

Prepare

in a
Year



12. Home Hazard Hunt



All of Washington State has the potential of being impacted by major disasters such as earthquakes. Take the time to identify and fix potential household hazards. Buildings — and their contents — are vulnerable to rocking and rolling caused by earthquakes. Fortunately, experts teach how to secure homes to their foundations and contents to wall studs. Check with your local building departments on regulations.

► **How-to videos are available at www.youtube.com/EMDPrepare**

Identifying potential home hazards:

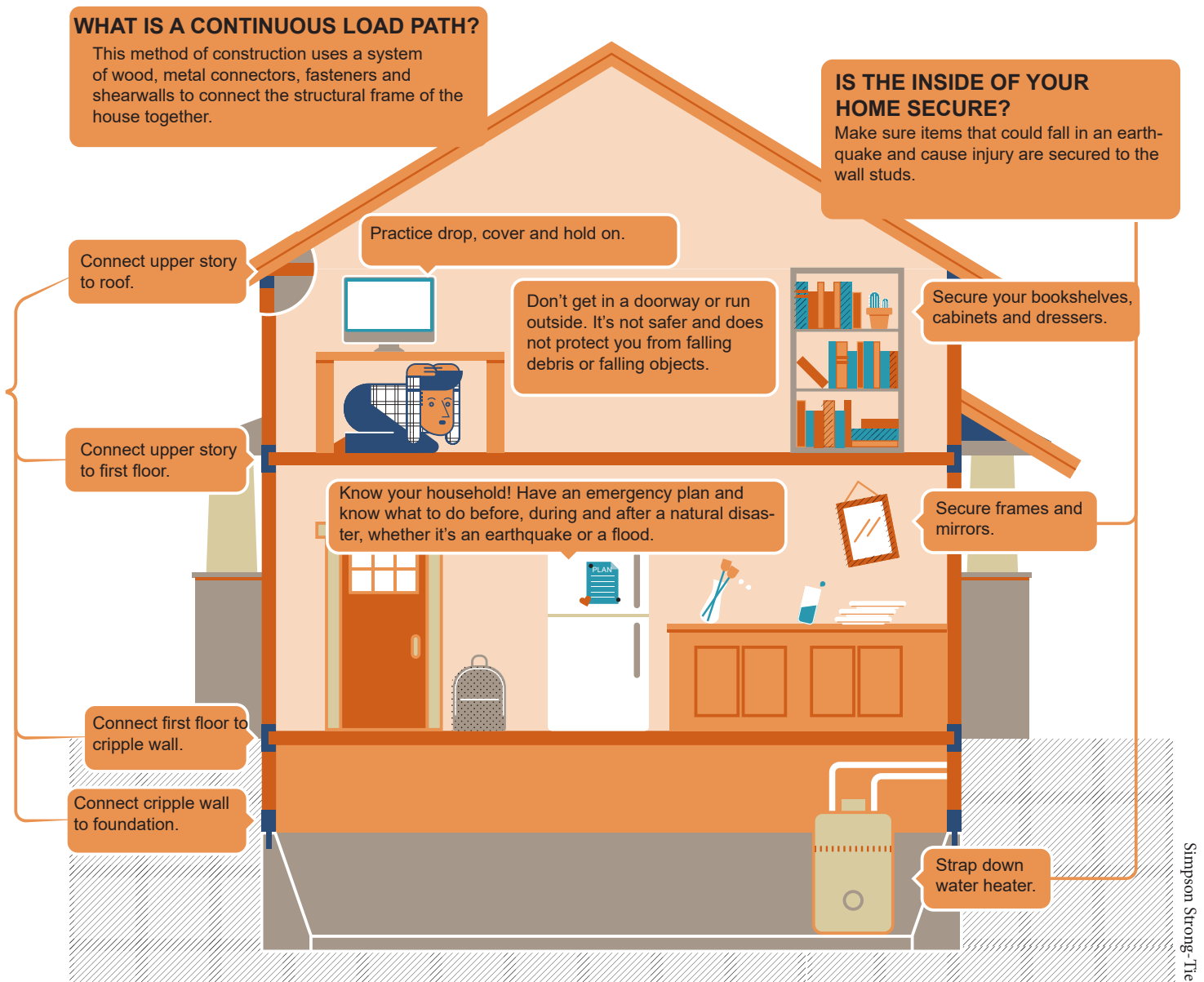
Take 30 minutes to walk through your home. Imagine the ground movement of a significant earthquake. Identify potential hazards and make a list of them so you can start fixing them.

- Check your water heater. Is it securely fastened to the wall studs with heavy-metal strapping at the top and bottom? Do not use metal plumber's tape.
- Does your water heater have flexible water and gas connectors?
- Tall pieces of furniture are especially vulnerable in earthquakes. Identify each bookcase, cabinet and armoire which needs fastening.
- Identify heavy or breakable objects on high shelves. Pay special attention to objects with sentimental value. Move heavy objects to lower shelves.
- Identify electronics, microwaves and other small appliances that need to be secured.
- Identify hanging objects, especially plants in heavy baskets and hanging lights near windows.
- Identify mirrors, framed artwork and other heavy hanging objects which needs to be secured to the wall studs. Pay special attention to items hung over beds.
- Identify kitchen, bedroom, and garage cabinets that need to be secured to keep their contents inside during the ground shaking.
- Check the foundation of your home. Is your home securely fastened to it? Check with your local city or county office, which issues building permits, for regulations.
- Does your chimney have loose bricks?
- Has your attic been reinforced with plywood to help prevent chimney bricks from falling into living areas?
- Identify poisons, toxics, or solvents in breakable containers that are located in high or dangerous locations, house, garage and sheds.



Is your home structurally sound?

Homes that are tied together from the roof to the foundation are much more likely to remain standing during an earthquake. This creates a continuous load path that helps hold the house together. Most newer homes are built with a continuous load path, which is like a chain that ties the house together from the roof to the foundation.



Has your home been retrofitted?

If your home was built prior to 1985, it may need to be retrofitted. A seismic retrofit strengthens your home's structural frame, including:

- ▶ Your home is bolted to the foundation.

- ▶ The cripple wall is reinforced.
- ▶ The cripple wall is attached to the first floor.

Research do-it-yourself projects to secure your house or contact a local contractor.