

During an Earthquake

If Indoors

- If indoors, stay indoors.
- “Drop! Cover! Hold On!” Drop to the ground (before the earthquake drops you)! Cover your head and neck with your arms and seek shelter by getting under a sturdy desk or table if nearby. Hold on to your shelter and be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops.
- If there is no table or desk near you, drop to the ground and then if possible move to an inside corner of the room. Be in a crawling position to protect your vital organs and be ready to move if necessary. Cover your head and neck with your hands and arms.
- If you are unable to “Drop! Cover! Hold On!” because you cannot safely move to the floor on your own, get as low as possible and protect your head and neck.
- If you are in bed, hold on and stay there. Protect your head and neck with a pillow.
- People who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices should lock their wheels and remain seated until the shaking stops. Protect your head and neck with your arms, a pillow, a book, or whatever is available.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall. If you are in a store, move away from heavy items on high shelves.
- Stay where you are until the shaking stops.



If Outdoors

- If outdoors, stay outdoors.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, “Drop! Cover! Hold On!” Stay there until the shaking stops.



If in a Moving Vehicle

- Pull over to the side of the road, stop, and set the parking brake. Avoid overpasses, bridges, buildings, trees, signs, utility wires and other hazards.
- Stay in the vehicle until the shaking is over and proceed cautiously once it has stopped.
- If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes it.

After an Earthquake

- Be prepared for the likely event of aftershocks and to “Drop! Cover! Hold On!” again.
- Monitor local media via radio, TV, social media and cell phone text alerts for emergency information and instructions.
- When the shaking stops, if there is a clear path to safety, leave the building and go to an open space.
- If you leave your home or office, leave a note at an agreed upon place so your family can find you.
- If you are trapped, do not try to move. If you have a cell phone, call or text for help. If not, tap on a pipe or wall, so rescuers can locate you.
- Check your building—including the roof, chimneys, and foundation—for damage.
- Check for gas and water leaks, damaged electrical wiring or sewer lines. If there is damage, turn off the utility at the source, if possible.
- Check on family members or co-workers in your area.
- Do not drive a vehicle unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Only hire contractors whose license and credentials can be verified through the South Carolina Labor Licensing and Regulation Department (www.LLR.SC.gov) or your local jurisdiction.
- Obtain permits as required by your local jurisdiction for construction-related work, even if you do the work yourself. Require that contractors obtain all necessary permits and ensure they are displayed appropriately. The person who requests the permit is responsible for the work being done. So, if the permit is in your name as opposed to the contractor’s, you assume liability and have no recourse if something goes wrong.
- Contact your local jurisdiction for a damage assessment.

Beware of Tsunamis

Even though uncommon in the Charleston area, there is



still a threat of off-shore earthquakes which can trigger a tsunami. A tsunami is a series of large ocean waves generated by major earthquakes under the ocean floor. If a tsunami warning is issued, follow instructions. If you are at the beach or near the coast quickly move at least two miles inland and to higher ground.

ARE YOU READY FOR AN EARTHQUAKE?

Charleston County Building Inspection Services
4045 Bridge View Drive, Suite A311
North Charleston, SC 29405
(843) 202-6930
BuildingServices@CharlestonCounty.org
www.CharlestonCounty.org



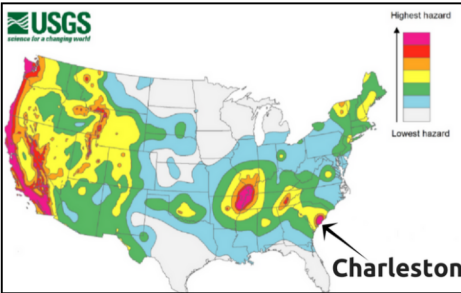
Earthquakes in Charleston? Yes, indeed! South Carolina experiences an average of 10-20 earthquakes per year. In fact, one of the worst earthquakes ever to hit the Eastern US occurred right here in Charleston in 1886.

