



KINGDOM OF PEACE AND JUSTICE CENTER

**Civil Training Program: Risk Management
and Emergency Preparedness**

EARTHQUAKES

MODULE 1

PHASE 1: BEFORE



Educational document for the general population
of Latin America and the United States

Edition 1 - 2026

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT:
EARTHQUAKES
MODULE 1 · PHASE 1: BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE
For the home, family, and community

| First edition · September 2026

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This guide is intended for individuals and families who wish to prepare their home and surroundings.

It is intended for educational and preventive purposes. It does not replace local civil protection regulations, the judgment of the relevant authorities, or the assessment of a qualified professional. Each person and each family should adapt these recommendations to their home and circumstances.

In an emergency, always follow the instructions of the authorities in your country.

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EARTHQUAKES

MODULE 1 | PHASE 1: BEFORE

Prevention, mitigation, and planning



Learning objective

For the participant to identify the seismic risks in their home, workplace, and community, and apply prevention, mitigation, and planning measures that reduce their family's vulnerability before an earthquake happens: securing the environment, emergency plan, 72-hour backpack, drills, and preparedness for people with specific needs and pets.

Phase 1: Before - Prevention, mitigation, and planning

Advance preparation is the phase in which the population can adopt the greatest number of measures aimed at reducing their vulnerability and risk of injury.

A properly prepared home, workplace, or community space significantly reduces the risks associated with falling objects, broken glass, damage to utility systems, and blocked exit routes.

1.1 Mitigation measures in the home and workplace

Securing the environment

Many injuries during moderate or strong earthquakes are caused by objects that fall, shift, break, or tip over. For this reason, it is essential to reduce these risks in advance.

01

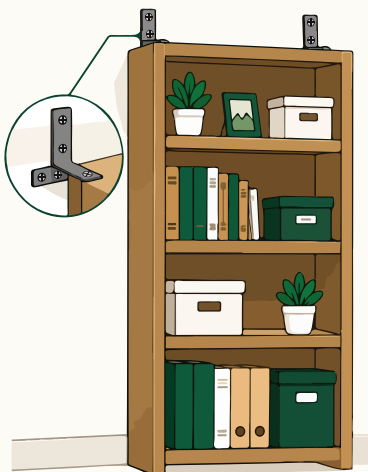
Securing tall and heavy furniture

- Mechanical anchoring: Cabinets, bookcases, display cases, and office organizers must be firmly secured to structurally sound wall elements using appropriate anchoring systems, such as metal brackets and suitable screws. Common nails alone should not be used.
- Weight distribution: Place heavy books, encyclopedias, dishware, files, and other heavier objects on the lower shelves. Reserve the upper areas for light objects or soft decorations.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION: SAFE ANCHORING OF FURNITURE AND WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION



ANCHORED BOOKCASE (CORRECT)



Secure furniture to the wall with suitable metal brackets and screws. This prevents it from tipping over during an earthquake.



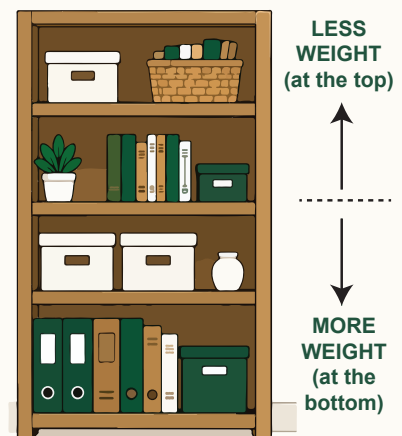
UNANCHORED BOOKCASE (INCORRECT)



During an earthquake, unsecured furniture can tip over and cause serious injuries and property damage.

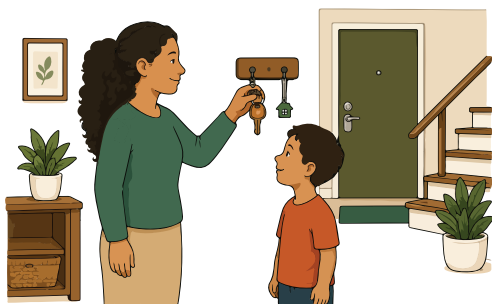


PROPER WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION (CORRECT)



Place light objects on the upper shelves and heavier ones on the lower shelves for greater stability.





02 KEYS AND EXIT ROUTES

- Keep emergency exit keys in a fixed location that is immediately accessible and known to all household members. Avoid relying on keys being permanently left in the locks.



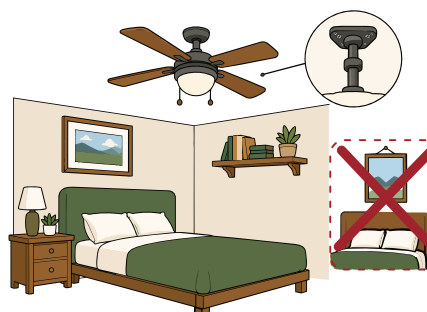
03 SAFETY OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND SCREENS

- Television screens, computer monitors, and sound equipment should be secured to their bases or to the wall using appropriate anchoring systems that prevent them from falling or shifting.



