



Earthquake Safety Tips

Even though we don't live in California, there is a significant risk of a major quake along the New Madrid Fault in the central U.S. within the next few decades, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. In 2016, the United States had over 19,000 earthquakes. That averages to about 52 earthquakes a day. Earthquakes are difficult to predict, but there are ways to secure your belongings and protect your family.

One of the biggest hazards during an earthquake is falling debris and furniture. Stay away from windows and furniture that could fall over. Avoid places that have objects stored overhead. During earthquakes, kitchens and garages are dangerous because of the items stored in overhead cabinets and shelves.

PREPARE FOR AN EARTHQUAKE

Indoors—

- ✓ Secure your space
- ✓ Identify hazards and secure moveable items such as large appliances.
- ✓ Consider installing flexible gas and water connections
- ✓ Anchor top-heavy furniture to the wall and place heavy objects on lower shelves
- ✓ Never hang anything heavy above where you sleep

AT THE START OF AN EARTHQUAKE

Indoors—

- ✓ **DROP.** Get down on your hands and knees. Stay clear of windows. Get under a sturdy table or desk and hold onto it; if that's not possible, crouch in a strongly supported doorway or inside corner and protect your head. This can help keep you from being knocked over or losing your balance. It can also help protect your vital organs.
- ✓ **COVER.** Place your hand on the back of your head and neck. Crawl to shelter such as a table or desk. If there is no shelter nearby, crawl against a wall, but avoid windows.
- ✓ **HOLD ON.** If you're under shelter, hold on to it with one hand. Keep your other hand on the back of your head and neck. If you do not have shelter, stay on your knees and elbows and cover the back of your head and neck with both hands.
- ✓ **DO NOT GO OUTSIDE UNTIL AFTER THE SHAKING STOPS.** Stay under cover, or in place with your hands over your head and neck.

Outdoors—

If you are outdoors when an earthquake begins, always move away from—

- ✓ Buildings
- ✓ Utility wires
- ✓ Street lights
- ✓ Overpasses

AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

- ✓ **BE PREPARED FOR AFTERSHOCKS.** Earthquakes are often followed by aftershocks—additional quakes that follow the main event. These can last for days or even weeks after a major earthquake.

- ✓ **CHECK YOUR GAS LINES.** Make sure there are no leaks. If you smell gas leaking, turn it off if possible, and call the gas company. Do not use an open flame in your house until you are sure it is safe. Wait for the gas company to turn the gas back on.
- ✓ **WEAR SHOES.** You may have broken glass or spilled chemicals on the floor of your house as a result of the earthquake. Don't walk around barefoot until you're sure the floor is clean and safe.
- ✓ **DOCUMENT THE DAMAGE.** If your insurance policy covers earthquake damage, be sure to take photos or video of the damage to use during your insurance claim process.

Professional weather forecasters can reliably predict heavy rains and subsequent flooding or the likelihood of a tornado. But, an earthquake can start without warning, and shake an entire state. It may seem impossible to prepare for something so unpredictable. However, by taking some minor precautionary steps and knowing how to respond, you will have a better chance of keeping you and your family safe through an earthquake and aftershocks.