



## **Emergency Readiness Guidelines for Staff Members**

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## Introduction

The goals of JHPIEGO's Emergency Readiness and Response Plan are to:

1. Promote greater security awareness among all staff members
2. Assist country offices in preparing for and responding to events that threaten staff safety and operational security
3. Provide information and guidance to Baltimore Emergency Staff
4. Facilitate clear and efficient communications between Baltimore and the country offices in times of crisis

The plan has three components:

1. The Emergency Readiness Guidelines for Staff Members, which provides information and advice on increasing individual security
2. The [Policies and Procedures for Responding to Country Office Emergencies](#), which outlines the measures the country offices and Baltimore will take to prepare for and respond to most medical and security crises in the field
3. The [Duty Officer](#) system, which ensures that the country offices and staff members on travel will be able to contact Baltimore 24 hours a day and seven days a week

Copies of all documents are available on the Global Operations website or from the Global Operations Support Division in Baltimore. All staff are encouraged to make comments or suggestions.

The following information is intended to help to individual staff members to increase their ability to prepare for emergencies and raise their level of personal security, but it is not a substitute for good judgement. Staff are urged to use their common sense in all circumstances, and to avoid taking unnecessary risks with their safety.

## Family Emergencies

In the event of a family emergency, refer to the [International Assignment Policies](#) section of the Human Resources Office page on Jwatch for information on leave and travel.

## Definitions

*Baltimore-based staff:* An employee of Johns Hopkins University (JHU) who normally works in the Baltimore office.

*Consultant:* A private contractor hired by JHPIEGO to perform a specific task.

*Expatriate:* A JHU employee assigned to an overseas office who is a citizen of the United States and that employee's accompanying family members.

*JHPIEGO employee:* An employee who is paid by JHPIEGO Corporation. This group generally includes local employees (see definition below).

*JHU employee:* An employee who is paid by Johns Hopkins University. This group generally includes expatriates, third-country nationals (see definition below) and Baltimore-based staff and consultants.

*Local employee:* A JHPIEGO employee who is a citizen of the country in which the JHPIEGO office of her/his assignment is located.

*Third-country national:* A JHU employee who is neither a local employee nor an expatriate.

## Before Leaving Home...<sup>1</sup>

If you travel often or will be living overseas, compile a list of the following information. Make a copy to leave with someone you trust. If you are moving overseas, keep one with you.

- Passport number, date and place of issue and expiration date
- Bank account numbers, including bank address and ABA Number or Swift Code
- Credit card numbers and phone numbers to call in case you lose the cards
- Insurance policy information
- Car information, including registration, serial and tag numbers and drivers license information
- Your Social Security Number
- Current prescriptions, including eyeglasses
- Contents and location(s) of safe deposit box(es)
- Debts and assets
- Professional and personal contacts

In addition, you should leave in a safe deposit box or with someone you trust:

- Powers of attorney
- Vital documents, such as marriage and birth certificates, social security cards and naturalization papers
- Deeds, leases and mortgages
- Investment information
- Insurance policies (life, car, home, etc.)
- Inventory of your personal belongings and/or the contents of your house

If you do not have a will, you should prepare one. Leave the original will with your lawyer or the executor.

You should have a supply of extra passport photographs on hand for visas or a new passport, as well as a notarized photocopy of your passport (it may suffice in an emergency). You should also obtain an international drivers license before you leave for your assignment.

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, obtain a letter from your doctor describing the condition and any prescription medications you are

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the *Direct Communication Project, Paper No. 10*, US Department of State website, [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

taking, including the generic names of prescribed drugs. Any medications that you take with you should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled. You should check with your embassy to make sure that the meds you are taking are not considered illegal. You should also obtain a complete health report from your doctor.

