

Earthquake Kit, Part II

Being Prepared at Work and in the Car

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In the August 2018 issue of the *Pony Express*, we wrote on the importance of preparing your home for an earthquake or other disaster. For some of us however, nearly one half of our 24-hour day could be spent at work or in the car so it makes sense to prepare for these possibilities as well. This month, we will address the need for your personal work and car earthquake/disaster kit. In addition, we will help you prepare your vehicle to “grab and go,” when you must leave your home for safer ground.

Preparing at work. Although our work situations are all very different, what is common is the need to be safe during the disaster and the need to safely evacuate after the disaster. Recall from a previous article that most earthquake-related injuries occur when one tries to evacuate a building during an earthquake. These injuries most commonly occurs from falling glass or building facades while exiting a building, cuts from broken glass while running down hallways and corridors, and from falling file cabinets or other heavy objects. Most important during an earthquake is to *Drop* down to the ground, *Cover* by getting under or next to sturdy desk or table, and *Hold On* or brace yourself to the table or desk during the shaking. After the shaking has stopped, you can then grab your work earthquake kit (see below) and evacuate the building.

The work earthquake kit is a personal “survival” kit designed to provide you with support items to help you self-evacuate your workplace and to get you to safety, be it home or another shelter. It will also provide you with support items if waiting for rescuers. In developing this kit, take into account your personal work environment. For example, if you work in a high-rise building, the comfortable shoes and flashlight are must for going down dark stairwells. If you work in a glass building, you may need the automotive glass breaker to break the safety glass. Food and water in any situation could help you survive beyond 3 days.

Your work earthquake kit should be easily portable; an old backpack would be ideal to store the items in your kit. These items should include:

- _comfortable walking shoes
- _extra car keys
- _2-3 bottles of water
- _snack items (granola bars, energy bars, etc.)
- _leather gloves
- _whistle
- _dust mask
- _tissue
- _small first aid kit
- _flashlight or light stick

- _extra batteries
- _Swiss Army style knife
- _cash in small bills and quarters for phone calls
- _automotive glass breaker

Store this kit under your desk or other location where you spend the majority of your time. This makes it easy to grab and carry should you need to walk any significant distance.

Preparing your car. Because much of our time could be spent in a car, we should also have a car earthquake kit as well. Your car kit should contain the following:

- _duct tape
- _signaling mirror
- _Safety flares
- _jumper cables
- _can of aerosol "flat tire fix"
- _map of the local area
- _portable battery-operated or hand-crank radio
- _extra car and house keys
- _extra car phone charger
- _comfortable walking shoes in the event walking is your only mode of transportation
- _change of clothes
- _4-5 bottles of water
- _snack items for two to three people
- _leather gloves
- _flashlight
- _extra batteries
- _light sticks
- _whistle
- _toilet tissue
- _small first aid kit
- _space blanket
- _multi-purpose, Leatherman tool
- _matches
- _cash in small bills
- _small (folding) shovel to help get tires unstuck
- _permanent marker, pencil and paper to write notes

Although some of the items are similar between the work kit and car kit, you should have these as two separate and distinct kits since we may not be at work when the earthquake strikes. In addition, it is recommended that you make it a habit to never let your gas tank fall below 1/3 to 1/2 a tank as a

regional disaster will likely make access to fuel severely limited. The 1/3 to 1/2 tank should be able to provide you with enough gas to leave the immediate area or to get you home. Lastly, you should have a pre-disaster plan with the expected route you will take to get home, who will get the kids at school, what route to take to schools, and alternate routes (walking or driving) when overpasses or bridges are impassable (part of your preparation should be to look for routes where travel under an overpass or on the overpass is minimized.) If you leave your car, you should also place a note on the dashboard with the date, time and your anticipated route of travel.

Preparing to “Grab and Go.” After a significant disaster, you may decide that it is best to leave your home and seek shelter or assistance outside of the local area. There are many variables that come into play in making this decision, too many to list in this article but a possible topic to a future article. For the purposes of this article, the assumption is that this decision to leave has been made, but that there is also the understanding that the roads and highways will likely be gridlocked and that fuel will be scarce or non-existent. We only need to look at our nations natural disasters, such as the recent tornados of Oklahoma, Hurricane Sandy and Hurricane Katrina, to see the massive gridlock on the highways leaving these areas.

Why would we expect gridlock? When a significant earthquake strikes Southern California, the epicenter (and area of most damage) will likely be the San Andreas Fault in the Inland Empire, making travel in an eastward direction extremely unlikely and probably impassable. In addition, with the more densely populated Los Angeles Metropolitan area to our north and northwest, travel in these directions is unwise. This leaves our best direction of travel being to the south towards San Diego. Unfortunately, with only one artery to San Diego, we will likely be in extremely slow-moving traffic.

Despite the fears of traffic gridlock, if you have decided to leave the local area, you will need to properly prepare you, your family and your vehicle. In addition to your Car Earthquake Kit, you will also want to have a “grab and go” bag (or backpack). This includes:

- _additional cash in small bills
- _regional maps
- _sufficient water for each family member for 2-4 days
- _sufficient food for each family member for 2-4 days
- _emergency contact information
- _all home documents from your home earthquake kit
- _extra fuel, if available

These items for your “grab and go” bag can be left in your home earthquake kit for easy accessibility.

The above kits can be assembled relatively easily and with minimal effort. The importance of these kits, however, cannot be understated. Similar kits can also be purchased ready-made at www.emergencycase.com and www.2BeReady.com. Both of these local companies are preferred vendors for the Nellie Gail Emergency Preparedness Committee.

This information on your work and car earthquake kit is provided to you so that you have a basic understanding of your potential needs during a disaster. Although the above kits provide the basic supplies needed, your kits will vary based on where you live, work and normal commute times. Most important is to be prepared because “by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail” (Benjamin Franklin).

[This next paragraph should be an excerpt or separate box to the above article:]

New Research Shows The “Big One” Might Be Closer Than You Think.

The earthquake faults in southern California are the subject of great geologic study. A recent study published in *Lithosphere* in June 26, 2018, identified a new fault structure on the San Andreas Fault, the Durmid Ladder. This 1 to 2 mile wide, 15-20 mile long ladder fault is located near Durmid Hill (hence the name) in the Salton Sea area of southern California. Researchers have predicted a 75% chance of a rupture of this fault structure in the next 30 years, resulting in a massive earthquake of a magnitude 7.0 or greater in both southern California and northern California. This is not a typo....*75% chance of a 7.0 or greater earthquake in the next 30 years.* If for no other reason, this should get all of us to start preparing. There is a direct relationship between your efforts in preparing and your likelihood of survival.