Mobile Homes in Earthquakes

How to protect your home and family

Earthquakes threaten older mobile homes through collapse and fire

- Many older mobile homes rest on slender supports that overturn in earthquakes
- Collapse injures occupants & damages homes, contents, water heater, & utilities
- Collapse can render exits unsafe, especially for occupants fleeing a fire
- Fires spread faster between closely spaced dwellings. Narrow roads make fire department access harder.

Bracing can make a big difference

Mobile homes are 2 to 5 times more vulnerable than woodframe houses

In strong shaking, 95% of unbraced mobile homes can fall off their foundations, as in the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

In 3 mobile home parks in the Northridge earthquake, 1 in 7 mobile homes burned. Several ignitions were because of mobile home collapse.

Earthquakes much larger than 1989 and 1994 are inevitable and could happen any day.

Courtesy National Information Service for Earthquake Engineering, University of California, Berkeley.
How to protect your home and family

Reduce or prevent collapse

**Good:** Earthquake Resistant Bracing System (ERBS)  
$3,000-$5,000

**Better:** Engineered Tie-down System (ETS)  
$1,000-$2,000

**Best:** Reinforced concrete or reinforced masonry foundation  
$5,000-$50,000

- Brace water heater ($35-$200)
- Flexible gas connection ($100)

Ensure quality retrofit work

- Find the right contractor. For guidance, see http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Consumers/HireAContractor/FindingTheRightContractor.asp
- In California, consider a General Manufactured Housing Contractor. Check licenses at https://www2.cslb.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CheckLicenseII/CheckLicense.aspx
- Check ERBS certification. In California, have the contractor show you the ERBS complies with CA Adm. Code, Title 25, Chapter 2, Art. 7.5.
- Get the work permitted and inspected. California enforcement agencies are listed at https://ssw1.hcd.ca.gov/ParksListing/faces/parkslist/mp.jsp
- Monitor your contractor’s work as it is being done.

Reduce or prevent fire

- Flexibly connect gas line to water heater
- Automatic gas shutoff device

Other ways to reduce loss

- Practice Drop Cover and Hold On
- Put latches on cabinet doors
- Have water and food for at least 3 days, ideally 2 weeks
- Brace canopies and awnings
- Consider earthquake insurance, www.earthquakeauthority.com
- Do one or more of these yearly
- See www.shakeout.org for more info