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Earthquakes

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Notes for the Large Print Reader

Print page numbers are indicated as:

Page 1

Main text is in Arial typeface, 18 point.

Headings are indicated as:

Heading 1

Heading 2

Heading 3

Omissions and alterations

Some page layouts have been edited for clarity.

Earthquakes

All of New Zealand is at risk of earthquakes. We can't predict when one will happen, but we can protect ourselves and our whānau.

Reduce the impacts of earthquakes

Make your home safer. Fix and fasten objects that could fall and hurt you in an earthquake.

Review your insurance regularly. Having insurance cover for your home and contents is important to help you get back on your feet if you suffer damage in a disaster.

For information on how to prepare your home and protect your whānau, visit www.naturalhazards.govt.nz/be-prepared/

Get ready before an earthquake

Work out what supplies you might need and make a plan together.

Practise Drop, Cover and Hold at least twice a year.

You can do this when the clocks change and by taking part in New Zealand ShakeOut. It's important to practise the right action to take so that when a real earthquake happens, you know what to do.

Identify safe spaces to Drop, Cover and Hold within your home, school, work and other places you often visit.

- Somewhere close to you, no more than a few steps away, to avoid injury from flying debris.
- Under a strong table. Hold on to the table legs to keep it from moving away from you.
- Away from windows that can shatter and cause injury. And from tall furniture that can fall on you. Protect your head and neck with your arms.
- Not in a doorway. In most homes, doorways are not stronger than any other part of a house and a swinging door can cause more injury.

What to do during an earthquake

Drop, Cover and Hold is the right action to take in an earthquake. It:

- stops you being knocked over
- makes you a smaller target for falling and flying objects, and
- protects your head, neck and vital organs.

Drop down on your hands and knees. Cover your head and neck. Hold on to your shelter.

Do not run outside or you risk getting hit by falling bricks and glass.

If you are near the coast remember, Long or Strong, Get Gone.

- Drop, Cover and Hold until the shaking is over.

- If the earthquake lasts longer than a minute or is strong enough to make it difficult to stand, move quickly to the nearest high ground or as far inland as you can out of tsunami evacuation zones.

What to do after an earthquake

Expect more shaking. Each time you feel earthquake shaking, Drop, Cover and Hold. More shaking can happen minutes, days, weeks, months and even years following an earthquake.

- Check yourself for injuries and get first aid if necessary. Learn what to look for and what to do if you need to give first aid at <https://www.stjohn.org.nz/first-aid/first-aid-library/>
- Do not run outside. It is frightening to stay in a building immediately after an earthquake, but it is much safer than going outside. An earthquake is not like a fire. You do not have to evacuate a building straight away unless it is showing obvious signs of distress or you are in a tsunami evacuation zone.
- Turn off water, electricity and gas if advised to. 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.
- If you can, put on protective clothing that covers your arms and legs, and sturdy footwear. This is to protect yourself from injury by broken objects.
- If you are in a store, unfamiliar commercial building or on public transport, follow the instructions of those in charge.
- If you can, use social media or text messages instead of calling to keep phone lines clear for emergency calls.
- Keep control of your pets. Protect them from hazards and protect other people from your animals.
- Check on your neighbours and anyone who might need your help.

If your property is damaged

- Do not do anything that puts your safety at risk or causes more damage to your property.
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible.
- If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company.
- Take photos of any damage. It will help speed up assessments of your claims.