

- Canned and dried foods sufficient for a week for each member of your household
- Non-electric can opener
- Fire extinguisher
- Clean water (two gallons per day per person), one gallon for pets.
- Candles and matches (note: no open flame should be lit or electric switches turned on until it is determined that there is no gas leak in the area.)

DISASTER PLANS

At Home

Every responsible member of the family should know:

- how to turn off utilities (water, gas, electricity)
- basic first-aid (contact your local Red Cross or St. John's Ambulance branch for information on first-aid training)
- where to go when disaster strikes
- what places in the home are safest during certain disasters
- whether to vacate the home in favour of a shelter or relative's house before disaster
- where to find the nearest public shelter
- where and/ or how to reunite with family members

At School/Work

Has the institution identified a course of action for school children or employees in cases of emergency? Are drills conducted periodically? If not, approach appropriate authorities, suggest that they contact the ODPEM or local Parish Disaster Committee for assistance in formulating an organizational plan.

In The Community

Ensure that your community or neighbourhood citizen's association is aware of the hazards that might particularly affect your area. Set up guidelines to follow in the event of a disaster and design a post disaster cooperation assistance programme, to help get your community back on its feet quickly.

WHAT IS THE ODPEM

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) is the agency of the Government of Jamaica responsible for:

- taking action to reduce the impact of disasters and emergencies on the Jamaican population and economy
- coordinating warning, emergency response and relief operations in major emergency events

The ODPEM was set up in July 1980.

PARISH DISASTER COMMITTEES

One of the primary functions of the ODPEM is to work with the emergency services and local authorities to organise the islands 13 parishes to cope better with emergencies. As a result, disaster committees have been set up in each parish at the Parish Council. These Committees consist of persons from the private sector, voluntary agencies, political directorate, civil service, churches and Local Government. Each Parish Disaster Committee has the responsibility of formulating its own plan to meet local emergencies in keeping with the guidelines set out by the ODPEM based on disaster risks.



OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2-4 HAINING ROAD, KINGSTON 5
TEL: 876-906-9674-5; 876-754-9077-8
FAX: 876-754-3229

EMAIL: ODPEM@CWJAMAICA.COM
HTTP://WWW.ODPEM.ORG.JM

EARTHQUAKE SAFETY



NATURE OF THE THREAT

Jamaica's position near the Northern margin of the Caribbean Plate as well as the presence of very active faults on the island makes it vulnerable to earthquakes.

Earthquakes are unpredictable and can strike without warning. They may range in intensity from slight tremors to great shocks, and may last from a few seconds to possibly a minute. Shocks could also occur in a series over a period of several days. During an earthquake, injury and death to persons are usually caused by falling objects and collapsing buildings. Disruptions of communications, light and power lines, and sewer and water mains can also be expected.

Earthquakes also trigger landslides and fires. Giant waves (tsunamis) may also be generated and can cause great damage along shorelines, even up to thousands of miles away from where a shock may hit.

MAJOR PAST EARTHQUAKES IN JAMAICA

The Port Royal Earthquake of 1692 took place on June 7. Although it was felt island-wide, the most extensive loss of life occurred at Port Royal where a portion of the town sank into the sea. At least 2,000 people died and 3,000 buildings were destroyed. Another 3,000 persons died as a result of an outbreak of yellow fever which developed after the quake. The Great Kingston Quake of 1907 occurred on January 14 of that year. Of the 48,000 people then living in Kingston, 1,000 perished, many of them in the fire following the shocks.

Some 9,000 people were left homeless throughout the island and damage was estimated at 2 million dollars. Aftershocks continued for over a month and most of the Kingston population slept outdoors for that period.

EARTHQUAKE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Before an Earthquake

Potential earthquake hazards in the home and workplace should be removed or corrected. Top heavy objects and furniture, such as bookcases and storage cabinets, should be fastened to the wall and the largest and heaviest objects placed on lower shelves. Water heaters and other appliances should be firmly bolted down and flexible connections used wherever possible. Pay special attention to the maintenance of emergency equipment such as radio transmitters and medical equipment.

During an Earthquake

- Stay Calm
- If you are inside, stay there. Stand in a doorway or crouch under a desk or table away from windows or glass dividers.
- If you are outside, stay there. Stay away from objects such as buildings, trees, telephone and electric lines, which could fall and injure you.
- If you are in an automobile, drive away from underpasses/overpasses, stop in the safest place possible and stay there.

After an Earthquake

- Evacuate the building as soon as the shaking stops, carefully inspect the exterior of the building for cracks in walls, shifted posts and pillars. If you see anything other than minor cracks do not re-enter the building until it has been inspected for safety by a professional.

- Check for injuries and provide first aid. Seriously injured persons should not be moved unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
- Check for safety hazards – gas, water, sewage breaks, downed power lines and electrical short circuits, damaged and weakened buildings and foundations, fires and fire hazards.
- Turn off appropriate utilities. Do not use matches lighters or open flame, appliances or electrical switches until you are sure that there are no gas leaks.
- Do not use the telephone except in extreme emergency.
- Wear shoes and protective clothing, for example, hard hats and gloves, to avoid injuries while clearing debris.
- Keep battery-powered radios on and listen for emergency bulletins.
- If electrical power is off for any length of time, use the foods in your refrigerator and freezer before they spoil. Canned and dry foods should be saved until last.
- Co-operate with all public safety and relief organizations. Do not go into damaged areas unless authorized by appropriate personnel.
- Be prepared for additional earthquake shocks.

Survival Supplies You Should Have

- Portable radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First-aid book and kit, including specific medicines needed for members of the household
- Adjustable wrench for turning off your gas and water