
During an Earthquake

Indoor Safety

There are actions you can take, even while an earthquake is happening, that will reduce your chances of being hurt. Lights may be out, and hallways, stairs, and room exits may be blocked by fallen furniture, ceiling tiles, and other debris. Planning for these situations will help you to take action quickly.

- If an earthquake strikes, you may be able to take cover under a heavy desk or table. It can provide you with air space if the building collapses. If you get under a table and it moves, try to move with it.
- Inner walls or door frames are the least likely to collapse and may also shield against falling objects. If other cover is not available, go to an inner corner or doorway, away from windows or glass panels.
- Stay away from glass and hanging objects, and bookcases, china cabinets, or other large furniture that could fall. Watch for falling objects, such as bricks from fireplaces and chimneys, light fixtures, wall hangings, high shelves, and cabinets with doors that could swing open.
- Grab something to shield your head and face from falling debris and broken glass.
- If the lights go out, use a battery-operated flashlight. Don't use candles, matches, or lighters during or after the earthquake. If there is a gas leak, an explosion could result.
- If you are in the kitchen, quickly turn off the stove and take cover at the first sign of shaking.

High-Rise Buildings

Get under a desk and stay away from windows and outside walls. Stay in the building. The electricity may go out, and the sprinkler systems may come on. DO NOT use the elevators.

Crowded Indoor Public Places

If you are in a crowded public place, do not rush for the doorways. Others will have the same idea. Move away from display shelves containing objects that may fall. If you can, take cover and grab something to shield your head and face from falling debris and glass.

Outdoor Safety

If outdoors, move away from buildings and utility wires. The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside doorways and close to outer walls. Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops.

Automobiles

If you are in a moving automobile, stop as quickly and safely as possible and move over to the shoulder or curb, away from utility poles, overhead wires, and under- or overpasses. Stay in the vehicle, set the parking brake, and turn on the radio for emergency broadcast information. A car may jiggle violently on its springs, but it is a good place to stay until the shaking stops. If you are in a life-threatening situation, you may be able to reach someone with either a cellular or an emergency roadside assistance phone.

When you drive on, watch for hazards created by the earthquake, such as breaks in the pavement, downed utility poles and wires, a fallen overpasses and bridges.

*All information from the Centers for Disease Control as of 1/25/2010.