



DROP! COVER! HOLD ON!



Protect Yourself During Earthquake Shaking!

Official rescue teams from the U.S. and other countries who have searched for trapped people in collapsed structures around the world, as well as emergency managers, researchers, and school safety advocates, all agree that “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” is the appropriate action to reduce injury and death during earthquakes.

Immediately when earthquake shaking begins:

DROP! down onto your knees (before the earthquake knocks you down). This position makes you a smaller target but allows you to still move if necessary.

COVER! your head and neck (or your entire body) under a strong table or desk. If there is no table to get under, get down near an interior wall and cover your head and neck with your arms and hands.

HOLD ON! to the furniture or to your head and neck until the shaking stops. Be prepared to move with your shelter if the shaking shifts it around.

The back of this focus sheet describes what to do in various situations, such as if you are driving, in a theater, at the beach, etc.

Earthquakes occur without any warning and may be so violent that you cannot run or crawl; you therefore will most likely be knocked to the ground where you happen to be. But if possible, take cover away from exterior walls of a building which are the most dangerous places to be. Windows, facades and architectural details are often the first parts of the building to collapse. To stay away from this danger zone, stay inside if you are inside and outside if you are outside.

Given the dynamics of earthquakes and their effects on structures, “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” is the single most useful instruction that you can follow to protect yourself in the majority of situations. It gives you the best overall chance of protecting yourself during an earthquake... even during quakes that cause furniture to move about rooms, and even in buildings that might ultimately collapse.

Use the information on the reverse side of this Focus Sheet to help you become more prepared. Take part in earthquake safety exercises.

Check these websites

www.shakeout.org

www.dropcoverholdon.org & www.dropcoverholdon.org/espanol

www.earthquakecountry.org (Earthquake Country Alliance/SCEC)

www.espfocus.org (Emergency Survival Program)

www.redcross.org (American Red Cross)

www.scec.org (Southern California Earthquake Center)



DO NOT Head for the Doorway



An enduring earthquake image of California is a collapsed adobe home with the door frame as the only standing part. From this came our belief that a doorway is the safest place to be during an earthquake. True—if you live in an old, unreinforced adobe house. In modern houses, doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house. **You are safer taking cover under a sturdy table or desk.**

If you are...

Indoors: Drop, cover, and hold on. During earthquakes, drop to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it firmly. Be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops. If you are not near a desk or table, drop to the floor against the interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms. Avoid exterior walls, windows, hanging objects, mirrors, tall furniture, large appliances, and kitchen cabinets with heavy objects or glass. Do not go outside!



In bed: If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured staying where you are. Broken glass on the floor has caused injury to those who have rolled to the floor or tried to get to doorways.



In a high-rise: Drop, cover, and hold on. Avoid windows and other hazards. Do not use elevators. Do not be surprised if sprinkler systems or fire alarms activate.



Outdoors: Move to a clear area if you can safely do so; avoid power lines, trees, signs, buildings, vehicles, and other hazards.



Driving: Pull over to the side of the road, stop, and set the parking brake. Avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs and other hazards. Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking is over. If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.



In a stadium or theater: Stay at your seat and protect your head and neck with your arms. Don't try to leave until the shaking is over. Then walk out slowly watching for anything that could fall in the aftershocks.



Near the beach: Drop, cover, and hold on until the shaking stops. Estimate how long the shaking lasts. If severe shaking lasts 20 seconds or more, immediately evacuate to high ground as a tsunami might have been generated by the earthquake. Move inland 3 kilometers (2 miles) or to land that is at least 30 meters (100 feet) above sea level immediately. Don't wait for officials to issue a warning. Walk quickly, rather than drive, to avoid traffic, debris and other hazards.



Below a dam: Dams can fail during a major earthquake. Catastrophic failure is unlikely, but if you are downstream from a dam, you should know flood-zone information and have prepared an evacuation plan.

Triangle of Life? You may have received an email that seems to make sense, but unfortunately it actually has dangerous instructions and is promoted by someone whose credibility has been broadly questioned. Learn more at www.earthquakecountry.org/dropcoverholdon.

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