Earthquake Preparedness Tips & Strategies



For Local Emergency Managers & Citizens

What to Do **BEFORE** an Earthquake

What to Do **DURING** an Earthquake

What to Do **AFTER** an Earthquake

BE PREPARED!

For more information, log onto:
www.gema.ga.gov
www.ready.ga.gov
www.geophysics.eas.gatech.edu

Ready.Georgia

Geophysics

FEMA

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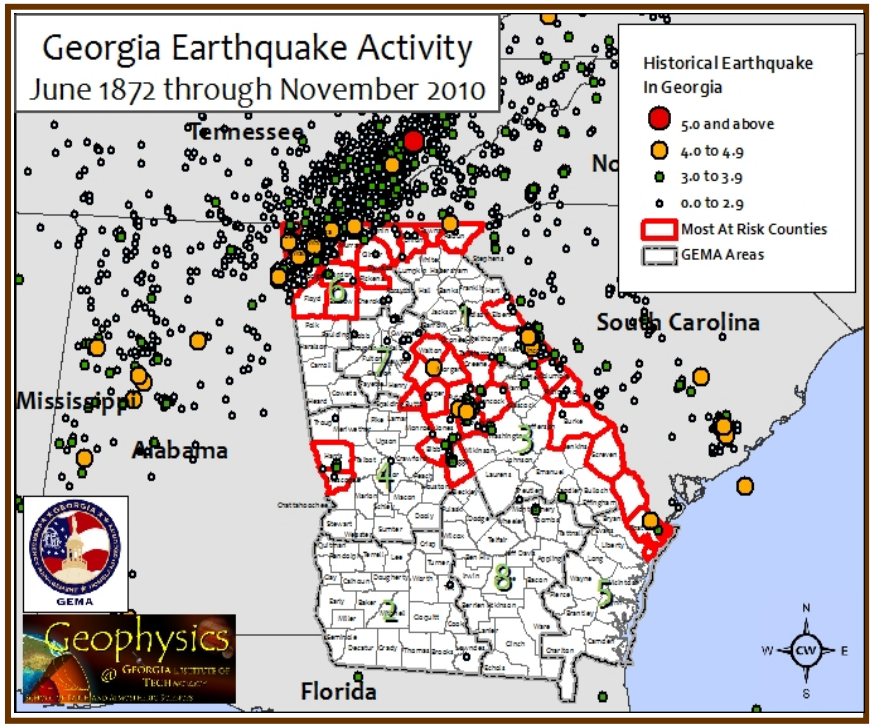
Georgia Earthquake Activity
June 1872 through November 2010
Historical Earthquake In Georgia
5.0 and above
4.0 to 4.9
3.0 to 3.9
0.0 to 2.9
Most At Risk Counties
GEMA Areas
Tennessee
South Carolina
Mississippi
Alabama
Florida
GEMA
Geophysics
@ Georgia Institute of Technology
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S

Individual and Family Preparedness is the best insurance against earthquake damage. Of the things to do, the single most important is to **eliminate those hazards in the home** that could cause significant damage to people or property during an earthquake. When a building shakes in an earthquake, falling objects can cause injury or start a fire. Many of the hazards associated with falling objects can be eliminated or minimized before an earthquake strikes. This guide has been developed to provide you with a quick reference guide intended to reduce possible damage to individuals and homes within your community.

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BEFORE An Earthquake

- ✓ Develop a Disaster Plan
- ✓ Secure cabinets, bookcases and mirrors to wall studs. Avoid installing bookcases next to beds, since heavily loaded structures could fall causing significant injury or death.
- ✓ Do NOT hang pictures over the bed.
- ✓ Strap any gas or electric water heater to wall studs. A broken gas line can cause a fire, while a knocked over or ruptured tank could cause damage or scalding.
- ✓ Store hazardous or flammable materials safely. If a container of flammable liquid spills during an earthquake, any source of flame may ignite the fluid and start a fire.
- ✓ Be prepared for 3-days of self-sufficiency. This is also good preparation for inclement weather and other disasters. Have on hand a flashlight, portable radio, first aid kits, fire extinguisher, and water for 3 days.
- ✓ Bolt house to foundation if possible. Houses in the southeast are built to stand-upright, and may not withstand shaking. Loss of contact with the foundation is a major source of damage in many large earthquakes.
- ✓ Keep important documents (insurance policies) up to date and safe. Determine if earthquake insurance is right for you.
- ✓ Consider having chimneys, roofs, and walls checked for stability. Bricks from chimneys and wall facings if not secured can fall and cause significant damage or injury.

