

# Prepare Your Home for an Earthquake

## Short Term

- Store breakable and heavy objects on lower shelves. Also, use latches on cabinet doors.
- Keep all flammable and hazardous liquids, such as paints, pest sprays and cleaning products, in cabinets or secured on low shelves.
- Know where your fire extinguishers are and how to use them.
- Test smoke alarms.
- Make sure you and your family know all the “safe spots” in the home, such as against inside walls, as well as the “danger spots” in the home such as windows, mirrors, hanging objects and fireplaces.
- Program important phone numbers into all family members phones (adults and children).
- Store a pair of shoes, flashlight, and whistle near or under your bed.

## Long Term

- Learn where electricity, water, and other master switches are located and how to use them.
- Make a family communications plan.
- Conduct practice drills. Physically place yourself and your children in the safe locations in the home.
- Share your plans with those who take care of your children, pets, or home.
- Learn first aid and CPR through your local Red Cross or other community organization.
- Walk your compound and identify possible risks.

# Prepare Your Children

## **Infants and Toddlers**

For infants and toddlers, special emphasis should be placed on making their environment as safe as possible.

Cribs should be placed away from windows. Secured bookcases and shelves that could slide or topple. A minimum of a 72-hour supply of extra water, formula, bottles, food, juices, clothing, disposable diapers, baby wipes, and prescribed medications should be stored where it is most likely to be accessible after an earthquake. Also keep an extra diaper bag with these items in your car.

## **Preschool and School-Age Children**

By age three or so, children can understand what an earthquake is and how to get ready for one. Take the time to explain what causes earthquakes in terms they'll understand. Include your children in family planning for earthquake safety. Conduct drills and review safety procedures every six months.

Show children the safest places to be in each room when an earthquake hits. Also, show them all possible exits from each room. Use sturdy tables to teach children to Drop, Cover, and Hold On. Teach children what to do wherever they are during an earthquake (at school, in a building, or outdoors). Make sure children's emergency cards at school are up-to-date. Although children should not turn off any utility valves, it's important that they know what gas smells like. Advise children to tell an adult if they smell gas after an earthquake.