



EARTHQUAKES



the local scoop

Earthquakes are sudden rolling or shaking events caused by movement below the earth's surface—a sudden slip on a fault. Earthquakes cannot be predicted, although the **LOS ALAMOS SEISMOGRAPH NETWORK** (operated by Los Alamos National Laboratory since 1973), monitors for earthquake activity in the area.

Area faults include the Pajarito, Guaje Mountain, and Rendija Canyon faults. LANL data suggests a magnitude 7.0 earthquake occurred along the **GUAJE MOUNTAIN FAULT** 4,000–6,000 years ago.

More recently, **SEVEN EARTHQUAKES** have been felt by Los Alamos County residents since the 1940s. The largest were a magnitude 4 in 1952 and a magnitude 3.3 in 1971.

LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE OCCURRENCES: Low. No major earthquakes have been recorded within Los Alamos County—although people in the County have felt ground shaking from earthquakes with epicenters located elsewhere.

BEFORE:

- Identify **SAFE PLACES** in areas where you spend a lot of time, such as below a sturdy piece of furniture or against an interior wall in your house.
- **SECURE ITEMS** that could fall and cause injuries during an earthquake.
- Practice how to **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON**; you might only have seconds to protect yourself in an earthquake, so reacting quickly is important.
- Store **CRITICAL SUPPLIES**, such as water, food, and medicine.
- Make a **FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN** in case your family is not together when the quake occurs. Decide how you will contact one another, how you will get back together, and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Check if your home or workplace is **EARTHQUAKE RESISTANT** per local building codes.

DURING:

- If you are inside a building, **STAY WHERE YOU ARE** until the shaking stops. Do not run outside. Do not get in a doorway.
- **DROP** onto your hands and knees so that the quake doesn't knock you down.
- People who use **WHEELCHAIRS** or mobility devices should lock their wheels and remain seated until the shaking stops; they should protect their heads with pillows, books, or whatever is available.
- **COVER** your head and neck with your arms to protect yourself from falling debris.
- If you are in danger of falling objects—and you can move safely—**CRAWL** for additional cover below a sturdy desk or table. Interior walls and corners also provide some cover.
- **STAY AWAY** from glass, windows, outside doors and walls,

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and anything that might fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.

- **HOLD ON** to any sturdy covering so you can move with it until the shaking stops.
- If you are **IN BED**: Stay there and cover your head and neck with a pillow; at night, hazards and debris can be difficult to see.
- If you are **OUTSIDE**: move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires. Once in the open, drop, cover, and hold on until the shaking stops. If you are unable to reach an open space, duck into a building to avoid falling debris and apply the steps above.
- If you are in a **MOVING VEHICLE**: stop as quickly and safely as possible, and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.

AFTER:

- Be prepared to **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON** in the likely event of aftershocks.
- **LOOK AROUND**. If you can leave a building safely, go to an open space away from damaged areas.
- If you are **TRAPPED**, do not move about or kick up dust. If you have a cell phone, call or text for help. Use a whistle, if you have one, to help rescuers locate you.

- If you are in a vehicle, **PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY**. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that the earthquake might have damaged.
- Once safe, monitor local news and social media for **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**, alerts, and instructions.

