

# Ready New York Earthquake Safety



Although earthquakes are uncommon in New York City, they can occur and residents should be prepared. Identify safe places in each room of your home, such as under a solid piece of furniture and away from windows, hanging objects or tall furniture that could fall on you. Prepare your home by securing bookcases and other top-heavy objects to the wall, and store large and heavy items on lower shelves. Do not hang large pictures or mirrors above sofas or other places where people may sit or sleep.

## During an earthquake:

- **Drop, Cover and Hold On:**
  - **Drop** to the floor.
  - Take **cover** under a solid piece of furniture or next to an interior wall. Cover your head and neck with your arms.
  - **Hold on** to a sturdy piece of furniture and be prepared to move with it. Stay where you are until the shaking stops.
- If in a high-rise building, stay away from windows and outside walls. Get under a table. Do not use elevators.
- If in a crowded public place, do not rush for the doors. Crouch and cover your head and neck with your hands and arms.

## If you are outdoors when shaking starts:

- Stay there.
- Move to a clear area if you can safely walk. Avoid power lines, buildings, and trees.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits and alongside exterior walls.
- If you're driving, pull to the side of the road and stop. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires. Stay inside your car until the shaking is over.
- If you are on the beach, move to higher ground. An earthquake can cause a tsunami.

## Once the earthquake shaking stops:

- When the shaking stops, look around to make sure it is safe to move.
- Expect aftershocks.
- Help people who are trapped or injured, especially those who may require special assistance such as infants, seniors, and people with access and functional needs. Do not move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger.
- If you have fire extinguishers and are trained to use them, put out small fires immediately. Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio or TV for the latest emergency information.
- Use the telephone for emergency calls only.
- Stay away from damaged areas and return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Be careful when driving after an earthquake and anticipate traffic light outages.

- Move carefully after the quake, watching for items that may have fallen or broken. Put on sturdy shoes before investigating further to prevent potential injuries from broken glass. Open closet and cabinet doors carefully, as items may have shifted inside.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleach, gasoline, or other flammable liquids immediately.
- Leave the area if you smell gas and **call 911**. Learn how to shut off the source of natural gas to your home if you smell a leak.
- Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker.
- If you leave home, leave a sign to let friends and family know your new location.
- If you use social media, Tweet or update your Facebook page to let others know you're okay.

**If you are trapped in debris:**

- Move as little as possible so that you don't kick up dust. Cover your nose and mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort.

**Earthquake Preparedness Tips for Seniors & People With Special Needs** (courtesy of [California Department of Health: Be Prepared California](#))

**Before an Earthquake**

- Write down any specific needs, limitations, and capabilities that you have, and any medications you take. Make a copy of the list and put it in your purse or wallet.
- Find someone (spouse, roommate, friend, neighbor, relative or co-worker) to help you in case of an emergency. Give them the list. You may wish to provide a spare key to your home, or let them know where they can find one in an emergency.

**During an Earthquake**

- If you are confined to a wheelchair, try to get under a doorway or into an inside corner, lock the wheels and cover your head with your arms. Remove any items that are not securely attached to the wheelchair.
- If you are able, seek shelter under a sturdy table or desk. Stay away from outer walls, windows, fireplaces and hanging objects.
- If you are unable to move from a bed or chair, protect yourself from falling objects by covering up with blankets and pillows.

**Resources:**

- If you are in immediate danger, **call 911**.
- To report damage to your home or business, or for non-emergency service requests, **call 311** or contact **311 online**.
- Sign up for [Notify NYC](#) for emergency information via text, tweet, e-mail, and phone.
- Follow OEM on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Learn more about earthquakes and other hazards on OEM's website: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/earthquakes.shtml>
- Visit the US Geological Survey for real-time earthquake monitoring: <http://www.usgs.gov/>



Thanks to the California Emergency Management Agency for assistance and to the San Francisco Department of Emergency Services for assistance via its website: <http://www.72hours.org>.