

# Emergency Preparedness

## Earthquakes

Bristol Tennessee Fire/Rescue offers Public Safety Education services in an effort to prepare citizens for a myriad of emergencies. Safety information is provided and skills are taught to the public on a regular basis. Disasters can strike without warning, forcing you to go for days or weeks without basic necessities or to evacuate your home. Earthquakes cannot be prevented, but their impact on life, property, and the economy can be managed. Earthquake awareness is conducted from late January and through the month of February throughout a 5 state region with Tennessee being one of the 5 states.

When planning for emergencies we often fail to consider the possibility of an earthquake; however, statistics indicate Tennessee to have been struck by 15 earthquakes in the past 6 months. The recorded quakes have ranged from 1.7 to 2.8 on the Richter Scale of severity. The nearest recorded epicenter was in Sweetwater, Tennessee, a quake which registered a 2.0 magnitude on March 9, 2014. Earthquake damage can occur for miles, and extend through several states.

Important things to consider during an earthquake:

- If you are inside a building, stay there.
- Hide under a table or desk, or crouch in a corner or against a wall. Use a doorway for shelter only if you know it is strongly supported.
- Stay away from windows and bookcases.
- If you are outside, stay there, but away from power lines, buildings, and anything else that can fall.
- If you are in a vehicle, stay inside but park in a safe place. Avoid stopping on bridges, near buildings or trees, or under overpasses and power lines.

Things to consider after an earthquake:

- Be cautious – aftershocks can further damage weakened structures.
- Stay off the streets.
- Tune to radio or TV broadcasts for the latest emergency information.
- Check your home for structural damage. If in doubt, call a qualified professional to inspect it.
- Inspect water pipes and electrical lines at your home.
- Check appliances and utilities. If you smell gas, open a window and leave, and then call the gas company. Shut off the main gas valve.
- Open cabinets carefully.

The basics of survival are fresh water, food, clean air, and warmth. Emergency supplies can and should be prepared before a disaster strikes using items readily available or regularly used in your home. Quantities of these emergency supplies should be adequate for at least 3 days per person; and, you should prepare smaller quantities of these items for your car.

**The choice is ours.** We can get ready and reduce our losses, or we can do nothing, and suffer the full consequences of a damaging earthquake. We need to continue to plan, to build better buildings, and make sure that earthquake preparedness becomes a part of all our lives. If you feel an earthquake, remember to **DROP**, **COVER** and **HOLD** for maximum safety.