



## Haiti: Earthquake Safety

Adapted from: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes/index.asp>

### INDOOR SAFETY

**If you are inside, stay inside. DO NOT run outside or to other rooms during shaking.**

In most situations, you will reduce your chance of injury from falling objects and even building collapse if you don't go out immediately:

- **DROP** down onto your hands and knees before the earthquake knocks you down. This position protects you from falling but allows you to still move if necessary.
- **COVER** your head and neck (and your entire body if possible) under the shelter of a sturdy table or desk. If there is no shelter nearby, get down near an interior wall or next to low-lying furniture that won't fall on you, and cover your head and neck with your arms and hands.
- **HOLD ON** to your shelter (or to your head and neck) until the shaking stops. Be prepared to move with your shelter if the shaking shifts it around.
- **DO NOT** stand in a doorway. You are safer under a table. In modern houses, doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house. The doorway does not protect you from the most likely source of injury—falling or flying objects. Most earthquake-related injuries and deaths are caused by falling or flying objects (e.g., TVs, lamps, glass, bookcases), or by being knocked to the ground.

**You can take other actions, even while an earthquake is happening, that will reduce your chances of being hurt.**

- If possible within the few seconds before shaking intensifies, quickly move away from glass and hanging objects, and bookcases, china cabinets, or other large furniture that could fall. Watch for falling objects, such as bricks from fireplaces and chimneys, light fixtures, wall hangings, high shelves, and cabinets with doors that could swing open.
- If available nearby, grab something to shield your head and face from falling debris and broken glass.
- If you are in the kitchen, quickly turn off the stove and take cover at the first sign of shaking.
- 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.

### OUTDOOR SAFETY

**If you are outside, stay outside.** And stay away, and move away, from buildings utility wires, sinkholes, and fuel/gas lines.

- The area near the exterior walls of a building is the most dangerous place to be. Windows, facades and architectural details are often the first parts of the building to collapse. Also, shaking can be so strong that you will not be able to move far without falling down, and objects may fall or be thrown at you. Stay away from this danger zone—stay inside if you are inside and outside if you are outside.
- The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside doorways and close to outer walls. Once in the open, get down low (to avoid being knocked down by strong shaking) and stay there until the shaking stops.



### **Automobiles**

- If you are in a moving automobile, stop as quickly and safely as possible. Move your car to the shoulder or curb, away from utility poles, overhead wires, and under- or overpasses. Stay in the car and set the parking brake. Turn on the radio for emergency broadcast information. A car may jiggle violently on its springs, but it is a good place to stay until the shaking stops. If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.
- When you drive on, watch for hazards created by the earthquake, such as breaks in the pavement, downed utility poles and wires, rising water levels, fallen overpasses and collapsed bridges.

### **Impaired Mobility**

- If you cannot drop to the ground, try to sit or remain seated so you are not knocked down. If you are in a wheelchair lock your wheels. Protect your head and neck with a large book, a pillow, or your arms. The goal is to prevent injuries from falling down or from objects that might fall or be thrown at you.

### **High-Rise Buildings**

- Drop, cover, and hold on. Move away from windows and outside walls. Stay in the building. The electricity may go out, and the sprinkler systems may come on. DO NOT use the elevators.
- If you are trapped stay calm. Try to get someone's attention by tapping hard on metal parts of the structure. That may increase your chances of being rescued.

### **Crowded Indoor Public Places**

- Drop, cover, and hold on. Do not rush for the doorways. Others will have the same idea. Move away from display shelves containing objects that may fall. If you can, take cover and grab something to shield your head and face from falling debris and glass.

### **Stadium or Theater**

- Stay at your seat and protect your head and neck with your arms, or any way possible. Do not leave until the shaking is over. Then walk out carefully watching for anything that could fall in the aftershocks.

### **Near the Shore**

- 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 live downstream from a dam, you should know flood-zone information and have an evacuation plan.