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DURING An Earthquake

Drop, Cover and Hold On is the simple three step solution to minimize the risk of being hurt or killed during an earthquake.

- ✓ **Drop** to the ground fast, otherwise the earthquake shaking may knock you down uncontrollably.
- ✓ **Cover** yourself below a strong table or desk. Falling objects and collapsing structures cause many of the injuries and deaths during an earthquake. Additionally, **cover** your head and face to protect them from broken glass and falling objects.
- ✓ **Hold** onto the table or desk and be prepared to move with it. Holding your position until the shaking stops.
- ✓ **Do NOT** run outside during the shaking or use the stairways or elevators. The entranceways of buildings and homes are particularly dangerous because of falling bricks and debris.

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AFTER An Earthquake

- ✓ When tremors STOP, vacate premises immediately until it is safe to return.
- ✓ Look for and eliminate fire hazards that can cause further damage.
- ✓ Follow your disaster plan to locate and communicate with family and loved ones.
- ✓ Check your building for cracks and structural damage.
- ✓ Take photos to record damage before you clean up or make repairs.
- ✓ Move valuables to a safe weatherproof location.
- ✓ Review your insurance coverage and report claims promptly.
- ✓ Collect inventory records, appraisals and photographic records.
- ✓ Use licensed professionals to conduct inspections and repair your home.
- ✓ Look for ways to better prepare your home for earthquakes as you repair or rebuild.

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Fast Facts About Earthquakes

- Earthquakes strike suddenly, violently, and without warning at any time of the year and at any time of the day or night.
- Smaller earthquakes often follow the main shock.
- An earthquake is caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the Earth's surface. Ground shaking from earthquakes can collapse buildings and bridges; disrupt gas, electric, and phone service; and sometimes trigger landslides, avalanches, flash floods, fires, and huge, destructive ocean waves (tsunamis).

- Most earthquake-related injuries result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.
- It is estimated that a major earthquake in a highly populated area of the United States could cause as much as $200 billion in losses.

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Fast Facts About Earthquakes

- California experiences the most frequent damaging earthquakes; however, Alaska experiences the greatest number of large earthquakes—most located in uninhabited areas.
- Earthquakes occur most frequently west of the Rocky Mountains, although historically the most violent earthquakes have occurred in the central United States.
- The largest earthquakes felt in the United States were along the New Madrid Fault in Missouri, where a 3-month-long series of quakes from 1811 to 1812 included three quakes larger than a magnitude of 8 on the Richter Scale. These earthquakes were felt over the entire eastern United States (over 2 million square miles), with Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi experiencing the strongest ground shaking.
- The Richter Scale, developed by Charles F. Richter in 1935 is a logarithmic measurement of the amount of energy released by an earthquake.

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Earthquake Insurance is available as a rider to most home insurance policies. To be effective, they should protect the homeowner against the most likely damage expected from a small or distant earthquake, such as the failure of brick facing experienced by a homeowner in a small earthquake near Lake Sinclair. These riders vary in price depending on the deductible and company pricing practices. Clearly, a high deductible would protect mostly against the very rare large earthquake that might cause more than 10-20% damage to your property (dependent on deductable). The cost versus peace-of-mind needs to always be assessed for any such purchase.

For more information on earthquake preparedness, go to:

Ready Georgia	www.ready.ga.gov
Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA)	Phone: 1-800-TRY-GEMA Phone: 404-635-7200 Website: www. gema.ga.gov
Georgia Institute of Technology School of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences	Phone: 404-894-3893 Fax: 404-894-5638 Website: www.geophysics.eas.gatech.edu