

Wind, Earthquake, or Fire Damage to Buildings!

If your building has been damaged by a tornado, hurricane, earthquake, fire, or flood, evaluate the extent of damage BEFORE you decide to enter:

LITTLE or NO DAMAGE: Probably safe to enter, but evaluate it first!

MODERATE DAMAGE: May be safe to enter, but get out quickly!

HEAVY DAMAGE: Stay out! Don't risk your life!

1: Turn off natural gas. Turn off electricity if you can get to the Circuit Box or Fuse Box without danger. (See "Shut Off Your Electricity, Gas, and Water!")

2: Evaluate structure types and their typical dangers:

- Mobile homes MOVE, have a weak structure, and damage utility connections, causing a fire and electric shock risk.
- Houses built before 1940 were not bolted to their foundations.
- Older homes made of un-reinforced brick are unstable.
- Multi-story apartment buildings may be unstable and unsafe.

3: Evaluate kinds of damage:

- Gas line breaks when gas ranges or water heaters moved.
- Electrical shock danger from loose wires, moved appliances.
- Potential for fire, or for a recent fire to start up again.
- Broken glass, fallen ceilings and walls, collapsed stairs or walkways.
- Greater damage up to total destruction

4: Decide whether it is safe to enter:

- If there is structural damage and you cannot turn off gas or electricity, do not go in.
- If there is MAJOR DAMAGE, stay out!

5: Plan the smart way to enter:

- Don't become a casualty by taking chances.
- Enter as a team of two people.
- Leave at least one person outside.
- Do a quick walk-thru to assess damage.
- Go back outside and decide what's best to do next.

6. Don't do anything dumb!

- Oops! That advice isn't in the manual! But that's what I tell my kids!