



## Household Hazard Hunt

Being prepared for an emergency includes making your home safe for you and your family. Any household item that can move, fall, break or cause a fire, is a home hazard.

The Connect and Prepare Household Hazard Hunt is a helpful way to identify items in your home that may be a risk to you during or after an emergency – and how to eliminate these potential risks by moving, removing or securing them.

Make this a family activity!

### Hot Water Tank



**The Risk:** Check your hot water tank. During an earthquake, unsecured water heaters can fall over, rupturing water and gas connections. This can cause damage, fires, and floods.

**The Fix:** Secure your hot water tank to wall studs with steel strapping

**Room:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP:** In multi-storey buildings, work with your building manager or strata council on how best to “hazard-proof” your space. Find out who has 24/7 emergency access to, and responsibility for, centrally controlled utilities.

### Large Appliances



**The Risk:** Heavy appliances such as fridges, ovens, washers and dryers, could move enough to damage or rupture gas or electrical lines during shaking.

**The Fix:** Restrain large appliances by locking their wheels and securing to wall studs with earthquake appliance straps or angle brackets. If you have gas appliances, use flexible gas lines to allow for a small amount of movement during an earthquake.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Small Appliances



**The Risk:** Small appliances and electronics can fly off the shelf during a major earthquake, causing damage or injury.

**The Fix:** Secure microwave ovens, TVs, computers and other electronics and small appliances with anti-skid pads or Velcro.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Bookcases and Display Cabinets



**The Risk:** Tall furniture such as bookcases and display cabinets can fall over, hurting you and your family, or blocking exits.

**The Fix:** Affix bookcases and display cabinets to wall studs with metal brackets or use nylon strapping. Store heavy items on bottom shelves.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP:** If it's taller than it is wide, secure it.

### Cupboards



**The Risk:** Doors on your kitchen, bathroom and workroom cupboards may not stay closed during heavy shaking.

**The Fix:** Place heavy items on bottom shelves. To prevent cupboard doors from flying open, install safety latches, which can be purchased at local hardware stores.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

# CONNECT & PREPARE



## □ Shelving/Open Storage



**The Risk:** Breakables or heavy objects such as boxes, tools and sports equipment that are kept on high or open shelves, may fall off, damaging your home and family members.

**The Fix:** Install railings or cargo netting to keep objects on shelves if your house shifts. Place heavier items on lower shelves.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

## □ Mirrors and Heavily-Framed Pictures



**The Risk:** Mirrors and heavily-framed pictures located over beds and couches can fall during an earthquake, causing injury.

**The Fix:** For safety, it's best to remove these items from walls where your family spends most of their time and place them elsewhere. You can secure picture frames with special hooks from local hardware store. Larger and heavier-framed pictures should be secured directly to wall studs.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

## □ Lamps and Hanging Plants



**The Risk:** Lamps and hanging plants located close to windows, may swing and break the glass during heavy shaking.

**The Fix:** Consider moving them to a different location. Secure hanging plants by closing the opening in the hook with lock wire, and make sure the hook is directly screwed into a ceiling stud.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

## □ Chemicals and Cleaners



**The Risk:** Chemicals and cleaners that are accessible to children and pets are a hazard. Spilled flammable liquids can easily start a fire.

**The Fix:** Move chemicals and cleaners to a locked cabinet and away from high, open shelving and food/water storage areas. Store all flammable liquids such as paint or solvents away from heat sources, in an outside building if possible. Keep away from children.

**Rooms:** \_\_\_\_\_

## □ Chimney and Roof



**The Risk:** A poorly-maintained masonry chimney could crumble and fall through an unsupported roof.

**The Fix:** Inspect your chimney and roof for any loose bricks and tiles. Determine if plywood should be installed to provide extra support for your roof. Reinforce the ceiling surrounding the chimney with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood nailed to the beams in the attic floor. This will provide protection from falling bricks that might break through the roof.

## □ Windows



**The Risk:** Windows may shatter in a major earthquake, causing broken glass and injuries.

**The Fix:** Reinforce windows. Consider adding a safety film to the inside of all windows greater than 60 centimeters (2 square feet) in size. This does not prevent cracking, but it does keep the glass from falling and causing injury. If you cannot add safety film, thick curtains and blinds may also offer protection from flying glass.

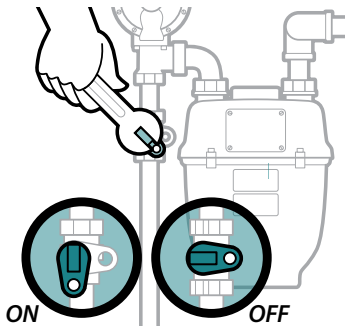
# CONNECT & PREPARE



## Utilities

It's important for everyone in your household to know where utilities are located and how to shut them off safely.

Illustrations courtesy of PreparedBC, [gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC](http://gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC)



### □ Gas Shut-Off

**The Risk:** A major earthquake can cause your home's gas to leak, which could cause an explosion. If you smell gas (rotten egg smell), hear a leak (hissing noise), or if there is a fire nearby after a major earthquake, you need to turn off your gas.

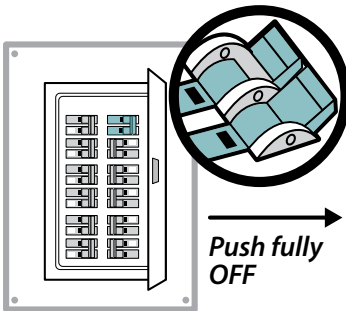
**The Fix:** Make sure your family members know where the gas shut-off is located and how to properly shut it off. Make sure the gas valve will turn. It only takes a quarter turn using a household wrench in either direction to shut off gas. Keep a wrench by the valve so it is always accessible.

Do NOT practise shutting off your natural gas meter. ONLY turn off if you smell gas. If you shut it off only a licensed gas contractor is permitted to turn it back on. If you do smell gas, you can turn it off with a wrench, giving the valve a ¼ turn left or right so it is at a right angle to the pipe.

Rooms/Areas: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP:** Always contact a qualified professional to turn your gas back on.

### □ Electrical Boxes



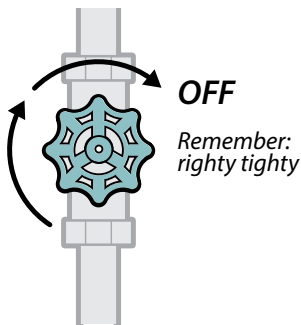
**The Risk:** Electricity in your home could cause shocks or fire in the event of flooding or an earthquake.

**The Fix:** If power is disrupted during a disaster, turn off the main circuit breaker, as well as individual circuits or fuses, to lessen the risk of fire damage if no one is home when the power system is restored. When power is restored, turn on the main breaker first, then the circuits individually. (Turn fuses to the left to unscrew.)

Rooms/Areas: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP:** Clearly label the on-off positions for the water, electricity and gas valves. Keep the correct wrench nearby or taped/tied to the shut off valve.

### □ Water Shut-Off



**The Risk:** Bursting pipes or damage caused by earthquakes can cause flooding. It is important that everyone in your family knows where the shut-off valve is and how to turn off the water line if necessary. Your valve may be rusted open or it may only partially close.

**The Fix:** Identify the shut-off valve for the water line that enters your home, and make sure that it can be completely shut off. Check it periodically and replace if necessary.

Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: PrepareYourself.ca "Prepare Yourself: A Guide to Emergency Preparedness in the Capital Region"

A collaborative project of Building Resilient Neighbourhoods and the City of Victoria

