

After the earthquake...

Is Your Chimney Safe?

HERE'S WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Was your chimney damaged in the earthquake? Find out before you use your stove or fireplace. Your life could depend on it.

Broken or cracked chimneys can let heat, smoke and toxic gasses escape into your home. Your home could catch fire. You could breathe in carbon monoxide—an invisible, odorless gas created when things burn—that can be deadly.

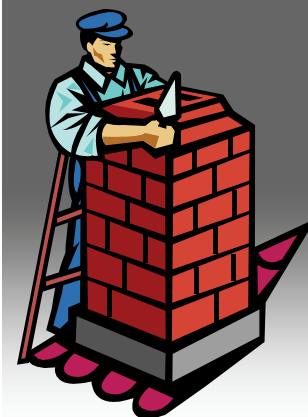
Some damage is obvious. Some is hidden. To start:

- Check to see if bricks have fallen or the chimney is leaning.
- Look for shiny areas on your metal chimney pipe. This means the chimney moved during the earthquake.
- Look for cracks at joints: where the chimney connects to the firebox, at the roofline, and in the attic.
- Look to see if there are metal ties that hold the chimney to the house. If there aren't any, your chimney is at greater risk.
- Check for debris in the firebox.
- Use a screwdriver to check the mortar between the bricks or stones. If it crumbles when you pick at it, the chimney may be a hazard.

Deciding whether a chimney has had earthquake damage is not always easy. When in doubt, consult a licensed engineer or contractor. For the name of an inspector, contact your insurance or mortgage company.

Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors save lives. Get them.

Your life and your family's lives may depend on it.



Virginia Department of
Emergency Management



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