

## PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITY: **Pass the Flashlight!**

### BACKGROUND:

Earthquakes are inevitable, but the damage and injury from earthquakes is not – even in a large earthquake. Many people think the destruction caused by earthquakes is unavoidable, and that our only option is to pick up the pieces after the shaking stops. However, taking some important steps before, during, and after an earthquake can reduce almost all earthquake damages and losses.

### ACTIVITY:

#### Set-Up

Obtain a timer that can time seconds, and have a flashlight ready for use as a “hot potato.” Before beginning “Pass the Flashlight” discuss and review the contents of the “Creating a Family Emergency Plan” activity with your students to give them a background for this activity, which serves as an immediate review of the materials learned.

#### Procedure

1. Have the students sit in a circle. As the educator/facilitator, stand off to the side with a timer set between 30 and 60 seconds (depending on the amount of time you want to give the students to answer each category). Give one student the flashlight; he or she will start the game.
2. Ask a question from the “Creating a Family Emergency Plan” discussion (e.g. “What are items you should have in an emergency kit?”). As soon as the question is asked, start the timer.
3. Let the student holding the flashlight suggest an acceptable answer to the question that the rest of the group can hear. Once an answer is provided, have the student pass the flashlight along to the person beside them. The next student must then suggest another applicable answer.
4. Continue around the circle and let the students suggest answers one at a time, as the flashlight reaches them. Answers cannot be repeated, and students cannot pass on the flashlight until they give an answer someone else has not already said.
5. Encourage the students to think quickly so that they do not end up with the flashlight when the timer goes off. The student that does is “out” for the next round.
6. Begin a new round with another question from the “Creating a Family Emergency Plan” activity. Continue the “Pass the Flashlight” activity until all of the materials have been reviewed.

## CONTENT:

Disaster-Preparedness Plan: Will everyone in your household do the right thing during the violent shaking of a major earthquake? Before the next earthquake, get together with your family or housemates to plan now what each person will do before, during and after. Once the earthquake is over, there will be the risk of fire, the potential lack of utilities and basic services, and the certainty of aftershocks. By planning now, you will be ready for an earthquake, or for any other emergency.

Plan NOW to be safe during an earthquake:

- Practice "drop, cover, and hold on." (See [Step 5](#))
- Identify safe spots in every room, such as under sturdy desks and tables.
- Learn how to protect yourself no matter where you are when an earthquake strikes.

Plan NOW to respond after an earthquake:

- Keep shoes and a working flashlight next to each bed.
- Get a fire extinguisher for your home, and learn how to use it.
- Teach everyone in your household to use emergency whistles and/or to knock three times repeatedly if trapped, in order to signal rescuers to your location.
- Identify the needs of household members and neighbors with special requirements or situations, such as use of a wheelchair, walking aids, special diets, or medication.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training course, and learn who else in your neighborhood is trained in first aid and CPR.
- Know the location of utility shutoffs and keep needed tools nearby. Make sure you know how to turn off the gas, water, and electricity to your home. Only turn off the gas if you smell or hear leaking gas.
- Install smoke alarms, test them monthly, and change their batteries when needed.
- Work with your neighbors to identify who has skills and resources that will be useful.

Plan NOW to communicate and recover after an earthquake:

- Select a safe place outside of your home to meet your family or housemates after the shaking stops.
- Designate an out-of-area contact person who can be called by everyone in the household to relay information to in case local phone lines are overwhelmed or down.
- Provide all family members with a list of important contacts.
- Determine where you might live if your home cannot be occupied after an earthquake or other disaster.
- Know about your local school's earthquake plan.
- Keep copies of essential documents, such as identification, insurance policies, and financial records, in a secure, waterproof container, alongside your disaster supplies kit. Include with it a household inventory (a list and photos or video of your belongings).

Have occasional earthquake "drills" to practice your plan. Practice your plan with anyone who may surround you, or be taking care of things for you, in the event of an earthquake, such as family, friends, sitters, and neighbors.