Earthquakes

Shaking comes without warning, so practice one move now and secure heavy things at home.

DROP, COVER, HOLD ON

- **Drop** to your hands and knees, **cover** your head and neck under a sturdy table or desk if one is close, and **hold on** until the shaking stops.
- With no table nearby, get low next to an inside wall and cover your head and neck with your arms. Stay inside, and do not stand in a doorway.

IN BED, IN A WHEELCHAIR, IN A CAR, OR OUTSIDE

- **In bed:** stay there, hold on, and cover your head with a pillow. **Wheelchair:** lock the wheels, stay seated, and cover your head and neck.
- **In a car:** stop as soon as it is safe, away from overpasses, poles and wires, and stay inside. **Outdoors:** move to an open area away from buildings and wires, and get low.

NEAR THE COAST

- A strong or long quake, or a sudden rise or fall of the ocean, is a natural tsunami warning. Do not wait for an alert. When the shaking stops, walk to high ground or inland. CDC gives 100 feet above sea level or 2 miles inland as a guide.

RIGHT AFTER THE SHAKING

- Expect aftershocks. Drop, cover and hold on each time.
- Check yourself for injuries first, then help others, and call 911 for serious injuries. If you are trapped, text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle.
- **Gas:** shut off the main valve only if you smell or hear gas, or see a broken line. Only the gas company can turn it back on.
- Stay out of damaged buildings. Text instead of calling, and message your out-of-area contact.

BEFORE THE SHAKING

- Move heavy items to low shelves, anchor tall furniture and TVs to wall studs, and strap the water heater to wall studs with two metal straps.
- Keep at least 3 days of water (1 gallon per person per day) and food, a flashlight, a whistle, and a wrench for the gas and water shutoffs.
- Most homeowners and renters policies do not cover earthquake damage, so ask your agent.

For our household

Safe spot in each room

Where we meet afterward

Heavy items we secured on

Where the gas shutoff tool is kept

Sources: Ready.gov, Earthquakes; CDC, Earthquake Safety; Earthquake Country Alliance, Seven Steps; ShakeOut safety actions and mobility guidance; FEMA earthquake brochure (2023); National Weather Service, Tsunami Alerts. Checked October 2026. Tsunami distances vary, so follow local officials.