



Abbotsford Emergency Program

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Earthquakes

Approximately 5000 earthquakes are recorded in Canada each year, most of them small ones. While earthquakes can occur in any Canadian region, British Columbia is most at risk from a major earthquake. In the past 100 years, at least nine earthquakes in or near Canada have registered a magnitude greater than 7, a few have caused extensive damage. Since no one can predict with certainty when an earthquake will happen, it is important to protect your family – be prepared.

- Clearly label on-off positions for the water, electricity and gas. Teach everybody in the family how to turn off the gas, water and electricity. If your home is equipped with natural gas, tie or tape the appropriate wrench on or near the pipe needed to turn off the gas. Do not turn the gas off unless there is a leak or a fire. If it is necessary to turn off the gas, do so, but do not turn the gas back on your self, a qualified technician must turn the gas back on.
- Teach members of your family how to use a fire extinguisher
- Tie the water heater to studs along with other heavy appliances, especially those that could break gas, or water lines if they shift or topple
- Secure top-heavy furniture and shelving units to prevent tipping. Keep heavy items on lower shelves.
- Affix mirrors, paintings and other hanging objects securely.
- Locate beds and chairs away from chimneys and windows. Don't hang heavy pictures and other objects over beds. Closed curtains and blinds will help stop broken window glass from falling on beds.
- Put anti-skid pads under TVs computers and other small appliances, or secure them with Velcro.
- Use child-proof or safety latches on cupboards to stop contents from spilling out.
- Keep flammable items and household chemicals away from heat and where they are less likely to spill.
- Discuss earthquake insurance with your insurance broker. Check your coverage – it could affect your financial ability to recover losses after an earthquake
- Practice a “Family Emergency Plan” and prepare an “Emergency Kit”
- Know that when an earthquake starts, to take cover immediately. Move a few steps to a nearby safe place if need be. Stay there until the shaking stops.
- Practice that if you are indoors when an earthquake starts: “DROP, COVER, HOLD”