

STEP 1—Identify Potential Hazards in Your Home and Begin to Fix Them

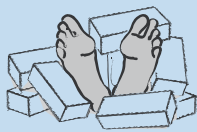
The first step to earthquake safety is to look around your home and identify all unsecured objects that might fall during shaking.

START NOW by moving heavy furniture, such as bookcases, away from beds, couches, and other places where people sit or sleep! Also make sure that exit paths are clear of clutter.

Simple and inexpensive things that you can do now will help reduce injuries and protect belongings in a quake. Most hardware and home-improvement stores carry earthquake-safety straps, fasteners, and adhesives that you can easily use to secure your belongings.

The following tips describe simple solutions to situations in your home that could be dangerous during earthquake shaking. If these have not yet been done in your home, take action now:

Don't be fooled!— Myth number 4



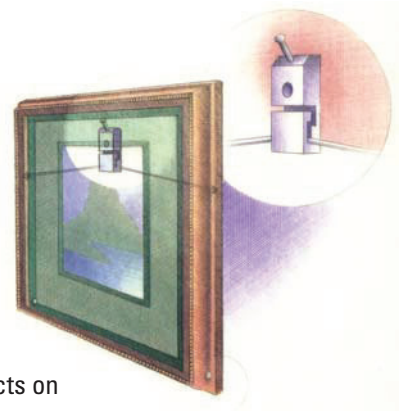
“QUAKE INJURIES ARE ALL FROM COLLAPSING BUILDINGS.”

Many people think that all injuries in earthquakes are caused by collapsing buildings. Actually, most injuries in quakes are from objects that break or fall on people. For example, in the 1994 magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake, 55% of quake-related injuries were caused by falling objects, such as televisions, pictures and mirrors, and heavy light fixtures.

Hanging objects

Art and other heavy objects hung on walls may fall, and glass in pictures and mirrors may shatter.

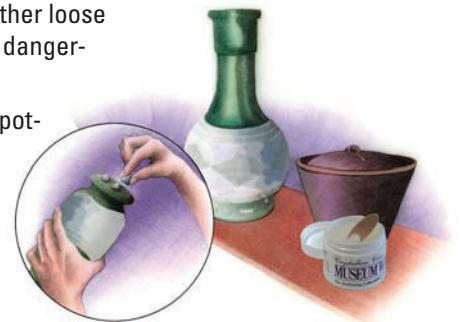
- ❑ Place only soft art, such as unframed posters or rugs and tapestries, above beds or sofas.
- ❑ Hang mirrors, pictures, and other hanging objects on closed hooks.



Objects on open shelves and tabletops

Collectibles and other loose objects can become dangerous projectiles.

- ❑ Hold collectibles, pottery, and lamps in place by using removable earthquake putty, museum wax, or quake gel.
- ❑ Store heavy items and breakables on lower shelves.



Furniture

Tall, top-heavy furniture, such as bookcases and entertainment centers, may fall and injure you.

- ❑ Secure both top corners of tall furniture into a wall stud, not just to the drywall.
- ❑ Flexible-mount fasteners, such as nylon straps, allow furniture independent movement from the wall, reducing strain on studs.



✓ Check the boxes!

Water and gas pipes

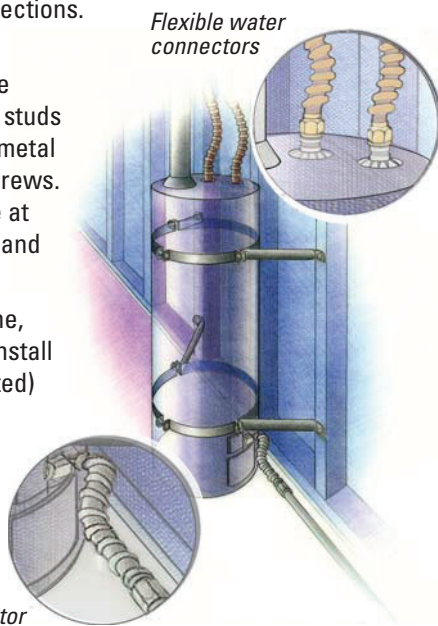
Water or gas pipes anywhere in your home can break. Water leaks can cause extensive damage, and gas leaks are a major fire hazard.

- ❑ Have a plumber evaluate, replace, and properly secure rusted or worn water and gas pipes.
- ❑ If not already done, have a plumber replace rigid gas connections to water heaters, stoves, dryers, and other gas appliances with flexible (corrugated) stainless-steel gas connectors (see below).
- ❑ Excess-flow gas-shutoff valves for individual appliances, which stop gas flow in case of a catastrophic leak, are also now available for use with flexible connectors.

Water heaters

Unsecured water heaters may fall over, rupturing rigid water and gas connections.

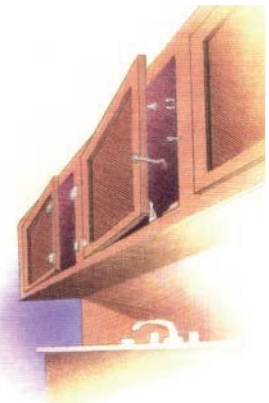
- ❑ Water heaters are required to be anchored to wall studs or masonry with metal straps and lag screws. Kits are available at hardware stores and home centers.
- ❑ If not already done, have a plumber install flexible (corrugated) copper water connectors.



In the kitchen

Glassware and china may crash to the floor if cabinet doors are unsecured. Gas appliances can shift, rupturing their gas connections.

- ❑ Secure all cabinets doors, especially those overhead, to help prevent contents from falling out during quakes. Use latches designed for child proofing or earthquake or boat safety.
- ❑ Secure refrigerators and other major appliances to walls using earthquake appliance straps.



In the garage or utility room

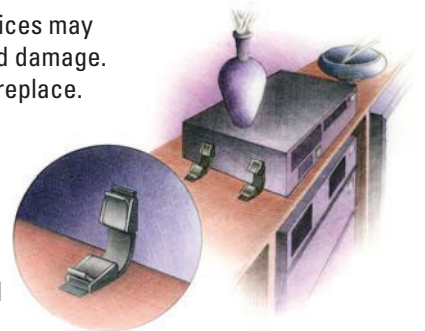
Items stored in garages and utility rooms can fall, causing injuries, damage, and hazardous spills or leaks.

- ❑ Move flammable or hazardous materials to low areas that are secure.
- ❑ Ensure that items stored above or beside vehicles cannot fall, damaging or blocking them.

Home electronics

Large electronic devices may fall, causing injuries and damage. They are also costly to replace.

- ❑ Secure TVs, stereos, computers, and microwave ovens with flexible nylon straps and buckles for easy removal and relocation.



For more information on making your home safer in earthquakes go to:
<http://quake.abag.ca.gov/housing/>
<http://quakeinfo.org/>

Move on to STEP 2. ➔