

# Earthquake Safety

Earthquakes are one of the most common, unpredictable occurrences on Earth. There is always the chance of an earthquake, but there is no way of predicting or giving any warning to when one may occur. We may not feel shaking all of the time because some earthquakes can only be felt by sensitive instruments. Other times, earthquakes can be very dangerous and occur in highly populated areas placing many people at risk. Homes and buildings can be severely damaged, and the ground can literally split apart.

Planning and proper responses are crucial to protecting yourself and your family before and after an earthquake. While you may think the earthquake has stopped, there is always the potential for aftershocks. Aftershocks can be severe and happen within the first hour after the main shock. The rate of aftershocks decreases quickly but can be felt up to weeks or even months after a large earthquake occurrence. The following are tips covering situations in which you may find yourself when an earthquake strikes.

## If Indoors

- Drop to the ground. Take cover by getting under a sturdy table and hold on. Stay inside until the shaking stops.
- Stay away from glass or anything that can fall, like light fixtures and furniture.
- Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Do not use elevators.

## If Outdoors

- Stay where you are if you are not near any buildings, streetlights or utility wires.
- Do not move from the area you are in until the shaking stops. Remember that aftershocks can be just as bad as the earthquake itself.

## In a Moving Vehicle

- Stop as quickly as possible, but stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the shaking has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that have been damaged.

## If You Are Trapped Under Debris

- Do not light a match because materials or fumes around you could ignite.
- Do not move frantically or kick up dust because you could injure yourself.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing to protect yourself from breathing in dust and other airborne items.

- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Shout only as a last resort because it could cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

**After it is over**

- After it is over be alert for fumes or broken pipes.
  - If found exit immediately and call for assistance.
  - Do not cut on lights or use cell phones.