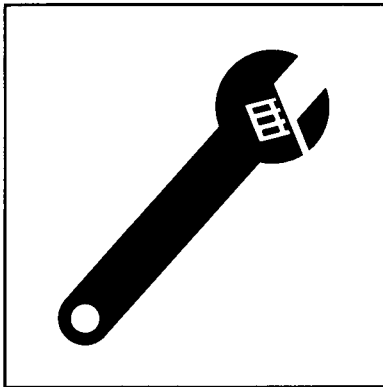


ESP FOCUS



TURN ONS AND TURN OFFS



WHY

Recent seismic events such as the magnitude 5.9 Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987, the magnitude 5.8 Sierra Madre earthquake in 1991, as well as the recent magnitude 6.1 Joshua Tree and magnitude 6.5 Big Bear quakes have shown us that even moderate temblors can damage gas, electrical, and water lines.

Knowing HOW to turn off your utilities after a damaging earthquake can reduce the threat of death, injury, and property damage.

Equally important is knowing WHEN to turn off your utilities. After the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake, more than 21,000 residents turned off their gas even though they did not have a gas leak. After the 1991 Sierra Madre temblor, more than 700 Southern California Gas Company customers needlessly turned off their gas.

Shut off the gas at the meter **only if you hear or smell a leak. Do not automatically turn it off.** Only a qualified plumber or service representative from a gas company should turn on gas once it has been shut off at the meter.

SEPTEMBER

HOW

Tips on how to turn off the gas, electricity, and water follow. Be sure to show all family members and immediate neighbors where utility shut-offs are located and how to turn them off. Keep necessary tools nearby to turn off valves.

Gas Shut-Off

1. Locate main gas shut-off (usually outside house) and all pilot lights.
2. Clear the area around the shut-off valve for quick and easy access in case of emergency.
3. Attach a wrench (or specialty tool for turning off gas and water) to a pipe next to the shut-off valve or in another easily accessible, but hidden location.
4. Paint the shut-off valve with white or fluorescent paint so that it can be located easily in an emergency. Grease the valve to prevent rusting.
5. Learn and practice how to turn off utilities. If you are concerned about your ability to turn off the main gas shut-off valve or are unsure if it is in proper working order (indication of rust, etc.) or do not know how to re-light your pilot lights, contact your local gas company. They can send a service representative to your house to show you the proper procedure and check the valve and pilot lights to be sure they operate properly.

Electrical Shut-Off

1. Locate main electrical shut-off.
2. Practice turning off the electricity. Your house may be equipped with fuses or circuit breakers. If your house has fuses, you will find a knife switch handle that should be marked "MAIN". If your house has circuit breakers, you may need to open the metal door of the breaker box to reveal the circuit breakers (never remove the metal cover). The main circuit breakers should be clearly marked showing on and off positions. If you have any sub-panels adjacent to the main fuse or breaker panel or in other parts of the house, be safe and shut them off too in an emergency.

NOTE: All responsible family members should be shown how to turn off utilities in case of emergency.

Water Shut-Off

1. Locate the main water service pipe into your house (probably in the front at the basement level). You will see a gate valve on the pipe. If you know you have leaks after an earthquake, you can shut off all water in your house with this valve. You may wish to paint the valve so it is easy to find in an emergency.
2. Practice shutting off the water. You can shut off all water to your property by finding the water meter box (usually at the street or sidewalk). Open the cover with a long screwdriver or specialty tool. The valve can be operated by a special tool or with a crescent wrench. If this box is inaccessible or you cannot find it, call your local water department.

Extracted and adapted from "Home Earthquake Preparedness Guide," developed by EQE Incorporated for the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project.

September 1991 Focus

Adjustable Wrench

Contact a SCEPP office or county ESP coordinator for a September 1991 Focus Sheet.

This action sheet is produced as part of the Earthquake Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase individual and home earthquake preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles and is coordinated by the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project and representatives from Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.



Things to do in '92



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