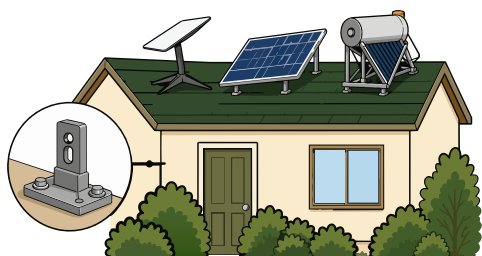
04 PROTECTION OF GLASS AND GLASS SURFACES

- Windows, large mirrors, and glass partitions can be covered with suitable safety film to reduce the scattering of fragments if they break.
- Avoid placing beds, armchairs, and commonly used areas immediately next to large glass surfaces.



05 HANGING OBJECTS

- Ceiling fans, lamps, and chandeliers must have secure and appropriate anchoring systems.
- Avoid placing heavy pictures, mirrors, shelves, or other objects that could fall directly above beds, sofas, or places where people spend long periods of time.



06 ANTENNAS AND ROOF-MOUNTED ELEMENTS

- Antennas, panels, tanks, outdoor equipment, and other elements installed on roofs or elevated structures must have adequate structural anchoring.
- The installation and anchoring of these elements must be done correctly and, when applicable, evaluated by qualified personnel. Improvised anchoring can turn them into dangerous objects during an earthquake.



07 HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

- Household or industrial chemical products (such as bleach, acids, paints, pesticides, and aerosols) should be stored in low, secure cabinets, preferably equipped with systems that prevent the doors from opening accidentally during shaking.

REMEMBER



Secure all tall and heavy furniture to the wall or floor.



Periodically check the anchors and condition of your home.



Organize and keep your spaces safe and clear.

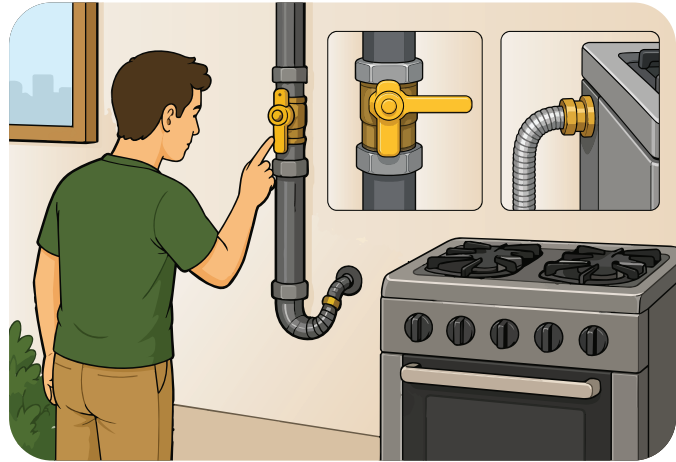


1.2 - UTILITY SYSTEMS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Damage to gas, electrical, and water systems can cause fires, leaks, flooding, and other hazards after an earthquake.

01 GAS AND FUELS

- Identify the main gas supply valve and make sure responsible adults know how to shut it off.
- Keep access to the valve clear.
- When applicable, use approved flexible connections sustainable for appliances.
- Appliances must be correctly installed and secured.



IMPORTANT

During the earthquake, do **NOT** move around the house to shut off the gas.

AFTER THE SHAKING STOPS

Once the shaking has ended, and only if it is safe to do so, check the utility systems. Shut off the gas if there are signs of a leak.



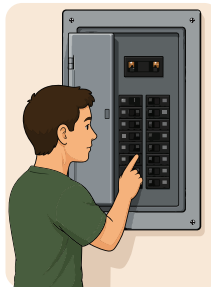
DO NOT INTERVENE



CHECK IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO

02 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

- Identify the main electrical panel.
- Keep the breakers properly labeled.
- Make sure responsible adults know the procedure for shutting off the power supply.

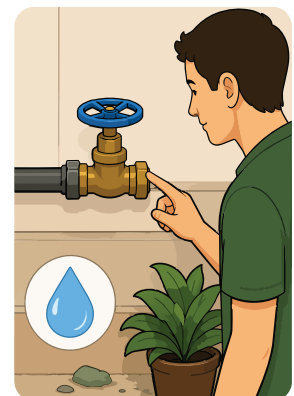


AFTER THE SHAKING STOPS

Once the earthquake has ended, shut off the electricity if you notice electrical damage and it is safe for you to do so.

03 DRINKING WATER

- Identify the main water shut-off valve.
- Keep access to it free of obstacles.
- After an earthquake, follow the authorities' instructions regarding the safety of the water supply.



REMEMBER



Identify all gas valves.



Identify the main electrical panel.



Identify the main water shut-off valve.

