

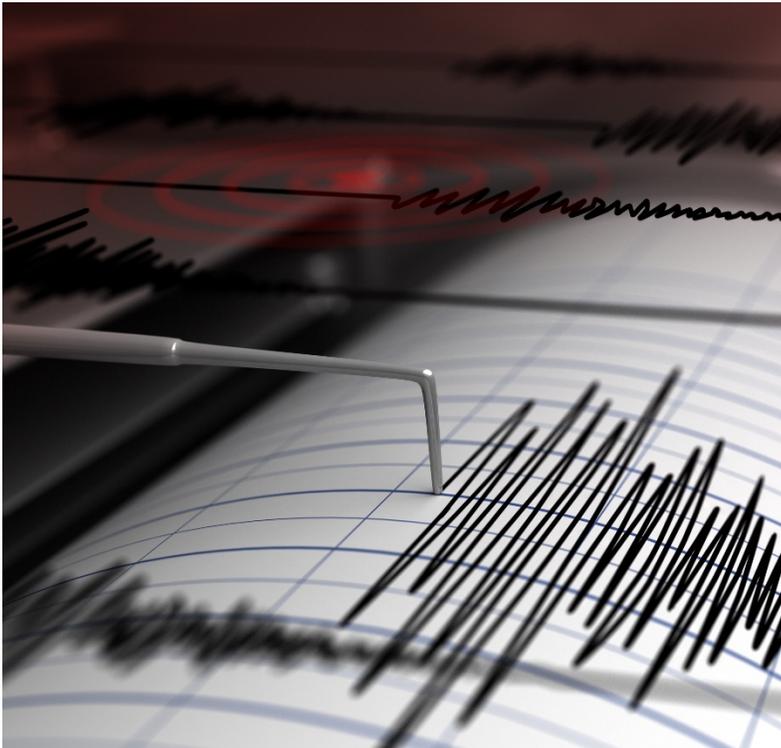


Safe Environments

Healthy Workers

## KNOW EARTHQUAKE SURVIVAL TIPS FOR HOME OR TRAVEL

In any sudden crisis, the goal is to mitigate damage and escape personal injury. An earthquake can happen without warning and depending on where you live you may not have much experience with how to handle this situation. Survival may, therefore, depend on preparing in advance and thinking ahead about how to respond quickly, taking the guesswork out of managing the situation. Read these tips if you are planning on travelling to earthquake-vulnerable counties like Japan, Nepal, India, Philippines or even Mexico. In Canada, British Columbia is the region that experiences the most seismic activity. However earthquakes can also occur in other regions including Quebec, Newfoundland, the Northwest Territories and even Ontario.



### IN AN EARTHQUAKE:

- If you are indoors when shaking starts, drop to the floor, preferably against an interior wall.
- If you are in bed, put the pillow over your head.
- If you are on the floor, cover your head with your arms.
- If you use a wheelchair, lock the wheels.
- Stay away from windows, hanging objects and mirrors.
- Remain inside during an earthquake.
- If you are outside, look for an open area, free of debris and fallen power lines.
- If you are near an Ocean, head for higher ground. A tsunami may be approaching.

## BE PREPARED AT HOME

- Secure heavy objects to the wall.
- Store hazardous chemicals away from heat sources.
- Secure your garbage bins and lawn furniture.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on every level of your home. Teach your children how to use them. Check smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms regularly.
- Clearly label the on-off positions for your gas, water and electricity. If a wrench is required to turn off gas flow, tie it on or near the pipe so it can be found in a hurry.
- Keep emergency phone numbers on hand for local police, fire department, poison control centre, family doctor, health clinic, the gas company and electrical company.
- Take a First Aid course at your local Canadian Red Cross or St. John Ambulance office.
- Keep an emergency travel kit or “go bag” ready, packed with a First Aid kit, enough water and food for at least 72 hours, pet supplies, a cell phone charger and a portable toolkit. Also, include any medications.
- Keep your car's gas tank at least half full.

## IF AN EARTHQUAKE HAPPENS AT HOME OR AWAY

### INDOORS: DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON

If you are indoors when an earthquake hits, the safest thing to do is drop to the floor, preferably against an interior wall or under a strong table or desk. An earthquake is powerful enough to cause you to lose your balance, so there is an imminent danger of an injury or fall. Cover your head and neck with your arms to avoid being hit by falling objects – or with a pillow if you are in bed. If you use a wheelchair, lock the wheels. Whether at home or at the office, stay away from windows, hanging objects, mirrors, tall unsecured furniture, large appliances and cabinets filled with loose or heavy objects. In high-rise buildings, fire alarms or sprinklers may activate. Although this can seem like a dangerous obstacle course, it is still preferable to being outdoors: try to remain inside during an earthquake.

### OUTDOORS: RETREAT FROM BUILDINGS AND OCEANS

If you can walk safely, get out of the way of danger. Stay clear of power lines, buildings and trees. If you are driving, pull over and stop, but avoid stopping under overhead hazards such as bridges, overpasses, power lines or large signs. If you are near the ocean, you may be in the path of an oncoming tsunami. If so, don't stop; try to navigate your way inland to higher ground, while carefully watching for falling debris. If your car becomes surrounded by water, abandon it; you could be swept away or trapped in a submerged car.

### THE AFTERMATH

Once the earth stops quaking, it's time to attend to any injuries with First Aid and to assess the danger posed by fires, downed power lines, gas leaks and structural damage. To avoid any further injury, use fire extinguishers to put out small fires immediately, and beware of spilt flammable or hazardous liquids, such as bleach, lye, garden chemicals, and gas. Clear away any broken glass. Evacuate buildings by stairs, avoiding elevators, but do not move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger. Keep them warm with blankets or additional clothing until help arrives. If you are trapped in debris, use your whistle or tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear you. Try not to move around too much, in case you stir up dust. Cover your nose and mouth.

## REFERENCES

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