



# MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SAFETY TIPS: AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE**

**PEARL** -- The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and local emergency management directors would like to remind citizens about what to do after an earthquake occurs.

Here are some general guidelines from the Central United States Earthquake Consortium on what to do after an earthquake. Remember, aftershocks may occur, so be prepared to **drop, cover and take hold**. After an earthquake, be prepared to:

- Make sure neighbors and family are safe. Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in danger of further injury.
- Wear shoes in all areas near debris or broken glass.
- Check for fires or fire hazards.
- If indoors, check the structural aspects of the building. If any part of the structure appears to be unsafe, evacuate the building until a more detailed inspection can be made. Buildings that are damaged by the main shock could receive additional damage from aftershocks.
- Do not touch downed power lines or objects touched by the downed wires.
- Immediately clean up spilled medicines, drugs, and other potentially harmful materials. Use extreme caution when cleaning up chemicals; they may have mixed with other chemicals during shaking and could cause harmful effects. Open windows to provide ventilation. If you begin to feel any effects from the material that you are handling, stop what you're doing and seek medical help.
- Check for damaged utilities. Inspect for leaking gas lines by smell only; do not use candles, matches, or other open flames. If you smell gas, open all windows and doors so gas can escape. Shut off the main valve at your gas meter, leave the house immediately, and notify authorities of the leak. Do not re-enter the house until repairs have been made and the dwelling has been declared safe. If water pipes are broken, shut off the main valve which brings water into the house. If the house is properly wired, internal trouble with the electricity is very unlikely. If there is a short circuit, turn off the electricity at the meter box.
- If water is off, emergency water may be obtained from melted ice cubes, canned vegetables, toilet tanks (if no bluing or sanitizing chemicals have been added), swimming pools and spas, and water heaters (strain this water through a clean handkerchief first).
- Check to see that sewage lines are intact before permitting continued flushing of toilets.

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- Do not eat or drink anything from open containers near shattered glass. Liquids can be strained through a clean handkerchief or cloth if the danger of glass contamination exists.
- If power is off, check your freezer and plan meals to use up foods which will spoil quickly.
- Use outdoor charcoal or propane broilers for emergency cooking. Do not bring these items indoors. The accumulation of fumes from their use can be deadly.
- Do not use your telephone except for genuine emergency calls.
- Tune-in to local radio stations for information and danger reports.
- Do not go sightseeing. Do not use your vehicle unless there is a genuine emergency. Keep the streets clear for emergency vehicles.
- Information concerning the welfare of separated family members will be handled by the American Red Cross. Do not call or go to the police or fire department for this information. If you have an emergency communications plan in place, use it instead.

Governor Haley Barbour has declared this week as Earthquake Awareness Week in Mississippi.

For more on how to prepare an all-hazards disaster survival kit and tips for protecting your property against earthquakes, visit MEMA online at [www.msema.org](http://www.msema.org) and click the "Preparedness" link. Additional information is available from Central United States Earthquake Consortium at [www.cusec.org](http://www.cusec.org), the U.S. Geological Survey at [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov) and from the Federal Emergency Management Agency at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

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