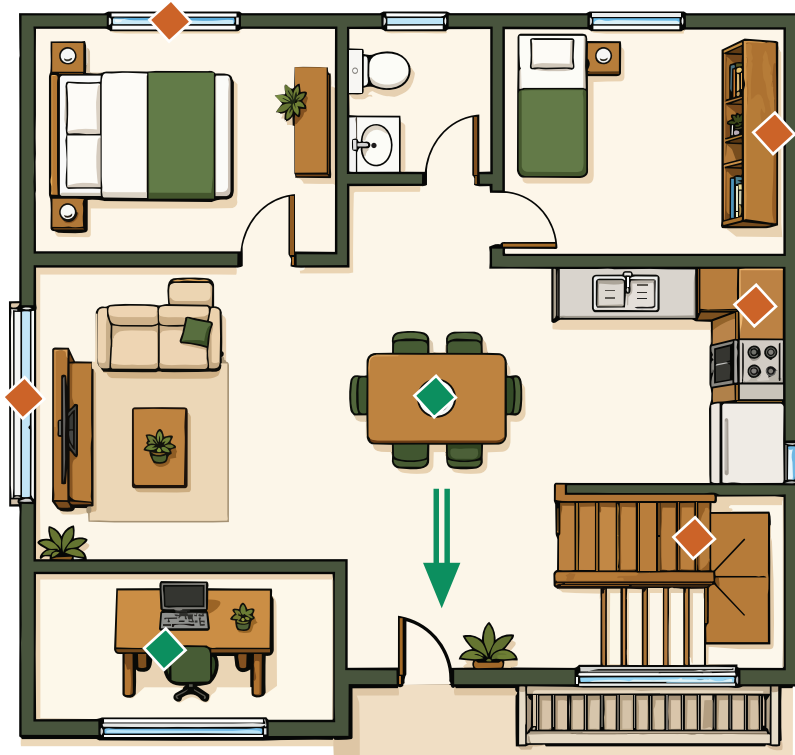


1.3 - FAMILY OR COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN

01

IDENTIFYING RISKS WITHIN IT

Identify risks, safe zones, and exit routes.



Safe zone
(sturdy tables and desks)

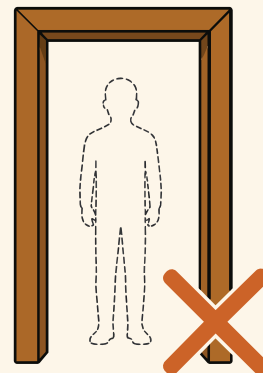
Risk zone
(objects that could fall or
hazardous surfaces)

Exit route
(keep clear)



ATTENTION

Doorframes are not automatically safe places.
In older houses, the frame might have been the only thing left standing due to the solidity of its construction, but in modern buildings they are not structurally strong.



Also identify the places where you can properly follow the protective action:

DROP



COVER



HOLD ON



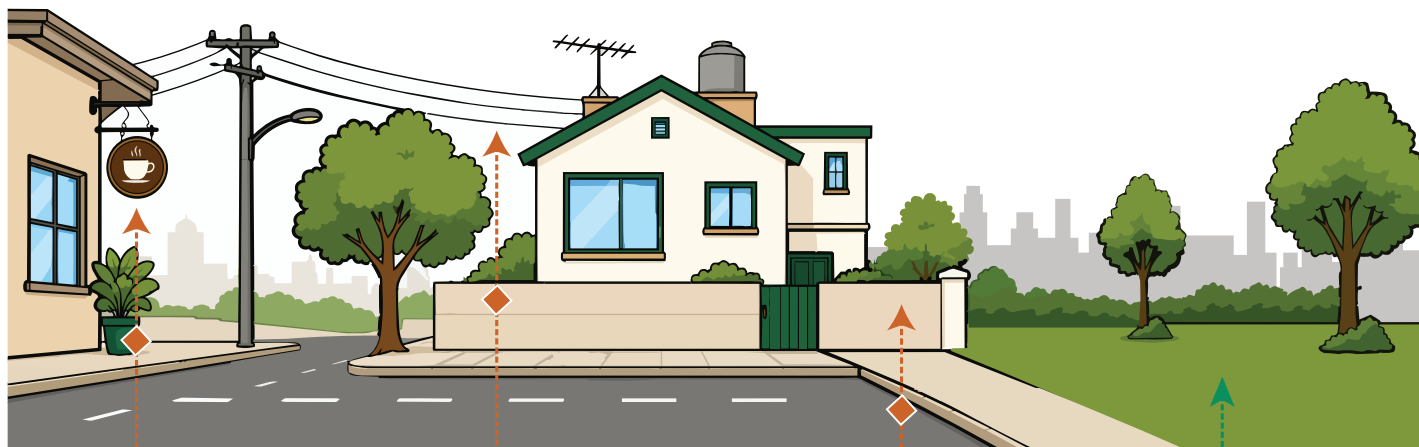
Whenever possible, protect yourself under a sturdy table or desk.



02

OUTDOOR HAZARDS

Identify in advance the hazards that exist around the home, building, school, or workplace:



