

Install Latches on Drawers and Cabinet Doors



FEMA

PROTECTING YOUR PROPERTY FROM EARTHQUAKES

During an earthquake, drawers and cabinet doors can open and the stored materials can spill out and damage floors and floor coverings. Objects that fall from overhead cabinets can injure you or others.

One way to prevent the accidental opening of drawers and cabinet doors is to install latches such as barrel bolts, safety hasps, and child-proof locks. Most hardware and home supply stores stock a variety of latches. The figure shows three types of child-proof locks, one for drawers and two for cabinet doors. Examples of mechanical drawer closures include child-proof or drawer latches. The strong mechanical cabinet catches can include safety clasps, touch-door cabinet catches, slide bolts, clip-rollers, or snap-action cabinet catches, etc.

Most types of permanent latches can be installed easily and will not interfere with opening and closing of drawers and doors. The slide bolt can be used on cabinets that do not need to be opened frequently; it is easily installed and removed.

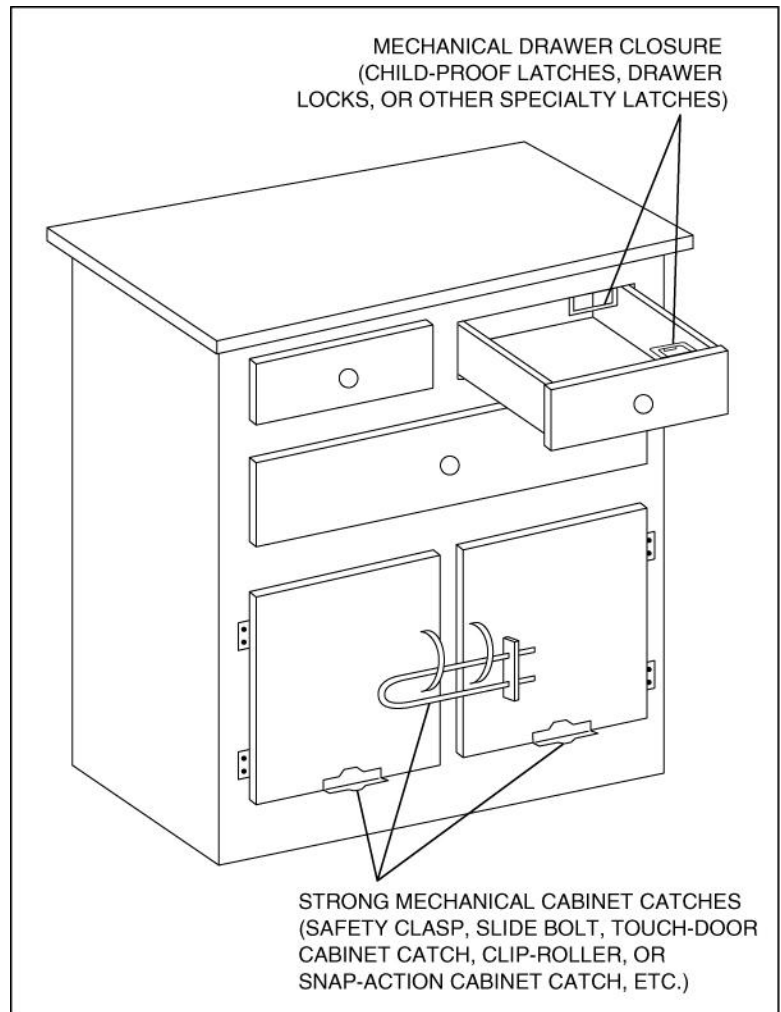
BENEFITS OF UTILIZING THIS MITIGATION STRATEGY

- Helps to prevent damage to floors and floor coverings, as well as to the contents of the drawers and cabinets
- Helps to prevent injuries to occupants

TIPS

Keep these points in mind when you install latches on drawers and cabinet doors:

- ✓ When possible, do not store heavy, breakable, or dangerous items (such as insecticides, solvents, and bleach) in overhead cabinets.
- ✓ Do not rely on magnetic or pinch-grip catches to hold cabinet doors closed, especially on overhead cabinets and any cabinets that contain heavy, breakable, or dangerous items.
- ✓ Install latches according to the manufacturer's directions. For example, use all of the hardware provided with the latch and do not substitute undersized screws or bolts for those provided.



ESTIMATED COST

The cost of adding latches will depend on the type you decide to buy and the number of drawers and cabinet doors you want to secure. If you do the work yourself, the cost of adding latches to one cabinet could cost approximately \$50. If you hire a contractor or handyman to install latches, you will have to pay for time as well as materials.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

FEMA 74, *Reducing the Risks of Nonstructural Earthquake Damage: A Practical Guide*, Third Edition, September 1994, <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=1574>.

FEMA 232, *Homebuilders' Guide to Earthquake-Resistant Design and Construction*, June 2006, <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=2103>.

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