



Your Action Plan

for the

Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety

EarthquakeCountry.org



This is Your Action Plan for what to do before, during, and after a damaging earthquake.
Visit EarthquakeCountry.org for more guidance and resources for each step.

PREPARE

1 Secure Your Space

by identifying hazards and securing moveable items.

Imagine where you live or work being picked up and shaken sideways and up-and-down during an earthquake – what would be thrown around? How can you prevent it? Start now with what you can do for free; ask others if you need tools or help.

No cost:

- Move potted plants and other heavy items to the floor or lower shelves.
- Move objects that can fall away from where people spend a lot of time.
- Move furniture and large items away from doors and exit routes.

Low cost (available at hardware stores or online):

- Strap top-heavy furniture and appliances to wall studs. (\$12-\$19)
- Fasten computers, TVs, medical equipment and other heavy items with straps. (\$7-\$15)
- Hang mirrors and pictures on closed hooks. (\$1-\$2)
- Strap water heater to wall studs with two metal straps. (\$20-\$50)
- Secure small items with museum wax or quake putty. (\$5-\$10 to secure many items)
- Install latches on upper kitchen cabinets. (\$1-\$8)

Your Step 1 Action Plan

What will you secure, and when?

Item and Location:

When:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

More guidance and instructions:
EarthquakeCountry.org/step1



2

Plan to be Safe

by creating your emergency plan and deciding how you will communicate.

Discuss your plan with your household, neighbors, caregivers, and others.

Plan now to reduce injuries and damage:

- Practice earthquake self-protection safety actions (see Step 5).
- Have fire extinguishers and learn how to use them, or how to get help.
- Take a first aid or CPR course and download a first aid app.
- If your home has gas service, show everyone how to shut off the gas valve.
- If near the coast, learn about evacuation and more at TsunamiZone.org.

Plan for how you will communicate and connect:

- Choose a meeting place where everyone will go if your home is not accessible.
- Share a list of key contacts (include someone in another area to text or call with updates).
- If you have children, learn the emergency plans of their school or daycare.
- If you know someone in a group care facility, learn their emergency plans.
- If you are a person with a disability, identify and include your support network in your plan.
- Learn how to join a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) or similar program.
- Sign up for local emergency text alerts or download alert phone apps.
 - U.S. West Coast residents: look for earthquake warning apps such as MyShake.
- Get a NOAA Weather Radio and learn about the Public Alert feature.

More about safety plans:
EarthquakeCountry.org/step2
EarthquakeCountry.org/accessibility

Your Step 2 Action Plan

Start with the following:

Out-of-Area Contact:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Other Key Contacts:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Meeting Place: _____

Other Planning Actions?



3

Organize Emergency Supplies in convenient locations.

Having the right supplies may reduce the impact of earthquakes or emergencies.

Choose where to keep your supplies:

- *Under-Bed Bags* (tied to beds) hold items needed when earthquakes happen at night (shoes and socks, extra glasses, dust mask, flashlight, etc.).
- *Go-Bags* contain supplies for about 3 days.
- *Home or Work Supplies* should last up to 2 weeks and be kept in a dry, secure area.

Items to include:

- Enough water for at least 3 days and ideally up to 2 weeks (people and pets each need a gallon each day for drinking, cooking, and cleaning).
- Flashlights and batteries, cell phone chargers, and a portable radio.
- Comfort items for children such as games, crayons, and toys.
- Copies of financial documents (Step 4) within your go-bag along with contact numbers (Step 2), printed prescriptions, medical cards, identification, and some cash.
- Medications and medical devices (oxygen equipment, mobility aids, etc.).
- Personal care products and sanitation supplies.
- Pet records (photo, vaccines, and ID "chip" number) along with food and restraints.
- Extra clothing, blankets, and other ways to stay warm (or cool).
- Work gloves and tools to shut off gas and water, open stuck doors, etc.
- Canned or packaged foods, utensils, manual can opener, and outdoor cooking options.

Your Step 3 Action Plan

What will you keep in each location?

Under-Bed Bags: _____

Go-Bags: _____

Home or Work Supplies: _____

Additional supplies guidance:
EarthquakeCountry.org/step3



4

Minimize Financial Hardship

by organizing important documents, strengthening your property, and considering insurance coverage.

Earthquakes can shake up our lives for weeks or months if items need replacing or repairs are needed.

Organize documents:

- Keep copies of documents for starting an insurance claim or applying for financial assistance in your go-bag (Step 3).
- Also identification, insurance policies, financial records, and a household inventory list (photos or videos can be saved online).

