

United States Embassy, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Message for U.S. citizens
Earthquake Preparedness Tips

May 28, 2014

In light of the May 21st earthquake in the Bay of Bengal (felt by many in Dhaka), the Embassy is encouraging citizens to review their own personal security plans and has prepared a list of tips to help individuals and families prepare for earthquakes and other emergency situations.

Household and Family:

Talk with your family about potential disasters and why it's necessary to prepare for them. Involve each member of your family in the planning process. By showing them simple steps that can increase their safety, you can help reduce their anxiety about emergencies.

- Make sure everyone knows where to find your disaster supply kit and Go-bags.
- Have a flashlight and a pair of shoes under everyone's bed in case there is an earthquake during the night. Use a plastic bag tied to the leg of the bed to keep these items from moving during an earthquake.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Try to identify two escape routes.
- Locate the gas main and other utilities and make sure family members know when and how to turn them off.
- Practice your evacuation routes, Drop, Cover & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll drills.
- Teach each member of your family how to use a fire extinguisher.
- Take into account the special needs of children, seniors or people with disabilities, family members that don't speak English and pets.

Home Safety:

During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. However, there are simple steps you can take to make your home safer. Start by viewing each room with a "disaster eye" and identify potential hazards – bookshelves that could tip over in an earthquake and block exits or heavy objects that could fall and cause injury.

- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and change batteries every 6 months.
- Move beds away from windows.
- Move mirrors and heavy pictures away from couches or places where people sit.
- Clear hallways and exits for easy evacuation.
- Store heavy items on the lowest shelves.
- Keep fire extinguishers on each level and know how and when to use them.
- Store flammable or highly reactive chemicals (such as bleach, ammonia, and paint thinners) securely and separate from each other.
- Secure pictures and wall hangings and use restraints to secure heavy items such as bookcases and file cabinets.
- Know how and when to switch off your utilities.
- Ensure that all window safety bars have emergency releases.

Food:

When a disaster occurs, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. Store enough emergency food to provide for your family for at least 3 days.

- Store food items that are familiar, rather than buying special emergency food. Consider any dietary restrictions and preferences you may have.
- Ideal foods are: Shelf-stable (no refrigeration required), low in salt, and do not require cooking (e.g. canned fruit, vegetables, peanut butter, jam, low-salt crackers, cookies, cereals, nuts, dried fruit, canned soup or meats, juices and non-fat dry milk).
- Mark a rotation date on any food container that does not already have an expiration date on the package.
- Include baby food and formula or other diet items for infants or seniors.
- Store the food in airtight, pest-resistant containers in a cool, dark place.

- Most canned foods can safely be stored for at least 18 months. Low acid foods like meat products, fruits or vegetables will normally last at least 2 years. Use dry products, like boxed cereal, crackers, cookies, dried milk or dried fruit within six months.
- After a power outage, refrigerated food will stay cold longer if you keep the door closed. Food should generally be consumed within 4 hours. Food in the freezer will normally remain safe for 2 days.

Water:

In a disaster, water supplies may be cut off or contaminated. Store enough water for everyone in your family to last **for at least 3 days**.

- Store one gallon of water per person, per day. Three gallons per person per day will give you enough to drink and for limited cooking and personal hygiene. Remember to plan for pets.

First Aid Kit:

In any emergency, you or a family member may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. Keep the following basic first aid supplies so you are prepared to help when someone is hurt.

- Two pairs of disposable gloves
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection
- Burn ointment
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant
- Scissors
- Over-the-counter medicines such as Aspirin or other pain reliever, laxative, anti-diarrhea medication
- Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine, or asthma inhaler
- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose monitoring equipment or blood pressure monitors

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Emergency services for U.S. citizens are available at all times. [U.S. Embassy Dhaka](#) is located at Madani Avenue, Baridhara, Dhaka, Bangladesh 1212, and by telephone at (88) (02) 882-3805 during regular hours. If you are a U.S. citizen in need of urgent assistance, the emergency number for the U.S. Embassy is (88) (02) 885-5500. For after-hours emergency services, please press "0" and ask for the duty officer. You may be asked to explain your emergency; this is to better direct your call.

American Citizens Services
U.S. Embassy
Dhaka, Bangladesh