



Adventist Risk  
Management® Inc.

# PREPARING FOR AN EARTHQUAKE

Earthquakes are ever-present dangers that strike at any time without warning. Churches and schools located in earthquake zones need to be prepared before the shaking starts.

## Before the Shaking—Earthquake Proof Your Facilities

- Make sure hot water heaters and gas appliances have earthquake straps and are secured to wall studs or bolted to the floor.
- Do not hang heavy objects, such as large mirrors or pictures, near public seating areas.
- Properly secure all chandeliers, stage lighting fixtures, speakers, and mounted audiovisual equipment to meet the seismic standards of the local jurisdiction.
- Anchor top-heavy freestanding bookcases, file cabinets, and other furnishings securely to wall studs.
- Store large, heavy, and breakable items on lower shelves in storage rooms.
- Install strong latches on cabinets, especially those holding fuel products, chemicals, cleaning supplies, or hazardous materials.
- Know how to shut off the gas supply valves into the building. Keep the shut-off wrench in a known location for easy access. If the smell of gas is present after an earthquake, immediately shut off the gas supply valves until a licensed HVAC contractor or the utility company can properly check all gas-fired equipment for damage or leaks.
- Make seismic improvements on existing buildings. Have a professional contractor assess exterior areas such as porches, decks, sliding doorways, carports, and covered walkways for safety.



- If building new facilities, check the current seismic building standards and codes in the local jurisdiction before construction starts.

## Plan and Prepare for the Shaking

In the event of a major earthquake, assistance from first responders may be delayed for several hours or even days. Prepare ahead by having earthquake safety supplies in storage. Consider these items for your Earthquake Safety Kit.

- **Water for both drinking and sanitary needs** — It is recommended to have 1 gallon per person per day for three days.
- **Food in non-perishable, easy to prepare forms** — Replenish food supplies annually to maintain freshness
- **Sanitation supplies** for personal hygiene
- **Safety tools** such as gloves, protective eyewear, helmets, masks, crowbars, shovels, and other tools for securing the building
- **Flashlights and a radio** with extra batteries
- **First Aid Kit**
- **Blankets**

Store these supplies in readily accessible areas. Large quantities of supplies may require storage in a locked

outdoor metal shipping container. Facility employees should know where these supplies are located and how to gain access after the earthquake.

## When the Shaking Starts

Remain inside until the earthquake's shaking ceases. Remember these three principles:



**1. DROP**  
Get down on the floor and move as little as possible.



**2. COVER**  
Stay away from windows and take cover under a sturdy table, desk, or another strong object.



**3. HOLD ON**  
If possible, cover your head and body to protect from falling objects or shattering glass and hold on.

Once the shaking has ended, carefully prepare to leave the building. Watch out for fallen debris, loose bricks, or broken structures that could give way when exiting. Look up for dangling light fixtures and damaged ceilings. Always use stairways instead of elevators when moving between floors after an earthquake. Be aware of aftershocks, which can be stronger than the original earthquake.

ARM Cares about your safety. Be prepared for an earthquake when at work, school, and even church.



Our ministry is to **protect** your ministry. Find more safety resources for protecting your facility and those under your care at [adventistrisk.org](http://adventistrisk.org).

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