

# What To Do During and After an Earthquake

## During an earthquake

If you are close to the source of an earthquake, you may hear a loud bang followed by shaking. Further away, your first warning might be swaying buildings or a sudden noise like a roaring sound. In either location, you will probably feel shaking followed by a rolling motion that rotates up, down and sideways. Expect the ground or floor to move, perhaps violently. You will probably feel dizzy and be unable to walk during the earthquake. If you live in a high rise or a multi-storey building, you may experience more sway and less shaking than in a smaller, single-storey building. Lower floors will shake rapidly, much like residential homes. On upper floors, movement will be slower but the building will move farther from side to side. Furnishings and unsecured objects could fall over or slide across the floor. Unsecured light fixtures and ceiling panels may fall. Windows may break. Don't be surprised if the fire alarm, sprinkler systems, lights and power go off. A moderate earthquake might last only a few seconds while a large earthquake could last for several minutes. Wherever you are when an earthquake starts, take cover immediately and stay there until the shaking stops. If you are in a crowded public place, take cover where you won't be trampled.

### If you are indoors

1. Stay inside.
2. Take cover under a heavy table, desk or any solid furniture and hold on.
3. If you can't get under something strong, or in a hallway, flatten yourself or crouch against an interior wall.
4. Stay away from windows, glass partitions, mirrors, fireplaces, bookcases, tall furniture and light fixtures. In an earthquake you could be hurt by shattered glass or heavy objects thrown around by the shaking.
5. If you are in a shopping mall, go into the nearest store. Stay away from windows, skylights and shelves with heavy objects.
6. Avoid doorways. Doors may slam shut and cause injuries.
7. If you are in a wheelchair, lock the wheels and protect the back of your head and neck.
8. If you are at school, get under a desk or table and hold on. Face away from windows.
9. Wherever you are, protect your head, face and neck.

### If you are outdoors

1. Stay outside.
2. Go to an open area away from buildings. Sidewalks next to tall buildings are especially dangerous.
3. Stay away from windows, buildings (or any other structure that could collapse), overhead wires, downed electrical wires, power lines and telephone poles.
4. Remember that broken gas mains and fallen chimneys can cause fires. Downed power lines and broken water mains can also wreak havoc.
5. Stay at least 10 metres away from downed power lines.

### If you are in a vehicle

1. Avoid bridges, overpasses, underpasses, buildings or anything that could collapse on you and your car.
2. Listen to your car radio for instructions from emergency officials.
3. Do not attempt to get out of your car if downed power lines are across it. Wait to be rescued.
4. Try to pull over to a safe place where you are not blocking the road. Stop the car and stay inside.
5. Place a HELP sign in your window if you need assistance.
6. Keep roads clear for rescue and emergency vehicles.
7. If you are on a bus, stay in your seat until the bus stops. Take cover in a protected place. If you can't take cover, sit in a crouched position and protect your head from falling debris until the shaking stops.

## After an earthquake

Earthquakes are often followed by aftershocks: smaller earthquakes that happen when the earth underneath the surface adjusts to a new position. If you feel aftershocks, stay where you are until they stop. Earthquakes can trigger huge ocean waves called tsunamis. If you are near the ocean, move far away from the waterfront.

This information is provided The Tofino Emergency Social Services

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