

Hello from Howard Lamcke. Fall has arrived. It seems like a broken record to keep talking about business is booming, so we will just confirm that yes, it still is! It appears that things are a little more orderly now, and we have a sequence going so don’t be afraid to get in line for that remodel. My mind is instead drawn to the weather, and how lucky we are to live in the bay area in the wake of the hurricane season on the southeast coast. My heart goes out to all of the victims as they face the nightmare of insurance claims and rebuilding. We are lucky, but then the earthquakes hit in Mexico and we are brought to earth with the realization that that is our inevitable future too. I have previously rendered my opinion about earthquake insurance. The truth is, the vast majority of us will suffer little if any real structural damage to our homes in a major earthquake. However, a quick walk around my house reminded me of the “minor” damage that could occur, and how sad and inconvenient that loss would be. So this letter is dedicated to the prevention of personal losses in our next earthquake and some helpful hints and modifications. Meanwhile, we look forward to hearing from you about your next remodel. Until then!

**Preparing for the Next Big One**

Most homes built in the bay area after 1950 will survive a major earthquake intact. We saw in 1989 that the majority of damage was to unreinforced chimneys or to homes built with pony wall underfloors. Almost everyone retained their gas and water service, but I personally lost electrical power for over 12 hours in Santa Clara. We all know to have flashlights and batteries available, and we can use our car radios for information. But make sure you know how to get your car out of the garage if the opener isn’t working. And don’t forget the family emergency plan if the phone service is interrupted. That being said; the majority of damage will be to your personal property in the house, and a quick walk around your rooms will identify problem areas.

Kitchen and buffet cabinets can and do open in a major shaker, and spill out dishes and glasses. Child safety latches will help with this; and be sure to secure display cabinets to the wall. I would do the same with tall dressers and television units on stands and aquariums. Items on upper display shelves will surely fall off and can be secured with museum wax. It’s especially important to secure items that are hanging over and around a bed, like pictures and mirrors in case the big one hits while we are sleeping. Another important place to look is in the garage. I just moved all my paint cans from the upper shelves. Cabinets and tools should be secured to prevent damage to cars. And even one strap on the water heater will do a world of good.

We know a major earthquake is coming. A few simple changes in the home will prevent a lot of damage. Do them today!