

CITY OF PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA

PRESS RELEASE

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Subject: What You Can Do to Prevent Injury During an Earthquake

The recent event in Napa and the effects felt here in Petaluma are good reminders of the personal obligation we have to our families to be prepared for such natural events. Being prepared at home and making sure your family and loved ones are educated is everyone's individual responsibility. Learn what to do, how to prepare and then teach those closest to you.

Though we cannot predict or stop many disasters, we can greatly reduce the impacts they have on us. The majority of injuries suffered by those in Napa were direct results from stepping on broken glass, falling to the ground due to imbalance or being struck by falling objects such as light fixtures, picture frames, bricks, dressers, etc. "Drop! Cover! Hold-On!" is what an initial reaction should be during an earthquake.



- **DROP** to the ground (before the earthquake drops you!);
- Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy desk or table; and
- **HOLD ON** to that sturdy table or desk until the shaking stops.

If there isn't a desk or table nearby, drop to the ground in an inside corner of the room and cover your head and neck with your hands and arms. Do not try to run to another room just to get under a table.

The main point is not to move and to immediately protect yourself as best as possible wherever you are. Most people are injured while trying to move to other areas. Earthquakes occur without any warning and may be so violent that running or crawling is not possible; chances are you will

be knocked to the ground should you try to seek shelter elsewhere. You also never know if the initial jolt is a one-time event or if it will turn out to be the start of a larger quake. Instead, Drop, Cover and Hold On immediately!

In addition, studies of injuries and deaths caused by earthquakes in the U.S. over the last several decades indicate that you are much more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects (TVs, lamps, glass, bookcases, etc.) than to die in a collapsed building. Drop, Cover and Hold On offers the best overall level of protection in most situations.

As with anything, practice makes perfect. To be ready to protect yourself when the ground begins to shake, practice Drop, Cover and Hold On at home with your family frequently as children often do in school.

What NOT to do:

- DO NOT run outside! Trying to run in an earthquake is dangerous, as the ground is moving and you can easily fall or be injured by debris or glass. Running outside is especially dangerous, as glass, bricks or other building components may be falling. You are much safer to stay inside and get under a table.



- DO NOT get in a doorway! In modern houses and buildings, doorways are no longer the safest place to be and they do not protect you from flying or falling objects. Get under a table instead!

Another way to prevent injury and damage is to take the time to prepare your home or workplace by:

- Securing large furniture (such as dressers, book cases, TV's, file cabinets) to the wall;
- Moving tall furniture and large wall-hung pictures away from your bed that may fall on someone sleeping;
- Strapping your water heater to prevent it from tipping over which can create a gas leak and the loss of valuable drinkable water; and
- Placing a wrench next to your gas meter so you can easily to turn it OFF if you smell gas.

For other information regarding prevention, kits, supplies, plans, etc.:

- Check out Petaluma Fire Department's Disaster Preparedness page at <http://cityofpetaluma.net/firedept/disaster.html>.
- Register for Nixle at www.nixle.com. This free service will provide bulletins and emergency alerts via email or text from the City of Petaluma Police and Fire Departments.
- Review the FEMA Readiness website: www.ready.gov.
- Go to the American Red Cross' website: www.redcross.org.

Boy Scout Troop 9 of Petaluma will be hosting a Community Emergency Preparedness Fair on Saturday, September 27th from 11:30a.m.-2:30p.m. in the Friedman's parking lot on North McDowell Boulevard. There will be representatives from Police, Fire, the Red Cross, FEMA and others with demonstrations and informational hand-outs. Please try to stop by to increase your awareness and personal preparedness.

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