



How to Make an Earthquake Kit

Recommendations from FEMA

City of Rialto Development Services Department

Because earthquakes are felt long after the shaking stops, it is a good idea to have an earthquake emergency kit. Even if your house is safe for occupancy following a quake, you may find yourself without many necessities. You may be without gas, electricity and running water, and for several days, there may be no food stores, restaurants or gas stations operating. Roads may be blocked and/or hazardous.

Experts recommend that you make three identical emergency kits. Store one kit at home, one at your workplace and one in your car. That way, your chances are good of having a kit handy after a quake.

Bulky emergency items such as water and dry food are hard to fit in a single, easily accessible container. Large plastic garbage cans can make good storage bins.

An inexpensive backpack is a good place to store smaller, loose items -- backpacks are easy to carry and can be used for other purposes once you have opened the kit.

Into each kit, put:

- Water and food to last at least three days (your car trunk is a handy place for these bulky items);
- Water purification tablets;
- Heavy-duty gloves;
- A first-aid kit;
- A minimum of \$100 in cash (automated teller machines and banks may be shut down following a quake);
- Family photos and descriptions (to aid emergency personnel in finding missing people);
- A flashlight and portable (or solar-powered) radio;
- Extra batteries;
- Goggles and dust mask;
- A personal commode with sanitary bags;

The most important thing for human survival is water. You should have at least five gallons of water stored in your hallway or back yard. After an earthquake hits, if you don't have a shut-off valve, the (tap) water will be contaminated within 12 hours. Although it is likely water would be restored within 72 hours of a major quake, some areas might be dry for much longer.

After a major quake, remember that opening your refrigerator and freezer can be a judgment call if you have no electricity. If indications are that power will be restored within a day or so, most foods will be fine as long as you don't open freezer or refrigerator doors. If you think it's going to be a long emergency, however, you might as well consume foods while they last. Watch for spoilage, and toss anything that's suspect.

Here are some suggestions for basic sustenance to see you through the first few days after a disaster. Shelf life and amounts are indicated in parentheses.

- **WATER:** Store drums of water (about a half gallon per person per day; you'll need more for washing or if you have pets) in the hall closet or back yard. For water stored in store-bought containers, add a half-teaspoon chlorine bleach to five gallons to keep it good for one year. Or purchase in multi-year, sealed cases for less than \$20 at some stores. Moist towelettes can reduce the need for bathing water. If water is shut off, ladle out the water from toilet tanks and hot-water heaters. Water purification tablets are available at sports and camping stores.
- **BREADS & CEREALS:** Keep crackers and cookies well packaged, preferably in tins (6 months). Stock up on ready-to-eat cold cereals (6 months). If you have ice cream melting in the freezer, pour it on the cereal. With even minimal cooking facilities, instant or quick-cooking cereals (6 months) are warming as well as filling.
- **DRY FOOD:** For main dishes, instant soup cups and add-hot-water-and-steep dishes (6 months) are a real boon.
- **CANNED FOOD:** Even if you generally do not use much canned food, it is invaluable in an emergency. Just be sure you've got a manual can opener. As with all emergency rations, cans or plastic containers are better than breakable jars. Canned fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry and fish (1 year) make for sturdy eating. Be sure to include items that can be eaten cold. Sardines and Spam may not be on your usual menu, but they'll keep bodies fueled. Shelf-stable tofu (check pull date) is another great nutritious food.
- **DAIRY PRODUCTS:** Powdered milk (4 months) is versatile: You can use it for making instant puddings, chocolate milk, etc. Soy milk, plain or flavored, is widely available in shelf-stable cartons (check pull date), and canned or evaporated milk (1 year) will fortify instant coffee. Keep a generous rotating supply of cheese such as cheddar or Swiss in the refrigerator; it could give you several days of good protein and good eating.
- **BEVERAGES & TREATS:** In addition to basic drinking water, store fruit juices and prepared coffee or tea drinks in cans or cartons. Stock instant coffee or tea drinks (1 year), canned puddings (1 year), whipped topping mixes, hard candies in cans and such snacks as dried fruit, nuts, pretzels, chips and ready-to-eat popcorn (check pull dates). They do deliver some nutrition.



Make sure every household member knows where the supplies are located.