OBJECTS THAT COULD FALL

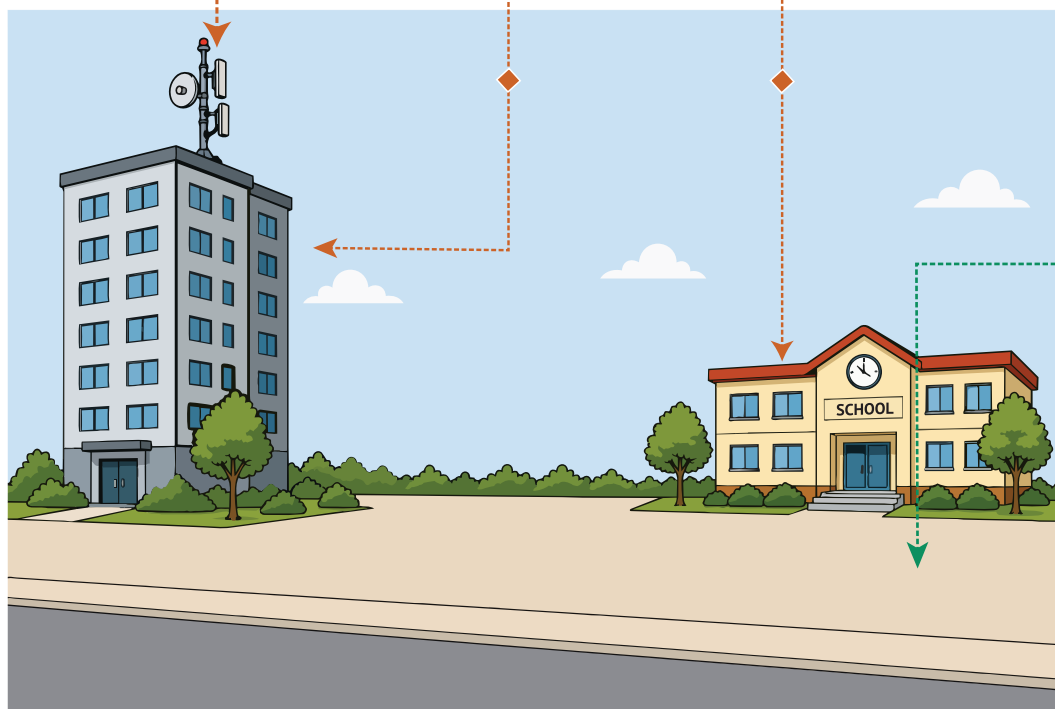
- ledges
- signs
- antennas

INFRASTRUCTURE (WATCH OUT FOR)

- poles
- power lines
- walls

SURROUNDINGS (AVOID AREAS NEAR)

- poles
- facades
- trees



OPEN, CLEAR SPACE

Determine in advance which open, clear spaces could be used after the shaking stops.



A plan established in advance allows for organized action during an emergency.

REMEMBER



Check your home periodically.



Discuss the plan with all household members.



03 ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITIES

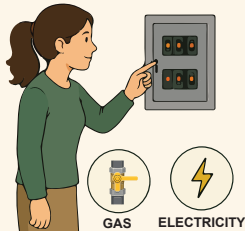
Before an emergency, each member should know what their responsibility will be.

EVACUATION LEAD



Will take the emergency backpack and, once the shaking has ended, will guide the group along the planned route when evacuation is necessary.

SAFETY LEAD



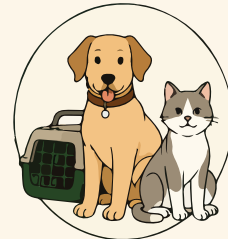
Once the shaking has ended, and only if it is safe to do so, will check the utility systems. Will shut off the gas if there are signs of a leak and cut the electricity if electrical damage is observed.

LEAD FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED ASSISTANCE



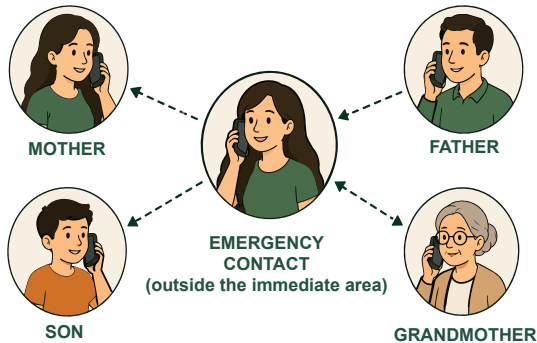
Will help infants, children, older adults, people with disabilities, and other people who require support.

PETS



Also decide who will be responsible for the pets.

04 COMMUNICATION



- 1 Choose a family member or trusted person who lives outside the immediate area as an emergency contact.
- 2 All family members should know or carry a written note of that person's phone number.
- 3 After the earthquake, when possible, send brief messages stating your condition and location.

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY



TEXT MESSAGE

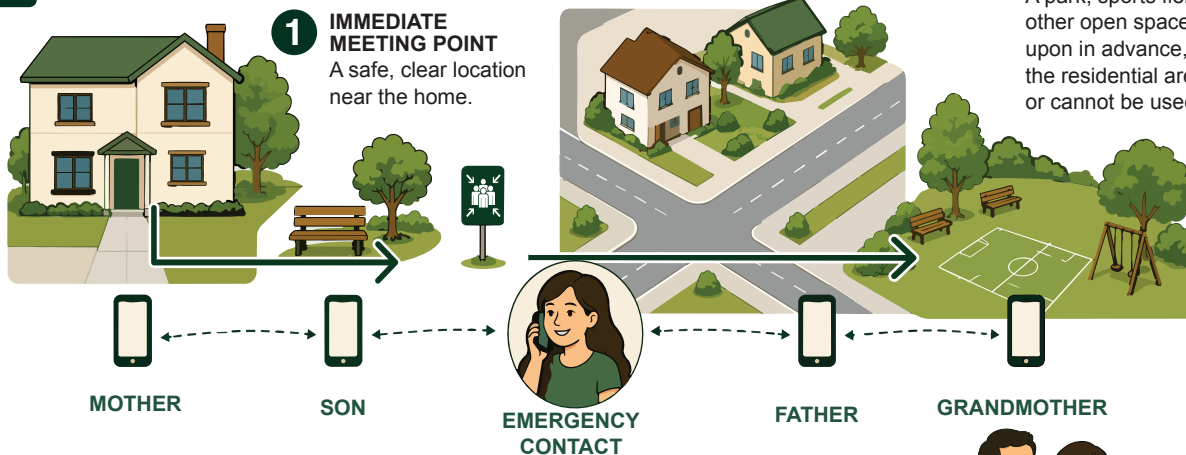
When networks are congested, text messages can be useful.



