



Everything you always wanted to know about  
*Earthquake Automatic Gas Shutoff Valves...*  
And you never dared to ask!

**Why should your home have an automatic gas shut off valve?**

The explosions and fire that follow an earthquake may be more destructive to homes than the quake. With our homes so close together, the fewer homes with leaking gas the better. Suppose that a strong earthquake takes place at night and the electricity is off. If your home is not equipped with an automatic gas shut off valve, then you must find a flashlight, a squirt bottle of soapy water, and a wrench to turn off the valve if necessary. Checking for leaks will take time just when your attention might be better spent looking after the welfare of your family. The automatic gas shut off valve works immediately whether you are at home or away. The automatic valve also relieves your neighbors from having to shut off your gas when you are away or incapacitated.

**How effective are automatic gas shut off valves?**

Following the 1994 Northridge earthquake a survey indicated that the valves "prevented numerous gas-related fires or explosions, which reduced the need for water, firefighters, and other emergency services (Strand, C. L., "Performance of seismic gas shutoff valves and the occurrence of gas related fires and gas leaks during the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, with an update on Legislation and standards development").

**Are current homeowners required to install automatic gas shut off valves?**

At the present, the counties of Contra Costa, Marin and Alameda are the only ones that require homeowners to install automatic shut off valves. However, it is only a matter of time before the installation will be mandatory statewide. The law generally indicates that all buildings sold or extensively remodeled in those counties must have:

- (1) At the outside gas meter: a seismic (motion sensitive) automatic gas shut off device **or** an excess flow (non-motion sensitive) device.
- (2) At each gas appliance inside the house: an excess flow (non-motion sensitive) automatic shut off valve.

## What are the kinds of automatic gas shut off valves?



(1) The **seismic (motion sensitive) automatic gas shut off valve** is a device attached to the gas meter that senses shaking in a building sufficient to cause damage to the gas pipe system and automatically shuts off the gas. This is the kind of valve that we have asked for bids to install. A popular model is the Koso, also known as the California Valve. If the valve closes because of an earthquake, the pipes should be checked, repaired for leaks, and the device reset by a qualified person before the gas is turned on again.

(2) The **excess flow (non-motion sensitive) automatic gas shut off valve** is a device that is activated to shut off gas when excess gas flows downstream as in a leak or rupture of gas pipes. The device can be mounted outside on the gas meter and/or on each gas appliance in the house. This kind of valve will be required on all gas appliances when the house is sold or extensively remodeled. If the valves have been closed after an earthquake, the pipes should be checked, repaired for leaks, and the devices reset by a qualified person before the gas is turned on again.



## Can I purchase a seismic automatic gas shut off valve at a hardware store?

Yes, you can. However, installation instructions for all valves state that **only qualified technicians** should install the valve. Additionally, some cities require submitting a plan to obtain a plumbing permit, and work must be in compliance with local codes, and/or Uniform Plumbing Code.

## Who do I call to check for gas leaks; turn on the gas; and relight appliance pilots?

Call Lunt Marymor! We will check the gas lines, repair damaged pipes, relight appliance pilots and reset the earthquake valve. There is a possibility that certain appliances (particularly vintage models) may require the expertise of an

appliance repairman in order to relight pilots or restart them. This is outside our scope of knowledge, and a possible additional cost that should be considered.

## **How do I get an automatic gas shut off valve... and save \$\$\$?**

Protecting your home is only the beginning. If your neighbors' homes are not protected, your home is in danger as well. The safest (and least expensive) way to protect your home is to get a group of neighbors together and have your valves installed at the same time.

**Lunt Marymor** has provided entire Bay Area neighborhoods with earthquake valve installations at the best group rates.

### **How is this possible?**

When the valves are purchased in larger quantities, and the installers do not have to drive from one home to the next, there are savings that can be passed along to the Clients.

**Lunt Marymor** works with neighborhoods to make sure that installations are done in an efficient yet flexible manner. Our staff's priority is your safety and satisfaction; we have a sterling reputation and always stand behind our work.

*For more information, call us!*



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