

Using your RV to survive in an earthquake or other natural disaster

May 15, 2010 by [Bob Difley](#)

The sudden shaking of my office, pens and paperclips skittering across the desk, and the rental motorhomes outside on the RV lot dancing like it was a Saturday night beach party. As any Californian instantly comprehends—another earthquake!

Even after the worst of Hurricane Katrina had passed over, when the levees broke, every New Orleans resident knew—we're still in for a BIG problem.

Mid-western tornadoes ravish the land, stacking what were once homes into piles of kindling. But those who stared in disbelief at the devastation, knew of the extreme difficulties that still lay ahead.

In each of these circumstances, thousands of people are left without a roof over their heads. In the earthquake my sister-in-law's house was knocked completely off its foundation, red-tagged. The earthquake only took a minute to render five people—including two young children and a grandmother—homeless. For the next four days, their only option was to sleep in their cars. No bathroom, no shower, no cooking facilities.

Have you ever stopped to think how a natural disaster of similar proportions would affect your life?

Having a mechanically maintained and fully stocked RV could make a huge difference in the quality of your life following such a disaster. But do you have the skills to live in your RV for an extended time without support, such as the hookups you normally take for granted? Obtaining supplies—food, water, and electrical power—may be impossible due to flooded roads, fallen or damaged bridges and highways, supplies inaccessible due to damaged or closed stores, power supplies cut off, water mains broken.

As an RV owner, to assure that you will be prepared for emergencies only takes a bit of planning, and if you develop the habit following each camping trip, no extra effort. To be sure of your preparedness, leave your RV in a ready-to-go state, rather than wait until your next trip.

- Replace all food used on trip, including adding several days more of canned and dry stores (with long expiration dates) than you might carry for just a weekend trip—including extra toilet paper, paper towels, dishwashing and bar soap.
- Fill your fuel, propane, and fresh water tanks.
- Dump both holding tanks.
- Launder all clothes, bedding, towels, etc. and return to rig.
- Keep plenty of fresh batteries for flashlights, book reading lights, and all battery-operated devices.
- Consider buying a solar battery charger.
- Fill at least one 6-gallon Jerry jug of back-up fresh water.
- Verify that your fire extinguishers are up to date.
- Upgrade your first aid kit and check that all contents are replaced after usage.
- Keep on board an emergency backpacker's water filter that would enable you to produce drinking water from even foul water sources, one that removes the microscopic bugs that could cause dysentery and other water-borne illnesses.

- And don't underestimate the emergency value of duct tape, wire ties, adequate tools, emergency instruction, repair, and survival manuals.

In an earthquake disaster, don't extend your levelers until the aftershocks have stopped. And lastly, hone your boondocking skills, so that you can live comfortably without outside support until services return, and roads and power supplies are repaired.