

EARTHQUAKE WARNING CALIFORNIA: STEPS TO PREPARE



**DON'T GET
CAUGHT OFF
GUARD**

1. Participate in Earthquake Warning California

Scientists are still unable to predict earthquakes, but thanks to new technology, individuals and organizations can potentially receive a few seconds of notice to take appropriate safety precautions before an earthquake strikes. Earthquake Warning California utilizes the California Integrated Seismic Network, which is a partnership between Cal OES, United States Geological Survey (USGS), UC Berkeley, the California Institute of Technology, and the California Geological Survey. The system uses ground-motion sensors to detect earthquakes that have already started and estimates their size, location, and impact. When it detects a significant magnitude, the system issues a ShakeAlert® Message, providing a warning before shaking begins. To receive earthquake warnings, individuals and family members can download the MyShake App and ensure phone settings are adjusted to receive emergency alerts, including:

- **Government Emergency Alerts:** No-cost text messages for emergency situations (magnitude 5.0 or higher and Modified Mercalli Intensity IV shaking);
- **MyShake App:** Free smartphone app that provides iPhone and Android users with audio and visual warnings (magnitude 4.5 or higher and Modified Mercalli Intensity III shaking). Available in the Apple App and Google Play stores; and
- **Android Earthquake Alerts:** Android phones with updated operating systems are automatically subscribed to Android Earthquake Alerts, which uses the same technology as the MyShake App.

Earthquakes can happen in California at any time. Whether you are a resident or visitor, you will need to react quickly to minimize injuries and hazards. During an earthquake, travel routes may be blocked, running gas or water may compromise safety, and access to technology may be limited. Preparation is critical.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) has compiled this tip sheet with important resources for earthquake preparation. Please share this information and encourage others in your community to take part in emergency planning. More resources are available at earthquake.ca.gov.

Once your phone is set up:

- Set phone location settings for the MyShake App, Android Earthquake Alerts, and Government Emergency Alerts to “always on.”
- Ensure all household members know what an earthquake warning sounds and looks like. You can test a MyShake App warning under the “Settings” tab. Individuals may have seen a Government Emergency Alert for other emergencies (e.g., AMBER Alerts, wildfires, flash floods).
- If you receive an earthquake warning, immediately take steps to protect yourself. You may receive a warning without experiencing shaking; however, always react with the expectation that shaking will follow.

2. Know How to Protect Yourself During an Earthquake

If an earthquake occurs:

- Drop to the ground, cover your head with your arms, and hold onto your neck until shaking stops.
- Do not stand in a doorway. Stay away from large glass windows and mirrors.
- If you have difficulty getting onto or off the ground without assistance, cover your head with your arms as much as possible, and try to remain in place. For more accessible safety tips, visit: earthquakecountry.org/disability.

3. Develop an Emergency Preparedness Plan

Create a customized emergency plan for your specific needs:

- Think through details of your everyday life, considering locations where you might be during an earthquake (e.g., at home, in the car, outside). If possible, hold practice drills in these settings.
- Learn emergency protocols for your workplace, school, transportation, and frequently visited places.

If you are a parent or guardian, explain to those being cared for what to do during and after an earthquake, in case you or another adult are not present.

4. Pack an Emergency Supply Kit

Your emergency kit should address all daily needs and include:

- A family plan with instructions and information for contacting others. Include a reminder to use text messages, if possible, to keep emergency call lines open.
- Basic supplies: a radio, first-aid kit, flashlight, batteries, water, and non-perishable food for your family and pets.
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications, medical equipment (including accessories, like hearing aid batteries or prescription glasses), and medical records.

5. Understand and Mitigate Hazards

Natural disasters can occur anywhere, but earthquakes are more common in certain regions. Visit myhazards.caloes.ca.gov to learn about local risks and how to prepare your home (including securing furniture, appliances, home fuel systems, and more).



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For more information:

Earthquake Warning California is managed by Cal OES. It provides individuals, organizations, and communities with easily accessible earthquake warning and emergency preparedness information, as well as resources. For the latest news and resources, visit earthquake.ca.gov. Send questions or comments regarding this fact sheet to earthquakeinfo@caloes.ca.gov.

For information, questions, or comments relating to this fact sheet, email Cal OES at: earthquakeinfo@caloes.ca.gov.