What is an Earthquake?

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of underground rock. They occur without warning and can happen any time throughout the year. Some earthquakes start out as mild shaking and within seconds can become very violent. An earthquake usually lasts less than one minute but in that time it can cause significant damage, injury and loss of life.

Can You Prepare for an Earthquake?

Yes. While there is no reliable method for predicting the time, place and size of an earthquake, scientists know where earthquakes are likely to occur at some point in the future.



According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), Charleston is at the highest risk level.

Since we

know our area is at significant risk for earthquakes, there are things we can do to prepare so that we protect ourselves, our families and our homes.

Actions to Take Before an Earthquake Strikes

Prevent Injury from Falling Items in Your Home or Office

- Secure or replace heavy wall hangings, like pictures and mirrors, especially over beds.
- Anchor wheels on movable carts, cribs, etc.
- Secure top heavy furniture (wall units, bookcases, etc.) to wall studs with metal braces.
- Secure ceiling fans and hanging light fixtures.
- Strap down televisions, computers and other large or hazardous electrical components.
- Secure cabinets to wall studs and use latches to keep doors from opening.

- Stabilize water heaters with metal straps to wall studs to reduce overturning.
- Prevent rolling or tilting of refrigerators.
- Brace or replace masonry chimneys.

Prevent and Prepare for Gas Leaks and Fire

- Use flexible connectors where gas lines meet appliances.
- Know how and where to shut off utilities.
- Keep fire extinguishers accessible.

Make Improvements to Your Home

- Consider upgrading unbraced crawlspace walls or other foundation problems.
- Consider strengthening garages that have living space above them.
- Contact a design professional such as an architect or engineer to see what improvements are feasible for your home.

Practice Where to Go and What to Do

- Identify safe places where you can shelter during an earthquake. The safest place is away from windows and under a sturdy piece of furniture or against an interior wall.
- Practice how to “Drop! Cover! Hold On!” During an actual earthquake you will have only seconds to protect yourself, so it is important to practice.



Be Prepared for All Emergencies, including Earthquakes

Be notified when there is an emergency

- Register for CodeRED Emergency Phone and Text Alerts at SCemd.org or other official websites.
- Download the FEMA and Charleston County Emergency Management Department apps.
- On Facebook follow the page Facebook.com/EMDChasCo/ and on Twitter follow @ChasCountyGov and @SCEMD.
- Monitor local media for the latest information and official instructions.

Create an emergency kit

- It is critical to have supplies on hand to meet your entire household's basic needs for at least three days. After an earthquake, basic utilities (electricity, water, gas, telephone and/or cell towers) may not be working.
- Ensure that you include necessary supplies for infants, the elderly and household members with special needs. Also have supplies for your pet(s).
- For information on what to include in your emergency supply kit visit FEMA.gov, Ready.gov or SCemd.org.
- Consider creating an additional portable kit to take with you in case of evacuation.



Courtesy of Jana Baldwin/FEMA

Develop an emergency plan

- Appoint an out-of-town relative as a point person for everyone in your household to contact if you are separated when a disaster strikes.
- Find out how your family's schools and workplaces will communicate with you during an emergency.
- Plan how you will evacuate or shelter in place. Take into consideration the requirements of household members with special needs and if you have pets. Most shelters prohibit pets.
- Keep evacuation route maps in each car and incorporate these routes into your plan.
- Keep copies of your plan in your emergency kit and share it with your family.
- For more information on creating an emergency plan visit FEMA.gov, Ready.gov or SCemd.org.

Check your insurance

- Most home insurance policies do not cover earthquakes. However, separate earthquake coverage is available. Contact your insurance agent for more information.

Store important documents

- Make copies of your important documents—mortgage papers, deed, passport, insurance policies, bank information, will—and store them in the digital cloud or in a safe deposit box.
- In addition, protect family photos, videos and other items by storing them online. Some popular places to securely store items online include: Google Drive, Dropbox.com, iCloud.com, etc.