## Personal Safety

### Administrative precautions

- If you are posted to a country office, will be staying for more than two weeks, or will be traveling in rural areas, register yourself (and your accompanying family members) with your embassy immediately upon arrival. You may also be required to register with the local authorities.
- It is your responsibility to keep the passports and visas of yourself and your family up-to-date.
- If your spouse is not a legal resident of your home country, contact your embassy as soon as possible to find out about immigration and visa requirements for your spouse. Also, ask specifically what can be done if an evacuation is ordered *before* the visas are obtained. This absolutely cannot be left until the last minute.
- Expatriate, third-country national staff, Baltimore-based travelers and consultants should carry their emergency medical insurance cards with them at all times (See below, [Health Insurance and Emergency Medical Assistance](#)).
- Procure for yourself and for your accompanying family members a Travel Kit (needles and syringes) from JHPIEGO Baltimore. Staff may obtain Travel Kits using the [Materials Requisition System](#) on Jwatch, or by contacting the Materials Management Unit in the JHPIEGO Baltimore office.

### Routine precautions

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times: Know where you are, what is happening and who is around you. If you are lost, don't show it.
- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood. Locate the nearest police station, hospital or clinic, shops and restaurants.
- Get to know your neighbors. They may be able to help you in an emergency.
- Vary your routine. Take a different route from time to time, changing the hours that you leave for or come home from work. Most muggings, attacks and kidnappings happen while leaving or returning home.

- Learn about the town or city you are living in, including anything to be wary of (e.g., pickpockets in the market) or places to avoid altogether.
- Stay informed: Listen to the local news and read the local newspapers.
- Learn some of the local language.
- Don't call unnecessary attention to yourself by displaying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive-looking jewelry.
- When out in town or on travel, distribute your cash about your person. Don't keep it all in your wallet or purse or one pocket. Use a money belt. Keep a small amount of cash in your pocket for easy access and keep the rest concealed.
- When using taxis, pay the driver *after* you get out of the vehicle.
- Do not allow anyone you don't know to lead you to a deserted area or away from a public place.
- During periods of civil unrest, stay home. If you have to go out, use common sense. Avoid large crowds and getting into arguments, especially with soldiers, police or anyone carrying weapons.



## Residential Security<sup>2</sup>

- Make sure all the doors, locks and windows in your house or apartment are reasonably solid and secure. Lock your doors whether you are out or at home.
- Keep a list of emergency contact numbers handy (if you have a phone).
- Identify a “safe room” in your house, where you can take refuge, if necessary. The area should be shielded from windows and doors. Interior rooms and corridors are good places. Be mindful of the need for a fire escape route.
- Put curtains or blinds on the windows.
- Don’t sleep with the windows open, unless you have bars on them.
- Keep a store of emergency provisions on hand in case you can’t leave the house or essential items become unavailable.

### Assembling a disaster supply kit for your home<sup>3</sup>

The best way to deal with a disaster is to prepare in advance. By assembling a few basic items and storing them in an accessible area of your home, you will minimize the effects of a disaster on you and your family. The most basic items you will need are food and water for each member of your household. An event such as an earthquake, a typhoon or a flood could damage your house and make it uninhabitable; therefore, place your supplies in a portable container and store it in an accessible area of your home, in case you have to evacuate.

#### *Water*

A normally active person needs at least two quarts (2.114 liters) of water each day. Children, sick people and women who are pregnant or nursing require more. Hot and humid environments and physical activity can double that amount. You should also take into account water needs for sanitation and food preparation.

Store at least a three-day supply of water for each member of your household. One gallon (4.2 liters) per person per day should be sufficient.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the United Nations *Field Security Handbook*, United Nations, New York, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from *Disaster Supply Kit*, website of the American Red Cross, [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

Store the water in clean, plastic containers (such as soft drink bottles). Don't use glass bottles (which can break) or cartons (which may weaken over time).

You can purify water for drinking by using commercially available purification tablets, or by heating water to the boiling point and maintaining a rolling boil for ten minutes. You can also use liquid chlorine bleach that is pure, unscented and 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. Add four drops per quart (.95 liters) of water; let the water sit for thirty minutes before drinking.

