

BANANAS HANDOUT

Earthquake Safety For Parents and Child Care Providers



An Earthquake strikes your area and for a minute or two the “solid” earth moves like the deck of a ship. What you do before, during and immediately after the tremor may make a life-and-death difference to you, your family and your child care program. The following suggestions can help you survive the next time the earth shakes.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

Water:

For each person in your household, store 1-2 gallons of water per day. Store enough water to last each person at least 7-10 days. You can store tap water that has been sealed airtight or store-bought bottled water. Store tap water in a sturdy, rinsed-out bottle, e.g. a plastic gallon milk container. Date your stored water containers and replace the water every six months.

Before drinking your stored water, treat it by either boiling it for at least one minute or adding 16 drops (1/4 teaspoon) of bleach per gallon of water. Shake and let stand 30 minutes before drinking. You can also use the water from your water heater for drinking after you strain it and treat it, as described. Water from the toilet tank, pool or hot tub can be used with soap for washing.

Food:

Keep a 7-10 day supply of food that doesn't need cooking. Store a can opener with the canned and sealed foods that will keep without refrigeration.

Other Supplies:

- Prescription Drugs – Maintain at least a two-week supply if anyone in your family or child care program needs a prescription drug.
- Diapers and Formula – You will need at least a 7-10 day supply. You will also need a system of temporary sanitary storage, such as heavy-duty, waterproof, plastic bags.
- Radio, Flashlight, Whistle and Fire Extinguisher – Use battery-powered, solar powered or hand-crank versions. Keep extra batteries marked with date purchased. Mark your calendar to remind you to replace batteries every six months.
- Comprehensive First-Aid Kit – Inspect it from time to time and replace any expired or used items.
- Extra blankets, clothing and cash in small denominations.

- Tools to turn off the main gas and water lines coming into your home or facility – PG&E recommends a 15” crescent wrench. Painting wrenches a bright color will make them easier to find in an emergency.

Make sure the other adults in your family or program know where your supplies are kept and how to use them. Consider keeping essential supplies in a portable case or backpack that you can carry with you if you have to evacuate.

Other Precautions:

- Earthquake-proof your home or child care facility by removing heavy objects from bookcases, high kitchen cabinets, and shelves in closets. Anchor bookcases and your water heater to the wall. You can buy industrial-strength velcro to hold down televisions and other heavy items and security latches for cupboard doors. Many items can be purchased at hardware stores or from a number of earthquake supply stores in the bay area and online. Contact the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA), (916) 845-8510, www.calema.ca.gov, for their Earthquake Emergency Supplies Checklist.
- Teach everyone how to “Drop, Cover & Hold On”– **Drop** down under a sturdy table or desk. Stay under **Cover** until the shaking stops. (If no furniture is available, seek cover against an interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms.) **Hold On** to the desk or table. If it moves, move with it. Stay in this position until the shaking stops. Teach children where it is safe to “Drop, Cover & Hold On” in outside play areas – well away from trees, utility lines, and buildings, especially windows and chimneys. Caution children about the possibility of aftershocks.
- Locate the main gas and water shut-off valves and the shut-off switch at your electric meter. Learn how and when to turn off the gas, water or electricity should that be necessary and keep the appropriate tools on hand.
- Learn first aid. Contact the American Red Cross: (800) 520-5433; The American Heart Association: (800) 242-8721 or BANANAS: 658-7353 for information on local classes.
- Find and mark the *First Aid and Survival Guide* in the White Pages of your phone book. It contains useful sections on general first aid and earthquake procedures.

At Home:

Discuss earthquake safety with your family. Plan an earthquake drill, including “Drop, Cover & Hold On” routines and practice it from time to time. Plan how to reunite your family after an earthquake. Select one person who lives outside

the area as your family's "out-of-area contact" – the person everyone would call to get or give information after the quake. Share this information with your child's school or child care program. FEMA offers many booklets to assist families: *Your Family Disaster Plan* and *Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit*. To order, write FEMA, PO Box 70274, Washington, D. C. 20024, contact your local Red Cross chapter or download the information from www.fema.gov. Cal EMA also offers earthquake info, including *What To Do Before, During and After an Earthquake* and *Prepare Your Children* at www.calema.ca.gov.

