

## After an Earthquake

Once an earthquake has passed, be prepared for aftershocks. These secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can still be strong enough to cause additional damage to weakened structures.

### Remember to:

- open cabinets cautiously; beware of dislocated objects that can fall from shelves.
- stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested by police, fire, or relief organizations.
- check for structural damage to your home or building; relocate to a safe destination until any damaged areas are repaired or inspected and deemed safe.
- call **Miss Utility** at 811 before beginning any excavation, as required by Virginia law; if natural gas appliances have been damaged, check with your gas service provider for instructions on how to safely and properly turn-off valves.



Ensure your home/building is deemed safe before returning.

### Sources:

Virginia Department of Emergency Management;  
Campbell County Public Safety Staff ; FEMA

## Resources

For additional information on earthquakes and other emergency preparedness measures or to obtain safety resources, please visit the following sites:

**Virginia Department of Emergency Management**  
[www.vaemergency.com](http://www.vaemergency.com)

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

**Ready America**  
<http://www.ready.gov>

**Campbell County Public Safety**  
[www.campbellcountyva.gov/depts/publicsafety](http://www.campbellcountyva.gov/depts/publicsafety)



### Campbell County Public Safety

P.O. Box 500  
Rustburg, VA 24588  
(434) 332-9540; (434) 592-9540; (434) 283-9540  
Fax: (434) 332-2957  
Email: [publicsafety@campbellcountyva.gov](mailto:publicsafety@campbellcountyva.gov)

***One County, One Mission, One Call Away***



**Campbell County Public Safety**

*One County, One Mission, One Call Away*



## Preparedness and Safety Tips



# Earthquake Safety



Although rare, earthquakes can occur any time in Virginia.

## Earthquake Preparedness and Safety Tips

Although earthquakes in Virginia are rare, they can still occur with little to no warning. Falling debris, loss of lighting, and damage to primary infrastructure can create dangerous scenarios in a matter of moments. Pre-planning for these incidents and adhering to some basic safety practices can reduce reaction time and minimize your risk of harm.

### Prior to an Earthquake:

FEMA recommends the following action steps to protect yourself, your family, and your property in the event of an earthquake:

- Seek professional assistance to repair defective electrical wiring, leaky gas lines, and inflexible utility connections; check to ensure your home is firmly anchored to its foundation.
- Bolt down and secure your water heater, refrigerator, furnace, and gas appliances to adjacent wall studs; have an automatic gas shut-off valve installed that is triggered by strong vibrations.
- Place large/heavy objects on lower shelves. Securely fasten shelves, mirrors, and large picture frames to walls; ensure high placed items and top-heavy objects are properly braced; anchor overhead lighting fixtures.
- Store glass jars and bottled beverages/food items, kitchen ware, and other breakables on low shelves or in cabinets that fasten shut.
- Install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks as they are more resistant to breakage.
- Locate safe spots in each room (under a sturdy table or against an inside wall). Indicate items you may need in case of an earthquake (cell phone, head covering, whistle, dust mask, etc.). Visit [http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/basic\\_preparedness.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/basic_preparedness.shtm) for a list of basic emergency preparedness steps and supplies.

- Conduct earthquake drills with your family members practicing the “duck, cover, and hold” steps in various rooms of the household or building (see illustration below).

### During an Earthquake:

Once an earthquake commences, minimize movement and adhere to a few simple actions as you seek a safe location:



A. Duck B. Cover C. Hold

Use the “Duck, Cover, and Hold” technique to protect yourself from falling debris.

- **Indoor Safety:**
  - Stay inside until shaking stops and it's deemed safe to go outside. Most earthquake-related injuries are caused by falling objects striking individuals entering into or exiting from buildings.
  - If possible seek cover under a heavy desk or table. This can protect you from falling debris, and likewise serve to create an air pocket should a collapse occur. If the table/desk moves during the quake, adjust your movements to stay under its protective cover. Duck, cover, and hold!
  - Inner walls and door frames of buildings are the least likely areas of a structure to collapse, thus they can also serve as protective shielding. If no other cover is available, seek shelter by crouching in an inner corner or doorway. Quickly select an object to serve as a covering over your head/face or use your arms as a protective barrier. Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing structure.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures and cabinets.
- DO NOT enter or use elevators. Avoid seeking shelter in kitchen areas as many sharp items and electrical/gas powered appliances are commonly located there. If in the kitchen when a quake occurs, quickly turn off appliances and exit the room to seek cover.
- Be aware that electricity may go out and sprinkler systems/fire alarms may turn on during the quake. Use battery operated flashlights if electricity is off-line. DO NOT use candles, matches or lighters during or after a quake in case of potential gas leaks which could spark explosions.

### Outdoor Safety:

- Stay outside and relocate to a safe distance in an open area away from buildings, street lamps, or utility wires. A good rule of thumb in calculating an appropriate safe distance is to estimate the height of a structure in feet then retreat that distance, plus ½. Example: if a building is 100 ft. tall, a safe distance would be approximately 150 feet from its perimeter.

### Traveling in a Vehicle:

- Stop quickly and as safely possible. Although the car may vibrate violently, stay inside until the shaking stops.
- Avoid parking near or under trees, buildings, overpasses or utility wires.
- Set the parking brake, and tune into local radio stations for emergency broadcast information.
- If you are in a life-threatening situation, use a cellular phone or an emergency roadside assistance phone.
- Proceed cautiously after the earthquake has ceased; be cognizant of any debris, mudslides, breaks in the roadway, downed utility poles and lines, and damage to overpasses/bridges.



Stop at a safe location away from structures and trees; stay in your vehicle!

### Crowded Indoor Public Area:

- Do not rush to doorways—move quickly, yet safely to a secure location. Place yourself away from displays and other items that could fall. Take cover near inside walls; shield your head and face with an object or your arms.

### If Trapped Under Debris:

- Stay calm, and cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing. Do not move about or stir up dust.
- Tap repeatedly on pipes or on a wall until rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available; shout only as a last resort as opening the mouth can cause inhalation of dangerous dust particles.