PHONE CALL

Use it when possible, but networks may be overloaded.

05 MEETING POINTS



REMEMBER



A plan works best when everyone knows what to do, how to communicate, and where to meet.



1.4 EMERGENCY BACKPACK AND SUPPLIES

The emergency backpack should allow quick access to essential items during an evacuation.

In addition to the portable backpack, it's a good idea to keep emergency supplies at home.

The backpack should be sturdy, comfortable to carry, and kept in a known, accessible location.

The number and distribution of backpacks will depend on the number of household members and the physical capacity of those who will carry them.



01 WATER AND FOOD

Water

As a general guideline, prepare approximately **4 liters of water per person per day**, covering drinking and basic needs, for a minimum of three days in case of evacuation.

Because of the weight of water, differentiate between:



- the water that can reasonably be carried in a backpack



- the emergency supply kept at home.



Non-perishable food

Include food that is easy to eat and store, such as:

- canned goods
- easy-open food products
- cereal bars
- nuts and dried fruit
- crackers/cookies
- other non-perishable foods suited to the family's needs.

Consider allergies, intolerances, and special dietary needs.

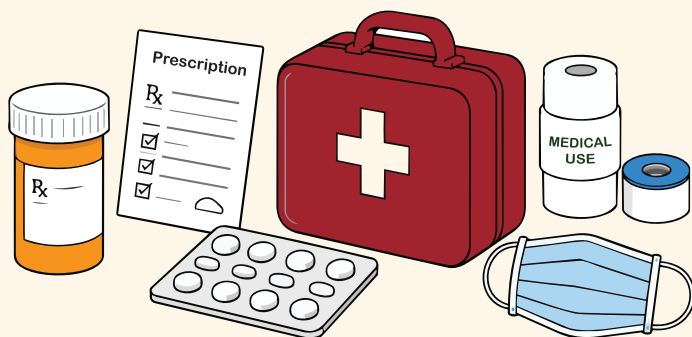


- For infants and young children, include formula, baby food, and other specific supplies needed.



- For pets, also include suitable food.



**Include:**

- regularly used medications;
- copies of necessary prescriptions or medical instructions;
- sterile gauze;
- bandages;
- medical adhesive tape;
- antiseptic;
- basic first aid supplies;
- masks suitable for dusty environments;
- other specific supplies needed for household members;



People who depend on essential medications should, when possible and in accordance with the relevant instructions, plan for a sufficient supply for several days.

**Flashlight**

Preferably use a headlamp, which keeps your hands free. Hand-crank flashlights can also be used. If battery-powered, keep spare batteries properly stored.

**Portable radio**

Keep a **battery- or hand-crank-powered AM/FM portable radio** to receive official information when mobile phone networks or the internet are down or congested.

**Tools**

Multi-purpose tools suitable for emergencies can be included, always stored safely and out of children's reach.

**Whistle**

Include a whistle that allows you to signal without needing to shout for extended periods.

**Portable battery**

Keep a charged power bank and the corresponding cables for mobile phones.



04 HYGIENE AND SANITARY ITEMS

Include:



Wet wipes



Hand sanitizer gel



Soap



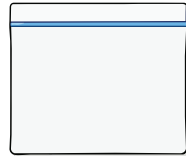
Toilet paper



Toothbrush and toothpaste



Menstrual hygiene products when needed



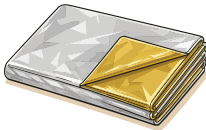
Sealable bags for items



Wet wipes and hand sanitizer allow for temporary basic hygiene when it's not possible to wash properly with soap and water, but they should not be considered equivalent substitutes for handwashing.

05 CLOTHING, WARM GEAR, AND DOCUMENTATION

Include:



Thermal blanket



A change of clothes



Weather-appropriate warm clothing



Raincoat when applicable



Closed, sturdy footwear



Copies of important documents protected against water



Contact information



Small-denomination cash



Duplicates of necessary keys

TIPS FOR ORGANIZING THE BACKPACK

01 LOCATION

Store it in a location that is accessible and known to all household members.



02 PERIODIC CHECK

Periodically check:



- ✓ water
- ✓ food
- ✓ medications
- ✓ batteries
- ✓ portable charger
- ✓ documentation
- ✓ clothing
- ✓ specific needs of children, people with disabilities, and pets.

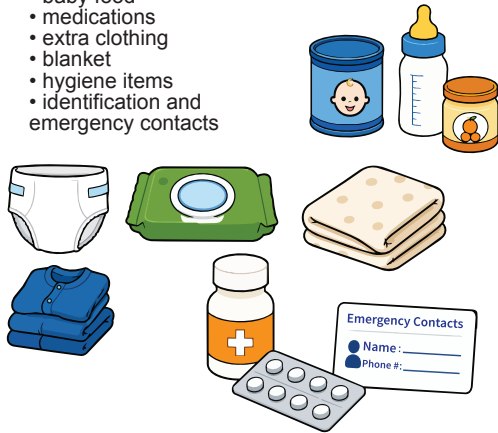
03 WEIGHT

The backpack should never be so heavy that it hinders a safe evacuation.



Households with babies or children should adapt their preparations to their specific needs.

- diapers
- wipes
- infant formula
- bottles and necessary utensils
- baby food
- medications
- extra clothing
- blanket
- hygiene items
- identification and emergency contacts



- A small toy, stuffed animal, or comfort object;
- simple activities that can help keep the child occupied and reduce their anxiety.



