



Town of Cheektowaga Emergency Services

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EARTHQUAKE



TERMS TO KNOW

Aftershock: One of many earthquakes that often occur during the days to months after some larger earthquake has occurred.

Epicenter: The location directly above the focus or place where an earthquake originates.

Richter Magnitude Scale: Used to express the total amount of energy released by an earthquake. Values are typically between 1 and 9 – each increase of 1 represents a 32 – fold increase in released energy.

BE PREPARED!

- Fasten shelves, bookcases, and other tall furniture securely to wall studs. Brace or anchor high or top-heavy objects. Secure items such as televisions and computers.
- Install strong latches or bolts on cabinet doors to prevent contents from flying out during the quake.
- Move large or heavy objects and fragile items to lower shelves where they are less likely to fall or break, and store breakable items such as bottled foods, glass, and china in low, closed cabinets with latches.
- Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products securely in closed cabinets with latches and on bottom shelves.
- Hang heavy items such as pictures and mirrors away from beds, couches, and anywhere people sit.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Secure water heaters and gas appliances by strapping them to the wall studs and bolting them to the floor.
- Install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks.
- Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations.
- Check to see if your house is bolted to its foundation.
- Consider having your building evaluated by a professional structural design engineer who can give you advice on how to reduce potential damage.
- Earthquakes are not covered under standard homeowners' insurance policies. Consider purchasing earthquake insurance.

DURING THE QUAKE

- **Duck, cover, and hold:** Duck or drop down to the floor. Take cover under a desk, table, or other sturdy furniture. Or seek cover against an interior wall and protect your head with your arms. If you are taking cover beneath sturdy furniture, hold onto it until the ground stops shaking.
- **Stay inside!** The most dangerous thing to do during the shaking of an earthquake is to try to leave the building because objects such as bricks, glass and other building materials are likely to be falling from the sides of a building. Stay away from windows, mirrors, skylights, and furniture that could fall on you.
- **If you are in a crowded building,** do not rush for the exit – others may have the same idea. Seek shelter beneath a stable piece of furniture instead. If you are in a high-rise building, stay away from windows and outside walls. Remain on the same floor. Do not use elevators.
- **If you are outdoors,** move into the open, away from buildings, trees, signs, streetlights, and utility wires. Once in the open, stay there until shaking stops.
- **If you are in a moving vehicle,** move to a clear area away from buildings, trees, overpasses, or utility wires. Avoid bridges or ramps that might have been damaged by the quake. Stop quickly and stay in the vehicle. Once shaking has stopped, proceed with caution.
- **Expect aftershocks,** which often follow earthquakes and may even be as strong as, or stronger than the initial quake.