

## When the Ground Shakes in El Cerrito, Think Preparation

This week's sharp tremblers on the Hayward Fault in the El Cerrito hills remind us of the importance of earthquake preparedness.

Home to eight active earthquake faults, the Bay Area faces a 63% probability of experiencing a 6.7 magnitude quake within the next 30 years according to the U.S Geological Survey. The Hayward fault, which runs north-south through the East Bay Hills, is considered one of the most dangerous faults because of its proximity to hospitals, freeways, and millions of people.

This is sobering. So, what can we do to prepare?

Quite a bit it turns out. For excellent details take a look at the [Ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)) website of the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for recommendations.

I'm working on making sure my household has done each of the following things to be prepared:

**A home earthquake kit** with water, a battery-operated or hand crank radio, a flashlight with extra batteries, a whistle, an emergency contact list, a wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, non-perishable food. (We've done this one)

**Family emergency communications plan**, outlining what family members should do in an emergency; where they should go; who will be checking on whom; contact numbers. (We've done this one too)

**Brace and secure** loose objects, wall hangings, furniture, and appliances. Check your local hardware store for instructions and supplies on doing this yourself. (We're still working on finishing this task; my wife reminded me about this after this week's quake shook our house)

**Install automatic shut-off valves on your gas lines.** Contra Costa County requires these valves on new construction, major remodels, and upon sale of property in unincorporated areas. For more information on this requirement, contact the **County Building Inspection Division at 925-646-7200** or search for the "shut-off valve ordinance" on the County Website [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us) (We had a plumber install one of these shut-off valves)

If you and your neighbors want information on how to organize a community meeting to help people get prepared, contact Terrance Cheung in my office at [terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us](mailto:terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us) or 510-374-3231. We've helped organize emergency preparedness neighborhood meetings and we would be glad to help you out.

Of course, I hope that none of us will experience a major earthquake. But, at least we can be prepared if one happens.

*John Gioia*

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