



Damage Assessment Activity Guide

Assessing damage in your neighborhood after a major earthquake will be important for safety and recovery. Documenting structural damage, damage to utilities, fires, incidents, injuries, and hazardous conditions in their neighborhoods will help you and your neighbors stay safe and to be able to communicate specific need for help from professional emergency responders. Choose the activities here that work for you or your group.

5-Minute Activities

1. Post a “We’re OK” Sign – Individual Activity

After a disaster you can post an “OK” sign in an easily-seen window so responders can move on to find people who need help right away. If you need help, you can post a sign reading “HELP” which will alert emergency responders.

TO DO NOW:

Gather the members of your household to account for everyone.

Using a thick marker, create a sign reading “OK” in large, clear letters. During the exercise, post the sign in a location that is visible from the street. Walk outside to verify that the sign is visible and readable.

You may also wish to pre-print signs from

here: <http://www.seattle.gov/emergency/library/snap/getorganized/help%20or%20ok%20sign.pdf>

30-Minute Activities

2. Tour Your Neighborhood – Group Activity

A neighborhood walkthrough will familiarize your group members with the terrain and geography of the area, potential hazards, and access issues.

TO DO NOW:

Tour your neighborhood together as a group to locate and document gas, water & electrical shut offs and potential fire and safety hazards such as overgrown vegetation and overhead wires.



3. Choose Two Family Meeting Places – Individual/Family Activity

In an emergency, families may not be able to access their home due to hazards such as downed power lines or trees. In these situations, it helps for families to have two meeting places: one near the home and one several blocks away.

TO DO NOW:

Involve your children in choosing one meeting place near home and one at least a few blocks away but within walking distance.

Good locations might be the following:

- A tree outside your house
- A park near your home
- A street corner near your home (This one makes me nervous)- JW
- A home of a trusted friend
- A nearby church, community center, library, or store
- The childrens' school (be specific about which entry).

Once you have chosen two meeting places, walk to those places together to firmly establish the memory.

4. Perform an Earthquake Home “Hazard Hunt” – Individual/Family Activity

Heavy items that can fall, shift or break in an earthquake can be dangerous for your family. A “Hazard Hunt” helps you identify hazards and remove them if possible. In many cases, reducing a hazard can be as simple as repositioning a heavy item from a higher to a lower shelf.

Your children may notice a Hazard you don't even think about if you turn this into a game similar to Hide and Go Seek.

TO DO NOW:

Walk through each room of your home and look for safety hazards. Identify heavy items in such as water heaters, shelves, televisions, heavy furniture, and wall hangings that need to be secured. See these resources:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1666>

<http://www.shakeout.org/downloads/HomeHazardHunt.pdf>

Children can participate in the home hazard hunt by joining adults in walking room by room and reviewing each room for hazards. Ask your children to imagine that each room is picked up by a giant and shaken – what would happen to the items inside?



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Children may be particularly interested in checking their own rooms and the areas over their beds for falling hazards.



2-Hour Activities

5. Create or Update a Neighborhood Layout Map – Group Activity

Once the Command Post is established Neighborhood Groups will consult detailed maps so they can perform critical tasks such as shutting off water or gas when a leak is identified. All members of the Group need to know their way around the neighborhood in order to assess damage and respond to incidents.

TO DO NOW:

Have everyone in the Group verify their information on a map if your Group already has one. If you don't have a map yet, create a layout map of your area/neighborhood including:

- addresses
- location of gas, water, and electrical shutoffs for each structure
- fire hydrants
- group assembly location
- evacuation routes
- homes having people with special needs, young children and/or infants, and pets (including species)
- homes that have/have not been retrofitted



6. Practice Neighborhood Damage Assessment With Scenarios – Group Activity

In an emergency, Neighborhood Groups will help professional responders by assessing and documenting structural damage, injuries, fires, and other hazards in the neighborhood. This will speed the process and allow responders to focus limited resources on the most critical needs.

Neighborhood Group members will also address immediate needs within their capabilities when professional responders are not available. For example, they will do emergency first aid or contain loose animals. The damage assessment will help the Incident Commander know where to send trained volunteers to assist.

TO DO NOW:

Steps for Group Leaders/Incident Commanders to Set Up a Neighborhood Damage Assessment Activity

- Choose scenarios that simulate damage, incidents or hazards for response teams to find. Sample scenarios and templates can be downloaded from the Exercise website.

Find sample scenarios and Damage Assessment Forms for download at www.CityofBerkeley.info/prepare/activities-guides/



- Create a way for your teams to “discover” scenarios. With permission, you can post scenario signs on doors or on garden stakes in front of homes.
- Assign participants to work in teams of two or more and walk a designated area of your neighborhood.
- Give blank damage assessment forms to your teams. Blank forms can be downloaded from the Exercise website.
- Have your teams deliver completed damage assessment forms to the Incident Commander.
- The Incident Commander should make sure that a good record and summary of the damage to the neighborhood are documented and ready to be passed on to professional responders when they arrive.

Steps for Damage Assessment Participants

- Check in with the Incident Commander and receive your assignment. You will be told where to look for scenarios to look for and report on.
- As you move through the neighborhood—**Stay Safe!**
 - Walk carefully, do not run
 - Ask yourself, “Is there anything I hear, see, or smell that can endanger me, or anyone nearby?”
 - Observe the scene from the sky to the ground from right to left and left to right:
 - a) Look above
 - b) Look to the middle
 - c) Look on the ground
- If safe, walk to your assigned area, looking over each structure as well as the roadways
- At each house or structure do the following:
 - For this Exercise, remain in publicly-accessible locations.

Group Leader Stories – Damage Assessment

“A retired Architect and I walked around our neighborhood. We chose 6 homes and a retaining wall that could be damaged by an earthquake. I photographed each place in its current condition. Then I wrote up a Scenario of possible damage he suggested. For example, a brick chimney is likely to fall down.

“I got permission from the owners and/or tenants of each property to post a sign in front of their home the day of the Exercise.

“I printed out each description and glued it to cardboard. Then I used duct tape to attach each ‘Scenario Sign’ to a 5’ garden stake.

“The night before the Exercise, we put the signs up in the ground by the sidewalk at each location.

“On the day of the exercise I had our Group split up into teams of two to walk each of our 6 blocks, discover the damage, and come back and report. They were also free to find additional damage they could imagine and ‘find and report’ that as well.

“Everyone loved it.”



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- Identify obvious hazards and structural damage. If a scenario is posted for a building, make notes of the damage on a Damage Assessment Form.
- Observe and speak with any victims or bystanders who are participants in the exercise.
- Document the number of people involved at that location and their condition (injured, trapped, missing, etc.)
- As you proceed with your area walk-through, immediately report urgent information such as fire, injured persons, or gas leaks to the Incident Commander via radio or a runner.
- Fill out a Damage Assessment Form (supplied by your Group leader) and deliver it to the Incident Commander.