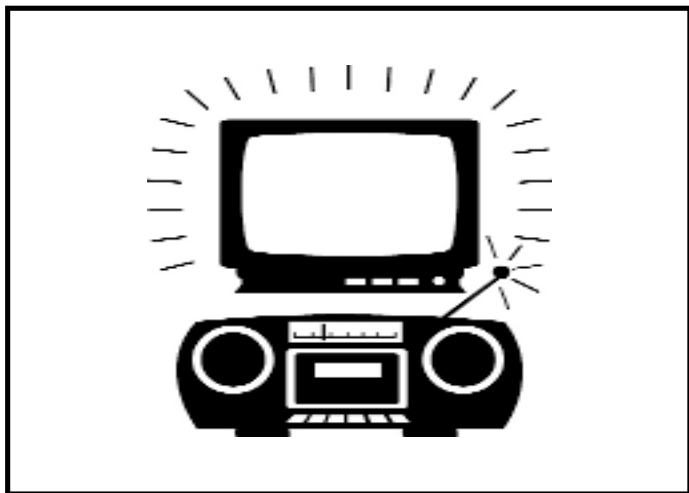




# FOCUS

## Communicate and Recover!



### When Safe, Continue to Follow Your Disaster Plan

Once you have met your and your family's immediate needs after a disaster, continue to follow the plan you prepared in advance. In earthquakes, aftershocks will continue to happen for several days or weeks. Some may be large enough to cause additional damage. Always be ready to drop, cover, and hold on.

Your recovery period can take several weeks to months or longer. Follow the steps on the back of this sheet to be safe and to minimize the long-term effects of the earthquake on your life.

Once you have recovered from the disaster, go back and do the things you did not do before, or do them more thoroughly. Learn from what happened during the disaster so you will be safe the next time.

### Check these websites

[www.cert-la.com](http://www.cert-la.com) (Community Emergency Response Team)

[www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov) (California Governor's Office of Emergency Services)

[www.earthquakecountry.info/roots](http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots) (Earthquake Country Alliance/Southern California Earthquake Center)

[www.fema.gov/about/process](http://www.fema.gov/about/process) (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) (American Red Cross)

Follow the seven steps to earthquake safety from Putting Down Roots in Earthquake County - [www.earthquakecountry.info/roots](http://www.earthquakecountry.info/roots).  
BEFORE: -----DURING:-----AFTER:-----

- #1**  
Identify and fix hazards in your home.
- #2**  
Create a disaster plan.
- #3**  
Create disaster supplies kits.
- #4**  
Identify and fix your building's weaknesses.
- #5**  
Drop, cover and hold on.
- #6**  
Check for injuries and damage.
- #7**  
When safe, continue to follow your disaster plan.

# AUGUST

## The First Days After the Disaster...

Use the information you put together in your disaster plan and the supplies you organized in your disaster supplies kits. Until you are sure there are no gas leaks, do not use open flames (lighters, matches, candles, or grills) or operate any electrical or mechanical device that can create a spark (light switches, generators, motor vehicles, etc.). Never use the following indoors: camp stoves, gas lanterns or heaters, gas or charcoal grills, or gas generators. These can release deadly carbon monoxide or be a fire hazard in aftershocks.

### Be in Communication

- Turn on your portable or car radio for information and safety advisories.
- Place all phones back on their cradles.
- Call your out-of-state contact, tell them your status, then stay off the phone. Emergency responders need to use the phone lines for life-saving communications.
- Check on your neighbors.

### Food and Water

- If power is off, plan meals to use up refrigerated and frozen foods first. If you keep the door closed, food in your freezer may be good for a couple of days.
- If your water is off, you can drink from water heaters, melted ice cubes, or canned vegetables. Avoid drinking water from swimming pools or spas.
- Listen to your radio for safety advisories.
- Do not eat or drink anything from open containers near shattered glass.

## The First Weeks After the Disaster...

This is a time of transition. Although in earthquakes aftershocks may continue, you will now work toward getting your life, your home and family, and your routines back in order. Emotional care and recovery are just as important as healing physical injuries and rebuilding a home. Make sure your home is safe to occupy and not in danger of collapse in aftershocks. If you were able to remain in your home or return to it after a few days, you will have a variety of tasks to accomplish:

- If your gas was turned off, you will need to arrange for the gas company to turn it back on.
- If the electricity went off and then came back on, check your appliances or electronic equipment for damage.
- If water lines broke, look for water damage.
- Locate or replace critical documents that may have been misplaced, damaged, or destroyed.
- Contact your insurance agent or company right away to begin your claims process.
- Contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to find out about financial assistance ([www.fema.gov/about/process/](http://www.fema.gov/about/process/))

## If You Cannot Stay in Your Home...

If your home is structurally unsafe or threatened by a fire or other hazard, you need to evacuate. However, shelters may be overcrowded and initially lack basic services, so do not leave home just because utilities are out of service or your home and its contents have suffered moderate damage.

If you evacuate, tell a neighbor and your family point-of-contact where you are going. As soon as possible, set up an alternative mailing address with the Post Office. Take the following, if possible, when you evacuate:

- Personal disaster supplies kits
- Supply of water, food, and snacks
- Blanket, pillow, and air mattress or sleeping pad
- Change of clothing and a jacket
- Towel and washcloth
- Diapers, formula, food, and other supplies for infants
- A few family pictures or other small comfort items
- Personal identification and copies of household and health insurance information.

Do not bring to a shelter:

- Pets (service animals for people with disabilities are allowed—bring food for them); have a plan for your pets in advance
- Large quantities of unnecessary clothing or other personal items
- Valuables that might be lost, stolen, or take up needed space

Once a presidential declaration has been issued, FEMA may activate the “Assistance for Individuals and Households Program.” This program includes:

- Home-repair cash grants; the maximum Federal grant available was \$26,200 in 2005
- Housing Assistance in the form of reimbursement for short-term lodging expenses at a hotel
- Rental assistance for as long as 18 months in the form of cash payment
- If no other housing is available, FEMA may provide mobile homes or other temporary housing

*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).*

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EMERGENCY SURVIVAL PROGRAM  
[www.espfocus.org](http://www.espfocus.org)

This focus sheet is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase home, neighborhood, business and school emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and representatives from

Contra Costa, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties; Southern California Edison; the Southern California Earthquake Center and the American Red Cross assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.