

Earthquake Preparedness for People with Disabilities or Access and Functional Needs

Before an Earthquake

- Create a disaster plan (<http://www.in.gov/dhs/2779.htm>);
- Create safe spaces by identifying hazards and securing items;
 - Safe spaces are places where falling objects or breaking glass are not as likely to cause fatalities or injuries.
 - For example: under tables, desks or along inside walls.
 - Look for safe places in a room to drop, cover and hold on (detailed below);
 - Create safe spaces by strategically placing and securing household items, such as:
 - Bolting heavy furniture to wall studs;
 - Moving heavy items to low shelves; and
 - Securing hanging art or mounted televisions to walls with closed hooks.
 - Secure essential equipment and life support devices such as oxygen tanks;
 - Be aware of surroundings at all times and identify safe spaces, whether in public or at home.
- Assemble an emergency preparedness kit (<http://www.in.gov/dhs/2783.htm>).

When Shaking Begins: Drop, Cover and Hold On

- Drop down to the floor;
- Protecting head and neck, take cover under a table or desk; and
- Hold on to the legs or other part of the furniture until the shaking stops.

If Drop, Cover and Hold On Is Not Possible

- Get as low as possible and move away from windows or other items that can fall;
- Do not try to transfer from a wheelchair, recliner or bed during the shaking. Wait until the shaking stops before transferring;
- If in a wheelchair, lock wheels and remain seated until shaking stops;
- Duck and cover to protect the head and neck;
- **NOTE:** Most earthquake-related injuries and deaths in the U.S. are caused by falling or flying objects, not collapsed buildings.

Once the Shaking Stops

- Check for injuries;
- Be prepared for aftershocks. Stay close to safe spaces;
- Identify hazards in immediate surroundings (broken glass, sharp objects, debris);
- Evacuate if it's possible to do so safely; otherwise remain in safe place;
- Follow the instruction of emergency authorities immediately.

Situation-Specific Safety Considerations

People with Physical Disabilities or Movement Limitations

- Shaking motion may increase difficulties for those with mobility or balance issues;
- If possible, get to the floor in a seated position and against an inside wall;
- Protect head and neck with your arms;

People Who Are Hearing Impaired

- Prior to an earthquake, identify and test multiple ways to receive warnings and evacuation information;
- Store extra batteries in disaster kits for hearing or communication devices;
- Keep pen and paper in kits for receiving and communicating information.

People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

- Earthquakes can cause items to fall and furniture to shift, making navigating a room more difficult;
- Regular sound clues may not be available afterward;
- Move with caution – shuffle feet and take small steps to reduce likelihood of falling;
- Store extra canes with emergency kit;
- Label emergency supplies using large print, fluorescent tape, Braille or other preferred methods.

People with Developmental/Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities

- Keep a simple written or visual checklist of what to do and important information in safety kit;
- Practice plan (including drop, cover and hold on) in advance;
- Store extra batteries for portable communication devices;
- If augmentative communication supports are used, include these in planning.

Service Animals

- Keep license and ID tags on service animals at all times;
- Keep copies of any service animal certification or documentation including immunization records, medications, and veterinarian's contact information in the service animal's disaster kit;
- Store extra animal food, water, and feeding bowls;
- Keep an extra harness and/or leash with disaster supplies;
- The service animal may be frightened or injured and may not be able to work after the earthquake. There is increased risk of injury to their paws from broken glass or debris on the ground;
- Be prepared to use alternate equipment if the service animal cannot provide its normal services;
- Service animals are allowed in shelters. Pets may not be allowed. Identify the service animal and, if necessary, explain what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

Considerations for Refrigerated Medications

- If there is a loss of power, keep medications in the refrigerator until it becomes warm, at which point they can be moved to the freezer. When the freezer becomes too warm, transfer medications to a small, insulated container and use chemical cold packs to keep cool.
- Before an emergency, ask doctor or pharmacist how long the medications can be unrefrigerated;
- If being evacuated, tell shelter staff about refrigerated medications.

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