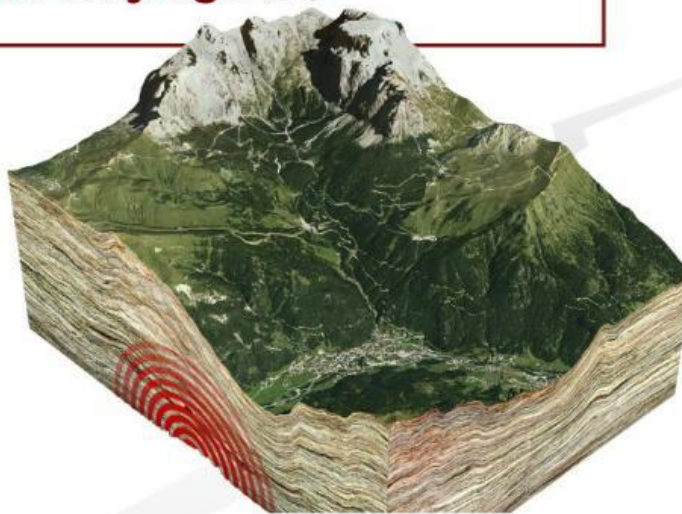


Earthquake Preparedness: Understanding Risk and Staying Safe

1 An earthquake is a natural event that happens when there is a sudden movement deep inside the Earth. This movement causes the ground to shake, sometimes very strongly, and it can last for only a few seconds or for a longer time. Although earthquakes are a natural part of the Earth's processes, they can be extremely dangerous for people. Many injuries happen not because of the shaking itself, but because of falling objects such as walls, glass, furniture, or parts of buildings. In addition, earthquakes often cause other serious problems, including fires, landslides, and even large ocean waves known as tsunamis. For this reason, understanding earthquakes and knowing how to prepare for them is very important.



2 One of the most challenging things about earthquakes is that they cannot be predicted. This means people may not have any warning before the ground begins to shake. Because of this, preparation becomes the most important way to reduce danger. People who live in areas where earthquakes may occur should learn about the risks in their region and think carefully about what they would do in an emergency. Even in places where earthquakes are less common, it is still useful to have basic knowledge, as earthquakes can sometimes happen unexpectedly.

3 A key part of earthquake preparedness is learning a simple safety action called "Drop, Cover, and Hold On." This action is widely recommended because it helps protect the most vulnerable parts of the body, especially the head and neck. When the ground starts to shake, a person should drop down onto their hands and knees. This position helps prevent falling and allows the person to move if necessary. Next, they should cover their head and neck with their arms, and if possible, move under a strong table or desk. Finally, they should hold on to that piece of furniture until the shaking stops. If there is no table nearby, it is still important to stay low and protect the head while staying away from windows or heavy objects. Practicing this action regularly can make a big difference, because in an emergency, people often react quickly without thinking.

4 Another important part of preparation is making sure that people can stay connected after an earthquake. Communication systems such as phone lines or electricity may stop working, so it is helpful to plan ahead. For example, people can keep backup batteries or power banks for their mobile phones. A battery-powered radio can also be useful for receiving important news and instructions. In addition, forming a small support group with family members, friends, or neighbors can help people feel safer and more organized during a difficult situation. When people work together, they can share information, provide help, and recover more quickly.

Preparing an emergency kit is also a practical step that can improve safety. This kit should include basic items such as clean water, food that does not need cooking, a flashlight, extra batteries, and a first aid kit. Important documents, such as identification or medical information, should also be kept in a safe and easy-to-reach place. Having these items ready can save valuable time and reduce stress when an emergency happens.

Earthquake Preparedness: Understanding Risk and Staying Safe



5 When an earthquake begins, it is natural for people to feel afraid or confused. However, staying calm is one of the most important things a person can do. Panic can lead to poor decisions, such as running outside during strong shaking, which can be very dangerous. If a person is inside a building, they should stay there and immediately follow the “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” method. They should move away from windows, glass, and objects that might fall. If they are outside, they should move to an open area away from buildings, trees, and power lines, and remain there until the shaking stops. If they are in a vehicle, they should stop in a safe place and stay inside the vehicle, avoiding bridges or tall structures. Each situation requires slightly different actions, but the main goal is always to protect the body and avoid danger.

6

After the earthquake ends, the situation may still be unsafe. Smaller earthquakes, called aftershocks, often follow the main earthquake. These aftershocks can cause additional damage, especially to buildings that are already weakened. Because of this, people should remain alert and be ready to protect themselves again if necessary. The first step after the shaking stops is to check for injuries. A person should check themselves and then help others if possible. Basic first aid can be very important in this situation.



7 It is also necessary to look for possible dangers in the environment. Fires may start due to broken gas lines or electrical problems, and buildings may be damaged and unsafe to enter. Broken glass and other sharp objects can cause injuries, so people should move carefully. Listening to official information is very important at this stage. A battery-powered radio or mobile phone can provide updates and instructions from authorities, helping people make safe decisions. In some cases, people may need to leave their homes. If this happens, they should take their emergency kit and follow safe routes. Roads and bridges may be damaged, so it is important to avoid risky areas. Communication with others may still be difficult, but sending text messages instead of making phone calls can be more effective because it uses less network capacity. Staying in contact with family or members of a support group can provide emotional support and help people stay informed.

Overall, earthquake preparedness is about knowledge, planning, and practice. While it is impossible to stop an earthquake from happening, it is possible to reduce its impact. People who are prepared are more likely to stay safe, avoid injuries, and recover more quickly. Preparation also helps reduce fear, because understanding what to do can give people a sense of control even in a dangerous situation.

In conclusion, earthquakes are powerful natural events that can cause serious damage, but their effects can be reduced through careful preparation. By learning about the risks, practicing safe actions, preparing emergency supplies, and staying calm during an emergency, people can protect themselves and others. Being prepared is not only a practical step but also a responsible one, as it helps build safer communities for everyone.

Adapted from the American National Red Cross (2022)



Activity 2: Emergency Drill Walkthrough

Group:

Section:

Date:

Emergency Drill Walkthrough

What to Do: Before

What to Do: During

What to Do: After