

AmTrust Property Zone

Secure Your Gas Lines Before and After an Earthquake

Earthquakes are one of the most unnerving events one can experience. They strike without warning, there's no place to hide and they're more prominent than you might think. According to the [U.S. Geological Survey](#), about 20,000 quakes occur in the U.S. every year. Most are small, even undetectable, but approximately 700 of them are big enough to cause major property damage, injuries and even deaths.

Earthquakes wreak havoc with infrastructure and gas lines are especially vulnerable. They can become dislodged and leak, a dangerous situation that can lead to a fire or explosion that could destroy an entire building.

Knowing what to do before and after an earthquake is key to protecting gas lines and your property. Follow these tips and be earthquake ready:

Before an Earthquake

By planning before an earthquake strikes and knowing what to do if one does, you can protect lives and property and prevent a bad situation from turning into a catastrophic loss.

- Know where your gas meter and shutoff valve are located
- Understand how to manually shut off the gas supply and keep an appropriate wrench nearby
- Seismic gas shutoff safety valve(s), or another automatic shutoff system, are recommended on gas lines, where they enter the building
- Gas (and water) lines should be flexible pipes
- Inspect all gas appliances such as water heaters, dryers and furnaces to make sure they are secured and have flexible pipe connections
- Keep combustible materials away from natural gas appliances by having 36 inch clearances, unless appliance listing permits less space
- Never store or use flammable liquids (including paint) in, or near, furnace, boiler, water heater rooms or electrical rooms
- Secure water heaters, appliances, tall shelves, racks and furniture to walls to guard against toppling and having gas or electrical lines rupture.
- Check local requirements for updated strapping information as some methods have been modified and old former methods are no longer recommended
- If you operate a business and have employees, incorporate earthquake incident response into your emergency response

For additional information and resources on this topic and other safety and risk management subjects be sure to visit the Loss Control section on our website:

www.amtrustfinancial.com/loss-control



training, including how to shut off gas lines

- Check with your local Building Department for details of local requirements

After an Earthquake

There are procedures to follow immediately following an earthquake, including:

- If a fire breaks out, call the fire department immediately, then call your gas company
- Check for gas leaks
- If you smell gas or hear gas escaping, manually shut off the gas supply and evacuate everyone from the building
- Call the gas company from a neighbor's phone or a cell phone away from the building
- Don't light matches, operate any light switches, or do anything else that might cause a spark
- Check to be sure nothing combustible or flammable has fallen or spilled near appliances
- Once the gas is shut off, DO NOT TURN IT BACK ON
- Have someone from the gas company come out, inspect, possibly repair the line and restore your service

Sources

<https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/earthquake-hazards>

<https://www.earthquakecountry.org/>

www.pge.com/en_US/residential/outages/planning-and-preparedness/safety-and-preparedness/gas-shutoff-devices/gas-shutoff-devices.page

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