

Earthquake 12-2005

It's that joyful time of year again when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. With all the gift giving, have you thought of **giving necessary food or emergency preparedness items** to those on your gift lists? Here's a brief list of ideas to get your mind rolling: sleeping bags, kerosene heaters and lanterns, Dutch ovens, camp stoves, extra cooking pots or a grill, a first-aid kit, an emergency backpack filled with necessary items, MREs, a one-month basic food supply from the dry pack cannery, baking mixes, a bucket of wheat, emergency flashlights and batteries, an emergency wind-up or battery-powered radio, a fire extinguisher, quilts or blankets, etc. As always, seek the Lord's guidance in making your decisions.

This month we will focus on **earthquake preparedness**, as that is one of the real threats we have in our area. The following information is taken from a booklet called "Earthquakes – What You Should Know When Living in Utah" which was prepared by the Utah Epicenter Earthquake Preparedness Information Center.

Why Prepare? – Most injuries, deaths and economic loss in an earthquake are due to man-made problems. These include damage to buildings and homes, roads and bridges, lifelines, and business and industry. Most of these problems can be avoided. **A pre-disaster hazard assessment** could help identify and correct problems ahead of time to reduce potential damage and the associated risk to life, property and the environment. Many of the techniques to reduce loss are simple and inexpensive. **Securing your water heater and other vulnerable articles**, preparing a **72-hour supply of essentials**, and **emergency planning for homes and businesses** can be done with minimal expense. The added cost to construct a new home or building with additional seismic bracing is also very low.

What To Do Before an Earthquake:

- **Secure fixtures** such as lights, cabinets, bookcases, and top-heavy objects to resist moving, coming loose, or falling during the shaking. Place large and heavy objects on lower shelves and securely fasten shelves to walls. Special care should be taken to remove hazardous objects from above sleeping areas. Do not hang plants in heavy pots that could swing free of hooks.
- **Store bottled goods, glass, vases, china, and other breakables** in low or closed cabinets and use non-skid padded matting, hold-fast putty, or Velcro whenever possible. (Use 'L' brackets & corner brackets of 'anodized' aluminum molding to attach tall or top-heavy furniture to the wall. Corner brackets or eye bolts can be used to secure items located a short distance from the wall. Attach a wooden or metal guardrail on open shelves to keep items from sliding or falling off. Fishing line can be used as a less visible means of securing items as a guardrail).
- **Check the electrical wiring and connections to gas appliances.** Defective electrical wiring, leaking gas, or inflexible connections are very dangerous in the event of an earthquake.
- **Develop a family plan** of what to do if an earthquake occurs while family members are at home, school, or work. Include a possible central meeting location for family members after the earthquake and an out-of-area contact person so other family members can find out information concerning their loved ones in the disaster area. It is usually easier to call out of a disaster area than it is to call into one.
- **Hold drills** so each member of your family knows what to do in an earthquake.
- **Locate master switch and shut-off valves** for all utilities and teach all responsible family members how to turn them off. Your local utility company can show you how.
- **Secure your water heater** by strapping it to the wall or bolting it to the floor. This will help prevent broken gas and water pipes and possible fires.

What To Do During An Earthquake:

- **Stay calm.** Having a plan you have practiced will help you to stay calm.
- **Stay put.** If you are inside, stay inside; if you're outdoors, stay there.
- **Take cover.**
 - **If indoors**, take cover under a desk, table, or bench, stand in a supported doorway, or along an inside wall or corner. Stay clear of windows, bookcases, china cabinets, mirrors, and fireplaces until the shaking stops. If no protection is available, drop to the floor and cover your head with your hands. Never try to restrain a pet during the shaking.
 - **If in the kitchen**, turn off the gas stove immediately and quickly take cover.
 - **If in a high-rise building**, get under a desk or table and stay away from windows and outside walls. Stay in the building on the same floor. Don't be surprised if the electricity goes out or if the fire alarm or sprinkler systems go on. **Do not use the elevators!**
 - **If in a crowded public place**, do not rush for the doorway since other people are going to have the same

idea. Move away from display shelves containing objects that fall.

- **If outdoors**, get into the open, away from buildings, trees, walls and power lines. The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside exterior doorways and close to outer walls. Stay in the open until the shaking stops.
- **If in a car**, pull over to the side of the road as quickly and safely as possible and stop. Never stop on top of or underneath a bridge or under power lines. Stay in your car until the earthquake is over. When you drive on, watch for hazards created by the earthquake, such as fallen objects, downed electrical wires, or broken or undetermined roadways.

What To Do After An Earthquake:

- **If you are at home**, make sure everyone is all right; don't move the seriously injured unless they're still in danger. Administer first aid if appropriate.
- **Do not use the telephone** unless there is a severe injury.
- **Only use your car** if a critical situation exists.
- **Keep children safe and relaxed.** This works best if you are calm and reassuring.
- **Wear sturdy shoes** in areas near fallen obstacles and broken glass.
- **Do not use matches**, candles or other open flame until you are sure there is no leaking gas. (Do not use battery-operated flashlights, equipment, or light fixtures until you are certain there is no gas leaking.)
- **Check gas, water, and electrical lines for damage.** If you smell gas, open windows and evacuate the house. To shut off gas in an emergency, use a large wrench. Attach the wrench to the valve key and turn in either direction until key is crosswise to the pipe, or closed. Don't turn it on without the help of a utility worker or plumber.
- **Turn off the gas** only if you suspect a leak or if the building is severely damaged.
- **Switch off the electricity** if there is damage to your house electrical wiring.
- **Do not touch downed power lines or broken appliances.**
- **Check water supply systems**, if water is leaking, shut off water at the main valve (inside your home or at the meter in the street). If you do not know how to shut off natural gas or other utilities, do not attempt to do it – get help.
- **Check your home for cracks and damage**, particularly the chimney or brick walls.
- **Do not use fireplaces** unless the chimney is undamaged and without cracks.
- **Leave homes or buildings** that have been damaged until a safety assessment can be made.
- **Use caution when cleaning up hazardous materials** (glass, spilled medicine, cleaning products, bleaches, gasoline, etc.) and beware of chemical reactions from mixed spills.
- **Listen to your portable radio** for official information concerning what to do, locations of emergency shelters, and the extent of damage in your area.
- **Be prepared for additional earthquake shocks called aftershocks.** Although most of these are smaller than the main shock, some may be large enough to cause additional damage or topple weakened structures.
- **After you have your own situation under control**, check on your neighbors.
- **If you are not at home**, getting back together is a high priority, but take care and time to do so safely.
- **If you are at work**, stay there (assist, if needed) until you know it's safe to leave.
- **Evaluate your situation:** Can you get home? Is that the best place to go? Listen to the radio, but make sure reports are confirmed before you react to the news.