



## Consular Information Sheet

# Earthquake Preparedness

Natural disasters may occur at any time and place in Japan. Typhoons hit from Mid August until the end of September, Volcanic activity and Earthquakes could happen all year round. They may occur in rural as well as densely populated areas. Floods come together with typhoons, fire and tsunamis together with earthquakes or volcanic activities. While typhoons and volcanic eruptions can often be predicted, thus allowing the authorities to take adequate preventive measures, earthquakes will hit without prior warning.

It is not possible to obtain 100% protection from such disasters while living in Japan, however you can prepare yourself and thus lessen the danger for you and your family. The present information sheet intends to provide some tips you might want to consider in drawing up a personal reaction plan in case of an earthquake.



### Prepare your home:

- Your home should be built according or superior to the standards set in 1981.
- Secure your furniture to the wall by using special devices to prevent them from toppling over (available at “Tokyu Hands” or similar stores)
- Don't place any heavy items from the top of shelves and cupboards
- Make sure you know where to switch off the gas supply of your apartment
- Know the emergency exits in your building and make sure they are not obstructed in any way
- Stock up at least 3 days of food and water supply
- Prepare an escape bag with radio, flash lights, spare batteries, solid fuel for a cooker, candles, toilet articles, a set of underwear, money (including coins) and ID documents.



## **Prepare with your family:**

- Make certain everyone, including children, knows where to meet after an earthquake, Parents will want to consult school officials for special guidelines in this regard
- **Evacuation:** Evacuations must be carried out when fires are spreading or buildings are in danger of being destroyed by landslides, etc. City police and fire authorities will issue evacuation advice. Just in case you must evacuate from your office or apartment building, take a walking pre-survey of the designated place of evacuation nearest your home and office. Also be familiar with the location of the ward office and the telephone number of the Disaster Relief Headquarters for your ward.
- The Tokyo Metropolitan Government has maps of evacuation points. Your landlord or the ward office can provide you with detailed information.
- Remember: Even if you are not asked to evacuate, the evacuation points will have fresh water, food and medical supplies.



## **During a quake:**

### **Inside a building:**

- Never use an elevator during or immediately after an earthquake
- Stay away from objects which may easily fall or break
- Find shelter under a table or some other solid object
- Cover your head
- Turn off the gas
- Open all doors as soon as possible in order to have a free escape route

### **Outside:**

- Watch for falling objects and keep away from narrow alleys
- Try to hide behind a stone or a concrete wall. This may protect you from flying glass
- Walk in the middle of the road and observe the houses; watch out for falling power lines
- If you notice a fire, check the wind direction, then walk in the opposite direction

### **While driving a car:**

- Stop your car on the left side of the road (the centre lane must stay available for emergency vehicles)
- Leave the key in the car and do not lock the doors
- Walk to the nearest evacuation site

## The role of the Embassy:

The Japanese Government will be responsible for assisting foreigners immediately after a major earthquake.

Telephone services will be severely overloaded and the Japanese Government will restrict phone use to priority users. The Swiss Embassy has been assigned 2 dedicated priority lines and will quickly try to ascertain the welfare and whereabouts of all Swiss citizens. Swiss citizens should cooperate with Japanese authorities at evacuation sites and clearly identify themselves as Swiss. Those connected with larger organizations such as companies, schools or church groups should try to let these organizations know of their well-being and whereabouts if possible.

The Swiss Embassy will be in touch with the Japanese Government and other organizations to attempt to identify as many Swiss citizens as possible and determine their well-being.

Beside the use of the Embassy's priority phone lines, the use of the NTT disaster message telephone service 171 is strongly recommended.

**Using disaster message telephone service 171**

The diagram illustrates the use of the disaster message telephone service 171. At the center is the 'Disaster Emergency Message Dial Center' (171), which provides 'Message recording and playback' services. This center is connected to four distinct areas: 'Disaster-stricken area', 'Evacuation center', 'Other areas', and 'Other areas'. Red arrows labeled 'Playback' and 'Record' indicate the flow of messages between the central dial center and each of these areas.

During an earthquake, volcanic eruption, or any other kind of major disaster, communication attempts to the affected area dramatically increase and it becomes difficult to make a connection. In order to minimize telephone use, NTT East introduced a voice message board service that uses the number 171. This service allows the users to leave a voice message that their relatives and friends can easily retrieve.

To learn how to use this service, on the 1st and the 15th (00:00 - 24:00) of every month you have the possibility to record as well as retrieve your own message. Try it out, it might be very useful in case of a real natural disaster.

For more details, please visit <http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/en/saigai/voice171/index.html>

Most importantly, the Swiss Embassy in Tokyo will forward as much information as possible about the situation as well as the status of Swiss citizens to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, who will contact relatives in Switzerland and answer their inquiries.

### How to get in touch with the Swiss Embassy in Tokyo

General phone:	(03) 5449 8400
Priority phone lines:	(03) 3473 1259 ** (03) 3473 8385 ** ** activated on emergency
Emergency mobile phone:	090 3510 9025
E-mail	<a href="mailto:tok.vertretung@eda.admin.ch">tok.vertretung@eda.admin.ch</a>
Helpline FDFA in Berne E-mail	+41 800 24 7 365 <a href="mailto:helpline@eda.admin.ch">helpline@eda.admin.ch</a>
Emergency number FDFA in Berne	+41 31 323 30 99



### More information:

The Japanese local governments have published various information brochures in regard to earthquake. Many of these publications have been translated into English and are available free of charge.

For copies please get in touch with the organizations listed below.

- Tokyo Metropolitan Government  
Bureau of General Affairs  
The Disaster Prevention Division  
Shinjuku  
phone (03) 5388 2453  
<http://www.bousai.metro.tokyo.jp/english/index.html>
- Your ward office
- Your local fire or police station
- Or the consular section of the Swiss Embassy  
<http://www.eda.admin.ch/tokyo>



## **IMPORTANT**



**Please provide the Swiss Embassy with a contact address (in Switzerland) in case of an emergency and notify the Embassy immediately whenever:**

- **Newly arriving in Japan**
- **Changing your address**
- **Changing your phone numbers (including mobile phone)**
- **Changing your e-mail address**
- **Changing employer/employment/school etc.**
- **Permanently departing from Japan**

*This consular information sheet is provided as a courtesy to Swiss citizens and the Swiss Embassy takes no responsibility for its content.*