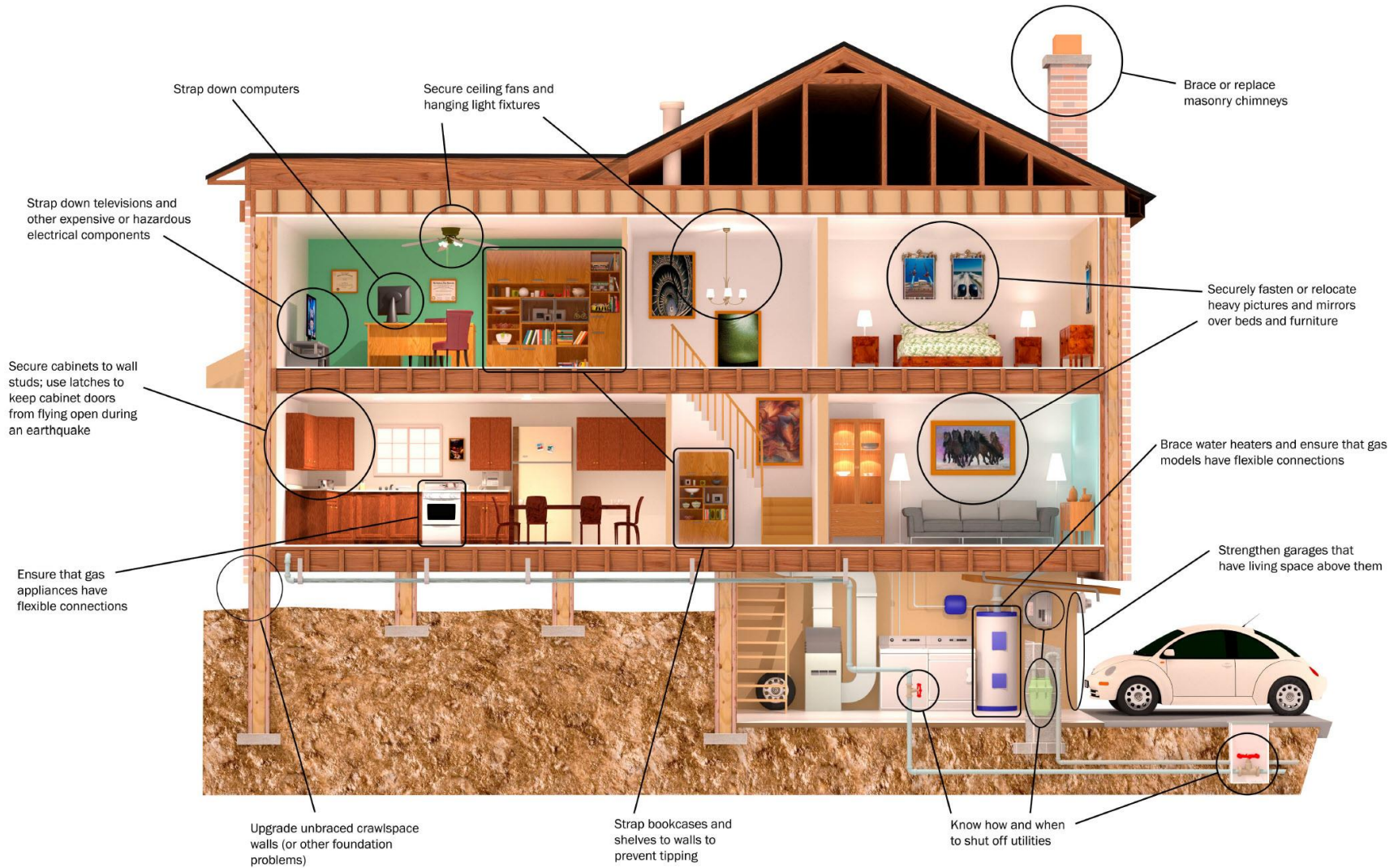


# Earthquake Home Hazard Hunt

Recommendations for reducing earthquake hazards in your home are presented on the other side of this poster

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## Home Hazard Hunt Checklist

Your home hazard hunt should begin with all family members participating. Foresight, imagination, and common sense are all that are needed as you go from room to room imagining what would happen if the earth and house started shaking. Anything that can move, break, or fall when your house starts to shake is a potential hazard.

