



# SAFETY NOTES

March 2018

In this bulletin we discuss actions to be taken to protect your life in the event of an Earthquake.

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long time. Initial mild shaking may strengthen and become extremely violent within seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may follow the initial earthquake. Most are smaller than the initial earthquake but larger magnitude aftershocks also occur. Earthquakes may cause household items to become dangerous projectiles; cause buildings to move off foundations or collapse, damage utilities, roads and structures such as bridges and dams, or cause fires and explosions. They may also trigger landslides, avalanches, and tsunamis.

All 50 states and 5 U.S. territories are at some risk for earthquakes. The risk is higher in identified seismic zones including the San Andreas Fault in California, the Cascadia Subduction Zone in western Oregon and Washington and Alaska, the New Madrid Fault Zone spanning areas in Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky, and areas on the east coast including the mid-Atlantic, coastal South Carolina and New England

Earthquakes can happen at any time of the year and occur without warning, although they usually last less than one minute. Aftershocks following the initial earthquake may occur for hours, days, or even months. Earthquakes cannot be predicted — although scientists are working on it!

## What to do before an Earthquake:

- Practice how to “**Drop, Cover, and Hold On!**”.
- Store critical supplies (e.g., water, medication) and documents.
- Plan how you will communicate with family members, including multiple methods by making a family communication plan.



## If you are inside a building:

- Drop down onto your hands and knees so the earthquake doesn't knock you down. Drop to the ground (before the earthquake drops you!).
- Cover your head and neck with your arms to protect yourself from falling debris.  
If you are in danger from falling objects, and you can move safely, crawl for additional cover under a sturdy desk or table.  
If no sturdy shelter is nearby, crawl away from windows, next to an interior wall. Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.
- Hold on to any sturdy covering so you can move with it until the shaking stops.
- Stay where you are until the shaking stops. Do not run outside. Do not get in a doorway as this does not provide protection from falling or flying objects, and you may not be able to remain standing.

### **If getting safely to the floor to take cover won't be possible:**

- If getting safely to the floor will be difficult, actions before an earthquake to secure or remove items that can fall or become projectiles should be a priority to create spaces.
- Stay away from windows and objects that could fall on you. The Earthquake Country Alliance advises getting as low as possible to the floor. People who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices should lock their wheels, bend over, and remain seated until the shaking stops. Protect your head and neck with your arms, a pillow, a book, or whatever is available.

### **If you are in bed when you feel the shaking:**

- If you are in bed: Stay there and Cover your head and neck with a pillow. At night, hazards and debris are difficult to see and avoid; attempts to move in the dark result in more injuries than remaining in bed.

### **If you are outside when you feel the shaking:**

- If you are outdoors when the shaking starts, move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires. Once in the open, "Drop, Cover, and Hold On." Stay there until the shaking stops.

### **If you are in a moving vehicle when you feel the shaking:**

- It is difficult to control a vehicle during the shaking. If you are in a moving vehicle, stop as quickly and safely as possible and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires. Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that the earthquake may have damaged.

### **After an Earthquake**

- When the shaking stops, look around. If the building is damaged and there is a clear path to safety, leave the building and go to an open space away from damaged areas.
- If you are trapped, do not move about or kick up dust.
- If you have a cell phone with you, use it to call or text for help.
- Tap on a pipe or wall or use a whistle, if you have one, so that rescuers can locate you.
- Once safe, monitor local news reports via battery operated radio, TV, social media, and cell phone text alerts for emergency information and instructions.
- Check for injuries and provide assistance if you have training. Assist with rescues if you can do so safely.
- Use extreme caution during post-disaster clean-up of buildings and around debris. Do not attempt to remove heavy debris by yourself. Wear protective clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves, and sturdy, thick-soled shoes during clean-up.
- Be prepared to "Drop, Cover, and Hold on" in the likely event of aftershocks.

***Source: Ready.Gov***



**Assistance with safety questions is just a phone call away!**

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