

What to Do during an Earthquake

Stay as safe as possible during an earthquake. Be aware that some earthquakes are actually foreshocks and a larger earthquake might occur. Minimize your movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place and stay indoors until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.

If indoors

- **DROP** to the ground; take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Protect yourself by staying under the lintel of an inner door, in the corner of a room, under a table or even under a bed.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, loadbearing doorway.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave.
- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- DO NOT use the elevators.

If outdoors

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, trees, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits, and alongside exterior walls. Most earthquake-related casualties result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.

If in a moving vehicle

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

If trapped under debris

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

After an earthquake

- Keep calm, switch on the radio/TV and obey any instructions you hear on it.
- Keep away from beaches and low banks of rivers. Huge waves may sweep in.
- Expect aftershocks. Be prepared.
- Turn off the water, gas and electricity.
- Do not smoke and do not light matches or use a cigarette lighter. Do not turn on switches. There may be gas leaks or short-circuits.
- Use a torch.
- If there is a fire, try to put it out. If you cannot, call the fire brigade.
- If people are seriously injured, do not move them unless they are in danger.
- Immediately clean up any inflammable products that may have spilled (alcohol, paint, etc).
- If you know that people have been buried, tell the rescue teams. Do not rush and do not worsen the situation of injured persons or your own situation.
- Avoid places where there are loose electric wires and do not touch any metal object in contact with them.
- Do not drink water from open containers without having examined it and filtered it through a sieve, a filter or an ordinary clean cloth.
- If your home is badly damaged, you will have to leave it. Collect water containers, food, and ordinary and special medicines (for persons with heart complaints, diabetes, etc.)
- Do not re-enter badly damaged buildings and do not go near damaged structures.