



Earthquake Safety

Earthquakes are abrupt shaking or rolling events caused by movement of rock masses deep within the earth. Earthquakes occur over fault lines, which run along the earth's surface, and they can be felt over large areas. Earthquakes are not yet able to be predicted so it is key to be prepared for this kind of natural disaster.

Even though some areas suffer from more earthquakes than others, they can happen at any time of the year, in any area of the US.

How to prepare before an earthquake:

- Be aware of the areas you spend the most time in. Identify safe and sturdy places, such as interior walls or a sturdy piece of furniture or equipment. These places are where you should attempt to crawl to in the event of an earthquake.
- Practice "Drop, Cover, and Hold On", which includes dropping to the ground, covering your head, and crawling to a safe area if possible.
- Ensure all items are secured that could fall and cause injuries during the quake (e.g. mirrors, equipment, light fixtures, other furniture, etc.). For additional resources to make your building safer, view the following FEMA publications:
 - [Incremental Seismic Rehabilitation of Office Buildings \(FEMA 397\)](#)
 - [Incremental Seismic Rehabilitation of Retail Buildings \(FEMA 399\)](#)
 - [Incremental Seismic Rehabilitation of Hospital Buildings \(FEMA 396\)](#)
 - [Incremental Seismic Rehabilitation of School Buildings, K-12 \(FEMA 395\)](#)
 - [Incremental Seismic Rehabilitation of Hotel/Motel Buildings \(FEMA 400\)](#)
- Store critical supplies in a secure place that can be accessed quickly and easily in an emergency.
- Create a [family emergency communication plan](#) to communicate with family members.
- Check with your local building-regulatory agency to ensure the building is up to code regarding seismic design provisions. If you currently work at a facility in an earthquake zone, you can ensure you are up to all codes by [clicking here](#).

How to react during an earthquake:

If you are located:	Then:
Inside of your building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remain calm and where you are until the shaking subsides. Do not attempt to run outside or get into a doorway, this will not provide protection from flying or falling objects and you may fall and become injured.• Drop down onto the ground quickly so you are not thrown from the quake.• Protect your head and neck from falling debris by covering them with your arms. If there is immediate danger of falling objects and you can move safely, crawl to the area.• Be sure to remain away from windows or other glass objects, outer walls and doors, or other potentially hazardous areas such as below light fixtures.• Remain where you are until the shaking subsides.• If you cannot get low to the ground due to a wheelchair or other mobility device, lock your wheels, remain seated, and protect your head with your arms or anything else available that can help.
Outside when you feel the shaking	If you are outside at the onset of an earthquake, move away from utility wires, buildings and streetlights. In an open area you can Drop, Stop, and Cover until the shaking subsides. If you are in a densely populated area with no open spaces, such as a city, it may be safer to take shelter inside of the nearest building.
In a moving vehicle when you feel the shaking	If you are in a driving or a passenger in a moving vehicle, stop quickly and safely and remain inside of the vehicle. Avoid stopping in dangerous areas, near or under buildings, trees, utility wires, and other structures. When the earthquake subsides, you can continue driving cautiously while avoiding possible damaged areas such as bridges or ramps.

How to react after an earthquake:

- Once the shaking subsides, look for a clear path to safety. Attempt to find an open area that is not near damage. If your facility has a specified emergency response and recover plan, enact it immediately.
- If you become trapped during an earthquake, remain calm and still and call for help.
- If you do not have a cell phone with you, you can tap on pipes, walls, or other sources of noise so that rescuers can find you quickly and easily.
- After ensuring you are safe, listen to your local news reports for additional emergency information and instructions.
- Prepare for aftershocks and remain in a safe place for a period of time, unless otherwise instructed by local authorities.

Don't forget!

Learn about established emergency plans for your area by your [state and local government](#). Always be sure to follow local authority instructions during any emergency.

Additional information to prepare for an earthquake and other emergencies can be found on these websites:

- [America's PrepareAthon!](#)
- [The Great ShakeOut](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [U.S. Geological Survey Earthquake Hazards Program](#)
- [American Red Cross](#)
- [Earthquake Country Alliance](#)
- [National Science Foundation](#)
- [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#)