

Homeowners Association Update – September 2015

Ready in Renton/National Preparedness Month

This year Ready in Renton is focusing 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. October 15 at 10:15 a.m. there will be a statewide earthquake drill.
- 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. Classes start September 22.
- Become an amateur radio operator with the Renton Emergency Communication Service and help provide emergency communications during a disaster. The next class is January 16 and 17.
- 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 Renton RedAlert, 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 on the City Of Renton home page (rentonwa.gov).
- 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 to 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.

Conditions are still extremely dry. Use extreme caution when disposing of barbecue ashes or working outside to prevent fires.

Significant Incidents:

- Renton Fire responded to an apartment fire at the 12200 block of SE Petrovitsky Road on August 19th. When Renton Fire arrived, the deck of a 3rd floor unit was fully engulfed in flames. Tukwila and Maple Valley assisted with extinguishing this fire. There were no injuries but 35 residents were displaced and provided shelter by the American Red Cross.
- Renton Fire responded to a residential fire at the 2300 block of NE 8th St on August 17th. The fire started in a shed/playhouse attached to the garage of the residence and was quickly put out. Bellevue and Tukwila assisted in extinguishing this fire. There were no injuries due to this fire and all residents were safely accounted for.
- Renton Fire responded to a residential fire at the 3100 block of SE 7th St on August 18th. The fire was concentrated to the kitchen and was put out. Tukwila and Skyway assisted in extinguishing the fire. There were no injuries and all residents were safely accounted for.
- Renton Fire responded to a residential fire at the 1300 block of N. 3rd St on August 12th. The fire started in the dryer and spread to clothing on top of the dryer and was put out. Skyway assisted in extinguishing the fire. There were no injuries and all residents were safely accounted for.