### What would happen to heavy furniture, fixtures, and appliances?

- Look at tall bookcases and shelves. How much would fall off the shelves? Would the whole bookcase topple, or is it anchored to the wall? Anchor bookcases and other top-heavy furniture to wall studs using flexible fasteners (e.g. nylon straps) and lag screws.
- Add bracing to support air conditioners, particularly on rooftops.
- Do you have hanging light fixtures or plants? Could they swing and hit a window or swing off their hooks? As a minimum precaution, transfer hanging plants from heavy clay pots to lighter ones and used closed hooks on all hanging items.

### Check for possible flying glass.

- Replace glass bottles in the medicine cabinet and around the bathtub and shower with plastic containers.
- What kind of latches are on your kitchen cabinets? Consider replacing magnetic “touch” latches with ones that will hold the cabinet doors shut during an earthquake. In some cases, a lip or low barrier across

shelves may prevent breakables from sliding out.

- Where do you sit or sleep? Anchor heavy mirrors and pictures over beds, chairs, and couches with wire through eye screws into studs. Locate beds away from windows.

### Think about fire safety.

- Remove all flammable liquids, such as painting and cleaning products, to the garage or outside storage area. Be sure these items are secured on their shelves, or stored away from heat sources and appliances, particularly your water heater and furnace.
- Secure gas lines by installing flexible connectors to appliances.
- Is your water heater secured? Metal straps can be used to fasten your water heater to the wood studs of the nearest wall.

### What would happen to the house itself?

- Look at the outside of your home. What about the chimney? Masonry chimneys pose a real hazard in earthquakes, especially the freestanding section above the roofline, as bricks may fall into the house.
- Check your roof. Make sure all tiles are secured; loose tiles could fall.
- Check the foundation for loose or cracked plaster.
- Secure the wood sill and wall framing to the foundation using anchor bolts.
- Sheath crawlspace walls with plywood to prevent collapse.
- Strengthen connections between posts and beams with bracing.

You may want to get an estimate from a contractor that specializes in seismic engineering to help with some of the above tasks.

With the knowledge you now have from the information provided above, see about applying these safeguards to your workplace. Check to determine whether your company has an earthquake safety plan.

Children can share their new awareness in the classroom. Determine whether their school has a practical earthquake plan, whether earthquake drills are held, and what the policy is if an earthquake occurs while school is in session.

### Acknowledgements

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# Correcting Problems

## Utilities

Teach responsible members of your family how to turn off electricity, gas, and water at main switch and valves. Caution: Do not shut off gas unless an emergency exists. If gas is ever turned off, a professional must restore service. Contact your local utilities for more information. Label the water shut-off valve (found where the water enters the house) and the gas meter.

## Hanging Objects

Prevent wall hangings from bouncing off walls:

- Secure mirrors, pictures, plants, and other objects on closed hooks.
- Secure the bottom corners with earthquake putty or adhesive pads.
- Place only soft art such as tapestries over beds and sofas.

## Home Electronics

Electronics and heavy objects and costly to replace. Secure TVs, stereos, computers, and microwaves with earthquake-resistant flexible nylon straps and buckles for easy removal and relocation.

## In the Kitchen

- First, secure all cabinets above waist level to the wall studs.
- Use latches designed for earthquake, child-proofing, or boat safety to keep cabinet doors from flying open and contents from falling.
- Have a plumber install flexible connectors on gas appliances.



## Furniture

Follow these important guidelines:

- Secure all tall, top-heavy furniture such as bookcases, wall units, and entertainment centers. Attach them securely to the wall studs with straps.
- Secure the top, on both the right and left sides of the unit, into wall studs, not just into the drywall.
- Use flexible mount fasteners, such as nylon straps to allow furniture independent movement from the wall, reducing the strain on studs.
- Secure loose shelving by applying earthquake putty on each corner bracket.
- Store heavy items and breakables on lower shelves.

## Water Heaters

Water heaters should be braced. There are many solutions – all relatively inexpensive.

Purchase and install a strap kit or bracing kit from your local hardware store. Other options include:

- Have a licensed plumber strap your water heater according to code.
- Use heavy metal strapping and screws to secure the water heater to the wall studs.

The gas and water lines should have flexible connector pipes. These are safer than rigid pipes during an earthquake. Be sure to check the straps once a year. They may come loose as a result of vibrations or other causes.

