

WHAT TO DO DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

Drop, cover, and hold on! Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. Most injured persons in earthquakes move more than five feet during the shaking. It is very dangerous to try to leave a building during an earthquake because objects can fall on you. Many fatalities occur when people run outside of buildings, only to be killed by falling debris from collapsing walls. In U.S. buildings, you are safer to stay where you are.

If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured staying where you are. Broken glass on the floor has caused injury to those who have rolled to the floor or tried to get to doorways.

If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, streetlights, and power lines. Drop to the ground and stay there until the shaking stops. Injuries can occur from falling trees, street-lights and power lines, or building debris.

If you are in a vehicle, pull over to a clear location, stop and stay there with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking has stopped. Trees, power lines, poles, street signs, and other overhead items may fall during earthquakes. Stopping will help reduce your risk, and a hard-topped vehicle will help protect you from flying or falling objects. Once the shaking has stopped, proceed with caution. Avoid bridges or ramps that might have been damaged by the quake.

Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit. More injuries happen when people move during the shaking of an earthquake. After the shaking has stopped, if you go outside, move quickly away from the building to prevent injury from falling debris.

Stay away from windows. Windows can shatter with such force that you can be injured several feet away.

In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off during a quake. Earthquakes frequently cause fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems to go off even if there is no fire. Check for and extinguish small fires, and, if exiting, use the stairs.

If you are in a coastal area, move to higher ground. Tsunamis are often created by earthquakes.

If you are in a mountainous area or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling rocks and other debris that could be loosened by the earthquake. Landslides commonly happen after earthquakes.