

39. Earthquakes and Other Natural Disasters

Emergency drills:

Mock drills of the procedures for responding to earthquakes and other natural disasters will be held at least once a year and documented on the Emergency Drills Record (see Policy #34: Emergency Preparedness). Earthquake preparedness supplies should be checked at this time and replenished if necessary.

Earthquake policy:

- (a) Household contents should be arranged in a manner which minimizes the potential risk in the event of an earthquake. For example, large and heavy objects should be placed on lower shelves of bookcases and cupboards, not on top shelves.
- (b) Each house and program site shall be equipped with an earthquake preparedness kit, to be stored in a place which is easily accessible (such as the back shed). Spectrum has an account with the Product Distribution Centre for bulk purchase of earthquake preparedness kits and other emergency supplies. For a complete list of earthquake preparedness kit contents, and to order new kits or replace expired items, contact the Spectrum office manager.

Earthquake procedure:

- (a) DON'T PANIC! Stay calm and reassure others.
- (b) As soon as a tremor is felt, all individuals should "drop and cover" until 60 seconds after the last movement.
- (c) If you are indoors, stay there until the tremors stop. Take cover under a heavy table, desk or bed; or stand in an inside doorway away from windows. If you are in the kitchen, move to another room as kitchen cabinets may not hold. If you are outside, stay there. Move away from buildings to avoid crumbling walls and falling debris. Stay away from power lines and dangling electric wires. If you are driving, stop quickly and stay in the car. If possible, do not stop on a bridge, overpass, or where buildings can fall on you.
- (d) After 60 seconds has elapsed past the end of the shaking, everyone in the building will cautiously leave the building, following the Evacuation Procedure. See Policy #43. If you are not at the individual's home or program site when the earthquake strikes, walk to the nearest community centre, church, or other public area where assistance is available, and wait for instructions.

- (e) Survey the scene and estimate the nature and seriousness of the emergency. If you find or suspect damaged water pipes, electrical circuits or leaking heating fuel, shut off utilities at main valves or meter boxes, if you have been trained to do this.
- (f) If you find or suspect that the building has suffered structural damage, or poses a safety risk in any way, do not re-enter the building until instructed by an appropriate authority.
- (g) Listen to CBC 690 radio for information and direction.
- (h) Do not use the telephone except in a real emergency. Leave the lines open for official use.
- (i) Do not use the car except in a real emergency. Keep the roads clear for rescue and emergency vehicles.
- (j) Stay together. Do not leave individuals unattended.
- (k) Be prepared for possible after-shocks.

Guidelines for Severe Weather Conditions:

- (a) Monitor conditions – heavy snow, sustained high winds; i.e. tornado or hurricanes, wind-chill conditions, floods or drought conditions. Be aware of changing weather patterns and prepared to implement safety measures.
- (b) Remain indoors if conditions are severe. Listen to the radio or tune in to the weather channel on t.v. If at all unsure about traveling to an appointment or activity, err on the side of caution and cancel it. Be aware that phone lines may be busy with community and provincial personnel during severe weather conditions.
- (c) If you are outside, proceed with caution. If driving conditions are not safe, pull off the road until conditions improve and/or seek shelter.
- (d) If there is a concern about the building's safety (i.e. power outages, black ice, flood, heavy snowfall blocking parking etc.), do not enter until you are sure it is safe to do so.
- (e) When a thunderstorm threatens, go immediately inside nearest building for protection from possible lightning strikes.
 - If you are in a hard-topped car and cannot get inside a safe building, stay in your car until the threat of lightning passes.
 - If you are caught outside, stay away from any object that could act as a natural lightning rod, such as a tall tree in an open area.
 - Stay clear of open fields, open water or small isolated sheds.

- If you are caught in a field, crouch low to the ground; do not lie flat on the ground.
- Stay away from fences or other metal objects.