

Homeowners Association Update

September 2017



With the intense weather and disastrous events being experienced around the world right now the Renton RFA would like to take this month to focus on earthquake risk. In addition to the annual hazards of storms and local flooding, earthquake is a significant although less frequent risk for Renton. Not only is there the Seattle Fault that runs roughly along I-90, but there is also the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a source of historically large earthquakes greater than 8.0 Magnitude. In very large earthquakes, the ground can shake for as much as 5 minutes. The prolonged shaking causes much more extensive damage than is caused by the shorter earthquakes (30 seconds or so) that California experiences.

There are many things you can do to be prepared for earthquake in addition to taking some general emergency preparedness steps.

- Do a home hazard hunt. Look for things that could break loose, fall down, shatter, or be thrown across the room during the shaking. The single biggest cause of injury in earthquakes in developed countries like ours is NOT structural collapse, it is falling non-structural objects and lacerations to bare feet from broken glass.
- Practice Drop Cover Hold. Drop Cover Hold is the correct action to take during an emergency. DROP to the ground. Take COVER underneath a sturdy piece of furniture (a table or desk, NOT under a bed). HOLD on to your cover because your protective cover will move during the earthquake and you want to move with it.
- There is a myth going around on the internet that promotes seeking out a “Triangle of Life” in the structure of a room. This MIGHT be true for third-world countries that don’t have adequate building codes, but in our country it is WRONG. It won’t protect you from falling objects, which is the greatest risk during earthquakes in the United States. Drop Cover Hold will protect you better from the kinds of earthquake damage we experience here.
- Take steps to secure things in place. Special L-shaped brackets can secure tall furniture to the wall. Special straps can hold computer monitors and televisions in place. Refrigerator straps will keep your refrigerator from tipping over or walking out of its corner. Non-skid pads underneath items on countertops and desks can keep them from bouncing off onto the floor. Use “museum wax” to hold display items like vases and figurines in place. The wax works better than the gel. Install child-proof cabinet latches on cupboards to prevent them from launching their contents during the earthquake. Close and latch desk and file drawers so they don’t spill their contents. Consider applying special window film to prevent glass from shattering and spraying on you, especially if your bed is under a window.
- If you have an older home, check to make sure your house is bolted to the foundation and the hot water tank is strapped in place. Be sure your chimney is braced. Much of the damage to homes in the Nisqually Quake of 2001 was from chimney collapses.
- If you have natural gas at your house, have a non-sparking wrench available to turn it off. ONLY turn off the gas after an earthquake if it is leaking – you can hear it hissing or smell it. If you shut it off in error, DO NOT attempt to turn on the gas again yourself. Leave it to a professional.

- The FEMA.gov website has details and more tips. Just search that site for “earthquake” in the search bar.

For general emergency preparedness, visit <http://makeitthrough.org>

Make a Plan

- Know how to safely evacuate your home and neighborhood if needed.
- Establish an Out-of-Area Contact to serve as a message board for family members.
- Find out how you will get information in an emergency.

Build a Kit

- Include a week or more of non-perishable food (this is more than has previously been recommended).
- Store one gallon of water per person per day.
- Put a flashlight, whistle, first aid kit, medications and a battery operated radio in your kit.

Help Each Other!

- Train in advance to become a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member and become a disaster responder in your own neighborhood.
- Become an amateur radio operator with the Renton Emergency Communication Service and help provide emergency communications during a disaster.
- Check the Renton Emergency Preparedness Academy (REPA) class schedule for these and other preparedness training opportunities in the What’s Happening brochure from the city. Follow the registration instructions in that brochure, or call 425-430-6700.

To stay informed:

- Register with ALERT Renton, an automated telephone and text message warning system. It wouldn’t likely be used in an earthquake because there isn’t enough warning, but it might warn you of a hazardous materials emergency or an evacuation order for your neighborhood. Sign up at rentonwa.gov/alert.
- In case communications are out and the City needs to share an important emergency message with you like where to go for shelter, food, or water after a disaster, it may be posted at a Neighborhood Information Center. (*Neighborhood Information Centers are bulletin boards located at the main entrance of most Renton School District schools within the city limits as well as at the Maplewood Golf Course.*)
- Bookmark the Critical Emergency Information page at rentonwa.gov for up-to-date emergency information on Renton roads, utilities, shelters, etc. This information appears on the city’s home page during serious emergencies to keep you informed and aware of the situation.
- Place a NOAA Weather Radio in your home and office to sound an alarm when severe weather or Emergency Alert System messages are issued. Look for one with the Public Alert logo and the Specific Area Message Encoding (S.A.M.E.) feature.

- Sign up to follow the city's Emergency Management Division on www.facebook.com/RentonEM and Twitter (@RentonEM).

Other Messages:

- Children are back in school. Slow down when driving in school zones.
- Always check to be sure there is no burn ban in effect. King County burn ban always supersedes any city burn ban.
- Conditions are still extremely dry. Use extreme caution when disposing of barbecue ashes or working outside to prevent fires.

Significant Incidents:

Renton Regional Fire Authority responded to multiple significant incidents during the month of August. Some incidents were in other jurisdictions where we provided assistance to the local fire jurisdiction. August's significant incidents included the following;

- 11 Fires;
 - 7 Structure Fires
 - *For 3 of the fires we provided aid to Eastside F&R, Skyway Fire and Kent Fire*
 - 1 Commercial Fire – Provided Aid to Skyway Fire
 - 1 Electrical Fire – Aid from Tukwila Fire and Kent Fire
 - 2 Wildland / Brush Fires
 - *Maple Valley, Kent Fire and Tukwila Fire provided aid to Renton RFA*
- 8 Emergency Medical Service Calls
 - 1 Stabbing of 27 y/o female victim
 - 1 Newborn CPR call
 - 1 Burn call for an 11 y/o male
 - 5 Motor Vehicle Accidents
- 2 Rope Rescue Calls