

Hazard 1 Earthquake



What to do in an earthquake

We should all know what to do in an earthquake, and that's **DROP**, **COVER** and **HOLD**.



New Zealand lies on the boundary of the Pacific and Australian tectonic plates. Most earthquakes occur at faults, which are breaks extending deep within the earth, caused by movements of these plates. There are thousands of earthquakes in New Zealand every year, but most of them are not felt because they are either small, or very deep within the earth. Each year there are about 150 – 200 quakes that are big enough to be felt. A large, damaging earthquake could occur at any time, and can be followed by aftershocks that continue for days or weeks.

Most earthquake-related injuries and deaths result from falling debris, flying glass and collapsing structures such as buildings and bridges. Earthquakes can also trigger landslides, avalanches, flash floods, fires and tsunamis.

Before an earthquake

Getting ready before an earthquake strikes will help reduce damage to your home and business and help you survive.

- Develop a Household Emergency Plan. Assemble and maintain your emergency survival items for your home and workplace, as well as a portable getaway kit.
- Practice **Drop, Cover and Hold**.
- Identify **safe places** within your home, school or workplace. See the right-hand panel for more information about safe places.
- Check your household insurance policy for cover and amount.
- Seek qualified advice to make sure your house is secured to its foundations and ensure any renovations comply with the New Zealand Building Code.
- Secure heavy items of furniture to the floor or wall. Visit www.eqc.govt.nz to find out how to quake-safe your home.

During an earthquake

- **If you are inside** a building, move no more than a few steps, drop, cover and hold. Stay indoors till the shaking stops and you are sure it is safe to exit. In most buildings in New Zealand you are safer if you stay where you are until the shaking stops.
- **If you are in an elevator**, drop, cover and hold. When the shaking stops, try and get out at the nearest floor if you can safely do so.
- **If you are outdoors** when the shaking starts, move no more than a few steps away from buildings, trees, streetlights, and power lines, then Drop, Cover and Hold.
- **If you are at the beach or near the coast**, drop, cover and hold then move to higher ground immediately in case a tsunami follows the quake.



Visit www.getthru.govt.nz
for more information



- **If you are driving**, pull over to a clear location, stop and stay there with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking stops. Once the shaking stops, proceed with caution and avoid bridges or ramps that might have been damaged.
- **If you are in a mountainous area** or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling debris or landslides.

After An Earthquake

- Listen to your local radio stations as emergency management officials will be broadcasting the most appropriate advice for your community and situation.
- Expect to feel aftershocks.
- Check yourself for injuries and get first aid if necessary. Help others if you can.
- Be aware that electricity supply could be cut, and fire alarms and sprinkler systems can go off in buildings during an earthquake even if there is no fire. Check for, and extinguish, small fires.
- If you are in a damaged building, try to get outside and find a safe, open place. Use the stairs, not the elevators.
- Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines, and stay out of damaged areas.
- Only use the phone for short essential calls to keep the lines clear for emergency calls.
- If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, open a window, get everyone out quickly and turn off the gas if you can. If you see sparks, broken wires or evidence of electrical system damage, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box if it is safe to do so.
- Keep your animals under your direct control as they can become disorientated. Take measures to protect your animals from hazards, and to protect other people from your animals.
- If your property is damaged, take notes and photographs for insurance purposes. If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company as soon as possible.



If you are on the beach or near the coast, an earthquake may generate a tsunami.

Think **LONG, STRONG, GONE**. If the earthquake lasts **LONGER** than a minute or is **STRONG** enough to knock you off your feet, then head immediately for higher ground or inland. Other warnings for a tsunami include loud or strange noises coming from the sea or a sudden rise or fall in sea level.