

WHEN THE SHAKING STARTS: EARTHQUAKE ADVICE

Frequently we have small earthquakes in California; and when we do, whatever the size, do you know what to do? Are you aware that recommendations have changed over the years? Here are some updates.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN THE SHAKING STARTS?

According to seismologists, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and others, the rule is: DROP, COVER and HOLD ON.

- DROP** Drop to the floor rather than getting knocked down by a violent quake
- COVER** Cover your body and head, preferably under a strong table or desk
- HOLD ON** Hold on tightly because furniture often moves with the shaking

Studies of injuries and deaths caused by earthquakes over the past few decades have proven that you are more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects; such as televisions, computers, lamps, broken glass, and bookcases than a collapsed building.

The first step is to drop to your hands and knees, so the earthquake does not knock you over. If you can crawl, look for additional cover such as a table or desk. If no additional cover is available, head to an interior wall. Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors, exterior walls, and other objects that could fall. Doorways do not provide protection from falling or flying objects or swinging doors. Once positioned, cover your head and neck with your arms.

If you are in bed, stay there and cover your head with a pillow. Prior to an earthquake, you should make sure that your bed is positioned away from windows that could break. Do not hang pictures above your bed.

If you are in your car, stop during shaking, pull over to the side of the road if possible. Remain in your vehicle. Try to avoid stopping under, or near, buildings, overpasses, utility wires, and trees.

Often, our inclination is to run from a building or car. But you need to stay safe. Do not run outside of a building or get out of your vehicle because you will be left unprotected and exposed to building debris, broken glass, downed power lines and other objects. After you are sure that the shaking has stopped; assess the damage and/or injuries. Also, be aware of the possibility of aftershocks because you may need to take cover, AGAIN.