



**WORKERS' COMPENSATION  
MANAGEMENT BUREAU**  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

October 1, 2024



October Safety Tip

## Be Prepared: Earthquake Safety Tips

Earthquakes and other disasters can strike at any time. It's crucial to make sure employees are prepared and know exactly what to do when disaster strikes. Keep reading for tips on training your teams effectively, then put it to the test at 10:17 a.m. on October 17.



*Each agency is encouraged to register their team for the Great Montana ShakeOut at [shakeout.org/montana](https://shakeout.org/montana).*

### Step 1: Secure Your Space

Imagine your workplace being picked up and shaken sideways – what would be thrown around? Earthquake shaking can move almost anything, even large or heavy items. Securing these items can prevent damage and injuries. Here are some potential internal hazards to address:

- **Unbraced shelves near exits**
- **Filing cabinets not bolted to the floor or wall studs**
- **Heavy or breakable items on high shelves or bookcases**
- **Lack of computer data backups and/or off-site storage**
- **Utilities located in the basement or on the floor**

## Step 2: Plan to Be Safe

Creating and maintaining an up-to-date Emergency Action Plan is vital. Disasters are unpredictable, but a solid plan can guide your decisions and allow flexibility to adapt to unexpected situations. Key actions include:

1. **Create contact lists for employees and their families** to ensure your ability to communicate during a disaster.
2. **Form a Building Emergency Action Team** that conducts annual training on [Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills](#).
3. **Educate employees** on the plan, how it works, and your agency's recovery strategies.
4. **Test your plan** regularly to ensure it works and employees know what to do!

## Step 3: Drop, Cover, and Hold On

When the earth starts shaking, the critical initial step for life safety is to:

- **Drop** onto your hands and knees to avoid being knocked down.
- **Cover** your head with your arms and, if possible, crawl under a table or desk.
- **Hold On** to your neck with your hands to protect yourself.

Or [adapt to your situation](#). If you have difficulty getting onto the ground, or cannot get back up again without help, then follow these recommendations:

- **If you use a cane:** Drop, cover, and hold on or sit on a chair, bed, etc. and cover your head and neck with both hands. Keep your cane near you so it can be used when the shaking stops.
- **If you use a walker or wheelchair:** Lock your wheels (if applicable). If using a walker carefully get as low as possible. Bend over and COVER your head/neck with your arms, a book, or a pillow. Then hold on until the shaking stops.

## Step 4: Improve Safety

Life safety is the top priority after an earthquake or any disaster. Activate your trained personnel to find and help anyone injured, as outside help may not be coming. Next, survey your building for damage or other hazards to prevent further injuries or damage. Decide if it's safe to stay.

**By following these steps, we can significantly reduce the risks and ensure the safety of our employees. Don't forget to register your agency for the Great Montana ShakeOut at [shakeout.org/montana](https://shakeout.org/montana).**

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## Looking to learn more about the history of earthquakes in Montana?

[Click to watch this 10 min presentation.](#)

Let's work together to create a safer workplace! [WCMB](#) is here to help you and your agency get and be prepared for earthquakes.

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT BUREAU

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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