

Earthquake coverage not included in homeowners insurance policies

Am I covered if an earthquake damages my home?

Unless you've purchased earthquake coverage, you are not covered by a standard homeowners policy. So, structural damage to the home and any loss of furnishings and personal possessions would not be covered.

How does earthquake insurance work?

Your homeowners policy excludes coverage to the dwelling for earth movement meaning earthquakes, and any other earth movement including earth sinking, rising or shifting.

You can purchase an endorsement to a homeowners, renters or business policy or as a separate policy to cover damage from earthquakes and aftershocks. Since different building materials react differently to earth movement (brick versus wood, for example), prices vary by the type of construction of the building.

Earthquake insurance is available at a considerably higher cost than standard homeowners insurance. Premiums are determined by the building's value, age and location, generally about 5 percent to 10 percent of the building's value for homeowners.

Can I buy earthquake insurance at any time?

The only time you can't buy earthquake insurance for a home is within 72 hours of an earthquake, since there is a high risk of damage from aftershocks within that period of time.

With earthquake insurance, am I covered for aftershocks?

Yes. When you purchase an earthquake endorsement, you are covered from the time of the earthquake through 72 hours after the earthquake. If an aftershock occurs within that 72-hour period, you will be covered for damage caused by it.

What if I belong to a condominium association? What if common property is damaged?

If you belong to a townhouse or condominium association that has inadequate earthquake coverage or none at all, you could be charged for repairs to common property.

If you have earthquake coverage and loss assessment coverage on your unit-owners policy, you may be able to extend it to cover you for this liability to the association. Please check with our agency for more information.

Do I really need earthquake coverage in my area of residence?

Shakeouts occur frequently in the Northeast. In fact, according to the Weston Observatory at Boston College, in 2012, there were 81 earthquakes. Most of these had a magnitude in the 2 range, with a few in the 3 and 4 ranges.

Although recently a Northeast earthquake registered a 5.9 on the Richter Scale, earthquake hazard maps (e.g., the National Seismic Hazard Map developed by the U.S. Geological Survey in 2008) generally show that most parts of New England are considered "low hazard" areas. For a copy of the hazard map, refer to <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2008/3018/>.



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