



Australian Government  
Geoscience Australia



# Practice earthquake safety

Run a Great ShakeOut Day  
drill this Earth Science Week

Earthquakes can and do happen in Australia. With more than 100 earthquakes above magnitude 3.0 every year, it's important to know how to keep yourself safe if you feel the ground start to shake.

The Great ShakeOut is an international earthquake safety drill on Thursday 15 October 2026, but you can hold your drill on any day of the year!

Participate in a “Drop, Cover and Hold On” drill to practice keeping yourself safe.

## How to run your drill:

1. Register your community drill on the Earth Science Week website: [ga.gov.au/esw](https://ga.gov.au/esw)
2. Download our drill audio and other resources at [ga.gov.au/GreatShakeOut](https://ga.gov.au/GreatShakeOut)
3. Talk about earthquake safety with your group, and explain the importance of “**Drop, Cover and Hold On**”
4. Download and play our guided drill audio or use our earthquake drill script (on the back of this flyer) to guide your group through the drill.

## What should you do during an earthquake?



**Drop**



**Cover**



**Hold on**

It is impossible to predict when an earthquake will happen. If you feel the ground start to shake the advice is to drop, cover and hold on until it is safe.

- **Drop** – Get on the floor fast.
- **Cover** – Your head with an arm and move under a table or sturdy piece of furniture to protect yourself from falling objects. If there is no cover available, move next to an interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms.
- **Hold on** – Stay in place until the shaking stops and you are sure it is safe to exit.

For more information on Earth Science Week visit [ga.gov.au/GreatShakeOut](https://ga.gov.au/GreatShakeOut) #EarthScienceWeek

## Adapt for your situation

If you are unable to get to the ground safely or are unable to get up again without assistance adapt for your circumstances.

### If you use a walking stick or cane:



**Drop, cover and hold on** if able and safe, or sit on a bed, sturdy chair or similar and cover your head and neck with both hands. Keep your mobility aid close so you can use it when the shaking stops.

### If you use a walker or wheelchair:



- **Lock** – Your mobility aid's wheels if applicable. If you are using a walker, carefully get as low as possible.
- **Cover** – Bend over and cover your head and neck with your arms, a book or a pillow to protect yourself from possible falling objects.
- **Hold on** – Stay in place until the shaking stops and you are sure it is safe to exit.

## Great ShakeOut Drill Script

It's time for the Great ShakeOut. Geoscience Australia is joining millions of people around the world participating in The Great ShakeOut as part of Earth Science Week.

This is an earthquake safety drill. Right now, Drop, Cover and Hold On.

**DROP:** Drop down on your hands and knees. Ground shaking in a large earthquake may knock you over. Dropping to the ground protects you from falling but also allows you to move.

**COVER:** Take cover under a nearby sturdy table or desk. Covering your head and neck, or your entire body if possible, will protect you from falling objects that could hurt you. And;

**HOLD ON:** Hold on to your shelter until the shaking stops. If the shaking moves your shelter, move with it. If you can't get under something sturdy stay low and protect your head and neck with your arms. When the shaking stops, take a moment to look around for any hazards before leaving your shelter.

When you are safe visit the [earthquakes.ga.gov.au](https://earthquakes.ga.gov.au) website and lodge a felt report. Felt reports help inform important decision-making tools like the National Seismic Hazard Assessment.

This is the end of the drill. Thank you for participating in The Great ShakeOut as part of Earth Science Week.