

# EARTHQUAKE SAFETY



## Have disaster supplies on hand

What to do during an earthquake Stay as safe as possible during an earthquake. Be aware that some earthquakes are actually foreshocks and a larger earthquake might occur. Minimize your movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place and stay indoors until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.

## If indoors

DROP to the ground; take COVER by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and HOLD ON until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.

Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or 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.

Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load bearing doorway.

Stay inside until shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave.

Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.

DO NOT use the elevators.

## If outdoors

Stay there.

Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.

Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits, and alongside exterior walls. Many of the 50 fatalities during the 1990 Baguio HYATT earthquake incident occurred when people ran outside of the buildings only to be killed by falling debris from collapsing walls. Ground movement during an earthquake is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most earthquake-related casualties result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.

## If in a moving vehicle

Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.

Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

## If trapped under debris

Do not light a match.

Do not move about or kick up dust  
Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.

Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available.  
Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

## What to do after an earthquake

Check yourself for injuries. Often people tend to others without checking their own injuries. You will be better able to care for others if you are not injured or if you have received first aid for your injuries.

Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and work gloves. This will protect you from further injury by broken objects.

Look for and extinguish small fires. Eliminate fire hazards. Putting out small fires quickly, using available resources, will prevent them from spreading. Fire is the most common hazard following earthquakes. Fires followed the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 for three days, creating more damage than the earthquake.

Leave the gas on at the main valve, unless you smell gas or think it's leaking. It may be weeks or months before professionals can turn gas back on using the correct procedures. Explosions have caused injury and death when homeowners have improperly turned their gas back on by themselves.

Open closet and cabinet doors cautiously. Contents may have shifted during the shaking of an earthquake and could fall, creating further damage or injury.

Inspect your home for damage. Get everyone out if your home is unsafe. Aftershocks following earthquakes can cause further damage to unstable buildings. If your home has experienced damage, get out before aftershocks happen.

Help neighbors who may require special assistance. Elderly people and people with disabilities may require additional assistance. People who care for them or who have large families may need additional assistance in emergency situations.

Listen to a portable, battery-operated radio for updated emergency information and instructions. If the electricity is out, your local radio may act as your source of

information. Get in touch with your local tanod-bayan at your nearest barangay to provide the most appropriate advice for your particular situation.

Expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one, drop, cover, and hold on! Aftershocks frequently occur minutes, days, weeks, and even months following an earthquake.

Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines, and stay out of damaged areas. Hazards caused by earthquakes are often difficult to see, and you could be easily injured.

Stay out of damaged buildings. If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe. Damaged buildings may be destroyed by aftershocks following the main quake.

Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to inspect your home. Kerosene lanterns, torches, candles, and matches may tip over or ignite flammables inside.

Take pictures of the damage, both to the house and its contents, for insurance claims.

Avoid smoking inside buildings. Smoking in confined areas can cause fires.

When entering buildings, use extreme caution. Building damage may have occurred where you least expect it. Carefully watch every step you take.

Examine walls, floor, doors, staircases, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.

Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas, using the outside main valve if you can, and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.

Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.

Check for sewage and water line damage. If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap except for washing.

Watch for loose cement, drywall, and ceilings that could fall, especially when you notice that your doors are jammed.

Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies. Telephone lines are frequently overwhelmed in disaster situations. They need to be clear for emergency

calls to get through.

Watch animals closely. Leash dogs and place them in a fenced yard. The behavior of pets may change dramatically after an earthquake. Normally quiet and friendly cats and dogs may become aggressive or defensive.

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