At Work:

Every work site should have an emergency plan. In addition, you should give your employer the daytime phone numbers for other family members, your child's school or child care program and your family's out-of-area contact person.

At Child Care:

Teach the children "Drop, Cover & Hold On" and conduct practice drills from time to time. Use a verbal signal for an earthquake drill which is very different from the one used for fire drills. You can use decals or stickers to mark the furniture which is safe to duck under or to show which walls or doorways are the inside ones. You will have to figure out the safe places in every area the children normally occupy including the outdoor play space. You never know when an earthquake will occur.

FEMA publishes a document called *Earthquake Preparedness: What Every Childcare Provider Should Know* which can be downloaded at www.fema.gov/kids/teacher.htm. Cal EMA has a number of publications to help with earthquake planning. Call, (916) 845-8510, write the Cal EMA Costal Region, at 1300 Clay St. Suite 400, Oakland, CA 94612 or access the website at www.calema.ca.gov. BANANAS also has earthquake preparedness videos in its lending library.

Hold parent meetings and share your earthquake plans with the children's families. Elicit their assistance in stockpiling enough food and water for 7-10 days. Let parents know where you will leave a note (e.g., on a nearby telephone pole; tacked to the front door) if you are ordered to evacuate with the children.

Obtain emergency information for each family in your program. You should have the address and phone number of where the parent works and the name, address and telephone number of somebody nearby who could pick up the child in case the parent cannot come. You will also need the name, phone number and address of the family's out-of-area contact person. Keep this information in a folder which you can take with you in the event of an evacuation. Update the information at least annually.

DURING THE SHAKING:

Don't Panic. The motion is frightening but, unless it shakes something down on top of you, it is harmless. The earth does not yawn open, gulp down a neighborhood and slam shut. Keep calm and ride it out in one place.

Drop, Cover & Hold On. *Indoors:* Drop to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it firmly. Be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops. If you are not near a desk or table, drop to the floor against the interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms. Avoid exterior walls, windows, hanging objects, mirrors, tall furniture, large appliances, and kitchen cabinets with heavy objects or glass. Do not go outside! *Outdoors:* Move to a clear area if you can safely do so; avoid power lines, trees, signs, buildings, vehicles, and other hazards.

Don't Run out of or into buildings. The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside doorways and close to outer walls and chimneys.

Don't Use Candles, matches or other open flames during, or after the tremor because there may be a gas leak.

If You're in a Moving Car, stop in a clear area away from trees, overpasses, etc., as quickly as safety permits, but stay in the car. A car will jiggle on its springs during the earthquake, but it is a good place to stay until the shaking stops. If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.

AFTER THE SHAKING:

If You Smell Gas, immediately open windows, shut off the main valve and avoid using electricity. Leave the building and report leakage. Don't go back inside until a utility official says it's safe. Once the gas is turned off, leave it off until PG&E can turn it on again.

If Water Pipes Are Damaged, shut off supply at main valve.

If the Electrical Wiring is Shorting Out, shut off current at main meter box.

Turn on Your Radio (or, if conditions permit, TV) to get the latest emergency bulletins. The local emergency radio stations are: KNBR 680 AM, KCBS 740 AM and KGO 810 AM. You can also receive information on local travellers information radio: 1610 AM for Berkeley and San Leandro residents, and 530 AM for Oakland residents.

Stay Off the Telephone Except to Report an Emergency. Keep a supply of coins on hand for pay phones.

Don't Go Sight-seeing and stay out of severely damaged buildings; aftershocks can cause additional, severe damage.

Providers, You Are Responsible for each child in your care until either the parent or someone s/he has designated comes for the child. Some disasters require evacuations and, in that event, you must be prepared to do whatever the local authorities require of you. Be prepared to take the children's emergency information, blankets and warm clothes with you.

(Thanks to the Oakland Office of Emergency Services for the information contained in this Handout. The Offices of Emergency Services highly encourage you to get involved with your local Community Emergency Response Team. You can find the one closest to you at www.citizenrcps.gov.)