

What to do in an Earthquake

Preparing for earthquakes

Earthquakes cannot be predicted so it's important to be prepared and know what to do if an earthquake happens in your area. Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) is a volunteer based emergency service. In a large scale earthquake, SES assistance may not be immediate and you should be prepared to be self-sufficient.

Earthquakes can cause disruption to essential services including power, water and telephones. Your best protection is to have an Emergency Kit ready which includes the following:

Items to keep in your kit:

- A copy of your Home Emergency Plan-including essential contacts
- A battery operated or wind up radio and spare batteries if needed
- A battery operated or wind up torch and spare batteries if needed
- Important papers such as wills, passports and insurance documents
- First aid kit
- Rubber and strong leather gloves
- Non-perishable food and drinking water for at least three days in case you become isolated.



During an earthquake

There is no accepted method to predict an earthquake so it's vital to know what to do during an earthquake as you will not receive any warning. How you should react in an earthquake depends on where you are at the time:

If you are indoors during an earthquake:

DROP COVER HOLD ON

- Drop to the ground; take cover by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and hold on until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Do not use a doorway except if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway and it is close to you. Many inside doorways are lightly constructed and do not offer protection.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Do not exit a building during the shaking.
- Do not use elevators.

If you are outdoors during an earthquake:

- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and power lines.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits and alongside exterior walls.

If you are in a moving vehicle during an earthquake:

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and power lines.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

After an earthquake

- Expect aftershocks.
- Keep your radio tuned to your emergency broadcaster and follow instructions by emergency services.
- Watch for hazards and check for injuries or damage.
- Turn off electricity, gas and water.
- Avoid driving unless for emergency.

If you are trapped under debris:

- Do not light a match.
- Stay as still as possible and cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

Contacts

After an earthquake, please do not phone emergency numbers for general information and advice. Call only if you require emergency assistance. Earthquake contacts are outlined in the table below:

Life-threatening emergency Police/Fire/Ambulance	Triple Zero (000)
Emergency assistance State Emergency Service	132 500 www.ses.vic.gov.au
Earthquake information line Geoscience Australia	1800 655 739
Report an earthquake Geoscience Australia	www.ga.gov.au/earthquake