

Earthquake risk: how to behave

It is very important to be prepared for an earthquake. Wherever you are at the moment of the event, it is important to remain calm and to behave according to a few simple rules. You are your own best defense.

During the earthquake

- If you are inside a building, shelter in a doorway in a supporting wall (these are the thicker walls) or under a lintel. It will offer some protection if the building is damaged.
- Shelter under a table. It is dangerous to stay close to heavy furniture/objects, or to glass panes which could fall and injure you.
- Do not rush towards the stairs or use the elevator. Stairs are often the weakest element of a building, and the elevator might get stuck and trap you inside.
- Do not try to leave the building unless you are on the ground floor and the door leads directly outside.
- If you are outside, stay clear of buildings and electric lines, which could fall.
- Avoid using telephones and cars. Phone lines and roads should be left as free as possible for use by the first aid services.

After the earthquake

- Check out on the people around you: you may be of great help to those with injuries, and of support to first aid operations.
- Do not try to move persons with severe injuries: this could worsen their condition.
- Go outside with caution, and make sure to wear shoes, as shards and splinters on the road could cause injuries.
- Reach an open space, away from buildings and unsafe structures which could fall down.

Once the earthquake has stopped, and you have assessed its consequences, either go back to your workstation or go to the Assembly Point (Punto di Raccolta), if it is at a safe distance from the building, or in the closest safe open space.

The emergency team will coordinate the evacuation and await instructions.

Rules of behaviour

Knowing and following some simple rules of behaviour will increase your safety during an earthquake. The first step is checking out your surroundings and identifying anything which could become dangerous in the event of an earthquake. Most people believe that earthquake casualties are caused by buildings falling down. Instead, most casualties are injured by objects falling or breaking, e.g. television sets, hanging pictures, mirrors, or false ceilings. Just a few easy and inexpensive measures can make our environment safer.

For example:

- keep heavy furniture, such as bookcases, at a safe distance from beds and couches or places where you normally sit
- use closed hooks to hang pictures on the walls, so that they will not fall
- put heavy objects on lower shelves, and fasten objects on higher shelves with two-sided adhesive tape
- fasten shelves, bookcases and other tall furniture to the walls
- in a kitchen, fasten the doors of closets containing breakable objects, so that they will not open during an earthquake
- fasten electrical appliances (stereo, computer) to the furniture with velcro.