### *Food*

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable foods. Select items that are light-weight, require no refrigeration and a minimum of preparation and water. For example:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples like sugar, salt and pepper
- High-energy foods, such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix
- Multi-vitamins
- Comfort foods, like cookies
- Consider the special dietary needs of people in your family (infants and children, women who are pregnant or nursing, the elderly, etc.)

### *First aid kit*

Suggested items to include in your first aid kit:

- Assorted bandages
- Assorted safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Gauze pads
- Triangular bandages
- Sterile, rolled bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue depressors
- Needle, 0.9mm x 40 mm, and 10cc syringe and alcohol swabs
- Laxatives
- Activated charcoal (to filter water)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by doctor)

*Other*

Gather together extra clothes, toiletries, a tent and bedding, a radio, flashlights, batteries, matches and candles, hurricane lamps and fuel.

Keep your travel documents (passport, visa, identity card, immunization booklet) where you can get them quickly. Keep a sufficient supply of cash in local and hard (e.g., US Dollars, British Pounds) currency on hand; you may not be able to use traveler's checks or credit cards.

*Emergency drills*

You should conduct emergency fire drills, especially if you have small children in your house. If you live in an area where earthquakes are a danger, conduct earthquake drills as well (see Appendix I, Earthquake Fact Sheet). Even if you live alone, take time to figure out the best way to exit the house or apartment in an emergency.

Personal articles and auto insurance

There are several insurance companies that offer personal articles and auto insurance for homeowners, travelers and expatriates; it is up to the individual to choose the policy that best suits her/his needs.

Clements & Company of Washington, DC, offers a policy called Professionals Abroad which covers personal belongings in transit, in one's residence, on travel or in storage. Auto insurance is also available under the Professionals Abroad program. The policy is available to anyone who is living outside of her/his home country. Information, brochures and applications are available from the Clements & Company website ([www.clements.com](http://www.clements.com)) or by contacting the Global Operations Support Division at JHPIEGO Baltimore.

## Health Insurance and Emergency Medical Assistance

All staff members should learn about their health insurance and where to go if they get sick or injured. Local employees receive health insurance from a local provider as a condition of their employment. This insurance covers preventative care, treatment and medical emergencies.

JHU employees should find out about their health care plan's policy on reimbursement for treatment received overseas. BlueCross / BlueShield, for instance, offers its members a worldwide hospital network of providers which operates the same as in the United States, reimbursement for out-of-network care and emergency medical evacuations.

JHU employees, in addition to their regular health insurance, are covered for emergency medical evacuation for serious or life-threatening illnesses and injuries, if proper care is not available incountry. For details on [medical evacuation procedures](#), see JHPIEGO's Policies and Procedures for Responding to Country Office Emergencies. Emergency medical assistance is available under the following plans.

**AIG Assist:** All JHU employees receive personal accident insurance from the University. It provides \$10,000 base life/dismemberment insurance, which you can augment up to \$300,000 by paying an additional premium out of your benefit dollars. A family plan is also available and it is strongly recommended for employees with accompanying family. Other features of the personal accident insurance plan are:

- Travel Assistance Benefit: The coverage includes consultation by a US-based specialist with the local doctor treating the patient, emergency medical evacuation to your hometown and repatriation of mortal remains whenever you are further than 150 miles from home.
- Kidnap and Extortion Benefit: The plan will pay the ransom and other costs incurred if you are kidnapped.

**AIG Assist:**

Telephone: In the US: 1.800.626.2427

From outside the US: 1.713.267.2525

Group Name: The Johns Hopkins University

Assistance #: 999-9015637

Policy #: PAI9015637

JHU employees who need an AIG Assist policy information card should contact the Human Resources Office or the Global Operations Support Division in Baltimore.

Worldwide Assistance Services (WAS): This is additional travel insurance provided to JHU employees by the University. It includes incountry referrals, consultation by a US-based specialist with the local doctor treating the patient, emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of mortal remains and loss and dismemberment insurance.

**Worldwide Assistance Services:**

Telephone: In the US or Canada: 1.877.618.7017

From outside the US: 1.202.659.7805

Fax: 202.331.1528

Employer's name: Johns Hopkins University

ID Code #: 25499/Hartford Life

Group #: ETB 102067

JHU employees who need Worldwide Assistance Services policy information card should contact the Human Resources Office or the Global Operations Support Division in Baltimore.

