Earthquake Preparedness

Earthquakes can happen quickly and without warning causing life-threatening and serious hazards such as fires, collapse of homes and buildings, tsunamis, landslides and avalanches. Learn what to do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

Before An Earthquake

Protect Your Family

Make sure you have an earthquake plan for your home and any buildings you and your family regularly occupy.

Be prepared to drop, cover and then hold on. Locate a safe place in each room of your home. A safe place could be under a piece of furniture or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture that could fall and cause injury.

Pack a safety kit with basic requirements such as:

- Supplies of food, water, necessary medications and cash.
- Extra clothing, in case you have to evacuate.
- Flashlights, cell phones, portable radios and extra batteries.
- A first aid kit.

Protect Your Home

- Bolt and brace water heaters, gas appliances, bookcases, china cabinets and other tall furniture to wall studs.
- Hang heavy items, such as pictures and mirrors, away from beds, couches and anywhere people sleep or sit.
- Brace overhead lights.
- Install strong latches or bolts on cabinets. Large or heavy items should be closest to the floor.
- Turn off utilities – if told to do so by authorities – to prevent damage to your home or within the community. If you shut off your gas, a professional is required to turn it back on.
- Keep insurance policies, documents and other valuables in a safe-deposit box — you may need quick, easy access to these documents. Keep them in a safe place that’s less likely to be damaged if an earthquake occurs.
- Take a few minutes to document the contents of your home with digital pictures or video and create a room-by-room inventory list, if possible.
During An Earthquake

- Drop to the ground, cover your head and hold on. Aftershocks frequently happen so be prepared to repeat.
- If in bed, stay there, curl up and cover your head with a pillow.
- Stay away from windows to avoid being injured by shattered glass.
- If you are outside, find a clear spot and drop to the ground. Stay there until the shaking stops (away from buildings, power lines, trees and streetlights).
- If you are in a car, pull over to a clear location and stop. Avoid bridges, overpasses and power lines. Stay in your car with your seat belt fastened. If a power line falls on your car, stay in the car and call for help.

After An Earthquake

Follow safety guidelines after the earthquake is over, but expect and prepare for potential aftershocks and landslides.

- Continue listening to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for updated information and instructions.

Return Home Safely

- Keep away from loose or dangling power lines. Report them to the power company immediately.
- Inspect your home’s structure and utilities and systems after an earthquake.
- Take pictures of home damage, both to buildings and contents, for insurance purposes.

Notify NFP right away if you believe you will have a claim to file.

NFP cannot guarantee that all information here will be applicable to every situation. While we use reasonable efforts to ensure accuracy, your situation may require different actions and this article is not a complete list of all possible risk management strategies. We assume no responsibility or liability from any action or inaction taken as a result of this content.