

October 2012

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

When The Shaking Stops

October is earthquake awareness month in Idaho. Thousands of Idahoans will practice what to do during an earthquake at 10:18 am on 10/18/12 as part of the Great Idaho Shakeout. (<http://www.shakeout.org/idaho/>). Equally important to taking the correct personal safety measures during an earthquake are the actions taken after the quake. Knowing what to do before it happens will help reduce the potential effects of an earthquake.

Steppin' Out

Earthquakes can cause a wide variety of damage; but one commonality is that people may have to walk out of an affected area to get to a safe place. Footwear can play a critical role in evacuating a dangerous situation or even just traveling home. One simple step everyone can take today is to always keep a pair of shoes and a flashlight next to their bed at night. Earthquakes can break windows and knock out power. Getting out of bed to walk barefoot through broken glass in the dark is not the best way to start earthquake recovery. The right shoes can also make the difference during a daytime event. Exiting a damaged building could mean walking over rubble, through water and across uneven surfaces on the floor. Some dress or business shoes may not be suitable for walking over these types of surfaces and may even increase the chances of stumbling. Keep a pair of sturdy, comfortable shoes at work to make evacuation easier and safer. The trip home may also require these shoes. If roads are damaged and closed to vehicular traffic it could become a long walk over broken ground to check on loved ones and property.

Take Care To Take Care

The disaster may continue after the initial shaking has stopped. Be prepared to drop, cover and hold if aftershocks occur. Keeping the potential of additional shaking in mind, start on this list of things to do after an earthquake has occurred. Prioritize according to the situation, remembering to take care of yourself first.

- 1.) Check yourself for injuries and get first aid if necessary before helping injured or trapped people.
- 2.) If available, put on long pants, long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and gloves to protect against injury from the environment.
- 3.) Look quickly for damage in and around the immediate area, get everyone out of any unsafe building or outdoor environment.
- 4.) Help as needed others that may require special assistance such as children, elderly or the disabled.
- 5.) Check telephones to determine if they are operational. Make brief calls locally only for life threatening emergencies. Call your out of state contact to report in and get news out to other family members.
- 6.) Look for and extinguish small fires. Fire is the most common post-earthquake hazard.
- 7.) Listen to a portable, battery operated or hand crank radio for updated emergency information.
- 8.) Clean up spilled medications, bleach, gasoline or any other flammable liquids as soon as possible.
- 9.) Stay out of damaged buildings and watch for fallen power lines or damaged gas lines.
- 10.) Keep animals under direct control for their own safety as well as the safety of others.
- 11.) Open any closet or cabinet doors carefully. Contents likely have shifted and may fall out.
- 12.) When driving after an earthquake, anticipate traffic light outages, downed signs and road damage.

Pick A Place To Meet, Practice The Path To Get There

There is a chance that the members of a household will not be together during an earthquake. Some may be at work, school, shopping, or jogging. Where will they meet, especially if they cannot get into their home or neighborhood after the event? It is very important to pick a meeting place for this very reason. It should be a location that all family members are familiar with and could walk to if necessary. The weather in fall is great for outdoor activities, so this a good time to pack up a 72 hour kit for each family member in a backpack and practice walking to the meeting place. Don't forget to pack supplies for and include pets in this exercise. For more information on earthquake preparedness go to: [ACEM/How-to-Prepare-Resources/Earthquake](http://www.adacounty.org/ACEM/How-to-Prepare-Resources/Earthquake)