International consultants are covered by MEDEX. See the Regional Office Program Coordinator for coverage details.

## **Crime**

If you are the victim of a crime, report the incident to the Country Director and decide whether to go to the local police. Expatriates and third-country nationals should also contact their respective embassies or consulates to file a report.

If you have personal articles insurance, most items lost to theft can be replaced, but you must file a report with the local police department. You must also get a police report if you intend to file a claim with JHPIEGO or JHU. Some insurance policies have a deadline for filing theft claims (some within as little as 24 hours), so get the police report as soon as possible.

If you lose your passport, you may also have to file a police report to get it replaced by your embassy.

If you are traveling overseas, check the US State Department's Travel Warnings and Consular Information website (<http://travel.state.gov>) for specific security information on your destination before you leave home.

## **Arrest/Detention by Police**

Expatriates, third-country nationals or Baltimore-based staff members or consultants detained by the local police for any reason should contact their respective embassies or consulates and the Country Director. Country office staff visiting Baltimore should call the Regional Team Leader. Remember that all JHPIEGO employees are subject to the laws of the country they are in.

For more information, US citizens can check the US Department of State travel website. Third-country nationals can get information from their respective embassies.

## Kidnapping

If you are the victim of a kidnapping, JHPIEGO will try to secure your freedom. In the meantime, you have to concentrate on your safety. Here are some tips<sup>4</sup>:

- Once you have been taken, follow your abductors' directions. Don't antagonize them. Avoid insults, threats and any other language or actions that could endanger your life.
- Breathe deeply and relax. Maintain control over your emotions and actions.
- Establish a good rapport with your abductors. Tell them about yourself and make conversation (avoiding contentious topics). Ask for a newspaper or something to read. If you have a medical condition or have special needs, tell them. Emphasize that as an employee of JHPIEGO you are a neutral party and take no sides in any conflict.
- Secretly study your surroundings: Try to determine where you are and if there is any opportunity for escape (**Attempt escape only if the situation is dire or there is a reasonable chance of success**).
- Whereas you should try to be a pleasant "guest," don't allow yourself to become too sympathetic towards your kidnappers.
- Establish an exercise routine and maintain good hygiene. Try to eat and drink as much as you need. Keep your mind sharp by recalling the plots of books and movies. Maintain your spirits by thinking about pleasant memories, etc.
- If the police attempt a rescue, take shelter on the floor and stay there, to avoid being mistaken for one of the kidnappers or being hit by random gunfire.

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<sup>4</sup>Adapted in part from the United Nations *Field Security Handbook*, United Nations, New York, 1998.

## **Traveling Where There is No JHPIEGO Office**

JHPIEGO does not have an office in every country where it operates. Staff traveling to such places should be especially security-conscious. It is strongly recommended that travelers research the current security situation before they leave. Staff should register with their national embassy upon arrival and leave a detailed itinerary with both the embassy and the regional office in Baltimore. It is also recommended that staff arrange to check in at regular intervals with the local USAID mission, their national embassy, another cooperating agency, the Regional Office in Baltimore or their country office of assignment.

Travelers facing medical or security emergencies while visiting a country that does not have a JHPIEGO office should contact their embassy or nearest consulate. They should also notify JHPIEGO Baltimore, as follows:

- During Baltimore business hours, call the Regional Team Leader or the Human Resource Manager
- All other times, call the Duty Officer (410.493.8293)

Travelers should carry the contact information card for their emergency medical assistance provider (AIG and Worldwide Assistance Services). Contact the Human Resources Office or the Global Operations Support Division in Baltimore if you do not have a card or need more information on emergency medical assistance.



## Earthquake Fact Sheet

### Plan for an Earthquake

Develop a Disaster Plan      Develop an earthquake-specific plan for your home and family.

Learn about earthquake risk in your area - Contact your local emergency management office.

