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**Media Contacts:**  
Kelly Huston, 916.607.7657  
[kelly.huston@calema.ca.gov](mailto:kelly.huston@calema.ca.gov)

Marta Bortner, 916.327.4050  
[marta.bortner@californiavolunteers.ca.gov](mailto:marta.bortner@californiavolunteers.ca.gov)

## **Study Reveals Californians Need to Increase Earthquake Preparedness Efforts Less Than 20 Percent Have Prepared Their Homes; Only 40 Percent Have Sufficient Water** State and Local Agencies are Better Prepared Today, but Weakest Link is Citizen Preparedness

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.**, March 5, 2010 – A majority of Californians have taken initial steps toward earthquake preparedness but more than 60 percent of Californians have not done enough to make their homes safer and guard their personal finances in preparation for an inevitable, large-scale earthquake, according to a recent *California Earthquake Preparedness Survey*.

Although state and local public safety and emergency management agencies are better prepared than ever before, California residents have focused on easy preparedness activities such as collecting supplies and making back-up copies of important documents but they have not done more difficult and expensive activities such as securing the contents of their home or purchasing earthquake insurance, according to the survey.

Key findings of the survey were:

- Fewer than 20 percent of households have structurally reinforced their homes or had their homes inspected for earthquake resistance.
- Only 40 percent keep the recommended minimum of three gallons of water stored per person.
- Fewer than 20 percent of California households have purchased earthquake insurance.
- More than 80 percent of households have first aid kits, flashlights and batteries in their house but only 40 percent of Californians have made family disaster plans.

The *California Earthquake Preparedness Survey* was conducted by the UCLA School of Public Health for the State of California on behalf of California Emergency Management Agency, California Seismic Safety Commission and CaliforniaVolunteers to learn how prepared California households are for earthquakes and where they get their information about preparedness and mitigation.

“The recent earthquakes in Chile and Haiti are unwelcome reminders of the devastating impact earthquakes can have on people and communities,” said Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen of the California Emergency Management Agency. “It calls attention to the need for Californians to do even more to prepare for the big one. This study confirms that Californians need constant reminders and a steady stream of earthquake preparedness information to motivate people to act. We continue to urge Californians to prepare now.”

Additional Survey Highlights

- Residents of high-risk areas were more likely to have learned about how to be safe during an earthquake; however, they are not getting ready in proportion to the differential risk they face.



- Hispanic respondents were the least likely among all racial/ethnic groups to prepare.
- Less than 20 percent have participated in neighborhood disaster planning. Northern California residents were more likely than others to have participated in neighborhood disaster planning.
- More than 65 percent of Californians reported being trained in first aid, less than 50 percent had participated in disaster trainings at work, and less than 20 percent have received specific disaster trainings. Hispanic respondents were the least likely to have received these types of training.
- Fewer than 50 percent have dust masks, tools to rescue trapped people, or an extra set of emergency supplies in the car.
- Some Californians believe earthquake myths that could lead to loss of life and injuries in an earthquake.

“It is important for Californians to prepare for all types of disasters by having a plan and being ready to take care of ourselves, our families and our communities,” said Karen Baker, Secretary of Service and Volunteering. “Personal preparedness allows disaster workers to focus on critical areas to protect our state. Everyone can take steps to prepare.”

Observations from the earthquakes in Chile and Haiti reinforce the importance of being self-sufficient immediately following a disaster such as stockpiling food, water and supplies; training and practicing skills that are critical during disasters; and protecting the structures of buildings.

In absence of an actual disaster, “information received” and “information observed” are most likely to increase investment in earthquake preparedness and mitigation. The amount of information people hear, read and see determines whether they prepare. Other factors, including the increased probability of a future event, risk of future event and demographics like income, education and age, which may constrain what people can afford, have little effect on motivating people to prepare.

A variety of free online disaster preparedness resources such as a customized family plan, personalized children’s book and disaster preparedness tips are available on [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org).

#### **About CaliforniaVolunteers**

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering, including the state AmeriCorps program, California Citizen Corps and the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning. CaliforniaVolunteers is charged with coordinating volunteers and financial donations in times of disaster. CaliforniaVolunteers also coordinates a statewide WE Prepare disaster preparedness public education campaign and is working to launch a state wide Disaster Corps. Through the innovative Web site, [CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://CaliforniaVolunteers.org), individuals and families can find more than 50,000 volunteer opportunities throughout the state involving the arts, education, animals, disaster preparedness, the environment and other areas of interest. Karen Baker, the nation’s first state cabinet secretary of service and volunteering leads the organization and First Lady Maria Shriver serves as the honorary chairperson. For more information, please visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org).

#### **About California Emergency Management Agency**

California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) is responsible for the coordination of overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. The Agency is responsible for assuring the state’s readiness to respond to and recover from all hazards - natural, manmade, war-caused emergencies and disasters - and for assisting local governments in their emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and hazard mitigation efforts. For more information, please visit [www.CalEMA.ca.gov](http://www.CalEMA.ca.gov).

#### **About the California Seismic Safety Commission**

California Seismic Safety Commission investigates earthquakes, researches earthquake-related issues and reports, and recommends to the Governor and Legislature policies and programs needed to reduce earthquake risk. For more information, please visit [www.seismic.ca.gov](http://www.seismic.ca.gov).