

# Monterey County Health Department Preparedness Minute

Volume 5 Issue 1

February 2010

## *Earthquake Preparedness*

Earthquake preparedness includes securing the contents of our homes and workplaces to reduce the risk of injury.

People have died and thousands have been injured due to unsecured building contents such as falling furniture or flying objects. Many injuries can be prevented through simple actions.



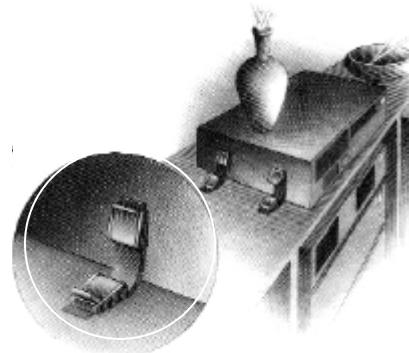
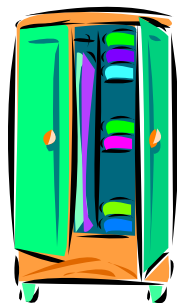
### *Secure it!*

Secure anything that is:

- ✘ heavy enough to hurt you if it falls on you, or
- ✘ fragile and/or expensive enough to be a significant loss if it falls.

In addition to contents within your living space, also secure items in other areas, such as the garage, to reduce damage to vehicles or hazardous material spills.

### *Start Now*



There are simple actions you can do right now that will protect you and your loved ones if an earthquake happens tomorrow. Move furniture such as bookcases away from beds, sofas, or other places where people sit or sleep. Move heavy objects to lower shelves. Then begin to look for other items in your home that may be hazardous in an earthquake. Consider involving your family in a home hazard hunt.

### *Home Hazards*

In an earthquake or any disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a potential hazard.

1. Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections.
2. Fasten shelves securely.
3. Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves.
4. Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
5. Brace overhead light fixtures.
6. Secure water heater. Strap to wall studs.
7. Repair cracks in ceilings or foundations.
8. Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products away from heat sources.
9. Place oily polishing rags and other flammable material in covered metal cans.
10. Clean, dust and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors, and gas vents.



### *More information*

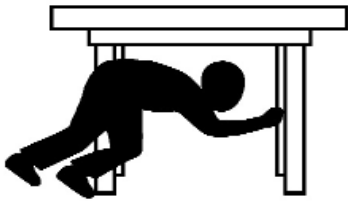


For more information on how to secure your stuff visit to [DaretoPrepare.org](http://www.daretoprepare.org) for more details  
[http://www.daretoprepare.org/secure\\_your\\_stuff.html](http://www.daretoprepare.org/secure_your_stuff.html)

The purpose of this short publication is to inform Monterey County staff about preparedness issues ranging from emerging communicable diseases to personal preparedness. If there is a specific topic you or your staff are interested in please contact the Preparedness Program at [klahnk@co.monterey.ca.us](mailto:klahnk@co.monterey.ca.us).

# Protect Yourself During Earthquake Shaking!

## DROP!



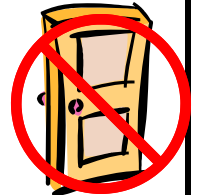
Learn what to do during an earthquake. Taking the proper actions, such as “Drop, Cover, and Hold On”, can reduce your risk of death and injury. During earthquakes, drop to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it firmly. Be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops.

The area near the exterior walls of a building is the most dangerous place to be. Windows, facades and architectural details are often the first parts of the building to collapse. To stay away from this danger zone, stay inside if you are inside and outside if you are outside.

## COVER!



**DO NOT** Head for the Doorway In modern houses, doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house. You are safer taking cover under a sturdy table or desk.



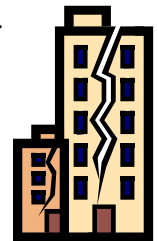
### *If you are...*

*Indoors:* Drop, cover, and hold on. During earthquakes, 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!

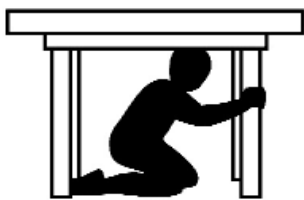
*In bed:* If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured staying where you are.

*In Apartment and Commercial Buildings :* Drop, cover, and hold on. Avoid windows and other hazards. Do not use elevators. Do not be surprised if sprinkler systems or fire alarms activate.

*Outdoors:* Move to a clear area if you can safely do so; avoid power lines, trees, signs, buildings, vehicles, and other hazards.



## HOLD ON!



*Driving:* Pull over to the side of the road, stop, and set the parking brake. Avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs and other hazards. Stay inside the

vehicle until the shaking is over. If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.

*In a stadium or theater:* Stay at your seat and protect your head and neck with your arms. Don't try to leave until the shaking is over. Then walk out slowly watching for anything that could fall in the aftershocks.



*Near the beach:* Drop, cover, and hold on until the shaking stops. Estimate how long the shaking lasts. If severe shaking lasts 20 seconds or more, immediately evacuate to high ground as a tsunami might have been generated by the earthquake. Move inland 2 Miles (3 kilometers) or to land that is at least 100 feet (30 meters) above sea level immediately. Don't wait for officials to issue a warning. Walk quickly, rather than drive, to avoid traffic, debris and other hazards.

*Below a dam:* Dams can fail during a major earthquake. Catastrophic failure is unlikely, but if you are downstream from a dam, you should know flood-zone information and have prepared an evacuation plan.

Adapted from Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country, published by the Southern California Earthquake Center and available online at [www.earthquakecountry.info/roots](http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots).



This issue of *Preparedness Minute* is brought to you by the Monterey County Health Department's Preparedness Program. For more information Contact:

Linell McCray  
Preparedness Coordinator—755-4739

Karen Smith  
Public Information Officer – 755-4639