



## MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Ontarians are Not Immune From the Threat of Serious Quakes St. John Ambulance Wants Ontarians to have an Earthquake Plan

**March 11, 2011 (Toronto, ON)** – This morning a devastating 8.9 magnitude earthquake struck Japan, causing widespread tsunami alerts for New Zealand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Hawaii, and Canada.

The widespread damage and loss of life has prompted St. John Ambulance to remind Ontarians that despite our geography, we are still vulnerable to earthquakes. Each year nearly 5,000 mostly small earthquakes are recorded in Canada, and over the last 100 years Canada has registered at least nine with a magnitude greater than 7. A magnitude 6 earthquake has the potential to do extensive damage in developed areas. It is believed that a strong quake near one of Canada's major urban centers would likely be the most destructive natural disaster our country could experience.

#### Before a Quake:

- **Plan ahead.** Create an emergency readiness plan. For more information visit, [www.emergencymanagementontario.ca](http://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca)
- **Prepare your home.** Secure furniture and appliances - bolt bookcases to wall studs, ensure dressers and other items of furniture are anchored to prevent tipping, install latches on cupboards and avoid storing heavy items such as cans above your head. Use wall studs to secure items like water heaters and heavy appliances. Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water mains.
- **Find a Safe Spot.** Find a place in each room of the house that you can go to in case of an earthquake. It should be a spot where nothing is likely to fall on you, or where you can take shelter under a sturdy surface, such as a table.
- **Prepare a 72-hour Survival Kit.** In case of disaster you may have to evacuate your home. Having a survival kit packed ahead insures you will have what you and your family need to take care of yourself at a shelter, or in your home until emergency services are able to assist you.
- **Be First Aid Ready.** During an earthquake there is potential to suffer serious injury and depending on the amount of destruction, it may take emergency services a long time to get to you. Get trained in first aid, so you can attend existing injuries and avoid making them worse. Keep a fully stocked first aid kit on hand so you have what you need close by.

#### When the Ground is Shaking:

- Drop down; take cover under a strong, sturdy surface.
- Stay indoors until the shaking stops.
- Stay away from anything that can tip over and fall on you.
- Stay away from windows. If you are in a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off.
- If you are in bed, hold on and stay there - protect your head with a pillow.
- If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground.
- If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place. Stay in the car until the shaking stops.

For more information on natural disasters in your area and how to prepare for them, visit [www.emergencymanagementontario.ca](http://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca).

For over 125 years, St. John Ambulance has been training over 140,000 Ontarians annually in first aid and other health care related courses and remains dedicated to saving lives at work, home and play. With over 4,000 volunteers contributing over half a million hours of community service a year, St. John Ambulance is an integral part of the community offering such unique and innovative programs as: medical first response, disaster response, car seat clinics, health and safety related youth programs and therapy dog services. As a charitable, humanitarian organization, proceeds from St. John Ambulance's first aid training and first aid product sales directly support these vital community services programs. For more information on St. John Ambulance training courses and volunteer opportunities please visit our website at [www.sja-mississauga.ca](http://www.sja-mississauga.ca)