

Federal, State, and local emergency management experts and other official preparedness organizations all agree that “**Drop! Cover! Hold On!**” is the appropriate action to take to reduce injury and prevent death during earthquakes.

The **Great Hawaii ShakeOut** ([shakeout.org/hawaii/](http://shakeout.org/hawaii/)), an annual earthquake awareness and preparedness event held on the 3rd Thursday in October, is an opportunity to practice protecting yourself during an earthquake.

You cannot tell from the initial shaking of an earthquake if it will suddenly become intense, so...always, and immediately, Drop! Cover! and Hold On!



- **DROP** to the ground (before the earthquake drops you!)
- Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy desk or table
- **HOLD ON** to your shelter and be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops

If a table or desk is not near you, drop to the ground and cover your head and neck with your hands and arms. If possible, crawl to an inside corner of the room. Stay in a crawling position to protect your vital organs and to be ready to move if necessary.

**If you are unable to Drop! Cover! Hold On!:** If you have difficulty dropping safely to the floor on your own, get as low as possible, protect your head and neck, and move away from windows or other items that can fall on you.

## Guidelines on how to protect yourself in specific situations

**If you are inside a building:** Stay inside, and Drop! Cover! Hold on! until the shaking stops. Do not move to another location or outside. Moving outside can put you in greater danger than staying inside because exterior walls and windows often collapse. Trying to walk or run during strong shaking can also result in serious injury if you fall.



**In bed:** If you are in bed, stay there. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured by staying in bed. Broken glass on the floor has caused injuries to those who have rolled to the floor or tried to get to a doorway.

**If you are outdoors:** Move to a clear area if you can safely do so. Avoid steep cliffs and road cuts, power lines, trees, signs, buildings, vehicles, and other hazards.



**Near the shore:** Drop! Cover! Hold On! until the strong shaking stops. Then, walk quickly to higher ground as a tsunami might have been generated by the earthquake. Immediately move to land that is at least 100 feet above sea level, or one mile inland. Do not wait for officials to issue a warning—a wave could reach you before warning sirens can sound. Walk, rather than drive, to avoid traffic, earthquake debris, and other hazards. Stay away from steep cliffs due to potential post-quake rockfalls.

**Driving:** Pull over to the side of the road, stop, and set the parking brake. Avoid bridges, power lines, steep cliffs or road cuts, overpasses, signs, and other hazards. Stay inside your vehicle until the strong shaking is over. If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.

**In a wheelchair:** Lock your wheels and remain seated until the shaking stops. Protect your head and neck with your arms, a pillow, a book, or whatever is available.

**In school:** Stay inside your classroom, and Drop! Cover! Hold on! beneath a desk or sturdy table. Remain there until the shaking stops. Do not run outside during an earthquake.

**In a high-rise:** Drop! Cover! Hold On! Avoid windows and other hazards. Do not use elevators. Don't be surprised if sprinkler systems or fire alarms activate.

**In a store:** Whenever you enter a retail store, take a moment to look around and note what is above and around you that could move or fall during an earthquake. As soon as shaking starts, Drop! Cover! and Hold On! A shopping cart or clothing rack can provide some protection. If you must move to get away from heavy items on high shelves, drop to the ground first and crawl only the shortest distance necessary. Then use your best judgment to stay safe.

**In a stadium or theater:** Stay at your seat or drop to the floor between rows and protect your head and neck with your arms. Don't try to leave until the shaking is over. Then walk out slowly watching for anything that could fall in an aftershock.

**Below a dam:** Dams can fail during a major earthquake. Catastrophic failure is unlikely, but if you live downstream from a dam, you should be aware of flood- zone information and prepare an evacuation plan.

#### **Myth: Stand in a Doorway**

An enduring image from a California earthquake is a collapsed adobe home with the door frame as the only standing part. From this came the belief that a doorway is the safest place to be during an earthquake. True—if you live in an old, unreinforced adobe or stone house. But, in modern houses, doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house.

**You are safer under a table.**

**For more information on what to do during an earthquake, please see these webpages:**

Great ShakeOut [www.shakeout.org/dropcoverholdon](http://www.shakeout.org/dropcoverholdon)

Drop! Cover! Hold on! [www.dropcoverholdon.org](http://www.dropcoverholdon.org)

Earthquake Country Alliance [www.earthquakecountry.org/dropcoverholdon](http://www.earthquakecountry.org/dropcoverholdon)