



## What to Do Right After an Earthquake

- **Check yourself and your loved ones for injuries.** The number one injury is cut feet from walking on broken glass: see the next item.
- **Protect your head, feet, and hands.** A bicycle helmet or hard hat protects from falling debris. Sturdy shoes protect from broken glass. Leather gloves protect from sharp objects. All should be stored ahead of time under each person's bed with a flashlight.
- **To prevent fire, check the natural gas or propane at your home.** If you smell a rotten egg smell, hear a hissing noise, or (for natural gas) see the meter dials spinning fast, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve, where the pipe comes out of the ground, by turning it ¼ turn in either direction – a NON-SPARK cast aluminum adjustable wrench works well. If possible, call the gas company from outside your house or at a neighbor's home.

**For propane,** turn off the valve on top of the tank, turning it to the right until it's completely closed.

**NEVER turn the gas or propane back on.** To avoid dangerous leaks, it must be turned back on by the gas company or a certified plumber.

- **If there is a small, contained fire, use your fire extinguisher. (PASS: Pull the pin, Aim the hose at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handle, and Sweep from side to side of the fire.)**

**If the fire is too big to put out with one fire extinguisher, quickly evacuate and call 911** from a neighbor's house or cell phone.

- **Look for electrical system damage if you can.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Do not step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker. Shut off the individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker.
- **If you are outside, stay away from downed power lines.** You can't tell by looking at them whether they are 'live' or not. NEVER try to move them. NEVER try to hop over them. Be sure to check overhead for power lines and other hanging items. NEVER walk under a power line that is resting on a tree branch or fallen tree.
- **Shut off water at the main house valve.** This traps water in your home and keeps pollutants out of possible drinking water. Likely locations for the house valve are the basement, near the water heater, the garage or at the curb or the meter.

These steps are covered in more depth in the **Get Organized** part of **PREP**.