

WEATHER & DISASTERS

Earthquake Preparedness

Secure your space and practice a response before shaking begins, even when traveling away from home.

During shaking: drop, cover, and hold on. Do not rush outside or stand in a doorway as a protective strategy.

Prepare your space

- Secure tall furniture and heavy objects that could fall. Keep heavy items on lower shelves and move objects that could fall onto beds or seating.
- Identify cover in rooms you use often. Keep sturdy shoes, a light, medication, essential supplies, and a household communication plan accessible. Practice together.

If you are indoors

- Drop to your hands and knees, cover your head and neck, and get under a sturdy table or desk if one is nearby. Hold on until shaking stops.
- If there is no table nearby, protect your head and neck near an interior wall, away from glass and falling objects. Stay inside rather than running down stairs or toward exits during shaking.

Outside or driving

- Outside, stay outside and move to an open area away from buildings, trees, poles, and power lines. Watch for falling material and avoid building entrances.
- While driving, pull over carefully away from overpasses, bridges, trees, signs, and power lines. Stay in the vehicle until shaking stops, then watch for damaged roads.

After the shaking

- Expect aftershocks and repeat protective actions. Check for injuries, follow official instructions, and keep out of damaged structures. Move carefully around broken glass and debris.
- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, leave and contact emergency services or the utility from a safe location. Do not use flames or operate switches nearby; do not attempt an unsafe utility inspection.

Sources & further guidance

[CDC: Stay safe during an earthquake](https://www.cdc.gov) | www.cdc.gov

[U.S. Geological Survey: What to do during an earthquake](https://www.usgs.gov) | www.usgs.gov

[NIST: Earthquake quick reference](https://www.nist.gov) | www.nist.gov