

ESP

BULLETIN

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FIRE SUPPRESSION

In addition to the damage caused directly by strong ground shaking, earthquakes can pose other threats to your community.

One of the most common threats resulting from earthquakes is fire. Strong earthquakes can increase the fire risk by:

- Rupturing gas lines;
- Downing power lines;
- Damaging electrical wiring in appliances; and
- Toppling shelves holding combustible chemicals.

Earthquake-related fires also can be caused by:

- Leaving food unattended while on the stove;
- Lighting or using matches before checking for gas leaks;
- Using fireplaces before they've been inspected for damage; and
- Using candles, which can fall as the result of aftershocks.

Neighborhoods can reduce the potential and actual fire threat by reducing or eliminating hazards before the next earthquake and by forming a fire suppression branch as part of its neighborhood response team.



**Can't
Do It
Alone!
1997**

**Monthly Preparedness
Items and Actions**

January

Understand the Threat

February

Meet with Your Neighbors

March

Inventory Community Resources

April

Develop Response Teams

May

Get Trained

June

Update Emergency Supplies

July

*Reduce Neighborhood
Hazards*

August

Learn Search and Rescue

September

Review First Aid Skills

October

Assess the Damage

November

Plan for Emergency Housing

December

Plan Your Drill

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**ORGANIZE THE FIRE
BRANCH**

If your neighborhood response team hasn't yet established a fire suppression branch as part of its operations section, it should do so now. The fire suppression branch should include a coordinator and several teams to assess the fire threat and put out small fires after an earthquake or another disaster.

At a minimum, members of the fire suppression branch should know basic fire safety, the types of fires they might encounter, the proper ways to put out each type of fire and how to use a fire extinguisher.

ELIMINATE HAZARDS

Before the next earthquake or other disaster, the fire suppression branch should work with the hazard reduction branch (discussed in the July 1997 ESP Focus sheet) to identify, reduce and eliminate potential fire hazards. Such hazards include:

- Water heaters and other gas appliances that are not properly secured or do not have flexible connections;
- Flammable liquids;
- Flammable vegetation;
- Trash;
- Tree branches near power lines.

After identifying and working to reduce fire hazards in the neighborhood, the fire suppression branch should try to:

