



EARTHQUAKES AND AFTERSHOCKS

RESPONSE GUIDE



An earthquake is a sudden, rapid shaking of the Earth caused by breaking and shifting rock beneath the Earth's surface. Earthquakes strike suddenly, without warning, and can occur at any time of the day or night, and any season of the year. Earthquakes may be followed by "aftershocks," smaller earthquakes or tremors that can happen minutes, days, weeks and even months later.



Know how to respond to earthquakes and aftershocks.

- ▶ When you feel an earthquake or aftershock, drop to your hands and knees, cover your head and neck under a strong table or desk, and hold on.



Get to a safe place.

- ▶ Stay or get inside to avoid falling debris.
- ▶ If you are near a large body of water, move to higher ground quickly. Tsunami waves (big waves) sometimes follow earthquakes and can arrive within minutes.
 - ▶ Go on foot, since roads and bridges may be damaged.
 - ▶ If you cannot evacuate, go to the third or higher floor of a sturdy building, if possible.
- ▶ Be alert for dangerous conditions such as fallen power lines, structural damage, broken glass and gas leaks.
- ▶ If you need to evacuate, use stairs instead of elevators in case of aftershocks, power outages or other damage.
- ▶ Help neighbors who may need special assistance such as children, older adults or people with limited mobility.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ▶ Get health information from credible sources (nyc.gov, cdc.gov and 311).
- ▶ Sign up for Notify NYC for information about emergency events.
- ▶ If you or anyone you know feels overwhelmed or needs help coping, visit lifenet.nyc for free help in your language.
- ▶ In an emergency, always call 911.



Beware of earthquake-related hazards and notify authorities if necessary.

- If you smell gas or your carbon monoxide detector goes off, open the windows, then go outside and call 911.
 - Do not re-enter until your home is declared safe.
 - Do not use candles, matches or other open flames to check for leaking gas lines.
- If water pipes are broken, shut off the main valve to prevent flooding.
- If there is a short circuit, turn off the electricity at the meter box, if possible.
- Check that sewage lines are intact before using toilets.
- Take extra care to protect against exposure to bodily fluids (blood, mucus, sweat) that may contain bacteria or viruses by using gloves when cleaning or making repairs and by washing your hands when done.