

Media Scripts for Post-Earthquake Public Safety Information

Nevada is earthquake country. Earthquakes, including large ones of magnitude 7 and greater, occur occasionally in the state. When a major earthquake occurs it will badly frighten people. This fear can lead to panic and paralysis. The earth, the psychological foundation of our stability, has moved, perhaps violently, and people are commonly awestruck, dazed, dumbfounded, and in disbelief, and anxiety accompanies their every thought and action. In addition, some people may have witnessed frightening damage, injury, or worse. People need help. This is not the kind of setting where people do their best thinking or recall of what the best course of action is.

The media, especially radio and television, have a very important role and responsibility to communicate safety information immediately following a major earthquake. This is the first step to empowering and helping people to take control of the situation. With the media's guidance dazed incomprehension can be turned into thoughtful action that can protect people and help them assist others. If the earthquake is a disaster, emergency services will be overwhelmed many times over, and most people will have to take care of themselves.

The Nevada Earthquake Safety Council has prepared these scripts to assist the media and public after an earthquake. This information can be life saving, so the importance cannot be underscored enough, nor can the importance of communicating this information as clearly as possible to the public. These messages will have to be repeated for those who did not hear the advisory the first time or did not get all the information.

If a strong earthquake has shaken the station and damage has occurred, it will be obvious that the media scripts should be read immediately. In other cases, please try to verify that a major earthquake has occurred with local or state emergency management officials before broadcast. An emergency broadcast will likely be issued and can be used as verification.

**Sponsored by:
the Nevada Earthquake Safety Council and the Nevada Division of Emergency Services**

Post-Earthquake Announcements

A major earthquake has occurred. After checking the safety of the people at the station, and assuring the station is safe to occupy, the Nevada Earthquake Safety Council encourages the reading of the following script.

Announcements for the First Ten Minutes Following a Major Earthquake

Announcer

This is an Earthquake Emergency Safety Advisory.

There has been a major earthquake. The danger from the earthquake may not be over. There could be more shaking.

If you are indoors when the shaking starts, stay indoors. Protect yourself by staying away from windows and other hazards, and taking cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or by an inside wall. Cover your head and neck with your arms and wait until the shaking stops. Do not run out of a building during the shaking.

If you are outdoors when an aftershock begins, stay in an open space, away from buildings and overhead power lines. Be careful of falling objects, glass and debris. Stay out of damaged buildings that another strong shock could collapse.

If you are in a car, stay where you are for the time being. Stay away from bridge overpasses, power lines, and other hazards. If you are on a bridge or overpass, keep moving - carefully - until you are off the bridge - then look for a safe place to stop until the shaking is over. Keep the roads clear for emergency vehicles. Stay tuned to the radio for further information.

Do not use the telephone or cell phone except to report life-threatening injury or fire. This is very important! Serious emergencies must be attended to first. Telephone lines are limited and are desperately needed for emergency use. Police and fire departments know the earthquake has occurred and you can contact friends and relatives later. Please replace the telephone receiver on the telephone if it has fallen off, because this ties up needed lines.

If your power is off, use only flashlights for light. If you turn light switches on or off, you may ignite leaking natural gas. Do not use matches, lighters, or candles.

Smell for smoke or leaking gas. If you smell gas, get everyone out of the house and open windows. Turn off gas at the meter. If you smell smoke, get everyone out immediately.

Wear sturdy shoes when inspecting for damage to avoid cuts from broken glass and debris.

Check fireplaces, wood stoves, and stove pipes. Put out fires immediately if you can. Approach chimneys with caution.

If there is a fire, put it out with a proper extinguisher. Do not use water on electrical or gas fires.

Check on other people in your household. If you are at work, check on your coworkers and customers. If anyone is hurt, use the first-aid instructions in the front pages of your telephone book.

Inspect the home's or building's foundation, walls and chimneys for damage. Look and listen for any signs of collapse. Evacuate the house or building if it is damaged or collapsing.

This has been an Earthquake Safety Advisory.

Announcements for Ten Minutes to Two Hours Following the Earthquake

Announcer

This is an Earthquake Emergency Safety Advisory.

There has been a major earthquake.

If you're at home, stay there if you can. The danger from the earthquake may not be over. There could be more shaking.

If your house or apartment seems to be okay, then:

Check all utilities - gas, electricity, and water - carefully and thoroughly. Look for damage to lines and connections. If utilities are damaged, turn them off at the main meters. If they are not damaged, leave them alone.

Check your water heater. If it has not been damaged, it contains good drinking water. If it has fallen over, it may have broken a gas line or an electric line, and you should turn off your gas and electricity.

Turn off your stove, the washing machine, or any appliance that was operating when the earthquake hit. Check for damage.

Check chimneys for cracks. If chimneys have been damaged, they could fall if we experience more shaking. Stay clear of them.

Clean up spilled medicines, flammable liquids, or any other hazardous materials. Keep an eye out for fires.

Find your pets and tie them up so they don't run away.

Check on your neighbors. See if there is anything you can do to help them.

Stay with small children as much as possible to reassure them. They need special attention, even if they seem okay.

If you must move from where you are now, leave a note on the front door so that family and emergency workers know where you've gone.

This has been an Earthquake Emergency Safety Advisory.

Announcements for Two to Six Hours Following the Earthquake

Announcer

This is an Earthquake Emergency Safety Advisory.

There has been a major earthquake. The danger from the earthquake may not be over. There could be more shaking.

Prepare to be on your own for some time. It could be days before normal services are restored.

Check your gas and electrical connections throughout your home. Cook in your home only if you are sure the utilities and connections are okay to avoid fires. If you are not sure, cook outside on a barbecue or camping stove.

Settle people as comfortably as possible. Talk out experiences, fears, and how to best deal with things. Pay special attention to children, older people, and anyone who is injured or badly frightened.

After an earthquake, some hot food in the stomach can help everyone feel better. It is not too early to start feeding people. Plan your meals carefully. If your power is out, eat perishable foods and the food in your refrigerator first, then the food in your freezer, and leave the food on your selves for last.

Open closets and cupboards carefully. Items may fall out when you open the door.

If your neighborhood has suffered earthquake damage, try to store water now for later use. Fill bathtubs and large containers with water. If the water in the storage tank on your toilet is clear, you may be able to use that too, but don't use water from the toilet bowl. Sterilize any non-bottled water that isn't already bottled. You can sterilize water by boiling it for five minutes, or by adding three to four drops of liquid chlorine laundry bleach per quart and letting the mixture stand for an hour. Do not use powdered bleach.

Remember not to use your telephone unless it is a life-threatening emergency.

Do not go sightseeing by car or otherwise. Roads need to be clear for emergency vehicles.

This has been an Earthquake Emergency Safety Advisory.