through the ceiling.

Know your house

- Find out where the utility shutoffs are for water, power, and gas.
- Place a [flashlight](#) or [an emergency light](#) next to your breaker panel.
- Place a wrench in your water meter box located near the street.
- Place or attach [a tool](#) on your gas meter for turning off the gas.
- Evaluate each room in your house. Ask yourself: what will fall on my head, or will keep me from getting out if it fell? Secure anything you find. Hang heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from beds, couches, and anywhere people sit.
- Fasten shelves securely to walls and place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Store breakable items such as bottled foods, glass, and china in low, closed cabinets with latches.
- Store household chemicals on a bottom shelf of a closed cabinet.
Never store bleach and ammonia in the same cabinet. These chemicals, when mixed, will create a toxic gas as deadly as any ever created.
- Identify the best and worst places to be in your house. Remember that you might not have any choice as to where you will be located when a disaster strikes. The best places inside the house are under major beams that are secured to the rest of the structure, or in strong doorways, or inner structural walls. The worst places are in front of windows, or near fireplaces and chimneys.
- Make an emergency plan including escape routes and meeting places. Choose both a nearby meeting place and an out of state relative to be your check in contact for the family.
- Test your emergency plan with all members of the family present.
- Plug [emergency lighting](#) into selected outlets. (These flashlights are constantly charged, and turn on automatically when power fails, or when the units are unplugged.)
- Keep all tree and shrub limbs trimmed so they don't come in contact with wires.
- Keep trees adjacent to buildings free of dead or dying wood.
- Store combustible or flammable materials in approved safety containers and keep them away from the house.
- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and near sleeping areas.



Know your neighbors, and neighborhood:

- Contact your school district to obtain policy regarding how children will be released from school.
- Know the location of the nearest police and fire stations, as well as the route to the nearest hospital emergency room.
- Meet with neighbors and find out who has medical experience.
- If you are taking this preparedness thing seriously, share this information with the households next to you. The more people you can convince to prepare, the greater your group resources. Remember that you will be called upon by all around you for help, especially by those who didn't take warnings seriously.
- Give spare keys to your trusted neighbors. Show them where the utility shutoffs are and provide them with a list of contact phone numbers.
- Ask how to turn off your neighbors utilities.



Know your family:

- Hold a home evacuation drill to test your emergency plan with all members of the family present.
- Teach your children how to get help from neighbors and call 911 (Emergency like U.S 911).
- Keep photos of family members in wallet in case they turn up missing.
- Teach household members how to turn off utilities.
- In case family members are separated from one another during an earthquake (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), develop a plan for reuniting after the disaster.
- Ask an out of state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.



In your car:

- Always keep your gas tank full! Fill it when it reaches 1/2 a tank. Mexican Local authorities have a tendency to ration fuel in an emergency.
- Think of your car's trunk as a big steel supply cabinet. Keep your supplies in the trunk along with other items like tools, jumper cables and spare tire.
- Even if you are at home when a disaster strikes, and your home is well stocked, you may still need the supplies in your car. Your house may not be safe to enter, it may catch fire after a disaster like an earthquake (like many houses in Kobe, Japan or the Marina District of San Francisco).
- Your car will be one of your most important resources after a disaster strikes. Keep it mechanically sound, and pay close attention to the exhaust system. A leaking exhaust system could kill.
- Replace your battery every 2-3 years. In an emergency, your car battery will need to run the radio and heater for extended periods.