

Week 6: Earthquake Preparation



Welcome to Week 5. In preparation for the [Great Shakeout](#), we'll be talking this week about earthquake preparedness. What actions do we take before, during and after an earthquake? How can you protect yourself, your family and your home?

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

Protect your Home

- [Secure heavy items](#) in your home like bookcases, refrigerators, water heaters, televisions and objects that hang on walls. Store heavy and breakable objects on low shelves.
- Consider making improvements to your building to fix structural issues that could cause your building to collapse during an earthquake.
- Consider obtaining an [earthquake insurance policy](#). A standard homeowner's insurance policy does not cover earthquake damage.

THE IMPORTANT OF DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON

It is important to know how to drop, cover, and hold on during an earthquake. By memorizing these steps, you will be better prepared and can help reduce the likelihood of injury to yourself

and your others in your vicinity.

So, what is drop, cover and hold on? Here are the steps to help you learn how to protect yourself during an earthquake:

1. DROP

As soon as you notice the first signs of an earthquake, drop onto your hands and knees. Earthquakes are very powerful and might knock you down if you remain standing, which could cause injury.

By dropping to the floor and staying low, you will be in a more stable, safe position. From a dropped position, you can also crawl to cover. If you are seated and cannot drop to the floor, you should still follow steps 2 and 3: Cover and Hold On.

2. COVER

Even small items in your home, such as a vase on a bookshelf or a framed photo on the wall, could cause severe injury if they fall onto you during an earthquake.

First, cover your head and neck with one arm while you seek out a more protective shelter. If there is a sturdy desk or table nearby, you can crawl underneath for cover. If no such furniture is accessible, crawl next to an interior wall and get as far away from windows as possible. Regardless of your location, remain dropped on your knees and bend over to protect your head and vital organs.

3. HOLD ON

After the initial jolt, there is still a chance of aftershocks, building damage, and other dangers. Because of this, it is important to hold on until you are no longer in immediate danger. Until the shaking stops, stay in your covered, dropped position.

Furniture might shift around during the earthquake, so if the table or desk you are under moves, you need to be prepared to move with it. So, you should hold on to your shelter with one hand in order to stay close to it. If you aren't sheltered under furniture, use both arms and hands to hold on to your head and neck.

WHAT TO DO IN OTHER SITUATIONS

The random nature of earthquakes means that one very well could strike while you are away from home. Here's what to do in a variety of specific situations:

- **IN BED**: Stay in bed and lie down. Hold on to your head and neck with both hands. You can cover your head and neck with a pillow for additional protection.

- **OUTDOORS**: If you can safely do so, head to an open, clear area free of hazards like trees, street signs, buildings, and vehicles. Be mindful that objects might still fall from the side, so follow the drop, cover, and hold on rules to protect yourself.
- **DRIVING**: Stay inside your vehicle. When it is safe to do so, pull over to the side of the road, come to a complete stop, and activate the parking brake. Try to avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, and other potential dangers. When you resume driving, be sure to avoid damaged areas of the highway or road, and stay clear of emergency service vehicles.
- **IN A STORE**: You can follow the same general drop, cover, and hold on principles as you would in your home. Use what is around you for cover, such as a shopping cart or clothing racks.
- **NEAR THE SHORE**: If you are near a body of water or the coast, you'll still want to follow the drop, cover, and hold on procedure. Then, when shaking reduces, move inward or to higher ground in case of a tsunami. If possible, walk to avoid traffic slowdowns.

MORE TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND

As soon as the ground stops shaking, assess your situation. If possible, move to higher ground or a safer location, especially if you are in a [landslide or tsunami inundation zone](#). Take a moment to check around you for any new hazards that may have formed, such as leaking gas lines, building damage or collapse, or broken water or electric lines. If there are any injuries to yourself or those around you, use your first aid training to provide assistance.