

Earthquake Preparedness

Before you leave home, find out whether your destination has a high level of seismic risk. The U.S. Geological Survey provides earthquake information by [country](#) and by [state](#). Earthquakes are common in many parts of the world, particularly in Pacific Rim nations such as Japan, China, Indonesia, **Chile** and the western U.S. Earthquakes are also common in Mediterranean Europe, the Indian subcontinent and Pacific island nations. If your travels take you to a developing country where buildings may not be constructed with earthquake safety in mind, advance preparation is doubly important.

Regardless of your destination, there are some steps you can take to be ready for an earthquake.

- Register with your nation's embassy if you are traveling overseas.
- In Chile, register with the AUI/NRAO Office: clara@nrao.edu – +56(2)210-9600
- Sign up for the USGS [earthquake notification service](#). You can have text notifications sent to your cell phone. (Tip: Be sure your cell phone will work in your destination country. If it won't, consider renting a cell phone and adding that number to your notification profile.)
- Carry a list of emergency contact numbers, including local emergency services, hospitals and embassies or consulates. If you're visiting another country and do not speak the local language, bring a list of emergency words and phrases.

Emergency Contact information in Chile (AUI/NRAO) – *from a cell phone*

- Eduardo Hardy: Office (02)210-9601 – Cell 9871-6892 – Home (02)243-1376
- Mauricio Pilleux: Office (02)210-9600 – Cell 9259-3366 – Home (02)758-1028
- Carola Lara: Office (02)210-9600 – Cell 7757-7693 – Home (02)312-3761
- Alina Prus: Office (02)210-9600 – Cell 9449-4297 – Home (02)848-4451

Note: to call from

- **land line to land line:** do not dial the "(02)", only the 7-digit phone number
- **land line to cell phone:** add a "9" to 8-digit cell phone number
- **cell phone to land line:** use the above numbers

Other emergency numbers (may not speak English)

- **Ambulance:** 131
- **Bomberos (Fire Dept):** 132
- **Carabineros (Police):** 133

- Once you arrive, take a look at your hotel room. Decide where you will shelter if an earthquake occurs. Look for interior, window-free walls and sturdy furniture, such as a desk or table, to protect yourself.

- If you are traveling with a group, choose on an emergency meeting place.
- Decide on your evacuation route from your hotel (after the earthquake) and find out how to get to higher ground if you are staying near the ocean. Strong earthquakes can cause tsunamis, and the best way to survive a tsunami is to move to higher ground and stay there.
- Charge your cell phone as needed. Include or obtain locally a spare battery or standby charge device for your phone.

During an Earthquake

If You Are Indoors:

- Stay where you are. Drop to the floor, seek cover under a table or desk if possible, and hold on until the shaking stops. If you cannot shelter under furniture, drop to the floor and get to an interior wall without windows. Crouch down and cover your head and neck with your arms.
- Do not try to go outside until the earthquake is over. You could be killed by debris falling from the outside of your building. Most hotels in Chile are built to exacting earthquake standards. They will protect you as well as any buildings in the world.
- Stay away from glass, windows and overhead lighting fixtures, which could break and injure you.
- If you are in bed, stay there and protect your head with your pillow. You should, however, leave your bed if it is under a light fixture that could fall.
- You do not need to stand in a doorway unless you are in an unreinforced building, such as an adobe house. Doors swing during earthquakes and you could be injured trying to reach the doorway.

If You Are Outside

- **Stay outside. Get away from buildings so that you are not injured by falling glass or other debris. Move away from electrical wires and trees.**
- **Remain where you are until the earthquake ends.**

If You Are Driving

- Slow down and pull to the side of the road. Park your car until the shaking ends. Do not stop under a bridge or electrical wires, and try to park away from buildings and trees.
- Stay in your car until the shaking stops.
- When you resume driving, be ready for collapsed or damaged bridges, debris and other hazards.

After the Earthquake

- If you are near the ocean, get ready to move to higher ground. Earthquakes can cause [tsunamis](#). You may have only 20 – 30 minutes to escape the devastating waters, so you should heed all tsunami warnings. When in doubt, evacuate to an area at least 50 feet above sea level and stay there. The tsunami warning may be in effect for hours.
- Be ready for aftershocks. Some aftershocks are almost as strong as the original quake, and buildings may collapse.
- Do not light matches.
- Turn off the gas if you smell a leak or hear gas escaping. Turn off electricity at the fuse box if you see exposed, broken wires or sparks. Do not touch downed utility wires.
- Pay attention to emergency information broadcasts. Do not ignore warnings.
- Listen for emergency hotline numbers and call your embassy and the hotline to report your location and condition. Otherwise, do not use the telephone unless you need emergency assistance.
- Put on sturdy shoes to protect your feet from broken glass.
- If you need to open a cabinet or cupboard, do so carefully. Earthquakes shift items; glass objects could fall out when you open the cabinet door.
- Clean up spills of cleaning supplies and other hazardous materials.
- Do not use a camp stove or barbecue to cook indoors.
- Do not consume water or food from open containers if you find broken glass nearby.
- You can get potable water from ice cubes, tank-style water heaters and cans of vegetables. Do not drink tap water unless you know the water lines have not been contaminated.
- Help others. If you discover someone who has been trapped by falling debris, call for assistance. Do not move victims with serious injuries; call for help and wait for trained personnel to arrive.