

Earthquakes

Earthquakes can happen anywhere, anytime.

An earthquake is a sudden, fast shaking of the earth. One can strike without warning — causing fires, explosions and landslides. Earthquakes happen when rock that is below the earth's surface breaks and shifts. People in all states are at some risk from earthquakes.

Safety Messages for Kids

- **"If you're indoors during an earthquake,** drop, cover and hold on. Get under a desk, table or bench...hold on to one of the legs and cover your eyes. If there's no table or desk nearby, sit down against a wall. Pick a safe place where things will not fall on you, away from windows, bookcases or tall, heavy furniture."
- "Wait in your safety spot until the shaking stops, then check to see if you are hurt. Check the people around you too. Move carefully and watch out for things that have fallen. Be ready for smaller earthquakes called aftershocks."
- "Be on the lookout for fires. Earthquakes can cause fire alarms and fire sprinklers to go off. If you must leave a building after the shaking stops, use the stairs, not the elevator."



- **"If you're outside in an earthquake...stay outside.** Move away from buildings, trees, street lights and power lines. Crouch down and cover your head."

- "If you are in a car, stay there with your seatbelt fastened."

Action Steps for Adults

- Help children understand what to expect in an earthquake and how to protect themselves.
- With children, find safe places in every room of your home or the classroom. Practice "drop, cover and hold on"...getting under a table or other sturdy object. Look for safe places inside and outside of other buildings where you spend time.
- Explain that it is dangerous to run outside when an earthquake happens because falling objects can hurt people.
- Tell children to be prepared for aftershocks — smaller earthquakes that can happen over a period of weeks (and sometimes months) after the first earthquake. Be sure they know to go to a safe place during aftershocks.
- At home, bolt down water heaters and gas appliances. Place large or heavy objects and fragile items (such as glass or china) on lower shelves. Securely fasten shelves to walls. Brace or anchor high or top-heavy objects.

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drop, cover and hold on.