A simple line drawing showing a caregiver in a green shirt and pants pushing a wheelchair. The person in the wheelchair is wearing a blue shirt and green pants. The caregiver is positioned behind the wheelchair, holding the handles.



All household members should know the exit routes and meeting points.



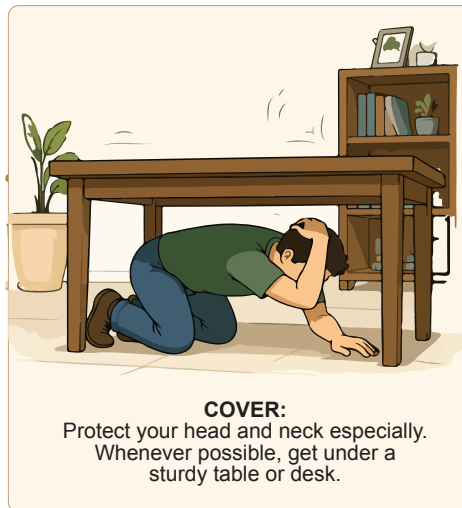
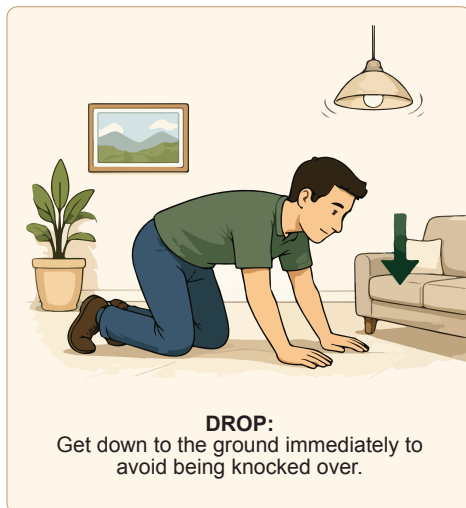
It is advisable for family or community members to receive formal training in first aid and CPR.



1.7 ESSENTIAL BEHAVIOR DURING THE EARTHQUAKE

All advance preparation should include practicing the action to take once the shaking begins.

DROP– COVER– HOLD ON



DURING THE EARTHQUAKE:



Do not run for the exit while the ground is shaking.



Do not use elevators.



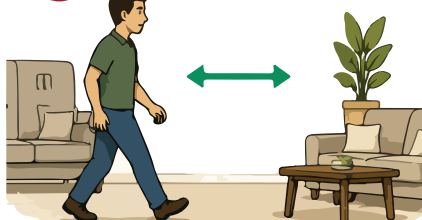
Do not automatically seek shelter in doorframes.



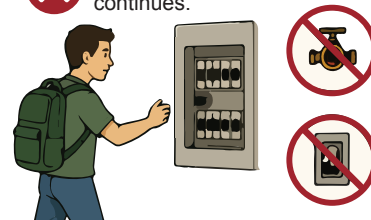
Protect yourself from windows, glass, and objects that could fall.



Do not move around the home unnecessarily.

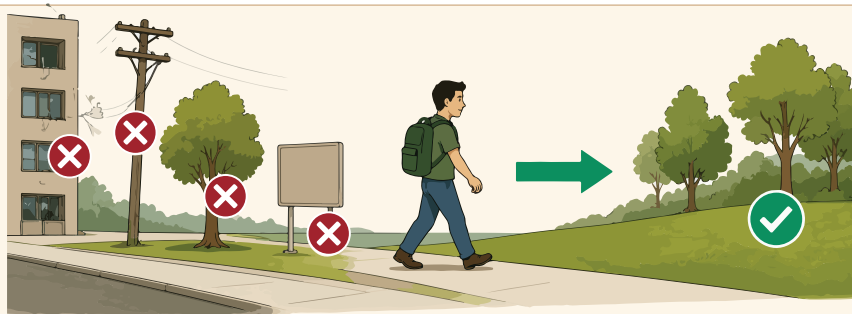


Do not try to shut off the gas or electricity while the shaking continues.



