

## **Article: Preparing for an Earthquake**

By Nancy Lakin

We all felt it; a 5.2 magnitude earthquake in the late evening of June 27 □...and we all know it could have been much worse. Hawaii Island has a history of destructive earthquakes including one with an estimated magnitude of 7.9 in 1868. A severe earthquake in our future isn't just a possibility, it will happen, it's only a matter of time. We owe it to our community and ourselves to be prepared and there are a number of things we can do in advance of the next earthquake. Are you prepared?

How can I prepare?

- Become aware of fire evacuation and earthquake plans for all of the buildings you occupy regularly.
- Pick safe places in each room of your home, workplace and/or school. A safe place could be under a piece of furniture or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture that could fall on you.
- Practice drop, cover and hold on in each safe place. If you do not have sturdy furniture to hold on to, sit on the floor next to an interior wall and cover your head and neck with your arms.
- Keep a flashlight and sturdy shoes by each person's bed.
- Make sure your home is securely anchored to its foundation.
- Bolt and brace water heaters, gas appliances, bookcases, china cabinets and other tall furniture to wall studs.
- Hang heavy items, such as pictures and mirrors, away from beds, couches and anywhere people sleep or sit.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Install strong latches or bolts on cabinets. Large or heavy items should be closest to the floor.
- Learn how to shut off the gas valves and keep a wrench handy.
- Keep and maintain an emergency food and supplies kit in an easy- to-access location.

More information including FEMA's Earthquake Safety Checklist, links to the Red Cross mobile apps, the USGS Earthquake Notification Service and a wealth of other emergency preparedness and response information can be found at the Volcano CERT's website – [volcanocert.org](http://volcanocert.org).