

# RETROFIT Improvements

## Self-Locking Cabinets, Drawers, & Doors

Making  
Homes  
Safer in  
Disasters

### Retrofit Opportunity

- Installing self-locking drawers and cabinets or locking mechanisms, such as baby-proof latches, can be installed at anytime

### Purpose

- To minimize the amount of property damage caused by a seismic event

### Benefits

- Reduce the potential for fatalities and injuries
- Prevent property loss and speed up recovery
- Maintain safe and clear exit ways for evacuation and access to home

### Hazards

Wind



Rain



Flood



Seismic



Fire



Snow



### Summary

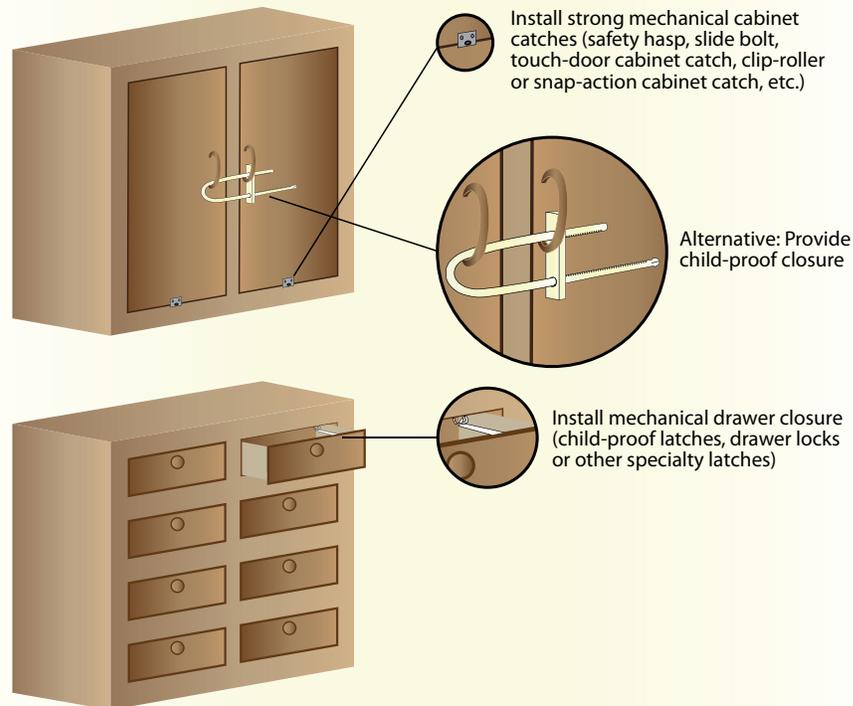
In an earthquake, the actual movement of the ground is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most casualties result from objects sliding, breaking, falling, or tipping over. For example, during a seismic event, cabinet doors can open and spill their contents. Furthermore, the drawers, which sometimes have sharp edges, can slide out and cause harm to the home's occupants. Therefore, securing the non-structural components (i.e., furnishings, equipment, cabinets, shelves, etc.) and building contents improves the safety and security of the home during an earthquake.

If items are not properly secured during an earthquake, all of your personal belongings are at risk of becoming disorganized or damaged. Significant damage can occur to valuable property and contents when they turn into projectiles. Installing self-locking kitchen drawers and cabinets or a locking mechanism, such as baby-proof latches, can prevent this from happening. Although these locks may seem a bit cumbersome at first, the small investment you spend on them can potentially save you from replacing hundreds of dollars worth of expensive kitchen dishes, glasses, and serve ware.

Installing self-locking latches to your cabinet doors and drawers is a simple "Do-It-Yourself" retrofit. The hardware for this retrofit will cost about \$1 for a set of two latches.

### Illustration

#### Retrofit



## Potential Damage



Photo: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

## Key Steps

- Attach mechanical or self-locking latches to prevent your cabinet doors from swinging open and spilling their contents. Your local hardware store should have a large variety of latches, many of which are small, unobtrusive, and fairly easy to operate.
- Your contractor may have additional ideas on how to improve the safety of your home.
- For more details about this retrofit improvement, please refer to the list of Resources in the section below.

## Resources

FEMA, *Homebuilders' Guide to Earthquake-Resistant Design and Construction*  
<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2103>

Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, *Is Your Home Protected for Earthquake Disaster? A Homeowner's Guide to Nonstructural Earthquake Retrofit*  
<http://www.seattle.gov/emergency/library/mitigation/NS-Guide-is-your-home-protected-update10-25.pdf>

Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, *Securing Cabinets and Drawers*  
<http://www.disastersafety.org/project?projectId=4043>

