

# EARTHQUAKE: MESSAGES

LAST UPDATE: MARCH 2022

## About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

### E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

### Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

## What is an earthquake?

Earthquakes can strike suddenly and without warning. An earthquake is a violent and abrupt shaking of the ground, caused by movement between tectonic plates along a fault line in the earth's crust. Earthquakes can result in the ground shaking, soil liquefaction, landslides, fissures, avalanches, fires and tsunamis. The extent of destruction and harm caused by an earthquake depends on:

- magnitude
- intensity and duration
- the local geology
- the time of day that it occurs
- building and industrial plant design and materials
- the risk-management measures put in place.

## What to do during an earthquake

**INDOORS:** Drop down on your knees and make yourself small. Cover your head and neck and protect your face. If you are near a sturdy table, get under it. If you are in your bed, stay there and protect your head. Keep away from glass windows and mud walls. When tremors stop, evacuate building as soon as possible.

**ADOBE:** If you are in an adobe house with a heavy roof, and if you can get outside to a clear space, then exit quickly and carefully as soon as you feel shaking. Stay calm by counting or by taking slow and deep breaths to calm yourself.

**OUTDOORS:** If you are outside, find a clear spot away from overhead hazards, including buildings, trees, streetlights and power lines. Drop to the ground and stay there until the shaking stops. Stay outside and remain in open areas away from hazards.

## What to do when you feel the ground shaking (if indoors)

Move away from windows, glass, large furniture that could fall and exterior walls and unstable and heavy objects. Extinguish any and all flames. If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured staying where you are. If available nearby, grab something to cover your head and face from falling objects and broken glass. If you are in the kitchen, quickly turn off the stove and take cover at the first sign of shaking.

### What to do after an earthquake

Stay out of damaged buildings. Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and stay out of damaged areas. Be particularly careful with buildings made from mud as they may collapse.

### What to wear after an earthquake

After an earthquake, wear sturdy shoes, gloves, trousers and long-sleeved shirts. This will help prevent injury against broken objects.

### Danger of playing in rubble (for children)

Following an earthquake, buildings can be reduced to rubble. These are dangerous areas to play in. Play in an area marked as safe or you may hurt yourself.

### Lost documentation

If you have lost your identity documents go to [insert info] for more information and support.

### Casualties

People needing medical care should be taken to [insert info]. [Insert also what to do with dead bodies]

## REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

World Health Organization (2022). **Earthquakes**  
[https://www.who.int/health-topics/earthquakes#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/earthquakes#tab=tab_1)

World Health Organization (2022). **Mental health in emergencies**  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-in-emergencies>

World Health Organization (2007). **Mass casualty management systems: strategies and guidelines for building health sector capacity**  
<https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/mass-casualty-management-systems-strategies-and-guidelines-for-building-health-sector-capacity>

World Health Organization (2018). **Communicating risk in public health emergencies: a WHO guideline for emergency risk communication (ERC) policy and practice**  
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241550208>

World Health Organization (2002). **Environmental health in emergencies and disasters: A practical guide**  
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9241545410>

**HELP US KEEP THE LIBRARY UP TO DATE**

**If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at [info@cdacnetwork.org](mailto:info@cdacnetwork.org).**