If you are at risk from earthquakes: **Pick "safe places" in each room of your home**

- A safe place could be under a sturdy table or desk or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases, or tall furniture that could fall on you. The shorter the distance to move to safety, the less likely you will be injured. Injury statistics show that persons moving more than 10 feet during an earthquake's shaking are most likely to experience injury.

- **Practice drop, cover, and hold-on in each safe place** - Drop under a sturdy desk or table, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. Practicing will make these actions an automatic response. When an earthquake or other disaster occurs, many people hesitate, trying to remember what they are supposed to do. Responding quickly and automatically may help protect you from injury.
- **Practice drop, cover, and hold-on at least twice a year** - Frequent practice will help reinforce safe behavior.
- **Inform guests, babysitters, and caregivers of your plan** - Everyone in your home should know what to do if an earthquake occurs. Assure yourself that others will respond properly even if you are not at home during the earthquake.
- **Get training** - Take a first aid class from your local Red Cross chapter. Learn how to use a fire extinguisher. Training will help you to keep calm and know what to do when an earthquake occurs.

- **Discuss earthquakes with your family** - Everyone should know what to do in case all family members are not together. Discussing earthquakes ahead of time helps reduce fear and anxiety and lets everyone know how to respond.

## What to Tell Children

- **Find safe places in every room of your home and your classroom. Look for safe places inside and outside of other buildings where you spend time.** The shorter the distance you have to travel when the ground shakes, the safer you will be. Earthquakes can happen anytime and anywhere, so be prepared wherever you go.
- **If you're indoors during an earthquake, drop, cover, and hold on.** Get under a desk, table or bench. Hold on to one of the legs and cover your eyes. If there's no table or desk nearby, sit down against an interior wall. An interior wall is less likely to collapse than a wall on the outside shell of the building. Pick a safe place where things will not fall on you, away from windows, bookcases, or tall, heavy furniture. It is dangerous to run outside when an earthquake happens because bricks, roofing, and other materials may fall from buildings during and immediately following earthquakes, injuring persons near the buildings.
- **Wait in your safe place until the shaking stops, then check to see if you are hurt.** You will be better able to help others if you take care of yourself first, then check the people around you. Move carefully and watch out for things that have fallen or broken, creating hazards. Be ready for additional earthquakes called "aftershocks."
- **Be on the lookout for fires.** Fire is the most common earthquake-related hazard, due to broken gas lines, damaged electrical lines or appliances, and previously contained fires or sparks being released.

- **If you must leave a building after the shaking stops, use the stairs, not the elevator.** Earthquakes can cause fire alarms and fire sprinklers to go off. You will not be certain whether there is a real threat of fire. As a precaution, use the stairs.
- **If you're outside in an earthquake, stay outside. Move away from buildings, trees, streetlights, and power lines. Crouch down and cover your head.** Many injuries occur within 10 feet of the entrance to buildings. Bricks, roofing, and other materials can fall from buildings, injuring persons nearby. Trees, streetlights, and power lines may also fall, causing damage or injury.

### **What to Do During an Earthquake**

- **Drop, cover, and hold on!** Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. Most injured persons in earthquakes move more than five feet during the shaking. It is very dangerous to try to leave a building during an earthquake because objects can fall on you. Many fatalities occur when people run outside of buildings, only to be killed by falling debris from collapsing walls.

Note that building codes in developing countries are not as rigid as they are in the US. The building you are in when an earthquake occurs may not be safe, and taking shelter in a doorway or against an interior wall could be dangerous. Be aware of your location and surroundings at all times, noting where you might take shelter in an earthquake.

