

“Drop, Cover, and Hold On”



Why is a “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” drill important? As with anything, to act quickly you must practice often. You may only have seconds to protect yourself in an earthquake before strong shaking knocks you down, or something falls on you.

The Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety

PREPARE

1. Identify earthquake hazards in your home:

You should secure anything heavy enough to hurt you if it falls on you, or anything that will be a significant loss if it breaks. Move heavy objects to lower locations, strap your water heater and top heavy furniture to walls, and securing electronics and valuables to tables.

2. Create a disaster plan: Plan now what each person in your household will do before, during and after an earthquake. Have a meeting place and an out-of-state contact. Learn basic first aid. Plan how to deal with the risk of fire, potential lack of utilities and basic services, and aftershocks. For those with functional or mobility needs, identify people who can assist you where you regularly spend time.

3. Create disaster supplies kits: Everyone should have personal disaster supplies kits, which are useful for many emergencies. Keep one kit in your home, one in your car, and a third at work. Your home should have a larger household kit with supplies to last three days to one week.

4. Identify and fix your building's weaknesses: There are several common issues that can limit a building's ability to withstand earthquake shaking, such as inadequate foundations, unbraced cripple walls, soft first stories and unreinforced masonry. Seek professional retrofitting advice if your building has these issues.

PROTECT

5. During earthquakes—Drop, cover and hold on: Drop to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it firmly. If no table is nearby, drop to the floor near an interior wall and cover your head and neck with your arms and hands. Face away from windows or mirrors. Do not leave a building during an earthquake. If you use a wheelchair or have other mobility impairments, protect your head and neck with a pillow or your arms if you are able.

RECOVER

6. After earthquakes—Check for injuries and damage:

Remain calm and take care of yourself first. If you are in a safe area, help others and check for damage. Learn in advance what to do about fire, leaking gas, electrical dangers, and chemical spills. Aftershocks may cause additional damage so be ready to drop, cover, and hold on.

7. When safe, continue to follow your disaster plan:

When possible, if you cannot stay in your home, take your disaster kit and get to a safe location. Listen to a portable radio for news, and call your out-of-state contact. Begin your recovery by organizing your financial papers and documenting any damage.