



How to Stay Safe in an Earthquake or Tsunami

Stay as safe as possible during an earthquake. Take no more than a few steps to a nearby safe place and stay there until the shaking or rolling stops.

If you are indoors

- **DROP, COVER and HOLD ON.** Get under a sturdy table or desk and hold on to it until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, crouch in an inside corner of the room and cover your face and head with your arms.
- **Stay away from glass**, windows, outside doors and walls, and **anything that could fall**, such as light fixtures or tall bookshelves (see **Earthquake Home Hazard Hunt**).
- **Stay in bed if you're there** when the quake hits. Hold on and cover your head with a pillow, **unless** you're near a window or mirror or under a heavy light fixture that could fall. If so, move to the nearest safe place.
- **Use a doorway for shelter only if** it's close by and if you know the doorway is strongly supported (in some buildings it may not be, especially newer ones). Watch out for doors, which will swing and cause injuries.
- **Stay inside until the shaking or rolling stops** and you're sure it's safe to go outside. Most injuries occur when people inside buildings try to go to a different location inside the building or try to leave.
- **When you go out**, watch out for any falling debris above you.
- **Be aware** that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- **DO NOT use the elevators.**

If you are outdoors

- **Move away from buildings**, streetlights and utility wires. The greatest danger is directly outside buildings, at exits and along outside walls. Ground movement during a quake is rarely the direct cause of death or injury. Most victims are hurt by collapsing walls, flying glass and falling objects or debris.
- **Stay outside** until the shaking stops and be ready for aftershocks, which can also be very strong. Stay away from damaged areas.

If you are driving

- **Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the car** with your seat belt fastened. **Avoid** stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses and utility wires.
- **Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped.** Avoid downed electrical wires and elevated roads, bridges or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

If you are 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 you have one. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can exhaust and dehydrate you and cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

If you are on the coast

- **Pay attention to the tsunami evacuation signs. Know your best route to higher ground.**
- **Move inland to higher ground immediately** after the shaking or rolling stops and stay there. **You'll have between 20 and 30 minutes** to seek higher ground.
- **Stay away from the beach.** Never go down to the beach to watch a tsunami come in. If you can see the wave you are too close to escape it.
- **CAUTION: If you see water being pulled strongly out from the shoreline this is nature's tsunami warning** and it should be heeded. You should **move away immediately.**