

## AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE



- ✓ Check for injuries. Seriously injured persons should not be moved unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
- ✓ Do not light matches, open flame appliances, ignite lighters or turn on electrical switches until you are sure that there are no gas leaks. Use a flashlight instead.
- ✓ Wear shoes and protective clothing, for example, hard hats and gloves, to avoid injuries while clearing debris and cleaning dangerous spills, such as, flammable fluids, drugs and poisonous pesticides.
- ✓ Check for broken gas, water and sewage lines, downed powerlines, damaged and weakened buildings and foundations, fires and potential fire hazards
- ✓ Do not use the telephone except in extreme emergencies
- ✓ Cupboards and other storage areas should be carefully opened because objects might have shifted during the earthquake.
- ✓ Stay away from beaches and other waterfront areas where seismic sea waves (tsunamis) could strike.
- ✓ Do not go sightseeing or into damaged areas unless authorized by appropriate personnel.



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# EARTHQUAKES

THE MORE  
**YOU KNOW...**  
THE BETTER PREPARED  
**YOU WILL BE.**



# WHAT IS AN EARTHQUAKE?



An earthquake is a shaking of the ground caused by the sudden breaking and movement of large sections (tectonic plates) of the earth's rocky outermost crust.

The edges of the tectonic plates are marked by faults (or fractures). Most earthquakes occur along the fault lines when the plates slide past or collide against each other.

Aftershocks which are smaller earthquakes follow the main one. Sometimes these can occur for up to a month. Although smaller in magnitude than the main earthquake, they can still cause damage.

## FACTS ABOUT EARTHQUAKES

The most common cause of earthquakes is movement within the earth, associated with tectonic plates. They may also be caused by volcanic eruptions, meteor impacts, and underground explosions or collapses. Their effects vary from mild to catastrophic.

The severity of an earthquake may be measured using either of two scales namely, the Richter scale and the Modified Mercalli Scale (MMS). The Richter scale is used mainly by scientists to measure the energy of the seismic wave or shock. The MMS measures the intensity or effect at the surface.

Earthquake effects include surface faulting (ruptures along the surface), ground shaking (causing buildings to shake and sway), landslides, liquefaction (the collapse of loosely packed, water-logged sediments at or near the ground surface), tsunamis, and seiches (the sloshing of a closed body of water such as a lake or swimming pool from earthquake shaking).

Danger includes damage to buildings, ruptures of water, gas and sewer lines, collapse of roads and other infrastructure, and falling debris. These may also cause serious injury or death.

## BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

- ✓ Regularly check for objects that can fall and cause injury in the event of an earthquake
- ✓ Bolt heavy furniture, water tanks, water heaters, cylinders and storage units to a wall or floor so that they remain in place.
- ✓ Be informed about building codes and ensure that you comply with them.
- ✓ Know the location and operation of safety valves and switches for gas, electricity and water.
- ✓ Have a list of emergency numbers on hand.
- ✓ Every business, home, school and community should have a disaster plan, which should be practiced often.
- ✓ Have an emergency kit ready. Stock up on non-perishable foods, emergency lighting, spare batteries, medication, baby items, water and first aid supplies.

## DURING AN EARTHQUAKE



**DO NOT MOVE**  
**UNTIL THE SHAKING HAS STOPPED.**

- ✓ Do not run outside during an earthquake. If inside, stay inside and protect yourself.
- ✓ Do not use elevators or stairs.
- ✓ If outside, stay outside away from buildings, electricity poles and bridges.
- ✓ If in a vehicle, do not stop on or under a bridge.

**THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF EARTHQUAKES IS MOVEMENT WITHIN THE EARTH ASSOCIATED WITH TECTONIC PLATES**