IF YOU ARE OUTDOORS

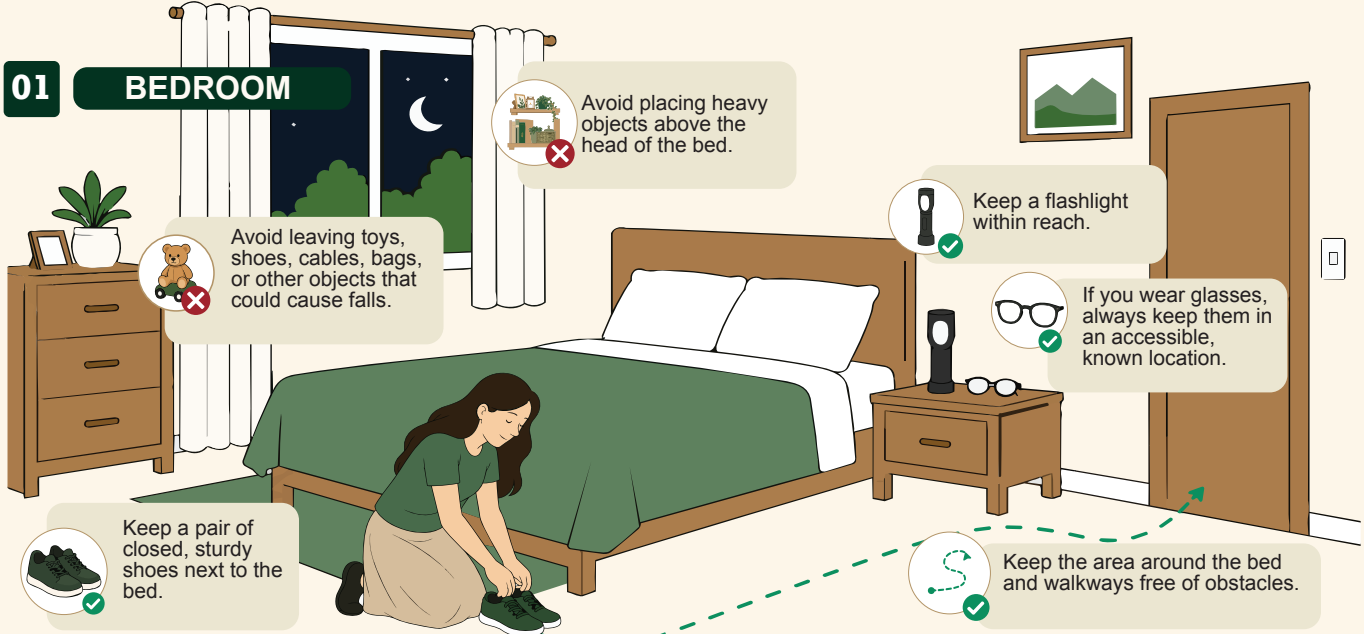
Stay where you are, or move — when you can do so safely — to an open, clear space, away from buildings, facades, ledges, glass, poles, power lines, trees, signs, and other objects that could fall.



1.8 NIGHTTIME HOME PREPAREDNESS

In seismically active areas, it's important to permanently maintain conditions that allow for a safe reaction during the night.

01 **BEDROOM**



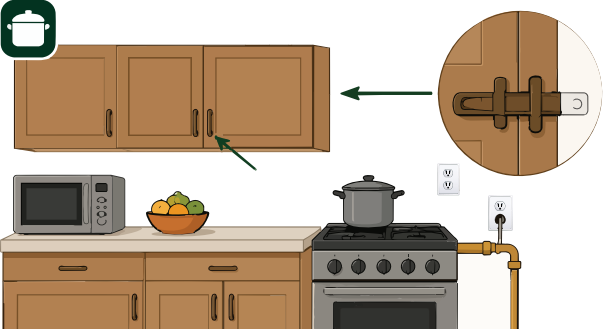
- Avoid placing heavy objects above the head of the bed.
- Avoid leaving toys, shoes, cables, bags, or other objects that could cause falls.
- Keep a pair of closed, sturdy shoes next to the bed.
- Keep a flashlight within reach.
- If you wear glasses, always keep them in an accessible, known location.
- Keep the area around the bed and walkways free of obstacles.

02 HALLWAYS AND EXITS



- Keep hallways free of obstacles.
- Do not block doors or exit routes.
- Keep the keys needed for exits in a fixed location, immediately accessible and known to everyone.
- When possible, use emergency lighting that works during a power outage.

03 KITCHEN AND UTILITY AREAS

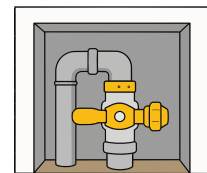


- Keep cabinets and cupboards properly closed.
- Use appropriate restraint systems when necessary.
- Do not leave hazardous appliances unnecessarily plugged in or running unsupervised.



It is not necessary to shut off the gas supply every night as a general earthquake precaution.

Prevention should focus on keeping installations safe, connections appropriate, appliances properly secured, and knowing the location and operation of the shut-off valves.



PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS



Keep your phone charged and accessible.



Enable the official alerts available in your area.



Keep the emergency backpack in its designated location.



Make sure everyone knows where it is.



1.9 PREPARATION FOR PETS

Advance preparation makes it easier to protect and recover pets after an emergency.

01 IDENTIFICATION

TAG

Dogs and cats should have identification and up-to-date contact information.

MICROCHIP

When available, consider microchipping and keep the associated information up to date.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Keep recent photos of the pet on your phone and, preferably, a copy together with your emergency documentation.



02 PET EMERGENCY KIT

Include:



Enough food for several days



Water



Portable bowls



Necessary medications



Veterinary documentation



Hygiene items



Waste bags



Species-specific items

03 TRANSPORT



Carrier

Keep the carrier in an easily accessible location. Get the animal used to it in advance to reduce stress during an emergency.



Leash and harness

Always keep them in a fixed, accessible location, preferably near the emergency kit.



Familiar object

You can include a blanket, toy, or familiar item that helps reduce the animal's stress.

04 SAFE ENVIRONMENT



Identify the places where the pet tends to hide when it feels afraid.

Avoid placing over those spots:



Heavy shelves



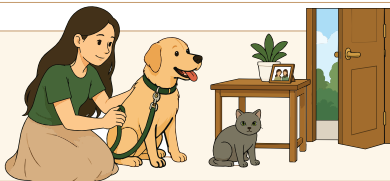
Mirrors



Pictures



Objects that could fall



Once the shaking has ended, and when it is safe to do so, check on the pet before opening doors to the outside, since a frightened animal may try to escape.



