

EDITOR'S NOTE: April is Earthquake Preparedness Month. Since 1987, seven earthquakes have caused extensive destruction and loss of life in California – 130 deaths, some 15,000 injuries and more than \$40.5 billion in property damage. On average, a damaging earthquake strikes the state every two years. Although the emphasis during April may be on earthquakes, it's a good time to prepare for any kind of disaster.

See: [California Earthquakes Since 1987](#)

See: [What to do before, during and after an earthquake.](#)

MTA's Diversity Staff is Ready for Any Emergency

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 27, 2003) If an earthquake or other disaster hits Los Angeles, today, disrupting transportation and communications and stranding employees at MTA Headquarters, the Diversity and Economic Opportunity staff is ready for it.

Squirreled away in a department storage room is a cache of emergency provisions – food, water, sanitary supplies, medicines and even a little candy – enough to feed and comfort 35 staff members for three days.

"Nothing needs to be cooked," says Linda Perryman, who along with Violeta Aguilos and Bessie Rush-Johnson, took the lead in stocking the emergency supplies after co-workers voted to undertake the project.

She points to shelves loaded with pork and beans, canned vegetables and fruit, canned meats and fish, pain relievers and rubbing alcohol, bleach for purifying water, flashlights, sanitary supplies and "things that bring joy into our lives like cookies, crackers and peanut butter."

Included in the storeroom are supplies for the children of several employees whose kids attend MTA's day care center. DEOD employees also were advised to keep extra clothing and a small reserve of non-perishable food at their desks.

Example of teamwork

How DEOD gathered its store of emergency supplies is an example of teamwork, employees say. During a meeting last Monday morning, the



^ Linda Perryman checks stocks of disaster provisions in the Diversity and Economic Opportunity emergency supply storeroom.

Below, Stocks of aspirin, antacid, rubbing alcohol and bleach are among the medical and sanitary supplies gathered for DEOD by, from left, Violeta Aguilos, Linda Perryman and Bessie Rush-Johnson.



staff voted to contribute \$20 each – college interns tossed in \$10 each – to purchase the stores.

Following the meeting and with about \$500 in hand, a flying squad made trips to Costco and Smart & Final. By 2:30 p.m., most of the supplies were on the shelves.

By Tuesday afternoon, the storeroom was fully stocked and 53 cents was left in the kitty.

In addition to the stock of emergency provisions, Deputy Executive Officer Linda Wright has encouraged staff members with special medical conditions to bring in enough medication to tide them over for three days.

Wright also has designated two staff members to assist those employees by providing safekeeping for confidential lists of their medical conditions or allergies. The sealed envelopes may be opened only with the employees' permission in the event of an emergency.

California Earthquakes Since 1987

- Whitter-Narrows, M5.9 – October 1, 1987 (8 deaths, 200 injuries, \$358 million in damage)
- Loma Prieta, M7.1 – October 17, 1989 (63 deaths, 3,757 injuries, \$5.9 million in damage)
- Upland, M5.5 – February 28, 1990 (38 injuries, \$10.4 million in damage)
- Sierra Madre, M5.8 – June 28, 1991 (1 death, 30+ injuries, \$33.5 million in damage)
- Humbolt County, M6.9 – April 25, 1992 (\$60 million in damage)
- Landers, M7.3 / Big Bear, M6.7 – June 28, 1992 (1 death, \$93 million in damage)
- Northridge, 6.7 – January 17, 1994 (57 deaths, 11,000+ injuries, \$40 billion in damage)

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What You Should Do [Before](#), [During](#) and [After](#) an Earthquake

Before

- Stock at least a 3-day supply of food, water, clothes, medical supplies, eyeglasses, extra cash (including change) and other items your family will need.
- Conduct Earthquake: Duck, cover, and hold drills every six months with your family.
- Identify the safest places in each room in your home so you know where to take cover during an earthquake.
- Identify all ways to exit your home and keep these areas clear.
- Decide where and when to unite should you be apart when an earthquake happens.
- Choose a person out of the area for family members to contact if separated.

- Locate shutoff valves for water, gas, and electricity. Learn how to turn off the valves before an earthquake. Be sure to train all members who may need to shut off these utilities after an earthquake.
- Make copies of vital records and make photos and/or video of your valuables. Keep these records in a safe deposit box or with trusted relative/friend in another city or state.
- Know the policies of the school or daycare center your children attend.

During

- Remain calm.
- Inside, stay inside.
- Protect yourself by ducking under a heavy piece of furniture or in a hall near an interior wall while covering your head and neck and holding on.
- Do not stand in a doorway. The door may injure you during the shaking.
- Stay away from appliances, large glass panes, shelves holding objects, and large decorative masonry, brick or plaster such as fireplaces.
- Keep hallways clear. They are usually one of the safest places to be during an earthquake. Stay away from kitchens and garages, which tend to be the most dangerous places.

After

- Check for injuries and give aid.
- Only use the phone for serious injury or fires.
- Check for hazards. Check gas and water leaks, broken electrical wiring and sewage lines. If damaged, turn off the source.
- Check the building for cracks and damage.
- Check food and water supplies.
- Turn on radio or TV (portable if no power) for instructions.
- Keep the streets clear for emergency vehicles.
- Be prepared for aftershocks.
- Remain calm and help others. If evacuating, post a message inside your home telling family members where to find you.
- Plan to report to work on your next scheduled shift, unless otherwise instructed.

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