

Information Zone

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- Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management
- Arizona Emergency Information Network
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Maricopa County

Emergency Management

5630 E. McDowell Road
Phoenix, AZ 85008
602-273-1411
ready.maricopa.gov

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ARE YOU READY? EARTH FISSURES & LANDSLIDES



Preparedness Starts with You!



Maricopa County
Emergency Management

Maricopa County is particularly susceptible to **SUBSIDENCE & FISSURES**

SUBSIDENCE is the gradual sinking of land that eventually forms a bowl shape.

An EARTH FISSURE is a crack in the earth's surface associated with land subsidence.

Both result from the removal or depletion of underground fluids, such as groundwater, or from the excessive use of surface water. Both can cause drainage problems, breach canals, and alter flood patterns or flood control measures. They can also damage underground utilities, infrastructure, roadways, and building foundations.

In areas burned by forest and brush fires, a lower threshold of precipitation may initiate **LANDSLIDES**

In a LANDSLIDE masses of rock, earth, and/or debris move down a slope.

DEBRIS and MUD FLOWS are rivers of rock, earth, and other debris saturated with water.

All can be caused by a variety of factors, including earthquakes, heavy rainfall, volcanic eruptions, fire, and by land mismanagement, particularly in mountain, canyon, and coastal regions.



Before

Know Your Risk & Be Informed

- Visit www.azgs.az.gov to see if you live in a fissure-prone area.
- Recognize warning signs including changes in and around your home that signal that a geologic event is likely to occur.
- Embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to landslides.

Prepare Yourself & Your Family

- Develop and practice a **Disaster Plan** with your family to prepare for what to do, where to go, and how to communicate during any disaster.
- Prepare to evacuate by creating a **Go Bag** for each individual and pet. Consider including one in your vehicle and one at work.
- Prepare to stay in your home for up to 3 days (without electricity or running water) by creating an **Emergency Kit**.
- Visit ready.maricopa.gov and ein.az.gov to learn more about how to prepare for disasters.

Prepare Your Home

- Become familiar with the land around you and get a ground assessment of your property. Seek advice from a geotechnical expert for evaluating hazards or designing corrective techniques to reduce risk.
- Practice a low water-use lifestyle.

Be Informed. Be Ready. Take Action.

Before & During Any Disaster or Large-Scale Emergency

- Monitor your television, portable radio, or cell phone for information and instructions.
- If you have been told to EVACUATE or SHELTER in your home, DO SO IMMEDIATELY. Secure your home. Remember your pets. Check on neighbors who may need special assistance. Follow all evacuation or shelter orders given by local authorities.
- Return home only when authorities say it's safe.

REPORT

Call 911 if the geologic occurrence is an immediate threat to anyone's life, health, or safety.

To report an earth fissure, email azgs-info@email.arizona.edu

During

Take Action Indoors

- During a landslide, move to a second story if possible.
- During a severe storm, stay alert and awake. Many deaths from landslides occur while people are sleeping.
- Bring pets indoors.

Take Action Outdoors

- Listen for unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid river valleys and low-lying areas.
- If you are near a stream be alert for any sudden change in water flow or clarity. This can indicate debris flow activity upstream.
- Move away from the path of a landslide or area of an earth fissure as quickly as possible.
- If escape is not possible during a landslide, curl into a tight ball and protect your head.

Take Action in a Vehicle

- Bridges may be washed out, and culverts overtopped. Watch for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flows, land subsidence, or earth fissures.

After

Stay Safe, Healthy & Alert

- Drive with caution. Anticipate traffic light outages and obstacles in the road. Report broken utility lines and damaged roadways/railways to appropriate authorities as soon as possible.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the site, without entering the direct area.
- Check the building foundation, chimney, and surrounding land for damage. Damage to foundations, chimneys, or surrounding land may help you assess the safety of the area.
- Fence off earth fissures. Do NOT dump anything into them.
- Watch for flooding. Floods sometimes follow landslides because they may both be started by the same event. Excessive water can also further erode earth fissures.
- Replant landslide-damaged ground as soon as possible since erosion caused by loss of ground cover can lead to flash flooding and additional landslides in the near future.
- If your home or property is damaged, take photos/videos of damage, list all damaged items, and contact your insurance agent to discuss claims.