



## Ministry of National Infrastructures

### Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee for Earthquake Preparedness

# Preparing for an Earthquake in Israel

In the past, devastating earthquakes occurred in our region and experts believe that such earthquakes will occur again in the future. It is impossible to predict when an earthquake will occur, however, there is no doubt that a strong earthquake will occur in Israel. We must therefore prepare for it.

## How do we know that an earthquake is taking place?

During an earthquake, we feel the floor shaking, the windows rattle in their frames, furniture and other items move about in a strange manner, ceiling lamps swing, and the quake makes it harder and harder to maintain stability and normal movement.

## Correct behavior during an earthquake:

### While indoors:

If you are inside a building when the earthquake begins, quickly move to a safe place, according to the following priority:

- 1. Go outdoors-** if it is possible to exit the building immediately (within seconds), go outdoors and stay away from buildings (this is particularly true if you are in a one-storey house or on the ground floor of an apartment building).
- 2. Enter the "Protected Space" ("Mamad") of your home or go out to the staircase** - in case you are unable to go outdoors immediately (within seconds), quickly enter the "Protected Space" ("Mamad") in your home. If there is no such "Protected Space", exit to the staircase and sit there until the earthquake is over (this is particularly true if you live in an apartment building).
- 3. Crawl under a heavy table or into an inner corner of the room-** If it is impossible for you to exit immediately or enter your "Protected Space" ("Mamad") / staircase quickly, take cover under a heavy table or in an inner corner of the room.

### Further instructions while staying inside buildings:

- Stay away from the buildings' outer walls, windows and shelves.
- Do not use elevators during an earthquake or after it- you may be stuck in it.
- If you are bound to a wheelchair- lock the chair wheels and protect your head (once you have reached a safe place).

### **While outdoors:**

If the earthquake occurs while you are outdoor, stay in the open and keep away from buildings, bridges or electric pylons and poles.

### **While on the beach:**

If you are on the beach during an earthquake, leave immediately in order to avoid a Tsunami which might wash out the entire shore. Do not return to the beach during the next few hours.

*Note: The Ministry of Education issues separate instructions for schools and kindergartens regarding correct behavior during an earthquake.*

### **Correct behavior after an earthquake:**

- While still indoors, Do not light a fire or turn on any sort of electric switch (including a cellular phone) in order to avoid an explosion due to a gas leak.
- Exit the building and remain outdoors, away from buildings.
- Prior to exiting the building, turn off the gas valves and the apartment's main electricity panel.

### **Trapped under ruins:**

If there are people trapped under ruins in your vicinity, cautiously use equipment such as a car jack or an iron bar to lift heavy loads. Provide first aid where possible.

### **After-shocks:**

Be prepared for additional quakes which normally appear, either several minutes or several days after the initial quake, and which might destroy building which were weakened by the initial quake. Do not enter damaged buildings after the earthquake unless it is for the purpose of saving lives.

## **How to Prepare for an Earthquake in Advance?**

### **Building's earthquake durability:**

The most significant way to prevent casualties and damage to property during an earthquake is to assure that the building in which you live can endure earthquakes, according to requirements of the Israeli building code (Code Number 413). It is advisable to consult with a licensed construction engineer. Buildings which include "Protected Spaces" ("Mamad") are considered much more durable. Buildings constructed before 1980 probably do not comply with the building code requirements and must therefore be strengthened immediately. The government of Israel encourages citizens to strengthen buildings under a National Outline Plan (Plan Number 38) [www.moin.gov.il/tama38](http://www.moin.gov.il/tama38)

### **Preparing the home:**

Most earthquake casualties happen as a result of shelves and other heavy objects collapsing from the walls, and due to broken glass, fires and gas leaks. Therefore, make sure to stabilize shelves and anchor television sets, gas containers, air conditioners and compressors into the wall. It is also advisable to have on hand a supply of food and water for emergencies, a first-aid kit, a radio, emergency lighting and baby equipment, as well as to backup essential documents.

**Educate family members and colleagues:**

- Decide in advance, together with all the immediate family members and according to the instructions above, where your safe place during an earthquake is going to be.
- Do the same with your colleagues at your workplace, for example: In an apartment building a safe place could be the Protected Space ("Mamad") or the staircase; and in a one-story home it could be outdoors.
- Agree on a specific place outdoors where the family could gather after the quake.

For further information, go to:

Earthquake Preparedness website: [www.eqred.gov.il](http://www.eqred.gov.il)

The Home Front Command website: [www.oref.org.il](http://www.oref.org.il)

Home Front Command Telephone information center: 1207