- **If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow.** You are less likely to be injured staying where you are. Broken glass on the floor has caused injury to those who have rolled to the floor or tried to get to doorways.
- **If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, streetlights, and power lines. Drop to the ground and stay there until the**

**shaking stops.** Injuries can occur from falling trees, street-lights and power lines, or building debris.

- **If you are in a vehicle, pull over to a clear location, stop and stay there with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking has stopped.** Trees, power lines, poles, street signs, and other overhead items may fall during earthquakes. Stopping will help reduce your risk, and a hard-topped vehicle will help protect you from flying or falling objects. Once the shaking has stopped, proceed with caution. Avoid bridges or ramps that might have been damaged by the quake.
- **Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit.** More injuries happen when people move during the shaking of an earthquake. After the shaking has stopped, if you go outside, move quickly away from the building to prevent injury from falling debris.
- **Stay away from windows.** Windows can shatter with such force that you can be injured several feet away.
- **In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off during a quake.** Earthquakes frequently cause fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems to go off even if there is no fire. Check for and extinguish small fires, and, if exiting, use the stairs.
- **If you are in a coastal area, move to higher ground.** Tsunamis are often created by earthquakes.
- **If you are in a mountainous area or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling rocks and other debris that could be loosened by the earthquake.** Landslides commonly happen after earthquakes.

## What to Do After an Earthquake

- **Check yourself for injuries.** Often people tend to others without checking their own injuries. You will be better able to care for others if you are not injured or if you have received first aid for your injuries.
- **Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and work gloves.** This will protect you from further injury by broken objects.
- **After you have taken care of yourself, help injured or trapped persons.** If you have it in your area, call 9-1-1, then give first aid when appropriate. Don't try to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
- **Look for and extinguish small fires. Eliminate fire hazards.** Putting out small fires quickly, using available resources, will prevent them from spreading. Fire is the most common hazard following earthquakes. Fires followed the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 for three days, creating more damage than the earthquake.
- **Leave the gas on at the main valve, unless you smell gas or think it's leaking.** It may be weeks or months before professionals can turn gas back on using the correct procedures. Explosions have caused injury and death when homeowners have improperly turned their gas back on by themselves.
- **Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, or other flammable liquids immediately.** Avoid the hazard of a chemical emergency.
- **Open closet and cabinet doors cautiously.** Contents may have shifted during the shaking of an earthquake and could fall, creating further damage or injury.

- **Inspect your home for damage. Get everyone out if your home is unsafe.** Aftershocks following earthquakes can cause further damage to unstable buildings. If your home has experienced damage, get out before aftershocks happen.
- **Help neighbors who may require special assistance.** Elderly people and people with disabilities may require additional assistance. People who care for them or who have large families may need additional assistance in emergency situations.
- **Listen to a portable, battery-operated radio (or television) for updated emergency information and instructions.** If the electricity is out, this may be your main source of information. Local radio and local officials provide the most appropriate advice for your particular situation.
- **Expect aftershocks.** Each time you feel one, drop, cover, and hold on! Aftershocks frequently occur minutes, days, weeks, and even months following an earthquake.
- **Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines, and stay out of damaged areas.** Hazards caused by earthquakes are often difficult to see, and you could be easily injured.
- **Stay out of damaged buildings.** If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe. Damaged buildings may be destroyed by aftershocks following the main quake.
- **Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to inspect your home.** Kerosene lanterns, torches, candles, and matches may tip over or ignite flammables inside.
- **Inspect the entire length of chimneys carefully for damage.** Unnoticed damage could lead to fire or injury from falling debris during an aftershock. Cracks in chimneys can be the cause of a fire years later.

- **Take pictures of the damage, both to the house and its contents, for insurance claims.**
- **Avoid smoking inside buildings.** Smoking in confined areas can cause fires.
- **When entering buildings, use extreme caution.** Building damage may have occurred where you least expect it. Carefully watch every step you take.
  - **Examine walls, floor, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.**
  - **Check for gas leaks.** If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
  - **Look for electrical system damage.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.
  - **Check for sewage and water line damage.** If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap.
  - **Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall.**
- **Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies.** Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in disaster situations. They need to be clear for emergency calls to get through.

- **Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard.** The behavior of pets may change dramatically after an earthquake. Normally quiet and friendly cats and dogs may become aggressive or defensive.

Produced by the National Disaster Education Coalition: American Red Cross, FEMA, IAEM, IBHS, NFPA, NWS, USDA/CSREES, and USGS