

FEMA REGION II

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS TEAM

Get Ready Now: Earthquake Preparedness for PWD

On Oct. 15, communities around the world will observe International ShakeOut Day by hosting an earthquake drill and practicing the safety technique “Drop, Cover and Hold On.”

This method involves dropping to the ground when you feel an earthquake, covering your head or body and holding onto furniture until the shaking stops. These three simple actions can reduce injury and death; however, individuals with disabilities should consider taking extra steps to prepare and protect themselves during an earthquake.

ShakeOut organizers have published the info graphic below, providing “Drop, Cover and Hold On” considerations for individuals who use durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, canes and walkers. Their tips include:

- If you use a cane, Drop, Cover and Hold On or sit on a chair, bed, etc. and cover your head with your hands. Keep your cane near you so it can be easily accessible when the shaking ends.
- If you use a walker, lock your wheels (if applicable) and carefully get as low as possible. Bend over and cover your head and neck with your arms, a book or a pillow. Hold on until the shaking stops.
- If you use a wheelchair, lock your wheels and remain seated when the shaking ceases. Try to get under a door frame or into an inside corner. Cover your head with your arms or other items that may be available, like a book or pillow.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Earthquake Country Alliance have shared additional guidance for individuals with access and functional needs:

- If you are able, seek shelter under a sturdy table or desk. Stay away from outer walls, windows, fireplaces and hanging objects.
- If unable to move from a bed or chair, protect yourself from falling objects by covering up your head and body with blankets and pillows.
- If you are outside, go to an open area away from trees, telephone poles, and buildings and stay there.
- If you are deaf or hard of hearing, prepare yourself by identifying and testing multiple ways to receive warnings and evacuation information. Store extra hearing aids or cochlear implant batteries and chargers in your emergency supply kit.
- If you are blind or have low vision, keep in mind that earthquakes can cause items to fall and furniture to shift. Regular sound clues may not be available afterwards. Move with caution. Keep extra glasses and canes in your emergency supply kit.

People with developmental, cognitive or intellectual disabilities should keep a simple list of what to do and important information on them and in their emergency kits.

The best time to prepare for an earthquake is right now. The CDC recommends writing down your specific needs, capabilities, limitations and medications and keeping copies of this list in your purse or wallet. Identify a person to help you in case of an emergency and give them a copy of your list and a spare key to your home.

It is also important to secure your space by moving heavy furniture away from your bed, sofas, or other places where you sit or sleep. The American Red Cross suggests repairing cracks in ceilings and foundations and using straps or other restraints to secure tall cabinets, appliances, mirrors, picture frames and light fixtures to wall studs.

To learn more about International ShakeOut Day and preparing for an earthquake, visit www.shakeout.org. FEMA Region II also offers a Preparedness webinar series and publishes a biweekly Preparedness & Resilience Bulletin with tips, articles and important news. Visit <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSFEMA/signup/13827> to subscribe for upcoming webinar announcements and the bulletin.