

## **MAKE A FAMILY EARTHQUAKE PLAN**

Vallejo Fire Chief Donald Parker reminds us in light of the recent earthquakes in the San Ramon Valley area it is always important to be prepared for any seismic event that may occur. The following are earthquake tips from the California Department of OES.

### **Know Your Environment**

#### **Safest place in the house**

- During an earthquake, stay away from heavy furniture, appliances, large panes of glass, shelves holding heavy objects, and masonry veneer (such as the fireplace). These items tend to fall or break and can injure you. Usually, a hallway is one of the safest places if it is not crowded with objects. Kitchens and garages tend to be the most dangerous. Also know the safest place in each room. It will be difficult to move from one place to another during a severe earthquake.

#### **Exits and alternative exits**

- Always know the possible ways to exit your house and workplace in emergency situations.

#### **Location of shutoff valves**

- Know the location of the shutoff valves for water, gas, and electricity, and how to operate the valves. If you are not sure, contact your utility company.

### **Make Special Provisions**

#### **Elderly, disabled, or persons under medication**

- These people may have difficulty moving around after an earthquake. Plan to have someone help them to evacuate if necessary. Also, they may need special foods or medication. Be sure to store several days worth of supplies of these special provisions.
- Persons who don't speak English: People who cannot speak English often rely on their family or friends for information. If they are separated during an earthquake, they may need help. Prepare emergency cards written in English indicating identification, address and any special needs.

#### **Pets**

- After an earthquake, you should be concerned with your own safety before taking care of your pets. Storing extra food and water for pets is always a good idea.

Keep them in a secure place at home after an earthquake. If you are evacuated, they will not be allowed at the emergency shelter.

### **Know Community Resources**

#### **Police and fire**

- Know the locations of the nearest fire and police station.

#### **Shelter and medical care**

- After a damaging earthquake, emergency shelters and temporary medical centers will be set up in your community. Contact your local Office of Emergency Services to find out the plans for your area.

#### **Community plans**

- Know your neighbors and their skills; you may be able to help each other after an earthquake. Also know where to go to help your community after a disaster. It may be days before outside emergency assistance arrives. It is important to help each other.

### **Plan to Meet**

#### **Plan to reunite**

- Make a plan on where and how to reunite family members. Choose a person outside the immediate area to contact if family members are separated. Long distance phone service will probably be restored sooner than local service. Remember, don't use the phone immediately after an earthquake, and make local calls only for emergencies.

#### **Plan for children**

- Know the policies of the school or daycare center your children attend. Make plans to have someone pick them up if, after an earthquake, you are unable to do so.

#### **Plan Responsibilities**

- There will be many things to take care of after an earthquake. Make a plan with your family, friends, and neighbors assigning specific responsibilities to each person. Remember that it may be difficult to get around after an earthquake, so each person's task should be related to where he/she may be.

## **APARTMENT/MOBILE HOME PLANNER**

A major earthquake can damage apartment complexes and mobile home parks, and can injure or kill residents.

### **The following steps should be taken by owners or managers**

- Consult local building codes to ensure that your building meets current seismic safety standards.
- Develop an emergency plan for your building or mobile home park. This plan should include measures for storing water and food, obtaining first aid training, appointing floor or area leaders, conducting drills and other such activities.
- Encourage mobile home residents to better secure their homes by leaving wheels on homes rather than removing them, installing structural support bracing systems and securing the coach's awnings. (A list of state certified bracing systems is available from the State Department of Housing and Community Development.)
- Provide tenants with information on how to secure furniture and other household items. Also provide them with information on what to do during and after an earthquake.
- Encourage tenants to develop individual family plans for shutting off damaged utilities, reuniting family members and evacuation, if necessary.
- Identify residents with special needs - such as mobility impaired, non-English speaking, elderly, or hearing and sight impaired - and make sure their needs are addressed in your emergency plans.
- Organize teams that are responsible for first aid, search and rescue, communications and firefighting. Compile a list of resources and skills available among your tenants.
- Provide tenants with a white flag or some other distinguishable sign to be posted after an earthquake if no one in the apartment or mobile home has suffered serious injuries.
- Practice earthquake drills in your complex or park.
- Find out and inform your tenants where the nearest mass shelter area is located.
- Organize a meeting at which a local emergency and disaster planner can provide information on earthquake preparedness.