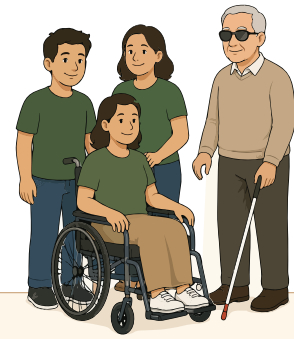
1.10 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWD)



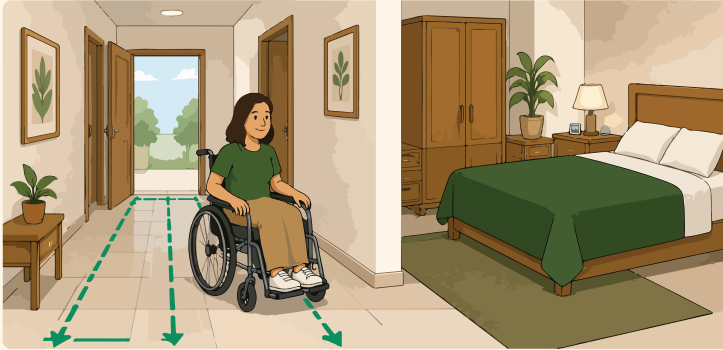
Preparation should promote autonomy, adapt the environment to each person's particular needs, and establish support networks in advance.



During an earthquake, the priority is to protect yourself immediately where you are and evacuate afterward, once the shaking has stopped, when conditions require it.



01 ADAPTING THE HOME



Accessible routes

Keep routes used by people with wheelchairs, walkers, canes, or other mobility devices completely clear.

Bedrooms

Keep beds away from:



Windows



Mirrors



Tall furniture



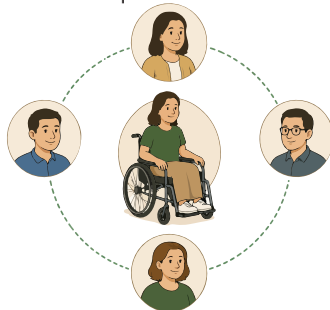
Heavy pictures



Other objects that could fall

02 SUPPORT NETWORK

Arrange in advance a network of family members, neighbors, coworkers, or other trusted people who can check on the person with a disability and provide assistance after the earthquake.



The network should know:



The person's specific needs.



The location of essential medications and devices.



The accessible routes.



The procedures agreed upon in advance.



When applicable and appropriate, set up secure means to allow support people access to the home.

03 SPECIALIZED BACKPACK

In addition to the general items, include the specific supplies the person needs.



MEDICATIONS

Keep essential medications and the information needed for their use.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Include a water-protected card with the information needed to provide assistance, such as:

- name,
- support needs,
- allergies,
- medications,
- emergency contacts,
- other relevant information.



ASSISTIVE DEVICES

Include, as applicable:

- spare batteries,
- chargers,
- hearing aid supplies,
- items related to mobility devices,
- alternative means of communication,
- other essential supplies.



04 PREPARATION BY SPECIFIC NEED

People with Reduced Mobility

If you use a wheelchair:

LOCK



Engage the wheel locks.

COVER



Protect your head and neck.

HOLD ON



Lean forward when possible. Hold on until the shaking stops.



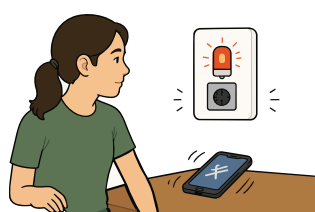
Keep canes, crutches, walkers, and other mobility devices always accessible.

PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS



- ✓ Keep furniture arranged in an orderly, predictable layout.
- ✓ Report any change in the location of objects.
- ✓ Practice the emergency routes and procedures in advance with the support network.
- ✓ After the earthquake, keep in mind that fallen objects may have altered familiar routes.

PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

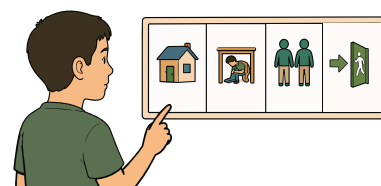


When available, use visual, light-based, or vibrating alert systems.

Keep alternative means of communication available, such as

- Mobile phone
- Paper or Notebook
- Pencil, Marker or Crayon
- Whiteboard

PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE OR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, OR NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE

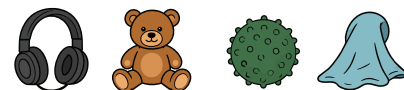


Prepare the person in advance using methods suited to their needs, such as:

- pictograms;
- visual instructions;
- social stories;
- gradual drills;
- repetition of simple routines.

Items that help reduce stress can be added to the backpack, such as:

- headphones;
- toys;
- sensory objects;
- small comfort objects.



Drills should be carried out gradually and in an adapted way, avoiding unnecessarily causing fear, distress, or sensory overload.

IMPORTANT: Prepare with other systems adapted to the person's needs.



REMEMBER



Preparation begins **BEFORE** the earthquake.
Secure objects that could fall. Keep routes clear.
Prepare water, food, medications, and essential items.
Organize your family or community. Identify the risks. Practice regularly.
And, above all, everyone must know and practice what to do when the shaking begins:

1 DROP



2 COVER



3 HOLD ON



Do not run for the exit while it is shaking. Protect yourself first.
Evacuate after the shaking stops, when necessary and safe to do so.





Civil Training Program: Risk Management
and Emergency Preparedness

EARTHQUAKES

MODULE 1

PHASE 1: BEFORE

EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENT FOR THE GENERAL POPULATION OF
LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES

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