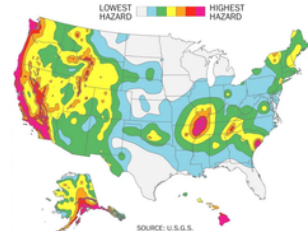


# Emergency Preparedness: Earthquakes

## What is an earthquake?

A sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, identified by rolling or shaking movements along the floor. Earthquakes usually occur along fault lines, making the West Coast of the U.S. particularly vulnerable. Potential effects of an earthquake can be any type of damage, from broken household items to serious injury.

Hot zones for potential earthquakes in the U.S.



Source: <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/earthquake-hazards/hazards>



Source: <https://www.shakeout.org/italia/dropcoverholdon/>

## DROP, COVER, HOLD!

During an earthquake, it's important to **drop** onto your hands and knees, **cover** your head and neck with your arms, and **hold** on to a sturdy structure or covering. Do not try to move, unless you can easily crawl to better protection.

## What to do: Before

- Find out if you are in an identified seismic zone where earthquakes are more likely to occur.
- Make sure you are signed up for local emergency alerts.
- Practice the drop, cover, and hold technique.
- Make an emergency communication plan and an emergency preparedness kit with your family.
- Secure your home: bolt heavy items and free standing furniture to the wall, secure loose objects, and know how to turn utilities on and off.
- Consider fixing structural issues in your home if applicable.
- Consider purchasing an earthquake insurance policy.

## Did you know?

So far, there is little evidence that climate change causes earthquakes, and there is a lot of research left to do. However, human activities like fracking, drilling, resource extraction, and wastewater disposal add extra stress to pre-existing fault lines. This extra stress can sometimes cause faults in the earth's crust to slip or move sooner than they would naturally. For more information about this evolving scientific field, visit: <https://www.usgs.gov/news/6-facts-about-human-caused-earthquakes>

# What to do: During

- Remember: *drop, cover, hold*.
- If inside, stay indoors and avoid doorways.
- If outdoors, stay away from buildings.
- If in bed, turn face down, then cover your neck and head with a pillow.
- If you become trapped indoors, cover your mouth with cloth (like a shirt) for protection. Do not shout, move about, or kick up dust, because debris could be harmful to your respiratory system.
- If trapped, or if in need of assistance, bang on a pipe or wall, send a text, or whistle loudly to alert people nearby.
- In New England, earthquakes are rare and almost always too light to feel. However, it's important to know how to turn your utilities on and off, in case a small tremor breaks a utilities line.



Source:  
<https://www.dreamstime.com/illustration/cartoon-earthquake.html>

# What to do: After

- Expect aftershocks of an earthquake and be ready to *drop, cover, and hold* at any time.
- If you are in a damaged building, immediately exit and move away from the building's exterior.
- Do not try to enter any damaged buildings.
- Monitor local news and alerts for information and updates.
- Check yourself and others to make sure everyone is safe. Texts are more reliable than phone calls in the aftermath, as phone lines may be downed.
- Use protective clothing and do not move heavy debris while cleaning up.
- People with asthma, lung conditions, or immune suppression should not enter buildings with water leaks or mold growth.



## For more information, visit:

<https://www.ready.gov/earthquakes>  
[www.climatecrew.org](http://www.climatecrew.org)  
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/human-activity-can-trigger-earthquakes-many-number-might-surprise>

