

Tips to Reduce Earthquake Damage

Release Date: January 25, 2020

CAGUAS, Puerto Rico – The recent series of earthquakes has left many people in Puerto Rico feeling unsettled or nervous but there are steps you can take to make your home more secure.

Puerto Rico is where the Caribbean tectonic plate meets the North American plate, which makes it seismically active. Because of this, earthquakes and aftershocks will occur in Puerto Rico; it is a natural process. While the aftershocks are expected to decrease in frequency and severity, aftershocks are likely to continue for the next few weeks and even months.

If your home was damaged, contact your local Municipal Emergency Management Office. Municipal staff can take your information and refer it to the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Bureau that has assessment teams ready to go out to check for damage.

While no one can stop an earthquake, there are steps you can take right now to reduce earthquake damage.

To secure your space, identify hazards and move them out of the way. The shaking produced by an earthquake or strong aftershock can cause heavy objects to move or fall, potentially injuring people and pets.

To avoid injury, move heavy objects to the floor or, if on a shelf, to a lower level.

Anchoring bookcases to the wall will prevent them from falling.

Here are some other things you can do:

- To prevent injuries from flying glass, apply safety film to windows and glass doors.
- Anchor large appliances to walls using safety cables or straps.
- Install ledge barriers on shelves and secure large, heavy items and breakables directly to shelves to keep them from falling.



FEMA

Page 1 of 2

- Install latches on drawers and cabinet doors to keep contents from spilling.
- Anchor filing cabinets and televisions to walls.
- Hang mirrors and pictures with closed hooks.
- Secure water heaters to wall studs with two metal straps.

You can also protect yourself financially by talking to your insurance representative. You may want to consider increasing your earthquake insurance.

You have worked hard to buy expensive items such as appliances and televisions. Protect them and act to reduce your potential earthquake damage today. For more tips to reduce damage, visit [Ready.gov/Earthquakes](https://www.ready.gov/Earthquakes).

For more information on Puerto Rico's disaster recovery, visit the [Government of Puerto Rico](https://www.governmentofpuertorico.gov), [FEMA.gov/disaster/4473](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4473), [Twitter.com/FEMARegion2](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion2) and [Facebook.com/femapuertorico](https://www.facebook.com/femapuertorico).

###

FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **711** for Video Relay Service. Multilingual operators are available. (Press **2** for Spanish.) TTY call **800-462-7585**.*

Follow us at:

www.facebook.com/femapuertorico

www.twitter.com/femaregion2