Strengthen your property:

- Current building codes rarely require older buildings to be upgraded, but there are things that can be done (visit StrengthenMyHouse.com).
 - o *Unbraced cripple walls* are common beneath older homes but can be braced and bolted.
 - o *Soft first stories* have larger openings in the lower floor (such as a garage door) that can be improved with braces and added supports.
 - o *Unreinforced masonry* (brick or block walls and chimneys) should be strengthened.
 - o *Mobile homes* should have an “earthquake-resistant bracing system” installed.
- Renters: if possible, choose buildings that don’t have these issues. Ask if retrofitting has been done, if water heaters are strapped, and if you can secure items to walls.

Learn more about this step:
EarthquakeCountry.org/step4

Consider insurance coverage:

- Homeowners and renters can protect themselves with earthquake insurance (a separate policy is required).
- If you live in a tsunami zone, consider FEMA flood insurance.

Your Step 4 Action Plan

What will you do next?

Organize Documents: _____

Strengthen Property: _____

Consider Insurance: _____



5

Drop, Cover, and Hold On!

or other recommended actions (when the earth shakes or you get an alert).

In most situations, if you are able:

DROP where you are, onto your hands and knees. This position protects you from being knocked down and allows you to crawl to shelter if nearby.

COVER your head and neck with one arm and hand.

- If a table or desk is nearby, crawl underneath it for shelter.
- If no shelter is nearby, crawl next to an interior wall (away from windows).
- Stay on your knees; bend over to protect vital organs.

HOLD ON until the shaking stops.

- Under shelter: hold on to it with one hand; be ready to move with your shelter if it shifts.
- No shelter: protect your head and neck with both arms and hands.



DROP!



COVER!



HOLD ON!

Practice with Millions!
ShakeOut.org

If you use a wheelchair or a rollator walker:

LOCK your wheels (or set the brake).

COVER your head and neck with your arms or a book.

HOLD ON to your device with one hand if possible, until shaking stops.

Learn more at EarthquakeCountry.org/accessibility.

Learn guidance for other situations:
EarthquakeCountry.org/step5

Your Step 5 Action Plan

Who will you practice with and when?

People at home:

When:

People at work:

When:

Other groups:

When:



6

Improve Safety

after earthquakes by evacuating if necessary, helping the injured, and preventing further injuries or damage.

When should I evacuate?

- If you are near a coastline, move to higher ground when you can safely move. Tsunami waves can arrive within minutes. Learn more at [TsunamiZone.org](https://www.tsunami-zone.org).
- If there is building damage, a fire, or other hazard, go to your meeting place (Step 2).
- If you need to go to a shelter, take your Go-Bag (Step 3).

Help the injured:

- Check your first aid kit for instructions or use a first aid phone app.
- Ask permission before helping someone else.
- If someone is bleeding, put direct pressure on the wound.
- If someone is not breathing, provide hands-only CPR unless you are trained to do more.
- Do not move a seriously injured person unless there is danger of further injury.
- Call 9-1-1 to request medical help for serious injuries.



Prevent further damage:

- Move or secure items that may fall during aftershocks (Step 1).
- Use a fire extinguisher for small fires only.
- Shut off the gas only if you smell or hear a gas leak.
- Use flashlights instead of lighting candles or matches.



Let people know your status and stay informed:

- Text or call your out-of-area contact and tell them your status and location.
- Register on the American Red Cross [SafeAndWell.org](https://www.safeandwell.org) website.
- Listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or a news radio station.

Your Step 6 Action Plan

What will you do **now**, so you can improve safety **after**?

Learn more about improving safety:
[EarthquakeCountry.org/step6](https://www.earthquakecountry.org/step6)



7 Reconnect and Restore

daily life by reuniting with others, repairing damage, and rebuilding community.

Like aftershocks, your recovery may continue for several months or longer.

The first days after the earthquake:

- Check for gas leaks, chemical spills and other hazards.
- Check on nearby older adults, people with disabilities, and children.
- Use your refrigerated and frozen food first.
- Contact your insurance agent. Take photos of your belongings and keep records of any costs.
- Update your out-of-area contact until regular communication resumes.

The first weeks after the earthquake:

- If your gas was turned off, contact the gas company to turn it back on.
- Visit [FEMA.gov/assistance](https://www.fema.gov/assistance) to learn about what might be available.
- If you need repairs, check that your contractor is properly licensed.
- Talk with others about how they are feeling, and help them seek counseling if needed.

If you cannot stay in your home:

- Shelters may be overcrowded so do not leave home just because utilities are off or your home has moderate damage. Staying with friends or family, or in a hotel, may also be options.
- Tell a neighbor and your out-of-area contact where you are going.
- Only take your Go-Bag and absolutely essential items to a shelter.
- Have a plan for pets in case they cannot stay with you.

More guidance for recovery is at:
[EarthquakeCountry.org/step7](https://www.earthquakecountry.org/step7)

Your Step 7 Action Plan

What else might you do **now** to speed your recovery?

