

# Are You Ready for an Earthquake?

**Here's what you can do to prepare for such an emergency**

## **Prepare a Home Earthquake Plan**

Choose a safe place in every room—under a sturdy table or desk or against an inside wall where nothing can fall on you.

Practice DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON at least twice a year.

Drop under a sturdy desk or table, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. If there's no table or desk nearby, sit on the floor against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases, or tall furniture that could fall on you.

Teach children to DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON!

Choose an out-of-town family contact.

Consult a professional to find out additional ways you can protect your home, such as bolting the house to its foundation and other structural mitigation techniques.

Take a first aid class from your local Red Cross chapter. Keep your training current.

Get training in how to use a fire extinguisher from your local fire department.

Inform babysitters and caregivers of your plan.

## **Eliminate hazards, by—**

Bolting bookcases, china cabinets, and other tall furniture to wall studs.

Installing strong latches on cupboards.

Strapping the water heater to wall studs.

## **Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit for home and car, including—**

First aid kit and essential medications.

Canned food and can opener.

At least three gallons of water per person.

Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.

Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.

Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.  
Written instructions for how to turn off gas, electricity, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)  
Keeping essentials, such as a flashlight and sturdy shoes, by your bedside.

### **Know what to do when the shaking begins**

#### **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON!**

Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit. Stay away from windows. In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off during a quake.

If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow.

If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground.

If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place (as described above). Stay in the car until the shaking stops.

### **Identify what to do after the shaking stops**

Check yourself for injuries. Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and work gloves.

Check others for injuries. Give first aid for serious injuries.

Look for and extinguish small fires.

Eliminate fire hazards. Turn off the gas if you smell gas or think it's leaking. (Remember, only a professional should turn it back on.)

Listen to the radio for instructions.

Expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one, **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON!**

Inspect your home for damage.

Get everyone out if your home is unsafe.

Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies.

**Your local contact is:**

Earthquakes can happen in most states . . . anytime . . . without warning. Reducing hazards and knowing what to do can make a big difference in how an earthquake affects your household. Adults and children in the household should talk about what you will do when an earthquake happens. This checklist will get you started in planning. Have various members of the household complete each of the items on the checklist below. Then get together to finalize your Home Earthquake Plan.

**\_\_\_\_\_ Pick one or more “safe places” in each room of your home. Practice DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON! in each place.**

Write the locations of safe places in each room of your home—

Bedroom:

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\_\_\_\_\_ Bedroom:

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\_\_\_\_\_ Living room:

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\_\_\_\_\_ Kitchen:

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\_\_\_\_\_ Other rooms:

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**\_\_\_\_\_ Choose an out-of-town relative or friend to be a family contact person.**

Family contact:

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Phone number:

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**\_\_\_\_\_ Put together disaster supplies kits.**

Location of home kit:

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Date assembled:

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Shoes and flashlight put next to everyone’s bed:

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(date)

Smaller kit put in car:

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(date)

**\_\_\_\_\_ Teach household members how to turn off utilities.**

Location of gas and water valves and electrical switches and turnoff tools:

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- \_\_\_ **Install strong latches or bolts on cabinets.**
- \_\_\_ **Secure water heater to wall studs with two steel straps.**
- \_\_\_ **Bolt bookcases, china cabinet, and tall furniture to wall studs.**
- \_\_\_ **Secure items that might fall (TV, books, computers, etc.).**

And remember . . . when an earthquake, tornado, flood, fire, or other emergency happens in your community, you can count on your local American Red Cross chapter to be there to help you and your family. Your Red Cross is not a government agency and depends on contributions of your time, money, and blood.

For more information, please contact your local American Red Cross chapter or emergency management office.

You can also visit these Web sites:

American Red Cross: **[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)**

Federal Emergency Management Agency: **[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)**

U.S. Geological Survey: **[www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov)**

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