



Preparing for Earthquakes

Washington is earthquake country. When the ground shakes, “Drop, Cover and Hold.”

Drop, cover and hold

- When you feel an earthquake, **DROP** and **COVER** under a desk or sturdy table. Stay away from windows and objects like bookcases that could fall. **HOLD** on to the desk or table. If it moves, move with it. Do not run—stay where you are. “Drop, Cover and Hold.”

Be prepared for an earthquake

- Anchor appliances and tall heavy furniture that might fall. Put latches on cabinet doors to keep contents from spilling out.
- Find out how you can improve your home to protect it against earthquake damage.
- Establish an “out-of-area” contact and keep the phone numbers handy. This is the person family members will call if you are separated.
- Have a place at home where emergency supplies are kept and tell others where it is.

During an earthquake

If you are indoors:

- Stay inside. Move next to an inside wall or get under a desk or sturdy table and hold on to it. If it moves, move with it. Stay away from windows, bookcases, refrigerators, heavy mirrors, hanging plants and other objects that could fall. Do not go outside until the shaking stops.
- If you are in a crowded store or public place, DO NOT rush for an exit. Move away from display shelves holding objects that could fall on you, and “**drop, cover and hold.**”
- If you are in a theater or stadium, get between the rows of seats, protect your head with your arms. Do not leave until the shaking stops.

If you are outdoors:

- If you are outdoors, move to a clear area

away from trees, signs, buildings, or downed electrical wires and poles.

If you are in a downtown area:

- If you are on a sidewalk near a tall building, get into a building, doorway or lobby to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass and other debris.

If you are driving:

- If you are driving, slowly pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses, power lines and other hazards. Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking stops.

If you are in a wheelchair:

- If you are in a wheelchair, stay in it. Move to safe cover if possible, lock your wheels and protect your head with your arms.

After the earthquake:

- If you were evacuated, wait until you are told it is safe before returning home. Be careful entering buildings. Stay away from downed power lines.
- Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- Be prepared for aftershocks.
- Use the phone only to report a life-threatening emergency.
- Do not drive unnecessarily.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound—open a window and leave the building. Shut off the main gas valve outside.
- Check on neighbors, particularly elderly or disabled persons.
- Try to contact your out-of-area phone contact. Listen to your radio.



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