

Minimize Home Hazards

Go through your property and imagine what could happen during an earthquake, flood or other emergency.

While checking for hazards, identify safe places in each room of your house, as well as danger zones (e.g. near windows, swinging doors, tall or hanging objects, chimneys or gas appliances).



Appliances

- ❑ Secure refrigerators, top and bottom, with plumber's tape (perforated metal strapping). Screw one end into a wall stud and fasten the other to a structural component (not the coils).
- ❑ Secure your water heater. If there is more than 1-2 inches between your tank and the wall, screw a wooden block (e.g. 2x4) to the wall studs to create a snug fit. Also fasten the tank to the wall using heavy gauge metal bands or nylon strapping.
- ❑ Secure gas appliances such as stoves or clothes dryers to a wall stud.
- ❑ Secure wood-burning stoves based on manufacturer instructions.
- ❑ If you must use castors or glides on appliances, lock the wheels or place a wedge under the front wheels.



Furnishings

- ❑ Use braided metal cable, chain or angle brackets to secure top-heavy furniture such as bookcases, china cabinets and shelves to a wall anchor. Always screw wall anchors into a stud (nails can pull out).
- ❑ Move beds away from chimneys, windows and tall furniture (unless secured). Closed curtains and blinds will help stop broken window glass from falling on beds.
- ❑ Place heavy or breakable objects on bottom shelves, or attach a guardrail to keep items from falling off.
- ❑ Secure electronics, small appliances and other items with Velcro or anti-skid pads (or dental wax or double-sided tape for more delicate items).
- ❑ Move hanging plants and lamps away from windows; they may swing wildly during an earthquake. Screw hooks directly into studs.
- ❑ Don't hang mirrors or heavy artwork above couches, beds or exits. Instead of picture hangers, use long-shanked, open eyehooks that penetrate the wall stud.
- ❑ Consider installing safety latches on kitchen, bathroom and workroom cabinets.
- ❑ In flood-prone areas, don't store irreplaceable items on lower floors.

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Minimize Home Hazards (*cont.*)



Utilities

Teach all adults and older children in the home where the utilities are located and how to shut them off. Post instructions and store any necessary tools nearby.

- ❑ **Electricity:** Know how to shut off electricity to the house and individual appliances / rooms. Mark all switches.
- ❑ **Watermain:** Replace valve if it is rusted open or will only partially close.

- ❑ **Natural gas:** It only takes a quarter turn of the valve either way to shut off the gas, so only test it with a one-eighth turn. ***Gas must be turned on by the gas company. Never turn it on yourself.***

Only shut off your gas if you smell the warning odour (rotten eggs) or notice a large use of gas on the meter. If you do smell gas, immediately get everyone out and away, open windows and doors, and shut off the gas.



Chemicals and Fuels

- ❑ Keep poisons, chemicals and solvents where they are less likely to spill, ideally in a locked cabinet. Keep away from stored water and food, children and pets.
- ❑ If possible, store all flammable liquids in an outside building. In flood-prone areas, do not keep in the basement.
- ❑ Store propane or other fuels away from the house. Keep tanks and valves in good repair.



Building and Property

- ❑ Secure anything that may be blown around or torn loose, both indoors and outdoors.
- ❑ Prune rotting branches and cut down dead trees. Contact BC Hydro to remove tree limbs around power lines.
- ❑ Keep roof tiles, chimney, masonry and other exterior elements in good repair.
- ❑ Check the drainage around your house to reduce the risk of basement flooding after a heavy rain.
- ❑ Keep your car in the garage to protect against damage.
- ❑ Check the foundation, cripple walls, posts, beams, chimney and roof to ensure they are structurally sound. Cracks and sagging are telltale signs. Hire a professional if you don't have the skills to do so yourself.



Fire and Carbon Monoxide

- ❑ Keep a working carbon monoxide detector on each level if you use natural gas.
- ❑ Keep a working smoke alarm on each level and in every bedroom/sleeping area.
- ❑ Keep a fire extinguisher on each level, including the kitchen, and make sure adults and older children know how to use them.
- ❑ If you are in an apartment or hotel, find out where the fire alarms and emergency exits are located.