



Fire Safety and Suppression Activity Guide

Earthquakes can start fires, and fires usually cause more damage than the earthquake itself. Wildfires are also a major natural hazard in our area. Prompt, safe, and effective suppression of *small* fires by Neighborhood Group members will be critically important. Fire prevention actions before an earthquake can be equally critical in keeping fires from starting after the disaster. Choose the activities here that work for you, your household, or your group.

5-Minute Activities

1. Test Smoke Alarms – Individual Activity

Take action to keep your household safe and to prevent small fires from growing into large fires.

TO DO NOW:

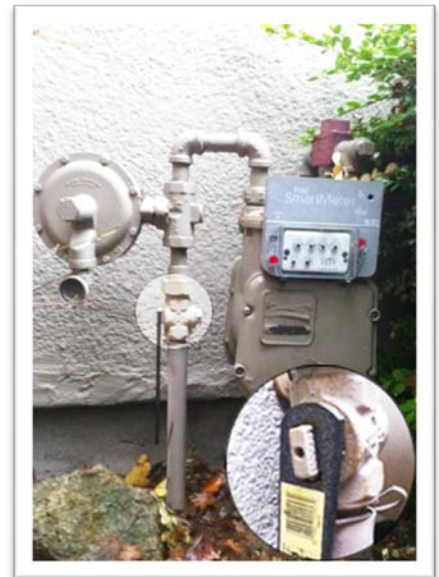
- Test smoke alarms by pushing the test button on each alarm, or in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations
- Replace batteries in alarms that are not working, or replace the alarm if necessary
- See
also: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/campaigns/smokealarms/alarms/index.shtm>

2. Locate Gas Shut-offs – Individual Activity

In an earthquake, gas lines may be broken, causing hazardous leaks. PG&E advises you to turn off the gas *only* if you smell gas or suspect a leak, or if there is an active fire nearby. All residents should learn how to shut off gas for their home.

TO DO NOW:

- Locate gas shut-off for your home;
see <http://www.pge.com/myhome/edusafety/gaselectricsafety/turngasoff/>
- Do not turn off your gas, but ensure that a tool to turn off the gas is in an accessible location near the shut-off



3. Check Garden Hoses – Individual Activity

Garden hoses can be used for extinguishing small fires when responders are not available.



TO DO NOW:

- Locate all garden hose spigots.
- Have (a) 5/8 inch or larger garden hose(s) attached and coiled for quick deployment
- Keep garden hose(s) long enough to reach any area of home and/or multiple garden hoses around the exterior of the house
- Equip your hoses with a nozzle that allows both straight stream and wide spray options, available at hardware and garden supply stores. Pistol grip-type nozzles are not recommended because they have to be held open.

4. Map Your Fire Station – Individual Activity

After a disaster, 9-1-1 may not work. If you need to get a message to responders, one communication option is to bring a written message to the fire station nearest you.

TO DO NOW: Look on a map of Berkeley or Albany and identify the fire station nearest you. Albany only has one fire station. A map of fire stations in Berkeley can be found at:

[http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Fire/Home/Fire Stations and Fire Districts.aspx](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Fire/Home/Fire%20Stations%20and%20Fire%20Districts.aspx)

Identify two routes from your home and /or work to your nearest fire station.



30-Minute Activities

5. Check Fire Extinguishers – Individual Activity

All homes should be equipped with well-maintained fire extinguishers. Portable fire extinguishers are valuable for immediate use on small fires.

TO DO NOW:

- Locate all of the fire extinguishers in your home or workplace
- On extinguishers with a pressure gauge, check that the level is in the green zone
- Ensure that the pin is intact on the handle
- If your manufacturer recommends it, gently shake or tap the extinguisher periodically to prevent the powder from packing
- Learn the acronym P.A.S.S.: **P**ull (the pin), **A**im (the nozzle), **S**queeze (the handle), and **S**weep (the base of the fire).
- See also: http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/extinguishers.shtm



2-Hour Activities

6. Practice Using A Garden Hose on a Simulated Fire – Individual or Group Activity

Prompt, safe, and effective suppression of small fires by Neighborhood Group teams will be important in an emergency when professional responders are not available.

TO DO NOW:

Watch *The City of Berkeley Fire Suppression Safety Video*:

<http://www.berkeleycert.org/#/fire-suppression-safety/4576478820>

- Locate garden hose
- Attach a high flow nozzle to the hose, as seen in photos
- Keep nozzle in “off” position
- Grab coiled hose and stretch out fully
- Open water valve
- Turn on water at nozzle and direct straight stream at base of a simulated fire from a safe distance
- Sweep back and forth
- Use spray pattern as you approach the fire

Groups may wish to create simulated fires for this practice, such as a flame shaped piece of cardboard and red markers. Simulated fires can be labeled to simulate different class fires. For example, the three fires could be labeled “Wood,” “Grease,” and “Electrical.” One fire could be labeled with a HazMat symbol indicating that the fire is not appropriate for CERT action.

Both adults and children can practice hoses on these simulated fires.



Utilize the straight stream for initial fire suppression from a safe distance.



As you approach the fire, widen the spray pattern to a fog to absorb heat and provide protection to yourself



7. Clear Fire Fuel From Around the Home – Individual Activity

Berkeley and Albany homes with dense vegetation are more prone to fires. Berkeley hills homes are also at significant risk from wildfire. Drought conditions make risks even higher. All residents in Berkeley and Albany should maintain the exterior of their homes. Reducing or eliminating flammable materials outside your home will make your home safer.

TO DO NOW:

- Clear weeds and all dead plant material on your property. Trees, ornamental shrubbery or green plants used as ground cover need not be removed as long as they are healthy & alive
- Remove combustibles, leaves and pine needles from roof
- Remove any portion of a tree within 10' of the chimney outlet
- Remove combustible grass and weeds within 10' of roadway
- Remove limbs 1/3 the tree's height from the ground and remove all vines from tree trunk

The checklist here provides easy and inexpensive steps you can take to increase your defensible space: [http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Fire/ProtectYourHomeFromWildfireChecklist\(1\).pdf](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedFiles/Fire/ProtectYourHomeFromWildfireChecklist(1).pdf)